

The Learning Communities of Exemplary Mid-Career  
Elementary General Music Teachers

Dissertation

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By

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## Abstract

Learning communities were essential to the teaching practices of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers. Meaningful stories contributed insight into the teachers' communities, career development, attitudes, and resilience. Accounts at a specific time in the teachers' careers initiated documentation of elementary general music teachers' career life cycle. Twenty-four exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers were selected with combination criterion and snowball method. Teachers participated in a pre-interview descriptive survey and an interview. Most teachers allowed a classroom observation without students and submitted documents reflecting the incorporation of their learning community into their teaching. Research questions resulted in a description of their learning communities, meaningful experiences from their learning community, and how these events influenced their teaching and their students' learning. Data emerged in two forms: individual teacher profiles and four broad themes across all interviews: (a) Multiple Learning Communities, (b) Membership Rationale, (c) Professional Development, and (d) Job Satisfaction. The exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers (a) were dedicated, (b) loved music and loved teaching music, (c) practiced systematic reflection, (d) responded to change, (e) revealed an intrinsic drive towards being a life-long learner, (f) sought their own professional development, (g) reflected upon their

professional development needs, and (h) valued sharing with other teachers. The teachers' learning communities were (a) diverse, (b) rich, (c) multiple, and (d) involved greatly with the teachers' practices. Inspiration and adaptation to change were themes associated with lifelong learning. Developing teacher biography would lead to further knowledge about resilience and lifelong learning. Further research into the use of learning communities for sustainable professional development is requisite due to the high interest of the exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers.

## Dedication

This study is dedicated to elementary general music teachers and to a better understanding of the different stages in their careers.

## Acknowledgements

I am appreciative for all of the time and energy from elementary general music teachers who contributed to this study. They recognized both an importance and interest in learning more about the learning communities of elementary general music teachers at mid-career. They freely communicated their experiences that resulted in an authentic portrayal of exemplary mid-career elementary general teachers which can be shared with others.

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## Fields of Study

Major Field: Music

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

We are often on an island all by ourselves and just being able to reach out to other music teachers who do what we do and being able to share with them is so important. And education is always evolving in the thirteen years that I've been teaching, just seeing the shift from one thing to another and to another, I think that it is constantly getting better. If I didn't have the support of collaboration and of learning communities, then, I would feel like I was drowning. I wouldn't know how to keep up. I just think that it's so important that we're able to bounce ideas off of each other, and share with each other, and learn from each other. - Bria<sup>1</sup> - Research Participant

Mid-career elementary general music teachers face many unique challenges in their career. In many cases, the elementary general music teacher is the only teacher of their kind in their building community. As a mid-career teacher, Bria finds support for changes in education and a process for success with other music teachers in a learning community. She acknowledges that learning communities meet her professional needs which are specific to the nuances of her job as an elementary general music teacher.

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<sup>1</sup> All participant names are pseudonyms.

As an elementary music teacher who participated in many different learning communities, at mid-career I decided to continue my long-term love of learning by investing in a Ph.D. graduate program. While in graduate school, I found an absence of literature concerning professional development that addressed my demographic, the mid-career elementary general music teacher. In fact, there was little literature about the elementary music teacher or descriptions of the changes they experience throughout their career.

While I was teaching elementary general music, I sought professional development in the American Orff-Schulwerk Association and in my local Orff chapter. Participation included attending workshops that highlighted the implementation of Orff-Schulwerk through singing, movement, instruments, and creating music (Appendix F). Eventually, I contributed to the long-term development of my local Orff chapter which resulted in many conversations locally and nationally about how to adjust our workshop series to continue to meet the changing needs of elementary music educators. This experience with other elementary general music teachers, the research of literature about general music teachers, and my own mid-career transition inspired me to examine how learning communities contribute to professional development. Also, more specifically, I wanted to study in which learning communities exemplary mid-career teachers chose to participate.

### **The Exemplary Mid-Career Elementary General Music Teacher**

There is little research literature that describes the experiences of elementary general music teachers. Common themes in literature about elementary general music teachers involve classroom activities and expertise. Techniques of teaching music to

elementary aged children comprise another large body of research. Though not specific to the elementary general music teacher, there are lines of research emerging in music education about the experience of music teachers at different stages of their lives (Conway, 2008; Eros, 2009, 2011, AB). The purpose of my study is to understand the unique experience of elementary music teachers at mid-career to provide insight into their retention, longevity, and different professional needs.

To extend further understanding of the experience of the teacher, there is a genre of research that pertains to the biography of the teacher. In this technique, researchers develop an approach to highlighting and understanding a teacher's perspective by studying teachers and the influence of context, life experience, and adult learning (Butt, Raymond, McCue, Yamagishi, 1992). Butt et al. (1992) reference Dewey's *Experience and Education* to develop a framework for researchers to map the collaborative autobiography of teachers. Especially influential is Dewey's opinion that personal experience is the most important part of the education of a teacher and external factors could be distractions from truly understanding the experience (p. 58).

The philosophies of Dewey can offer additional support in studying teachers within a learning community. Dewey led the Progressive Education Movement from the late 1880's to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Though the movement lost momentum by the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, Dewey's concepts of pragmatism and constructivism are philosophies researchers continue to practice. Pragmatism means that theory can be developed from experience and constructivism represents the thought that individuals learn by creating meaning through their personal experiences. In *Experience and Education*, Dewey (1938/1998) claims that not all experiences facilitate knowledge (p. 13). External



factors must be present in order to learn from it and education must be adapted to the needs of the recipients (p. 33, 45). Lastly, Dewey wrote, “We have to understand the significance of what we see, hear and touch. This significance consists of the consequences that will result when what is seen is acted upon” (p. 79).

In applying the thoughts of Dewey to the study of learning communities, a community experience must have an atmosphere that encourages learning and meets the needs of its participants. Finally, being an observer does not mean that learning will take place. Thus, a teacher must be able to synthesize value from their experience in order for meaningful learning to take place.

In this study, other steps have been taken to describe authentic experiences of exemplary mid-career general music teachers. Though there is not a clear definition of the exemplary music educator in research literature, there are qualities that have been explored in research (Duke, 1999, Juchniewicz, 2010). Some qualities of exemplary music teachers include “non-verbal communication, teacher self-efficacy, and servant leadership” (Steele, 2010, p. 71). To describe the parameters of the exemplary elementary general music teachers chosen for this study, I have borrowed from theories in general education. The exemplary teacher exhibits all the qualities of a National Board Certified<sup>2</sup> teacher but may not have the certification. The teacher performs above and beyond the requirements of their job description (adapted from Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch, & Enz, 2000).

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<sup>2</sup> National Board Certification is recognition of excellent teaching attained by successfully completing ten assessments involving four portfolios and six exercises. A certification lasts ten years (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2013).

There is little research in music education about music teachers at mid-career. Thus, research and theories of mid-career teachers from general education serve as a reference in forming a foundation for this study. In general education, mid-career teachers have been studied more often because it is considered a pivotal time to study their retention and longevity. For this study, the mid-career teachers are defined as teachers who have completed half of her or his career. To accommodate varied career cycle lengths, the range of the participants' years of teaching experience is from eight to nineteen years.

### **Professional Development**

In the past, researchers studied professional development of preservice and inservice music teachers. Often the inservice teacher represented a range of experience from beginning to veteran teachers. Little research existed for professional development specific to the experienced music educator. This is now an emerging line of research (Bauer, 2007). Even within the pool of experienced teacher professional development literature, few studies differentiate types of music teachers or their level of experience. Thus, when addressing professional development for exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers, there is not a direct line of research literature to reference. Instead, the information comes from studies that represent professional development and the broader population of experienced music teachers.

On the other hand, a strand of recent research literature acknowledges and examines the changing professional development needs throughout a music teacher's career. Originating in general education, the study of the life cycle of a teacher examines different periods of time throughout teachers' careers. Often, patterns within

the periods of time are identified as phases or cycles. Research about the phases of teachers' careers provides an interesting perspective and gives insight to the types of professional development that could support teachers at different times in their careers. This research about the life of the career teacher has been explored more in general education literature. Even though it is not known how studies of general education teachers can be transferred to studies of music educators, the model of the general education teacher can serve as a reference point as the literature base develops (Conway, 2008).

One approach frames career phases based on teacher actions, rather than years of teaching. Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch, & Enz (2000) outline teacher growth as “novice, apprentice, professional, expert, distinguished, and emeritus” (Steffy et al., 2000, p. 5). Descriptions of teachers in the expert phase include the following:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Teachers are members of learning communities (p. 78).

Reference to this career phase has been cited in music education literature (Conway, 2008; Eros, 2009, 2011, AB). Although it is not known if the same assumptions can be made of expert music educators, some researchers have encouraged further exploration in the professional development practices of experienced music teachers. Bauer (2007) asks the question: If professional development were held over a longer period of time,

would it be more effective? In addition, there is a call for study of the informal professional development of inservice music teachers (Conway, 2007; Schmidt & Robbins, 2011). Some suggest that the music teacher learning communities deserve more study because these communities present long-term practices that educators could adapt in order to meet their personal professional development needs (Conway, 2007; Conway, 2011; Schmidt & Robbins, 2011). In the attempt to explore these issues, I will interview exemplary mid-career elementary music educators about their learning communities.

## **The Study**

### **Purpose**

Contributing research to explore the learning communities of exemplary elementary music teachers can provide insight into how they develop through their participation in learning communities. Like the Steffy et al. (2000) model of teacher growth, does an exemplary elementary music educator choose to be a part of a learning community? If so, what does the learning community look like? What benefits does the elementary music educator receive? How can information be gained from these informal forms of professional development and be transferred to the practice of music teaching? There is some music education research that illustrates what a mid-career teacher might need for professional development. The study of specific professional development and the examination of a specific career type such as the elementary general music teacher will help clarify characteristics of music teachers in research literature.

Discovering common themes in the learning communities of successful teachers can provide insight to collaborative professional development. Examining how and why exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers contribute to learning communities can determine if teachers' participation in these groups support their success. In addition, studying learning communities can illustrate some of the changing professional needs of teachers throughout their career. Career experience, setting, demographics, and educational background play a part in teachers' decisions to participate in specific learning communities. Recognizing similarities and differences among learning communities can lead to describing alternate paths of expert teachers and to creating criteria for participation in elementary general music learning communities. Another line of study can explore informal professional development as a method of developing knowledge. The information gathered can be valuable to teacher educators and can lead the way to a new type of professional development in higher education.

Related questions to study in regard to the learning communities of successful mid-career music teachers are:

- Why do elementary general music teachers participate in learning communities?
- To what degree are they involved in their learning communities?
- Why does their participation change?
- What meaning do they draw from their experiences?

- What do elementary general music teachers think about their learning communities' influence on their curriculum, artistry, and pedagogical knowledge?
- What kinds of support do elementary general music teachers receive from their learning communities?

Work as a music specialist can be isolating. A learning community can be a means of professional support to counter this isolation. In addition, it can play a part in job satisfaction. Understanding how and why teachers participate in learning communities can offer scenarios in how successful teachers create support systems.

Documenting meaningful experiences of music educators reveals the thought processes leading to connections in both their own development and their students' development. In choosing to be part of their learning communities, teachers empower themselves by directing their own path of professional development. With personal success in their learning communities, teachers gain confidence and inspiration to transform their experiences to their teaching and ultimately to student learning outcomes. Studying the relationships, interactions, and commitments with the learning communities of mid-career exemplary music educators will help describe how teachers become resilient and help illustrate their thought processes in developing their approach to successful teaching.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to provide a thorough description of learning communities of mid-career exemplary elementary music teachers and to illustrate the

complexity and diversity of the professional development choices they make. The intention is to identify characteristics of learning communities and the meaningful experiences that result from participation in them in order to examine how the groups influence music teacher development, attitudes, and longevity. My research questions are:

- What are the characteristics of the learning communities of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers?
- What meaningful experiences do exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers describe as a result of their participation in learning communities?
- How do they think their meaningful experiences transfer to their teaching practice and to their student learning outcomes?

### **Approach**

The aim of this study is to remain true to the voices of the teachers interviewed and let their stories guide the interpretation of their meaningful experiences. In addition, their descriptions will illuminate their individual experiences with learning communities as exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers. While gathering data, an interpretive process emerges that is appropriate for the study and that allows the stories of teachers to be highlighted. The variety of participants illustrates the diverse experiences of the teachers. The study reveals the diversity and similarity of stories shared among learning communities. Previous research in both music education and teacher education will help describe the mid-career elementary general music teacher, and the descriptions will complement the information that emerges naturally

from the participating teachers in this study. The current study is designed to shed light on this population of music teachers through pre-interview descriptive surveys, interviews, field notes about their classroom setup, and documents that demonstrated the influence of their learning community in their workplace. Specific procedures are discussed in Chapter 3. At present, there is no study about the learning communities of exemplary mid-career elementary teachers; this study serves as an impetus to introduce new information and to suggest paths of future study.

### **Limitations**

- I have participated in the learning communities in which I have studied and my intention is to be transparent with my previous experience, to provide a rich description of the experience of others, and to cross-check my interpretation with an expert in music education research.
- The study is a representation, not a generalization, of the general music teachers interviewed.
- There were few urban teachers represented. No conclusions were drawn as to why or why not they did not participate.
- The exemplary music teacher has not been defined in music education research. However, there have been some qualities of the exemplary music teacher identified. Professors and veteran exemplary teachers provided the initial list of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers by using identified characteristics.



## **Operational Definitions**

**Learning Community:** A learning community consists of people who have a similar interest, learn from one another, and share resources. Members build and maintain community relationships over time. A learning community can be made of formal and/or informal group learning experiences. (adapted from Wenger, 1999)

**Formal Learning Community:** an experience that is guided by higher education, a school district, a method of instruction, or an association. (adapted from Wenger, 1999)

**Informal Learning Community:** an experience in which people with shared interests create and guide learning groups. (adapted from Wenger, 1999)

**Primary Learning Community:** a group that was the main focus of the teacher.

**Secondary Learning Community:** a group that was important to a teacher, but was not her or his main focus.

**Varietal Learning Community:** a group that formed as a result of the influence of a Primary or Secondary Learning Community.

**Marginal Learning Community:** a group that entailed limited involvement.

**Elementary General Music Teacher:** a teacher who instructs students in the range of kindergarten to sixth grade in musical skills and concepts based on state and national standards.

**Mid-Career Teacher:** a teacher who has completed half of her or his career. For the purposes of this study and to accommodate varied career cycle lengths, the range of the participants' years of teaching experience was from eight to nineteen years.

**National Board Certification:** a recognition of excellent teaching attained by successfully completing ten assessments involving four portfolios and six exercises. A certification lasts ten years (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2013).

**Exemplary Teacher:** a teacher who exhibits all of the qualities of a National Board Certified teacher but may not have the certification. The teacher performs above and beyond the requirements of their job description. (adapted from Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch, & Enz, 2000)

**Membership Rationale:** the reasons for a teacher's participation in a learning community.

**Multiple Learning Communities:** the participation in more than one learning community.

**Professional Development:** the skills and knowledge a teacher acquires as a result of participation in a learning community.

**Job Satisfaction:** the degree to which a teacher is content with her or his job.

**Orff-Schulwerk Learning Communities:** This community is a group of teachers with a shared Orff-Schulwerk philosophy and practice. Formal groups occur at professional development offerings of Orff-Schulwerk or through leadership positions with the American Orff-Schulwerk Association. From these experiences, informal groups in which teachers guide their own learning of Orff-Schulwerk can emerge.

**Kodály Learning Communities:** This community is a group of teachers with a shared Kodály philosophy and practice. Formal groups occur at professional development offerings of Kodály or through leadership positions with the Organization

of the American Kodály Educators. From these experiences, informal groups in which teachers guide their own learning of Kodály can emerge.

**District Elementary Music Teacher Learning Communities:** This community is a group of elementary music teachers who teach in the same district and meet to discuss teaching, to implement district initiatives, to arrange continuity between programs, and/or to provide support. Some groups supported by their district may meet during professional development days. Other groups meet outside of the school day.

**Building Learning Communities:** This community is a group of teachers from the same school building that meet to discuss teaching, to implement district or building initiatives, to arrange continuity between programs, and/or to provide support.

**Other Learning Communities:** These communities are learning communities in which exemplary mid-career elementary music teachers from this study have chosen to participate. These communities were not common choices.

## **Chapter Overview**

Chapter two is a review of relevant research which supports the study of exemplary general music teacher learning communities. Existing research literature illustrates the current view of the mid-career exemplary elementary general music teacher. In addition, characteristics of learning communities in an educational setting will be developed.

Chapter three is a description of the methods and procedures used to study the learning communities of exemplary mid-career elementary music teachers. Included is a description of the study setting, participants, and procedure process. In addition, results from the three pilot studies are discussed.

Chapter four describes and identifies patterns and themes found in interviews, observations, descriptive surveys, and documents. The first part of the chapter focuses on developing descriptions of exemplary mid-career general music teachers and the five learning communities they emphasized the most: Orff-Schulwerk, Kodály, District Elementary General Music Teacher, Building, and Other. The second half of the data section discusses four themes found among the communities: (a) Multiple Learning Communities, (b) Membership Rationale, (c) Job Satisfaction, and (d) Professional Development.

Chapter five is a discussion of the data found and an outline of suggestions for future research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The objective of this chapter is to create a foundation for analyzing the experiences of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers and their learning communities. Research specific to the elementary general music teacher and an investigation of their practices form an initial description. By reviewing literature about teachers' life cycles and mid-careers, qualities of teachers at different stages of their careers offer perspective in developing the portrayal of the exemplary mid-career elementary general music teacher. Research about the professional needs of experienced music teachers lends insight. Finally, research about learning communities serves as an impetus to provide a foundation for study of professional development communities for exemplary mid-career elementary music teachers.

### **Elementary General Music Teachers**

In developing the story of elementary general music teachers, the first step is to identify pedagogical methodologies in music education and to study research pertaining to elementary general music. A methodology comprises of "a body of techniques, methods, and curricula that is based on a philosophical system and foundation of research" (Costanza & Russell, 1992, p. 498). This section will include a review of music education methodologies and will identify research that pertains to the elementary general music teacher within each methodology. The section concludes

with a review of literature that specifically highlights the voice of elementary general music teachers and identifies how these voices are expressed in research.

### **Methodologies**

Several methodologies influence the teaching style of music education in America. Dalcroze, Kodály, Orff, Suzuki, and Gordon provide a philosophical approach to techniques, methods, and curriculum (Costanza & Russell, 1992; Labuta & Smith, 1997; Shehan, 1986). Many of the methodologies have roots from the education philosophers Johann Pestalozzi, Lowell Mason, and John Dewey (Costanza & Russell, 1992). In addition to specific research about music education methodologies, there is a body of research that contrasts these methodologies (Bebeau, 1982; Colley, 1987; Kratus, 2001; Krigbaum, 2005). Though some influence of music education methodologies carries over to music textbooks, general music basal series such as *McGraw-Hill* and *Silver-Burdett* are considered a separate methodology because they implement their own “techniques, methods, and curricula...based on a philosophical system and foundation of research” (Costanza & Russell, 1992, p. 498, 500).

There is a large body of research about alternative techniques to the well-known methodologies of Dalcroze, Kodály, Orff, Suzuki, and Gordon regarding teaching music to elementary-aged children. Literature reviews describing alternative techniques include music literacy (Hodges & Nolker, 2011), listening (Dunn, 2011; Flowers, 2011b), singing (Phillips & Doneski, 2011), movement (Abril, 2011; Campbell, 1991), and language arts literacy (Standley, 2008). The intent of this literature review is to explore the experiences of elementary general music teachers.

Because some of the well-known methodologies support associations that encourage local professional development groups, the literature review addresses the history of the well-known methodologies of Dalcroze, Kodály, Orff, Suzuki, and Gordon and includes the research literature that describes the practices and experiences of elementary general music teachers.

**Dalcroze.** While a harmony and solfège music professor at the Geneva Conservatory of music, Émile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1950) created a method of teaching music with the goal of an inner hearing and a kinesthetic understanding of musical concepts and movement. Jacques-Dalcroze's early influences included his mother, a Pestalozzian music teacher, who implemented new ways of developing children to their potential (Costanza & Russell, 1992). Dalcroze's method emulated the same philosophy as his mother's, developing his students' musicality in new ways to reach their potential. The methodology furthered musical expression and auditory understanding of rhythm and harmonies with eurhythmics, solfège, and improvisation. Jacques-Dalcroze believed that rhythm was a foundation that bound musical concepts together and was an expression of motion (Landis & Carder, 1972, p. 12).

Eurhythmics consists of movement exercises that develop a student's awareness of attention, relationship to music, others' relationships to music, and musical nuances (Labuta & Smith, 1997, p. 109). A successful implementation of the method allows the integration of "physical flexibility with musical ability" (Labuta & Smith, 1997, p. 109). Another principle of the methodology is that "time, space, and energy are interrelated as tempo, dynamics, and other elements are interrelated. By synchronizing his movements

with music as he hears it, the student experiences these interrelationships” (Landis & Carder, 1972, p. 14).

In 1915, Jacques-Dalcroze opened his first of many institutes in Geneva in which he continued to be involved until 1950. The integrated music system was brought to America in 1912; the first Dalcroze certification school started in New York City in 1915. The Dalcroze Society in America began in 1926 (Becknell, 1970). Jacques-Dalcroze’s writings in support of his method consist of essays, books, and compositions. Some of his publications include *Le rythme, la musique et l’éducation* and *Eurhythmics, Art and Education* (Comeau, 1995).

In examining research about the Dalcroze methodology and elementary general music experiences, little is found. Although not directly related to the elementary music teacher, areas of Dalcroze research highlight the adult learner and include the process of learning eurhythmics (Alperson, 1995; Stone, 1985). Stone (1985) observed a Dalcroze college class over two semesters. Teaching and learning behaviors were documented which involved teaching strategies that led to student internalization of music. Alperson (1995) observed four different Dalcroze teachers in intensive workshops that lasted between one and two weeks. Observations, teacher interviews, and student interviews described classes as being “spontaneous, student centered, and creative” (Alperson, p. 233). Creativity in class involved a teaching flow of different musical concepts. The documentation of the music teachers’ professional development utilizing Dalcroze opened the experiences and reactions of adult students to learning within a methodology.



**Kodály.** Hungarian composer, ethnomusicologist, and professor at the Academy of Music in Budapest, Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967) felt impassioned to change music education after witnessing the lack of aural skills, music literacy, and musical heritage knowledge in his students. His vision encouraged individuals in the Hungarian schools to create a methodology borrowed from different music techniques including Solfa, Chev  rhythmic symbols, Curwen hand signs inspired by a Pestalozzian process, and Jaques-Dalcroze solf ge approaches (Chosky et. al, 2001; Comeau, 1995).

The Kod ly methodology utilizes singing as a means to develop music literacy and to teach the appreciation of folk and art music. In addition, sequential processes in the methodology meet the developmental needs of children. Kod ly composed music to support his method and endorsed an interpretation of his method written by Erzs bet Sz nyi, *Methods of Sight Reading and Notation (Vols. I, II, and III)* (Comeau, 1995). The initiation of the method began in 1920 and eventually it became the state curriculum in the 1940's (Baumann, 2010). The method existed in the United States in the 1960's, with teacher institutes created later in that decade. The Organization of American Kod ly Educators began in 1975 (Baumann, 2010).

In investigating the experiences of teachers and the Kod ly methodology, there are two studies that explore professional development and elementary music teachers. Ferrell (2003) investigated the influence of Kod ly teacher educator, Katinka Daniel. Daniel contributed to the Kod ly organization nationally and she promoted the development of Kod ly in the United States. Her students, elementary music teachers, felt that her instruction helped change their teaching. Daniel's expectations, her example of being a successful teacher, and her generosity of spirit inspired music

teachers. Baumann (2010) conducted a case study of two Kodály teacher education programs in search of signature pedagogies from the perspective of teachers and a student focus group. Multidimensional paths of pedagogy in both settings occurred by way of “demonstration teaching, masterclass teaching, discovery learning, and music literature collection and retrieval system”<sup>3</sup> (Baumann, 2010, ABSTRACT). Insight by the participants in both studies illuminated the influence of Kodály had in professional development and delineated the experiences that resulted.

**Orff-Schulwerk.** German composer, Carl Orff (1895-1982), drew from his experience working with artists and musicians to form a methodology that explored the relationship between movement and music. Influenced by Jaques-Dalcroze and Rudolf von Laban, Orff founded a school, Güntherschule, with Dorothee Günther in 1924. Together Orff and Günther taught gymnastics, dance, and music; they encouraged composition and improvisation until World War II.

The Orff-Schulwerk methodology includes any combination of speech, movement, singing, and playing instruments. As a result, students explore, imitate, improvise, and create (Shamrock, 1995). Within this sequential developmental methodology, students participate in a variety of musical experiences before introduced to notation. For example, to supplement the classes at Güntherschule, Orff led the development of child-sized, pitched percussion for students to play while their classmates danced. Inspired by the Indonesian gamelan, “xylophones, metallophones, and glockenspiels were constructed from the finest materials in varying registers so that

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<sup>3</sup> A retrieval system was a catalog of lessons with folk songs sequenced by music concepts and grade levels.

in ensemble, their tones would complement each other well in quality and ranges” (Velásquez, 1990, p. 97).

Requested to write children’s music in 1948, Orff collaborated with a former student, Gunild Keetman, to produce *Music for Children*, a five volume music series produced through the mid 1950’s. In 1949, Keetman taught children at the Mozarteum in Salzburg using the materials she helped write. The Mozarteum became the Orff Institute in 1961. Through national and divisional MENC conferences between 1956 and 1962, Orff-Schulwerk was introduced to teachers in the United States. Classes in teacher education started as early as 1955; these classes developed into Orff teacher certification programs (Osterby, 1988). The American Orff-Schulwerk Association, originally named the Orff-Schulwerk Association, began in 1968. The Orff-Schulwerk methodology developed into a holistic approach to teaching movement, music, and instruments. The original volumes of *Music for Children* still inspire Orff-Schulwerk teacher education.

There is more research about general music teacher experiences in Orff-Schulwerk than in other methodologies. The scope comprises a study about an Orff-Schulwerk Levels course (Robbins, 1994), a description of an Orff elementary music classroom (Martin, 1993; Munsen, 1986), classroom activities (Beegle, 2001; Sogin & Wang, 2008), teacher/student interactions (Taylor, 2004, 2006; Wang & Sogin, 2004), beliefs about singing (Scott, 2010), and the study of a master teacher educator, Grace Nash (Orrell, 1995). Teacher interviews are a major component in these studies; the studies most descriptive of the experiences of elementary general music teachers are

those of Orff teachers in an Orff level's course (Robbins, 1994) and those whose descriptions have opinions about singing in the classroom (Scott, 2010).

Robbins (1994) met regularly with six teachers who kept journals for the first two years of an Orff Levels certification program at Eastman School of Music. Beginning questions included subjects of organization and pedagogy. Over time, the questions developed into an interpretative approach as the teachers searched for meaning in the implementation of Orff-Schulwerk. Confidence of the teachers grew as they developed a collaborative communication within the group. Scott (2010) interviewed eight Orff-Schulwerk teacher educators about their attitudes toward singing. Teachers adjusted singing lessons according to the ability level of their students. Teacher attitudes towards singing were shaped by family and college Orff-Schulwerk experiences. With stories and attitudes that came directly from practicing elementary general music teachers, both studies guided the readers to witness the teachers' experiences from their point of view.

**Suzuki.** Japanese violinist Shin'ichi Suzuki (1898-1998) believed that all students learned music in the same way they spoke language and that all had the potential to achieve musical excellence. The Suzuki method was coined the "Mother Tongue" method. Similar to learning a language, repetition and rote memorization are the processes in which students developed performance skills. Additional key elements include teaching children from a very young age, listening, group classes, individual classes and parental involvement (Labuta & Smith, 1997).

Created in Japan in 1945, the Suzuki methodology was introduced to the United States in 1964. Beginning as a means to teach the violin, the methodology branched out

to incorporate other instruments: “viola, cello, bass, piano, flute, harp, guitar and recorder” (Suzuki Association of the Americas, 1998). The Suzuki textbooks provide a base for the curriculum; however, a certified Suzuki teacher must implement them in order to be recognized as the Suzuki method (Costanza & Russell, 1992). Teacher training began in the United States in 1971 (Wilson, 2011). The Suzuki Association of the Americas commenced in 1972 (Suzuki Association of the Americas, n.d.).

Although research about Suzuki and elementary general music teachers does not exist, there are general lines of research that provide insight into the implementation of the methodology. These include a description of a teacher of the Suzuki methodology (Wilson, 2011), teacher/ student interactions (Colprit, 2000; Duke 1999), Suzuki schools (Miranda, 2000), and parental involvement (Zdzinski, 1992, 1996; O’Neil, 2003). In addition, another line of research addresses the influence of early instruction in the Suzuki methodology (Scott, 1992; Stamou, 1998). Research that applies to the experiences of elementary general music teachers is the descriptions of expert Suzuki teachers and how they interact with their students. There is a high proportion of teacher verbalization with an emphasis on positive feedback (Colprit, 2000; Duke 1999). In addition, the students are engaged actively in a fast pace of instruction. Wilson (2011) wrote the biography of one of the first Americans to study with Shin’ichi Suzuki, Margery Abner. Abner created the first Suzuki Institute in America which led to the development of over 70 Suzuki Institutes in America. Wilson examined trends in excellent teaching and focused on an individual teacher of the Suzuki methodology to study exemplary teachers in music education.

**Gordon.** Currently a Professor at University of South Carolina, Edwin E. Gordon (b. 1927), developed *music learning theory* which was influenced by educational psychology. In 1975, Gordon wrote *Learning Theory, Patterns, and Music* in which he introduced *music learning theory* (Gerhardstein, 2001). The theory is sequential and addresses the concept of audiation, an internalization of musical melodies without external help (Labuta & Smith, 1997). The intention of the methodology is to teach rote learning, to discriminate between different musical concepts, and to apply these concepts to new musical experiences. Teachers who implement the methodology and work with young children focus on developing audiation and musical experiences before introducing music notation or symbols.

Incorporated in 1987, the Gordon Institute for Music Learning provides workshops and teacher certification at several locations in the United States (Gerhardstein, 2001). Certification courses are available with a focus of early childhood, elementary general music, and instrumental music (Gordon Institute for Music Learning, n.d.). Gordon published many books and resources about *music learning theory* including a general music textbook series for K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade called *Jump Right In*.

There is no research about the professional development or experiences with the Gordon methodology regarding elementary general music teachers. Applicable research includes a content analysis of elementary general music texts and Gordon learning sequences (Byrd, 1989). When comparing Gordon's process of skill development, tonal and rhythm learning, and development of curriculum to three textbooks, Byrd found some similarities. However, when examining the scope and the

sequence of the textbooks, the curriculum did not resemble Gordon's learning processes. There are two researchers that explore audiation in elementary students. Krautus (1994) found that there was a positive correlation with audiation and children composing music. In the investigation of an audiation based improvisation process, Azzara (1993) discovered evidence leaning towards an improved understanding of music literacy. As a result, current literature about the Gordon methodology provides an introduction to *music learning theory* and how it can be applied to the elementary setting.

**Textbook.** Basal series textbooks were created to serve as a foundation for general music curriculums. Popular music textbooks include those published by Silver Burdett and McGraw-Hill. At times, the basal music series integrate music education methods such as Kodály or Orff-Schulwerk (Clemenz, 1990; Mason, 2008).

There is little research about the use and preference for the music education textbook in general music. The focus of literature concentrates on the content analysis of ethnicities represented (Culig, 2012, Curry, 1982; Mason, 2010; Schmidt, 1999), lesson objectives (Clementz, 1990), or the influence of a philosophy (Boothe, 1993; Byrd, 1989). One study describes the attitude of teachers regarding the use and the effectiveness of elementary music textbooks (McClellan, 1994). Results from the McClellan's survey revealed that the majority of the teachers used textbooks. A finding was that 75% of the teachers supplemented textbooks with other methodologies such as Orff, Kodály, or Dalcroze. In addition, teachers expressed that their planning time would increase if they did not have the basal series. Although the findings could not be

transferred, McClellan described teachers who expressed an opinion about methodologies which was a unique perspective in music education research.

### **Additional Areas of Research About Elementary General Music Teachers**

How do researchers describe the elementary general music teacher? To help answer this question, I will review techniques, methods, and strategies an elementary general music teacher might implement. The two most researched areas about elementary general music teachers address classroom activities and teacher expertise. The following review examines patterns found among these studies. The section concludes with qualitative research that highlights the voices of elementary general music teachers.

**Classroom Activities.** Research about the activities of elementary general music teachers in their classroom involves a variety of topics. Included are music activity reports (Price & Hardin, 1990; Wang & Sogin, 1997, 2008; Wagner & Strul, 1979), implementation of the National Standards (Byo, 1999; Orman, 2002), and influence of student behavior (Forsythe, 1977). For one study, elementary general music teachers reported various classroom activities. When detailing their activities, the teachers tended to overestimate the time spent in an activity than what was observed (Wang & Sogin, 1997). Also, teachers were inclined to talk for larger amounts of time than planned (Forsythe, 1977; Wang & Sogin, 1997; Orman, 2002). Wang & Sogin (2008) compared music classroom activities with the professional development experiences of elementary general music teachers. With more experience in formal Orff-Schulwerk training, teachers included more active music making (playing, creating, and moving) in their classrooms. One researcher found that an increase in



student involvement in activities in the classroom resulted in more *on task* behaviors (Forsythe, 1977). Other researchers discovered no difference in classroom activities when comparing teachers with and without Orff-Schulwerk teacher training (Price & Hardin, 1990). In contrasting use of teaching time between beginning teachers and experienced teachers, the more experienced teachers spent less time explaining directions (Wager & Strul, 1979). Experienced elementary general music teachers incorporated all nine National Standards for Music Education when teaching and spent less time allowing children to develop musical decision making skills (Orman, 2002). Time was the reason why experienced elementary music teachers did not explore the National Standards in depth (Byo, 1999).

**Expertise.** The research of expertise in music education is a popular subject. Research of the behavior of the expert music teacher includes topics of intensity and feedback (Duke, 1999, Juchniewicz, 2010). It is difficult to pinpoint the exact combination of behaviors of the effective teacher; however, three traits identified in music education research are “nonverbal communication, teacher self-efficacy, and servant leadership” (Steele, 2010, p. 71). Literature specific to exemplary elementary music teachers identify common characteristics (Anderson-Nickel, 1997, Eshelman, 1995, Hendel, 1995) which will be examined further later in this section.

There are common teaching gestures and patterns of instruction by exemplary elementary general music teachers. In a comprehensive study of behavior characteristics and instructional patterns of nine elementary general music teachers, Hendel (1995) used multiple forms of data: observations, tapes, interviews of teachers and students, and documents including lesson plans and curriculum maps. Her results

confirmed prior research about exemplary music teachers in the areas of teacher magnitude, teacher intensity, and teacher use of sequential patterns. The elementary teachers demonstrated high levels of intensity in teaching and the ability to change gestures, teaching patterns, and pace depending on the needs of the students. Each had instructional patterns that were succinct, that reviewed objectives of their lessons, and that gave clear feedback. Specifically, the elementary general music teacher included more diversified collections of instructional gestures. High intensity expressed by elementary general music teachers included using softer voices to gain attention of their students rather than louder voices and switching between neutral and positive facial expressions. High school conductors who were described as exemplary chose more often to increase voice volume and to demonstrate consistently positive facial expressions (p.194).

Often researchers compare the expertise of experienced music teachers with beginning music teachers or within a framework of instructional knowledge. Specific to elementary general music teachers, when contrasting six expert teachers to six beginning teachers in a mixed method study, Anderson-Nickel (1997) concluded differences in reflection, evaluation skills, selection of classroom information, efficiency of routines, and classroom management. The expert teachers were more adept in predicting and diagnosing student learning and expressed more confidence in diagnostic rather than prescriptive skills. In another study, instructional knowledge of four expert elementary teachers was compared to a model inspired by David Elliot's model of the Professional Music Educator. Using a webbing technique, Eshelman (1995) created a model reflective of exemplary elementary music teacher knowledge

and behaviors that included music fundamentals, skills, literature, curriculum, philosophy, and sensitivity to demonstrate their interactive relationships among their characteristics (p. 185). Although study of exemplary elementary general music teachers and their characteristics has begun, more research, including the examination of the attitudes of exemplary elementary music teachers, can help develop the story of the individual and the collective experiences of these music teachers.

**Voices of Elementary General Music Teachers.** By developing the voices of elementary general music teachers in research literature, their personal experiences become authentic through their descriptions. As more qualitative studies emphasize what elementary teachers are experiencing from their perspective, the collective experiences develop differentiation among teachers. Research literature that highlights the voice of the elementary general music teacher includes studies of teaching rationale (Flowers, 2011a; Robinson, 2010) and job reflection (Stanley, 2009, 2012; Wiggins & Bodoïn, 1998).

In studying teaching rationale through the voice of elementary general music teachers, there are implications for pre-service teacher education programs. Robinson (2010) questioned why instrumental majors chose to teach elementary general music classes. Seven of his former students participated in an email questionnaire. Trends in responses included the preference to work with a younger population, the dislike of competition in instrumental music, the influence of their career on life balance, and the limitations of an instrumental job (p. 33). The teachers in the group studied found that their personalities were not a fit for an instrumental job, and they had readjusted to find a career path better suited for their individual needs. Robinson stated that the opinions

of the teachers provided insight for music education programs in the area of career exploration and contributed awareness in the teachers' approach to instrumental competitions.

After being a professor of music education, Flowers (2011a) returned to the elementary general music classroom. In a narrative format, Flowers described her educational preparation, her teaching, and her unexpected layoff. Woven throughout her account were her memories as a beginning teacher and her thoughts from the perspective of a veteran teacher returning to teach in an elementary general music classroom. This resulted in Flowers viewing her pre-service music education program at the university in a different way. The experience rejuvenated her approach for teaching pre-service teachers which included building skills for the first years of teaching, developing subject competency, and imparting values which would help teachers overcome the influences of the economics and the politics of their individual job. By providing an account of both her beginning teacher self and her veteran teacher self, Flowers illustrated a picture of the initial teaching experience and described the veteran experiences of a teacher from the perspective of a professor.

Another mode of expression for elementary teachers in research is a reflection of their experiences with professional development. Stanley (2009, 2012) studied collaboration as a form of professional development. The researcher met with three elementary teachers seven times over a year to analyze and discuss videos of their teaching. Through sharing their experiences, the teachers became more confident. In analyzing teacher and student relations, the participants developed a vocabulary and

flow of discussion that led to a deeper understanding of collaboration, roles, and experiences in the general music classroom.

In another study, a focused account of the experience of one teacher helped her understand the importance of reflection in relation to her teaching. Wiggins and Bodoïn (1998) collaborated to share the learning experiences of second grade students and their teacher. The dialog with Bodoïn, an experienced teacher, and Wiggins, a professor, occurred throughout the study. Additional information was drawn from Wiggins's observations and the experience of two students. By sharing the teacher's classroom dialog, the students' comments, and the teacher's reflective statements, Wiggins and Bodoïn achieved authenticity by describing the insights into an experienced teacher's professional development. They concluded that the examination of a teacher's work could provide more meaning and growth for the experienced teacher. In addition, the narrative provided a biography of one elementary general music teacher. The following section explores how other disciplines use the biography of teachers to examine the life cycle of their profession and to develop the voice of the teachers.

### **Developing the Description of Elementary General Music Teachers**

Research about the life cycle of the teacher can lead to the development of the voice and the biography of elementary general music teachers. Goodson & Sikes (2001) claim that studying the lives of teachers contributes to the improvement of professional development and serves as a means of gathering more information from certain perspectives. The positive benefits include (a) knowledge gained from self-reflection, (b) space created for affirmation of career practices, (c) social factors learned that influenced school life, and (d) large picture issues re-examined so that teachers

would not be blamed for problems that were not their fault (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p.74). Researchers of teacher career life cycles propose that teachers experience similar patterns throughout their careers. Each model has separate theories in how these patterns (stages or phases) occur. The patterns unfold throughout the teachers' careers and define the career life cycle. Some music education researchers have begun to explore specific times in the life cycle of the music teacher. In order to create a better understanding of the elementary general music teacher at mid-career, the sequence of reviewed literature begins with three teacher career life cycle models. Emerging research of the life cycle in music education follows. Research literature pertinent to mid-career teachers sets the foundation for the description of the mid-career elementary general music teacher.

### **Mid-Career in Teacher Career Life Cycle Research**

Teacher career life cycle models provide ways to identify and to analyze different stages in a teacher's career. Each model has a different approach to interpreting the experiences of teachers. Teacher career life cycle models (Fessler and Christiansen, 1992; Huberman, 1993; Leithwood, 1992; Steffy, 1989; Steffy et al. 2000) have been introduced in music education literature (Eros, 2009, 2011, AB). Among the models, a perspective for educating principals exists (Leithwood, 1992). However, to depict the experiences of teachers for purposes of educating teachers, the theories of Steffy (1989), Fessler and Christiansen (1992), and Huberman (1993) are represented in this literature review. Because the purpose of my study is to explore the learning communities of exemplary mid-career elementary music teachers, each theory's

description includes relevant information in regard to the collaboration and socialization of exemplary teachers at mid-career.

To promote excellent teaching throughout the career of a teacher, the *Life Cycle of the Career Teacher* model provides criteria for success in six phases. Steffy (1989) and Steffy et al. (2000) acknowledge that teachers have to interact with their environment in order for growth to happen and have the ability to be exemplary within the first five years of teaching. Teachers develop at different rates within the phases of the framework: novice, apprentice, professional, expert, distinguished, and emeritus (Steffy et. al., 2000, p. 5). Flow among the phases accelerates with reflection and renewal or becomes obstructed with withdrawal (p. 4). Criteria for expert and distinguished teachers apply to exemplary mid-career teachers. According to the *Life Cycle of the Career Teacher* model, expert teachers have the qualifications of a National Board Certified teacher and hold leadership roles in different communities. Distinguished teachers demonstrate leadership in communities at the district, state, and national levels and exceed well above what is expected of them (p. 9).

External factors of a teacher's life influence one model of a teacher career cycle. Fessler and Christensen (1992) introduce an eight-phase model that allows teachers to move among all phases based on social system theories. Incorporated into the model are the external factors of personal environment and organizational environment which influence teachers' career cycles (p. 34). Listed personal environment variables include "family support structures, positive critical incidents, life crises, individual dispositions, avocational outlets (hobbies), and the (teachers') developmental life cycles" (p. 35). Organizational environments refer to aspects of schools and school systems that

influence teachers' careers such as regulations and management (p. 38-39). The eight phase teacher career cycle consists of preservice, induction, competency building, enthusiastic and growing, career frustration, stable and stagnant, career wind-down, and career exit (p. 27). The phase that applies to exemplary mid-career teachers is enthusiastic and growing. In order to support a teacher at this phase, the most important element in teacher development is leadership opportunities.

A study of 160 secondary schoolteachers in Geneva serves as foundation for Huberman's seven-phase teacher career cycle. Huberman (1993)'s theory is non-linear which supports "psychological and psycho-sociological frameworks" (p. 2). To encompass the multiple experiences of teachers, Huberman acknowledges that teachers encounter alternative paths at different times throughout the framework. The phases include (a) career entry, (b) stabilization, (c) experimentation and diversification, (d) reassessment, (e) serenity and relational distance, (f) conservatism and complaints, and (g) disengagement (p. 5-12). Huberman identifies factors that influence teachers' movement between the different phases of their career. These include (a) relationships with students, (b) different teaching environments, (c) gender, (d) pedagogical mastery, crisis, and (e) relationship with their institution (p. 251-260). As a part of his theory, Huberman develops the criteria for job satisfaction which he determines which is most common after the stabilization phase. A teacher experiences job satisfaction by possessing these characteristics:

- an enduring commitment to the profession after being appointed with tenure;



- ‘manageable’ classes, and where one can maintain good relations with pupils;
- good relationships with colleagues;
- a balance between school and home life/personal interests

(p. 249).

According to Huberman’s study, the stabilization phase is a time in which the teacher is most positive in both expression and attitude towards socialization that allows independence (p. 245). Exemplary mid-career teachers can be anywhere among the following stages: stabilization, experimentation and diversification, reassessment, serenity and relational distance.

Each teacher career life cycle brings a different interpretation of the professional life of teachers. Positive environmental factors and collegial collaborations play a part in the maintenance of a supportive environment for teachers in each model. The models did not specify how they adjust the interpretation of the teacher career cycle according to the grade level in which teachers taught. In fact, Huberman (1993) acknowledges a contrast in experience among teachers who taught different age levels (p. 253).

Because environmental factors play an important part in each model, there is a concern that the environment of the exemplary mid-career elementary general music teacher’s experience is too different than those outlined. Thus, teacher career life cycle literature is used as a reference and is not used as a definitive guide in this study.

### **Life Cycle Research in Music Education**

Although studying the life cycle of a teacher is not a new topic in music education, there is little research exploring the teacher career cycle of music educators

and their changing needs of professional development. However, some music education researchers recognize the need to study different stages in music teachers' careers (Bauer, 2007; Bauer, Forsythe, & Kinney, 2009; Bowles, 2003; Hookey, 2002). Conway (2008) began documentation of the differences of professional development needs in a music teacher career cycle. However, only a few researchers have studied stages in a music educator's life (Baker 2005a, 2005b; Eros, 2009, 2011, AB).

Professional development may provide sources of renewal and reflection to support music educators in a constantly changing environment. At the same time, music teachers require different types of support throughout their careers due to their diverse professional and personal experiences. Conway (2008) explored the differences in professional needs between thirteen mid-career music teachers and six veteran teachers. Based on a framework of teacher growth from Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch, & Enz (2000), Conway chose the categories of expert and distinguished teachers. According to the life cycle framework, teachers did not qualify for a growth category based on years of experience, but were eligible by demonstrating the characteristics of expert and distinguished teachers. Conway's criteria of expert and distinguished teachers showed that "Evidence of these characteristics included:

- had presented at the state music conference;
- had been a cooperating teacher for my institution or another teacher education institution in the state; and
- had regularly attended local and national music professional development events" (p.10).

In addition to interviewing the music teachers, Conway created a focus group of six veteran teachers. The music teachers taught different subjects at different levels (elementary, middle, high school) and in diverse settings (urban, rural, suburban). The years of teaching experience of mid-career teachers were in the range of five to eleven years and the years of teaching experience of veteran teachers were sixteen or more years.

Conway found that the most meaningful form of professional development was informal interactions with other music teachers. Both mid-career teachers and veteran teachers expressed some concerns about the application of non-music district professional development, but they still found value from the experience. Also, both groups recognized that learning from their students and student teachers was important to their career growth. Both the mid-career teachers and veteran teachers had different views about their long range, professional development. The mid-career music teachers felt that they were proactive in finding suitable professional development and they saw a larger perspective of teaching through professional development. Veteran teachers viewed professional development as a new way to develop their career by presenting at conferences or by consulting. In addition, veteran teachers acknowledged that they learned from everyone in their teacher community. Conway (2008) concluded that the professional needs of music educators might have changed over their life cycle and recommended that more research be conducted to develop theories and practices of professional development for music educators. Steffy et al. (2000) described similar experiences in studying the growth cycle of teachers and their professional development.

In England, Baker (2005a, 2005b) collected life histories of peripatetic mid-career music teachers and music teachers of all age ranges. With the traveling mid-career teachers, Baker defined the group by age range from 36 to 42 years old and identified a critical point that occurred during that time which led to a renewal of self-identity. As a result, Baker suggested a professional development program for renewal and rejuvenation which celebrated the benefit of pedagogical knowledge. In conclusion, Baker stated using the teacher life cycle as a framework for studying music teachers involved in a process of reflection and a method of action in solving career issues.

A case study about music educators during their second stage of teaching provided insight into the problems associated at a specific time in their career cycle. Eros (2009, 2011, AB) defined the second stage teacher as one who had taught more than five years, but was yet to be an “expert” teacher according to the Steffy et al. teacher growth cycle. The second stage teacher, or “professional” teacher, was represented by sharing “a range of a number of years’ teaching experience, an increase in self-confidence, a shift from self-focus to student focus, and an interest in greater pedagogical mastery” (Eros, 2011, p. 66). Eros (2009, AB) studied three urban music educators to examine the issues of teachers during their second stage of teaching in an urban setting and how they perceived their career development. The participants were an elementary general music teacher, a middle school strings and band teacher, and a high school band and music appreciation teacher. Eros found common themes among these teachers that included an acknowledgement of being in a different stage of their career and needing professional development that would support them. These teachers

experienced a change in confidence, but they were uncertain about their future in education and expressed the possibility of leaving the field of education. An infrequent theme among the teachers discovered by Eros was that the teachers had different views of themselves during the second stage of their careers.

### **Professional Development Needs of Experienced Music Teachers**

A previous literature review of experienced music educators identifies common themes within the topic: professional development needs, effectiveness, experiences, and practices (Bauer, 2007). Concerning experienced music teachers, there is not a clear picture of the professional development needs of specific types of music teachers and their levels of expertise. Thus, it is difficult to determine how the professional needs of elementary, middle school, and high school music teachers vary at different times in their career. By examining the professional development choices of music teachers, insight can be gained in the development of the life stories of music educators.

One line of research examines the professional development and needs of music educators (Bauer, Forsythe, & Kinney, 2009; Bowles, 2003; Bush, 2007; Conway, 2008; Tarnowski, & Murphy, 2003). Surveys conducted within one state explored the types of professional development needs for different types of teachers (Bauer, Forsythe, & Kinney, 2009; Bowles, 2003; Bush, 2007). Bauer, Forsythe, & Kinney (2009) found that general music teachers' topics of interest were much different from the topics of interest in choral, band, and strings educators. In addition, there was a clear difference of interest in topics between experienced teachers and new music teachers. Implications from the study included that career interests evolved over time and that sustained professional development had more impact.

Some information about mid-career elementary music educators can be extracted from studies that group different levels of experienced music educators together. Bowles (2003) surveyed members from a state music association and found that they preferred summer workshops with multiple days and that they favored professional development sponsored by a university. The members of the state music association chose technology and assessment as topics of choice. However, the general music teachers of that group preferred the topic of general music first. Bowles concluded that more study should address the changing needs of educators throughout their career. Lastly, Bush (2007) discovered through a survey of Arizona music teachers that they preferred internet resources and did not like district sponsored non-music professional development. He suggested future research in professional development for different experience levels of music teachers.

In music education literature regarding the experienced teacher, some studies address information about the exemplary mid-career elementary music teacher. Tarnowski, & Murphy (2003) studied elementary music educators who were music association members in Minnesota and Wisconsin to examine teacher retention and professional development practices. They found that 97% of the respondents were involved in professional development. These music educators expressed future interests in the Orff approach, technology, assessment, and music standards. A large majority reported that they were satisfied with their teaching career. Conclusions by the authors emphasized the importance of professional development in teacher retention and in the need for revitalization during the careers of elementary general music teachers. Conway (2008) interviewed expert music teachers at mid-career and

end of career. Although all types of music education teachers were represented, common themes were found among teachers with similar experience levels. Mid-career teachers felt they must be proactive in searching for professional development. Veteran teachers had a different view of professional development; they saw it as an opportunity to grow in a new way by presenting at a conference or teaching a methods course.

In summary, studies of the exemplary elementary music educator are intertwined with the studies of experienced music educators. While there is some study of elementary teachers and some studies of music teachers with different levels of experience, current research does not provide a full picture of the exemplary mid-career elementary general music teacher. However, music education researchers acknowledge that there is a need for more detailed study of specific types of music teachers at different times in their careers.

### **Learning Community as Professional Development**

One avenue less researched is the impact of the learning community in music education. A learning community is defined as informal or formal practices in which educators created community while at the same time learning from one another. As previously mentioned, according to the Steffy et al. (2000) teacher growth model, an “expert” teacher participates in a learning community. Could it be the same for the music educator? If so, what would the learning community look like for an elementary music educator? Next, research in general education and music education with an emphasis in theories related to learning communities is reviewed to lay a foundation for this study.

## **Communities of Practice Framework**

Based on a social theory of learning, communities of practice stems from a conceptual framework in the field of cognitive anthropology. Inspired by situated cognition theories<sup>4</sup>, Wenger has created the concept of the communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999). In studying a community of learning, the layers of interaction, learning, and knowing become more complex. Etienne Wenger writes the following about communities of practice:

Over time, this collective learning result(s) in practices that reflect both the pursuit of our enterprises and the attendant social relations. These practices are the property of a kind of community created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise (Wenger, 1999, p.45).

From the perspective of studying a social learning system, characteristics examined in communities of practice include the boundaries that they create and the changes in personal identity that result in group participation (Wenger, 2000a). Key points applicable to this study include concepts of belonging, learning, and identity in a community of practice.

In the communities of practice, dimensions of involvement include modes of belonging and occurrences of the types of participation. Modes of belonging consist of engagement, imagination, and alignment (Wenger, 2003, p. 78). Engagement is the interaction among members of the group, whereas imagination is the process of individuals realizing connections among themselves, the community, and other environments. The reflection process and the transfer of information spark the

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<sup>4</sup>Situated cognition includes the development of the apprentice and the influence of learning in specific environments.



imagination and the mode of belonging. Alignment is the guidance associated with learning to fit within other life experiences to maximize benefits for an individual. The negotiation among experiences allows an individual to learn as a result of interaction. This interaction influences both the social learning system and the identity of the participant (p. 79).

There are different levels of participation in a learning community that vary the experience of an individual. The levels of participation are core group, full membership, peripheral participation, transitional participation, and passive access (Wenger, 2000, p.219). The concentration of participation depends on the intrinsic goals of the community. Wenger states “The most successful communities of practice thrive at the intersection between the needs of an organization and the passion and interest of participants” (Wenger, 2000, p. 220).

Learning occurs as a result of the tension between social competence and personal experience. There is an interaction between what the community becomes to represent over time to both members and nonmembers and what the experience of the individual is as a member (Wenger, 2000, p. 78). Learning takes place both by the individual member and by the members collectively. Knowledge nurtures understanding of the community and the accountability in joint enterprise (p. 80). Wenger suggests viewing progress of a growing community of practice by “enterprise: the level of learning energy..., mutuality: the depth of social capital..., and repertoire: the degree of self-awareness” (p. 81). Thus, the experience of the individual is acknowledged in multiple, multifaceted ways. In examining the modes of belonging, the levels of participation, and the nuances in progress of a growing community, the

analysis reveals the complexities of both the community and the individual members. Because there are many nuances that influence the learning experiences of the group and the individual, this complexity reveals the diversity of members' experiences, interactions, and learning applications within their communities of practice.

Wenger believes that understanding identity within a social system is an important component to understanding an individual within a group experience in communities of practice. To illustrate, he creates criteria that serves as an example of a healthy identity: connectedness, expansiveness, and effectiveness (p. 92). Then Wenger applies the criteria to the modes of belonging (engagement, imagination, and alignment) to create a healthy identity dimension. An example of the transfer to engagement includes questioning how connected individuals are within their group, what the variety of connections are within a group, and what happened as a result of the individual's exchanges within the group (p. 93).

In acknowledging the circumstances and the layers of the individual and collective experiences within a group, many dimensions of communities of practice is revealed. Considerations in modes of belonging, membership practices, how learning takes place, and how learning is evaluated are key parts to the foundation of the theory. The theory of community of practice continues to be developed and to be adopted by other disciplines.

### **Teacher Education Research of Learning Communities**

With the introduction of situated cognition among disciplines in the 1990's, there was a shift in how some education researchers viewed the impact of educational communities (Roth & Lee, 2006; Westheimer, 2008). In addition to Lave & Wenger's

theories in situated cognition, education researchers became inspired by others who examined the influence of environments in knowledge development such as Bruner, Gardner, and Vygotsky (Westheimer, 2008). Some research supports a positive influence of learning communities in the areas of reform, student achievement, and professional development (Westheimer, 2008). Since the 1990's, there are mixed opinions in how to define communities in education and how to evaluate the effectiveness of professional learning communities. However, researchers still call for more study of professional learning communities in education (Borko, 2004; Stein, 1999; Westheimer, 2008).

Education researchers debate the definition of the learning community (Grossman, 2001; Van Driel & Berry, 2012). Documented characteristics of the learning community in education are "shared values and vision, collective responsibility, reflective professional inquiry, collaboration," and promotion of group and collective learning (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2007, p. 226-227). In their research of learning community traits in education, Stoll et al. (2007) "confirm these five characteristics, also identifying three others:

- mutual trust, respect and support among staff members;
- inclusive membership – the community extending beyond teachers and school leaders to support staff, and it being a school-wide community rather than consisting of smaller groups of staff;
- openness, networks and partnerships – looking beyond the school for sources of learning and ideas" (p. 227).

This study addresses one approach to interpreting learning communities in education. Not all education researchers agree. There is concern that the themes in interpreting learning communities are too broad. Additional challenges in determining characteristics of learning communities include the complexity of differences within the communities and the different opinions of interpretation and evaluation of the communities.

Some research literature includes the concerns of evaluating the performance of a learning community. Besides the difficulty in defining a learning community, not all learning communities are considered effective (Westheimer, 2008; Van Driel & Berry, 2012). Because the needs for unlike communities are different, researchers have a difficult time generalizing specific efficacy. There is a trend in education for efficacy and accountability; thus, without research to support the efficacy of a learning community, education researchers have difficulty providing documentation to justify the learning community as a productive form of professional development (Roth & Lee, 2005). Along the same line of reasoning, ethnographic studies about learning communities depict positive views, but there is a question as to if these descriptions have value (Westheimer, 2008).

Continued support in using learning communities for professional development requires goals from people who value learning communities in education. Goals that Westheimer (2008) cite are to:

- Improve teacher practice so students will learn.
- Make ideas matter to both teachers and students by creating a culture of intellectual inquiry.

- Develop teacher learning about leadership and school management.
- Promote teacher learning among novice teachers.
- Reduce alienation as a precondition for teacher learning.
- Pursue social justice and democracy (p. 759).

Additional areas in education literature include the support of teacher resources in learning communities (Little, 2002). Both leadership (Darling-Hammond, 1995) and teacher talk (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Lieberman & Mace, 2009; Richmond & Manohare, 2010) have been identified as forms of learning in communities. Furthermore, the learning community potentially provides sustaining, differentiated instruction for teachers at various stages within their career (Borko, 2004). Some studies identify the learning community as a link to school improvement and student achievement (Westheimer, 2008). However, there is little research on the impact of a learning community and its influence on teaching and student learning. Some researchers suggest procedural documentation to record learning community improvement (Vesco, Ross, Adams, 2008).

The complexities of definitions, differing opinions, and diversity of communities prevent definitive descriptions, evaluations, and efficacy in the study of learning communities. Despite the challenges, there continues to be interest in the sustainability of the learning community as professional development in education. In addition, there are educators who acknowledge that the learning community is a new area of study and is still at the point of establishing itself in the field of education research (Westheimer, 2008).

## **The Learning Community in Music Education**

Few researchers have studied music education professional learning communities. Stanley (2009, 2012) examined elementary general music teachers in a collaborative study group that demonstrated how collaboration could change a teacher's practice. For a year, she facilitated a professional development group of three elementary music educators and observed how their interactions influenced their perceptions. The study implicated that the creation of a non-hierarchical community facilitated new knowledge. She identified principles of collaboration in a music education community which addressed the facilitation towards students' self-expression, independence, shared goals, and a path to accomplishing the shared goals (Stanley, 2009, ABSTRACT). In addition, Stanley suggested these principles might be transferred to another music education setting; the data showed promise for future study.

Another example of the study of a professional learning community is by Gruenhagen (2008). She facilitated a professional development collaborative conversation group with pre-school music educators and documented their feedback. The music teachers felt their experience resulted in meaningful growth individually and as a group; both experiences led to changes in their teaching practices. Additional benefits of the professional learning community of music educators documented by the study were an increase in differentiated learning, an increase in addressing relevant issues, feeling less isolated, and an increase of confidence. Both studies acknowledged the lack of learning community research literature and demonstrated a need for more study.

## Chapter Summary

The literature review reveals a current depiction of the mid-career elementary general music teacher. Because there is little research specific to this group of teachers, information is gleaned from the activities in which they participated. Methodology that influences music education in the United States is described and research literature pertinent to elementary general music teachers using methodology is discussed. Results of the review demonstrate that research literature about elementary general music teachers emphasize classroom activities and expertise. Little research illuminating the voice of the elementary general music teachers exists.

Examining trends in teachers' experiences at different stages of their careers begins to develop the biography of the elementary general music teacher. In music education, few researchers study the specific needs of the mid-career teacher. More researchers study experienced teachers as a whole group. In music education, mid-career teachers are characterized as those who search for professional development (Conaway, 2008; Steffy, 2000). There is support in highlighting the individuality of the music teachers' voices in relation to professional development (Bauer & Moehle, 2008; Bowles, 2003; Conway & Holcomb, 2008; Conway, 2008). In general, education life cycle literature, environmental factors, and collegial collaboration influence the development of a teacher. In addition, the study of teacher career stages is a new field of research in music education.

The development of the learning community is another new area of research in general teacher education and in music education. Issues concerning definitions, general characteristics, evaluation, and efficacy impede the development of this

research. However, there continues to be interest in the expansion of community as sustainable, varied professional development for teachers. The phases of music teachers' careers can become a foundation upon which to develop new conversations in research about the expansion of the learning community for elementary general music teachers.



### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

By studying the learning communities of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers, I sought to initiate a research conversation about their community and professional development. The literature review emphasized that situational experiences greatly influenced the career cycle of a teacher (Butt et al., 1992, Fessler and Christiansen, 1992; Huberman, 1993; Steffy, 1989). Previous models had not addressed the study of the elementary teacher or the unique experience of the elementary general music teacher. Huberman (1993) acknowledged a difference between teachers who taught middle school students and high school students. Finally, education researchers struggled with definitive descriptions, with evaluations, and with determinations of efficacy concerning learning communities (Westheimer, 2008). Because there was not a framework specific to the criteria of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers and their learning communities, theories outside of music education research influenced interpretations of this study, but did not serve as a definitive guide.

Because teachers' environments influenced their experiences, the philosophic approach to education and experience by John Dewey provided a foundation for this study. There must be intention within a learning experience and value synthesized in order for thoughtful learning to take place (Dewey, 1938/1998). In addition, teacher

career life cycles theories by Steffy et al. (2000) and communities of practice theories by Wenger (1999) were influential. However, these theories did not serve as a sole means of interpretation. Patterns of meaning emerged naturally from participants in the analysis of the data provided by the teachers. Differences were described to demonstrate the diversity of experiences teachers had both as individuals and as members of their learning communities. In addition, descriptions revealed values that expressed the influence of teachers' interactions with their learning communities and their teaching.

A thorough description emerged from the multiple experiences and settings of teachers. An interview, a pre-interview descriptive survey, an observation of the classroom without students, and documentation of the teachers' learning communities illustrated the various contexts in which mid-career exemplary music teachers interacted and learned from their communities. A triangulation of data established greater detail of teachers' experiences within their learning communities. As a result, patterns of meaning from the teachers' stories emerged naturally which developed the individual and the collective voices of the exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers who participated. In addition, this study extended descriptive music education research literature in the areas of learning communities, mid-career exemplary teachers, and elementary general music specialists.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of the study was to provide a thorough description of the learning communities of mid-career exemplary elementary music teachers. The intention was to identify characteristics of learning communities and meaningful experiences that

resulted from participation in those learning communities in order to examine how they influenced music teacher development, attitudes, and longevity. The research questions were:

- What are the characteristics of the learning communities of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers?
- What meaningful experiences do exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers describe as a result of their participation in a learning community?
- How do they think their meaningful experiences transfer to their teaching practice and to their student learning outcomes?

### **Pilot Testing**

#### **Pre-Interview Descriptive Survey**

A descriptive survey was designed to provide additional background information about music teachers' education, work experiences, pedagogical experiences, professional associations, curriculum priorities, and level of involvement in learning communities (Appendix C). The pre-interview survey introduced the concept of the learning community to the teachers and allowed them to prepare for the interview describing their experiences with learning communities. The goal was to triangulate data provided by the pre-interview study, the interview, the field notes about their classroom without students, and the documents detailing the teachers' learning communities.

Once the study was approved by the Institutional Review Board in November, 2011, six elementary music teachers who either did not hold current positions as full-

time public school elementary general music teachers or were veteran elementary general music teachers were asked to review the pre-interview descriptive survey for clarity. Teachers filled out the form but did not send it to the researcher. Upon completion, teachers emailed answers to four questions that addressed (a) the time it took to fill out the form, (b) the reasons for the lack of clarity, (c) the parts not understood, and (d) suggestions for improving the survey. Five teachers responded with suggestions for the form. The suggestions were implemented and then were sent back to the same five music teachers for review. Separate email conversations occurred between the researcher and the teachers until everyone's concerns for clarity were met. Some conversations lasted longer than others. The teachers who had the most comments during the review process helped devise the rough draft of the pre-interview survey. An updated rough draft was sent to three of the teachers who had not seen the latest version. Their suggestions were added to form the final draft. At this time, a new sixth music teacher and one of the teachers who had not seen the final draft were asked to review the form. Their comments were reviewed and implemented to create the document that was used for this study.

### **Cross Check**

A separate pilot study occurred to determine a method of cross checking the analysis of interviews. The first pilot interview occurred with a retired elementary general music teacher in December 2011. Next, the interview was coded using HyperTRANSCRIBE. The codes used were pre-set codes determined from research literature and new codes determined by the themes found in the interview. A coding agreement was written listing the types of codes, operational definitions of the codes,

and general directions for reviewing the interview. Two individuals outside of the discipline of music education coded the interview using the coding agreement as a guide. If they identified other themes in the interview not listed in the agreement, they created additional codes. Using a computer program for qualitative research, HyperRESEARCH, a coding book was created, and a documentation of each cross checker's codes was stored. The coding agreement was revised based on input and clarification of codes throughout the pilot study. Initial codes were categorized into learning community descriptions (LC DALCROZE, LC KODÁLY, LC NAFME, LC (State Abbreviation)EA, LC (State Abbreviation)MEA, LC ORFF, LC PERFORMING GROUP, LC PRIVATE LESSONS, LC RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION), learning community experiences (COLLABORATION, LC PARTICIPATION, MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES and SUPPORT), and transfer of learning community experiences (JOB SATISFACTION, PERSONAL GROWTH, VALUE STATEMENTS, and OUTCOMES). The number of codes in the agreement divided by the number of codes identified determined an agreement rate. The results averaged a yield of 46% agreement using a stringent classification system.

Due to the low inter-agreement rating, a new pilot interview occurred with a mid-career elementary general music teacher who taught in a private school and an additional contributor who was an expert in music education research. The final codes consisted of learning community descriptions (LC DALCROZE, LC KODÁLY, LC NAFME, LC (State Abbreviation)EA, LC (State Abbreviation)MEA, LC ORFF, LC PERFORMING GROUP, LC PRIVATE LESSONS, LC RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION), learning community practices (DESCRIBING, ENGAGING, INSPIRING,

REFLECTING), and transfer of learning community experiences (OUTCOMES).

Results from the second run of the pilot study determined that the four coders could not agree at the suggested 80% accuracy for a cross check (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 64).

In the third step of the cross check pilot, four coders received extended passages to exemplify each description of the coding system and a final revision of definitions based on their input. The results yielded a low inter-agreement rate because the coders could not agree on the themes of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers and their learning communities when given sentence level descriptors. The finding was consistent with studies in teacher education addressing learning communities. With the diversity of learning communities and differing definitions and opinions, teacher education researchers have struggled with definitive descriptions, evaluations, and efficacy (Westheimer, 2008).

### **Peer Review**

Since sentence level themes could not be determined in the interviews of exemplary mid-career general music teachers, I implemented a new process using a peer review. First, I identified broad themes. Next, operational definitions of themes, instructions, and random sample interviews representing each Primary Learning Community (Orff-Schulwerk, Kodály, District Elementary General Music Teacher, Building, and Other Learning Communities) were sent to a music education expert. The peer reviewer checked the coding of the four interviews. Questions, conversations, and discussions emerged between the researcher and the peer reviewer who eventually

validated four broad themes across the interviews: (a) Multiple Learning Communities, (b) Membership Rationale, (c) Job Satisfaction, and (d) Professional Development.

### **Recruitment**

After IRB approval of this study, Ohio State music education faculty and two veteran expert Ohio teachers suggested potential participants. Upon clarity of the pre-interview descriptive survey in early January 2012, the researcher contacted possible participants through phone, email, or by letter (Appendix A.1-A.6). The selection of music teachers was based on a criterion approach with elements characteristic of a snowball sample. Music teachers who agreed to be participants were asked if they could recommend other exemplary mid-career music educators as participants. Ohio teachers who met the criteria and had the interest and the time to become involved in the study became participants. Recruitment continued throughout the period of data collection and concluded by the beginning of April 2012. At the conclusion of the initial contact, I told teachers that they could leave the study at any time.

Once music teachers agreed to become participants, the 35-minute interviews were scheduled. Packets were sent to the teachers' schools; each included a letter, a pre-interview survey, and a consent form (Appendix B, Appendix C, Appendix D). The letters confirmed the dates of the interviews and gave instructions for the pre-interview surveys. The survey could take 25 minutes and they could skip any questions in the survey they did not want to answer. Both the consent forms and pre-interview surveys were to be collected upon our meeting for the interview. Teachers could opt to have the interview at their school or at another location of their choice. The interviews took place during their planning time, their lunchtime, before school, or after school.

Twenty-three teachers agreed to be interviewed at their school. If time was available, I scheduled an additional 30 minutes for classroom observation without students to study connections between their curriculum and their learning communities. Twenty-three teachers allocated time for an observation of their classroom.

### **Meeting with Teachers**

At the beginning of the interview, the consent form was reviewed and signed by both the teacher and myself. The participants could decline to answer any of the questions during the structured interview. In addition, teachers could stop the interview at any point. Permission was granted by each teacher to record the interview prior to its beginning. The interview consisted of twelve semi-structured interview questions formed with the aim of examining the learning communities of exemplary music educators in depth (Appendix E). Questions ranged from describing learning community participation to examining the impact of the learning community on the teacher. Interviews took between 17 and 90 minutes. Depending on the situation, a follow-up interview was scheduled either immediately after the completion of the interview or when a question transpired upon the review of an interview.

At the conclusion of the interview, the teacher was asked to return the pre-interview survey. At the end of the pre-interview survey, there was a question asking if the teacher would provide a document that demonstrated an integration of their learning community into their classroom or contributed to their personal growth. If the teacher chose to share examples, they were collected at this time. Examples included musical programs, professional development handouts from workshops, curriculum maps, and



lesson plans. The aim was to examine how the learning community had impacted their work environment.

If the participants had time in their schedule, a 30-minute observation of their classroom without students took place. The observations happened during the same visit as the interviews or was scheduled for another time. Descriptive field notes of the classrooms allowed examination of any connections between the teacher's curriculum and learning communities. In addition, the field notes provided more information to support the participants' perspectives of learning communities and their teaching.

After the visit to the schools, interviews were transcribed. The interview, pre-interview survey, observation, and personal documents were considered confidential. Information that identified a participant such as names and school districts were not revealed in the data and were referred to in the form of a letter coding system. Following transcription of each interview, the researcher retained the transcripts and deleted the digital recordings. All data were coded and were stored on external drives and paper copies. All data remained secure, locked in a cabinet behind two locked doors.

### **Background of the Teachers**

Twenty-five exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers participated in the interview process. Twenty-four remained in the study; one participant's years in elementary general music met the criteria; however, the total years of the participant's teaching exceeded nineteen years. The number of interviewees in this study was inspired by Kvale & Brinkman (2009) and Creswell (2009). But data from the interviewees was from different contexts, widening the possibility of

identifying themes and patterns in how the elementary music educators described learning communities.

Exemplary elementary music teachers were those who had been observed as excellent teachers by professors and expert teachers. Some of the qualities were: commitment, subject knowledge, responsibility for student learning, systematic reflection, and learning community participation (Bray, Kramer, & LePage, 2000, p. 78). For the purposes of this study, the definition of an exemplary teacher was that she or he exhibited all the qualities of a National Board Certified teacher, but may not have had the certification. Also, the teacher performed above and beyond the requirements of her or his job description (adapted from Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch, & Enz, 2000).

The definition of mid-career teachers was based on prior research in music education about the life cycle of music educators (Conway, 2008; Eros, 2009, AB) and general educators (Huberman, 1993; Fessler and Christiansen, 1992; Steffy et al. 2000). A mid-career teacher was a teacher who had completed half of her or his career. For the purposes of this study and to accommodate varied career cycle lengths, the range of the participants' years of teaching experience was from eight to nineteen years.

Information from both the pre-interview survey and the state reported economic status of disadvantaged students by building for the 2010-2011 school year assisted in providing a description of the 24 exemplary mid-career elementary teachers and their settings. Twenty-three women and one man participated in this study. On the average, the teachers taught 13 years at three different schools. More specifically, 19 out of the 24 teachers taught at a previous school prior to their current job. Of the 24 teachers included in this study, 22 teachers had obtained a master's degree (88%) and 12

teachers had achieved tenure in their school district (50%). Only three teachers reported that they held National Board Certification (13%).

Primary Learning Communities and Secondary Learning Communities of the general music teachers were determined through content analysis of interviews, pre-interview descriptive surveys, classroom observations without students, and documents. In addition, direct comments and meaningful experiences that contributed to determining the teachers' learning communities were included. The Primary Learning Community membership among the elementary general music teachers included eight in Orff-Schulwerk Learning Communities (33%), three in Kodály Learning Communities (12%), five in District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Communities (21%), three in Building Learning Communities (12%), and five in Other Learning Communities (21%). All teachers possessed a Secondary Learning Community focus and some teachers had more than one. The Secondary Learning Community members consisted of three in Orff-Schulwerk Learning Communities, eight in Kodály Learning Communities, seven in District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Communities, four in Building Learning Communities, and nine in Other Learning Communities. A more detailed narrative description of the teachers and their communities will be described and will be explored in Chapter 4.

During the time of the study, two teachers taught at two different elementary schools. Thus, the setting of the elementary general music teachers included 26 elementary schools, even though I visited 24 schools. The intent was to describe the environment of the teachers' experiences relying on their interviews, field notes, and data reported to the state for the 2010-2011 school year. The elementary schools'

settings included 15 suburban (58%), nine rural (34%), and two urban (8%). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in 2009-2010, the state's public school districts exist in 724 locales: rural (47%), town (19.3%), suburban (29.4%), and urban (4.3%) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). Thus, this study slightly underrepresents rural school districts, overrepresents suburban school districts, and underrepresents town school districts. In the composite of the elementary school population, the makeup of economically disadvantaged students ranged from under 5% to 100% of the students with an average of 31% across all 26 elementary school buildings. The state reported five of the 26 schools with 50% or more economically disadvantaged students and five schools with less than 10%. The hope was to have a proportional representation of suburban, rural, and urban schools. But the study was limited by its criteria and by those who volunteered, so there was not a control in place for the setting in which the teachers worked.

### **Trustworthiness and Reliability**

Several steps were taken to establish reliability and trustworthiness. First, the study was not meant to generalize about other people or situations. Instead, the intent was to shed light in understanding the specific learning communities of the exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers who chose to participate in this study. Secondly, the following procedures established consistency and reliability within the study: triangulation of data, use of rich description, member checks, code comparisons, and explanation of research bias.

The interview, classroom observation, relevant documents, and the pre-interview survey formed multiple pieces of evidence in the development of themes.

The varied data assisted in the trustworthiness and the reliability of the study, enabled triangulation, and provided for rich description. In accordance with Patton's approach to triangulation, multiple data provided more perspective into how teachers described and demonstrated their experience with learning communities (Patton, 2002, p. 248). Furthermore, additional data allowed a thorough description of the learning communities of exemplary general music teachers. The process took account of multiple points of view and descriptions that led to a realistic and valid study.

Member checking and cross checking procedures established accuracy in the study. First, teachers reviewed their transcripts and returned corrected copies to the me with a preaddressed stamped envelope which they had been provided. If the teacher did not return a corrected copy, the conclusion was that the transcription was accurate. If further clarification was needed, a follow-up interview was scheduled for 30 minutes. Secondly, two pilot studies were held to cross check codes to ensure reliability. A third pilot study involved peer debriefing in which an expert music educator asked questions and discussed broad themes with me concerning randomly selected interviews from each learning community focus: Orff-Schulwerk, Kodály, District Elementary General Music Teacher, and Other. The peer debriefing produced four broad themes: (a) Multiple Learning Communities, (b) Membership Rationale, (c) Job Satisfaction, and (d) Professional Development. The process of reviewing added validity to the study (Creswell, 2009, p. 192).

Finally, because I was a mid-career, elementary general music teacher who participated in some of the learning communities in which I studied, I was forthcoming about my own experiences. These experiences helped shape my value in the

importance of learning communities as a means of professional development. I recognized that what might work for me may not work for others. Thus, I attempted to represent all my perspectives fairly while disclosing my own experiences and revealing how these experiences shaped my perspective. My continuous reflection and self-awareness when examining participants' experiences helped create transparency and aided in deterring bias within this study. Patton (2002) stated that this process results in an authentic portrayal of the experience of participants (p. 14).

### **Content Analysis**

Several procedures were put in place to represent a thorough, authentic portrayal of the exemplary mid-career elementary music teachers in this study. Information from the interviews, pre-interview surveys, classroom observations, and documents from the teacher participants were filtered into individual profiles grouped by Primary Learning Community emphasis: Orff-Schulwerk, Kodály, District Elementary General Music Teacher, Building, and Other Learning Communities. The teachers' identification of meaningful experiences, curriculum influences, and participation levels determined their Primary Learning Community. The pre-interview survey and the interview questions served as a framework for data organization.

Throughout the process of the study, I kept a journal of memos, analytic questions, and reflections about the data as suggested by Creswell (2009) (p. 184). A major component of the study was how the participant profiles were organized. The framework of the profile consisted of the questions from the pre-interview survey and the interview. In addition, I created additional questions to be included in the framework to further develop descriptions of the participants and their experiences. At

the end of each profile, quotations were selected from the interview that described the teacher's Primary Learning Community and her or his meaningful experiences. Abbreviated notes were taken from the pre-interview survey, interview, classroom observation without students, and documentation the teachers provided. The notes were inserted into the profile framework. Profiles were arranged alphabetically by the teachers' pseudonyms and were grouped by the teachers' learning community emphasis. To view the same data within the Primary Learning Community in a different way, the abbreviated notes from each profile were extracted and placed into the framework. This resulted in seeing all of the abbreviated notes from participants of a specific learning community by category in the profile framework and enabling the researcher to locate patterns and similarities among teachers who identified the same Primary Learning Community.

There were two approaches used in reporting the data. First, participants were described in relation to specific settings. Next, participants' varied experiences of learning communities were examined. Because the point of the study was to explore and to describe the teachers' experiences, it was appropriate to group similar themes observed to determine characteristics of the experiences of teachers and their learning communities. Patton (2002) supported this method; he charted options for organizing and reporting qualitative data. This study used elements from three concepts of Patton's. Under Case-Study Approaches, the concept of "People" was used to look at individuals and groups as "a unit of analysis" (p. 439). The first part of analysis in this study took the form of developing profiles of participants. Another Case Study Approach used was Patton's "Various Settings," explaining places "before doing cross-

setting pattern analysis” (p.439). Chapter 4 begins with describing the people and their learning communities before describing broad themes across all the learning communities. Lastly, under “Analytical Framework Approaches,” the notion of “Issues” led to the development of questions emerging during the data analysis about the changes in participants’ experiences. Results from the cross check study determined the following broad themes that could be coded across participant interviews: (a) Multiple Learning Communities, (b) Membership Rationale, (c) Job Satisfaction, and (d) Professional Development. The broad themes addressed common issues and growth that the teachers reported in relation to their experiences in their learning communities. The last aid in organizing data involved technology. The database, HyperRESEARCH, was a tool used to code the interviews and to search swiftly among the identified themes across the interviews.

Finally, content analysis of the interviews and pre-interview survey revealed patterns and emergent themes. Constant comparison of data uncovered similarities and differences among the mid-career teachers, their learning communities, and their attitudes concerning student learning. Topics reflected meaningful experiences of teachers allowing insight into their approaches to and needs for professional development.

### **Conclusion**

Ultimately, the approach to examining professional learning communities of mid-career elementary music teachers provided insight into how the groups formed and how they sustained themselves. Exploring teacher attitudes led to how a learning community impacted their teaching and their student learning. This study documented



the change of teachers' professional needs over time, thus adding to the literature of the career cycle of the music educator. By studying individual teachers and their professional needs, pre-professional music education programs and in-service professional development programs can be enhanced. The knowledge of learning communities not only invests in a support system for learning communities, but also leads to long-term success of music teachers in their profession.

Chapter 4 unfolds the stories of exemplary mid-career teachers and their learning communities. The narrative transpires in two parts. First, a description of the teachers and the Primary and Secondary Learning communities in which they participate occurs. Profiles of the teachers are grouped by their Primary Learning Community preference. The main learning communities identified by teachers include Orff-Schulwerk, Kodály, District Elementary General Music Teachers, and Other Learning Communities. Four encompassing themes among the teachers are examined and described: (a) Multiple Learning Communities, (b) Membership Rationale, (c) Job Satisfaction, and (d) Professional Development.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

Chapter 4 contains two parts. First, the exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers' descriptions are grouped according to learning community emphasis. Interviews, pre-interview descriptive surveys, classroom observations without students, and documents from the 24 participants reveal five Primary Learning Communities: Orff-Schulwerk, Kodály, District Elementary General Music Teachers, Building, and Other Learning Communities. Each Primary Learning Community comprises of a section which includes descriptions of the learning community, portrayals of the teachers who are primary members, common characteristics among primary members, explanations of the teachers' meaningful experiences within the group, and accounts of how the teachers' feel these experiences influence their teaching and students' learning. The section concludes with an examination of secondary membership in each learning community. Part Two contains four broad themes that are found among participants: (a) Multiple Learning Communities, (b) Membership Rationale, (c) Job Satisfaction, and (d) Professional Development. Finally, a discussion of highlighted topics within each theme occurs.

## Part One: Learning Communities

### Orff-Schulwerk Focused Learning Communities

An Orff-Schulwerk Learning Community is a group of teachers with a shared Orff-Schulwerk philosophy and practice. Formal groups occur at professional development offerings of Orff-Schulwerk or through leadership positions with the American Orff-Schulwerk Association. From these experiences, informal groups in which teachers guide their own learning of Orff-Schulwerk emerge. Additional descriptive information is found in Appendix F. Eight out of the 24 exemplary mid-career teachers emphasize Orff-Schulwerk as their Primary Learning Community. Each teacher in this group is introduced with (a) their vision statements of their program, (b) their connection to the Orff-Schulwerk Learning Community, (c) their experiences in professional development, and (d) their documentation of the implementation of the learning community in their workplace. The section concludes with discussing the teachers' common and meaningful experiences in the Orff-Schulwerk learning community and with their interpretation of how it influences their teaching and their students' learning.

**Diane.** A tenured teacher, Diane had taught for 16 years total, 12 in an elementary school. She taught K-4 grades in a large rural elementary school in a small district. In her previous position, she was the junior high and high school choral director. Diane's vision for her music program: "would be to expose these children to as much as I possibly can in the short of amount of time." Diane described her interest in Orff-Schulwerk as:

I got involved with the Orff chapter when I took my levels at a university as a part of my Master's degree. I did levels one and two and became more interested in wanting more knowledge and in depth understanding, and just idea sharing of the Orff process.

Diane held both an undergraduate and a master's degree in music, and attained Orff Level I & II certification. In the future, she wished to obtain Orff Level III, to earn National Board Certification, and to continue attending graduate courses and workshops. She took part in the state and national chapters of the National Association for Music Education (NAFME) and the National Education Association (NEA). In addition, she was a member of the local Orff-Schulwerk chapter. Diane's additional learning communities included formal and informal partnerships with three higher education institutions, research partnerships, and music education workshops. Informally, Diane met with the district music teachers twice a year; she identified in her survey that the level of teacher participation in this group was the greatest among all of her learning communities.

Most influential in the development of her curriculum was student demographics, access to technology, and training in using resources. Diane provided documents with curriculum information about recorder repertoire and listening excerpts and content standards created by the district's music teachers. Lastly, inspired by Orff-Schulwerk process, Diane created a music program from musical stories around the world. Diane's building was brand new. Contents of her room included an Epson

BrightLink interactive projector, Orff instruments, Orff posters, basal series materials, *Music K-8*, John Feierabend<sup>5</sup> materials, and recorders.

**Grace.** Employed 11 years in a rural elementary school, Grace taught K-5 grades in one building and traveled to other schools in her district to teach kindergarten. Grace's approach to her program was: "to create an environment where kids can creatively express themselves." Grace described her participation in the local Orff-Schulwerk chapter:

I have been on the Board (as in Board of Directors) where we identify which areas that people might be interested in, getting more ideas, honing their skills, and discussing what is good for the group as far as professional development. I participate as well when I can. I enjoy becoming the student and getting both ideas and learning for myself that helps in my classroom. I also have presented at these as well.

Grace held an undergraduate degree in music education and completed Orff Levels I and II and a taiko training program. She attained additional continuing education in Orff-Schulwerk, world percussion, and Israeli and Latin world dancing. She hoped to repeat Orff Level II and to complete Orff Level III and Dalcroze Eurhythmics training. She was a member of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association and her local Orff-Schulwerk chapter. She was involved in the national, regional, and local Orff-Schulwerk Learning Communities. Grace was active in a number of additional learning

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<sup>5</sup> John Feierabend created two music methods. *First Steps* was written for infants to young children which incorporated folk music, movement, and responding to classical music. *Conversational Solfège* was written for general music that addressed music literacy (Feierabend Association for Music Education, 2012, *John Feierabend*). The Feierabend Association for Music Education (FAME) formed in 2012 (Feierabend Association for Music Education, 2012, *About FAME*).

communities: music teachers in her district, inter-district children's taiko ensemble, staff in her building, online language forum, salsa dance team, Cuban drumming, and professional adult taiko performing group. She was involved most consistently in an online language forum and a professional adult taiko group.

The three top influences in her curriculum included the Orff approach, time parameters, and district/state mandates. Documents that Grace felt represented the influence of her learning communities included news clips about her taiko ensembles and a video of her Israeli dances. Grace's music room was in an older building and had a window that overlooked an elaborate play castle structure that students helped pay for with a school fundraiser. The playground sat next to a fenced farm. Her room was full of different world percussion instruments including several hand made taiko drums, a conga, and a cajon. There were many types of barred instruments with stands made by her father. On Grace's whiteboard was a song in Spanish.

**Isabelle.** A tenured teacher, Isabelle taught for 12 years total, eight years in an elementary school. Isabelle's current position was general music for grades K-6 in a suburban school. In the past she taught elementary general music at three elementary schools and general and vocal music at two middle schools. Isabelle's current district incorporated the Orff-Schulwerk inspired curriculum, *GAMEPLAN*, into their standards. Isabelle expressed that:

I try very hard to follow an Orff approach in the sense that I believe in giving children an experience to explore music and then improvise with it and create and eventually polish it. I believe in getting kids up and moving around. I believe in having them playing instruments and singing and have them be active

participants every single time that they are here. They don't just sit on the floor (laugh), look at a board, and listen. They are active participants in my room.

In relation to her involvement in the local Orff chapter Isabelle stated: “It's the basis of so much that I do in the class.”

Isabelle had an undergraduate degree in music education and a master's degree in education. Isabelle had completed Orff Level I and wished to complete Level II and Level III. She may seek Kodály training in the future. She was a member of the local Orff chapter and participated in the local and regional Orff-Schulwerk Learning Communities. It was required to be a part of a learning community in her district, but she had the opportunity to choose which one. She joined other general music teachers in the district to create the music and technology Professional Learning Community (PLC). Eventually, she facilitated this group which explored SMART Board technology. In addition, Isabelle participated in a choir and a Facebook group that formed as a result of Orff Levels training at a college.

Orff level training, ideas from the Orff workshops, and ideas from Isabelle's district PLC influenced her curriculum the most. Documents that Isabelle provided included a proposal for the elementary music teacher smart board learning community, a log of PLC accomplishments in a district learning community, and a fifth grade announcement for a program she wrote, “Stories in Song,” inspired by an Orff workshop. Isabelle had a SMART Board in her room as well as materials for the Orff curriculum, *GAMEPLAN*. Other forms of curriculum displayed in her room were Jazz posters, “I can” statements, and a composer timeline. Instruments included seven barred instruments, boomwackers, drums, recorders, and a ukulele.

**Jade.** With nine years experience, Jade taught K-2 and fifth grades general music at a rural elementary school. Jade’s previous teaching experiences included elementary general music in a different district and in Germany where one of her positions was teaching English conversation to native German speakers ages 14-19 years. In regard to goals for her music program, Jade said, “More than anything, I just want to see them get a well-rounded music education that they can enjoy.” Jade felt that being a part of multiple communities influenced her lesson sequencing.

The Orff process has really helped me present the information in a sequential way and reinforce(s) it in so many different ways: singing, dancing, and playing instruments. The benefit is the same with the Kodály email exchange: I feel that every time I get a new idea or SMART Board file, it helps me get the point across better. I always see a benefit and this is why I continue to be involved in a variety of learning communities.

Jade had an undergraduate degree in German and music education with a master’s degree in music. She had certification in Orff Level I and II and Roots of Rhythm Level I. She took multiple courses and workshops post teacher certification including those for guitar and Chinese language study. She hoped to obtain all levels in Kodály certification, Orff Level III, and study at the Orff Institute in Salzburg. She was a member of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association, her local Orff chapter, National Association for Music Education, and a local flute society. Her active learning communities included the Orff National Conference, her local Orff chapter, and informal partnerships with a university. She was also involved with the National Association for Music Education, the state music association, and tap dance lessons.



Jade's Informal Learning Communities were through an Orff group Facebook page, a regional Kodály email group, and a local flute society.

Factors that influenced Jade's curriculum included what she thought the students should know, state content standards, and what her district middle school and high school music teachers wanted her students to know. Documents provided included her communication in a regional Kodály listserv where she shared a SMART Board lesson. Jade shared an Orff Facebook group posting asking a question and her webpage which had announcements for programs, grade level objectives, and pictures of different instruments. Jade had moved to a brand new building when we met, but she shared pictures of her previous rooms which contained all different types of percussion instruments. Her new room had new stereo equipment and a SMART Board.

**Qiana.** A tenured teacher, Qiana had taught for fifteen years. Her current position was teaching K-5 grades general music at two suburban/rural elementary schools. Over 50% of students in both buildings was economically disadvantaged as defined by the state for the 2010-2011 school year. Previously, Qiana taught elementary general music and Junior/Senior High School choir in a different district. In explaining the vision of her music program, she said:

The vision of my music program is to have an environment where it is strongly communicated to students that music is for everyone. The program allows students to make and create music as well as develop musical skills in terms of literacy, musical literacy, and other rhythmic melodic skills.

Qiana had a background in Kodály and John Feierabend's process and recently became interested in Orff-Schulwerk. She felt comfortable in understanding and implementing

the Kodály process. In learning about Orff-Schulwerk, she gained a new insight in implementing her curriculum:

I felt maybe five years ago, now, the Orff chapter and the Kodály chapter had a joint workshop with a presenter at a university. So, that was eye opening. So that has influenced my teaching. It was a few years later that I started attending the Orff workshops and that has influenced my teaching a lot in terms of opening it up a lot to students creating music and improvisation.

Qiana had an undergraduate and master's degree in music education. With her master's program, she completed Kodály Levels I, II, and III. In the future, she hoped to become Orff certified in Levels I, II, and III. Qiana was both a member and a participant in the Organization of American Kodály Educators, the local Kodály chapter, and the local Orff chapter. Also, Qiana was a participant in regional Kodály events and elementary music teacher meetings in her district.

Influences upon her curriculum included her Kodály training, materials by John Feierabend, classroom observations of Orff teachers, and attendance at Kodály and Orff workshops. Qiana showed me notebooks of handbooks and packets from the meetings that she attended. She said that she often referred to them. In addition, curriculum guides in her classroom included a K-5 Kodály curriculum and Feierabend materials. Displayed in her room was a poster titled "What you will expect from me as a teacher," a solfège hand sign poster, Kodály rhythms on the board, a word wall, a composer wall, and a dance wall. Instruments included drums and different voiced barred instruments. Qiana found mid-20<sup>th</sup> century elementary music student books from different basal series and placed displays of them around the room.

**Samantha.** Having taught for 16 years, Samantha was in her first year of teaching at her current position, a K-5 grades general music program at an urban art focused elementary school. Over 50% of students in her building was economically disadvantaged as defined by the state for the 2010-2011 school year. Previously, Samantha had worked outside of the state in a Catholic school and in an urban school district in four schools before working for her current district. Prior to her new position, Samantha taught students ranging from pre-K to 8<sup>th</sup> grade at four different schools in her current district. In addition to general music, she had taught vocal music.

Samantha's goals for her music program were:

to provide an outstanding music education for my students so that if they choose to continue onto the upper campus, onto to a college music program that they are as prepared as they possibly can be to be as successful as they can. Or, if they do not choose a music career, but something in a related field, or just to enjoy music in an informal manner as adults and (to) have all the tools that they need to continue with music for the rest of their lives.

Samantha described herself as an Orff-focused teacher:

I am going to have to say my most impactful learning community has been the Orff levels and in the people that I have met through the Orff levels, especially my instructors. So I am going to start with that. It has radically changed how I teach. It is not as top down as it used to be. It is much more student centered, student focused.

Samantha had an undergraduate degree in music and a master's degree in curriculum design, instruction, and assessment. In addition, Samantha completed Orff

Level I, Orff Level II, and TI:ME 1A certifications.<sup>6</sup> In the future, she hoped to obtain Orff Level III and TI:ME 1B certifications. She was a member of the national and local chapters of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association and the National Association for Music Education. She participated in the national, regional, and local Orff-Schulwerk Learning Communities. Other learning community participation included a regional Kodály group, TI:ME, World Music Drumming, formal/informal partnerships with a college, mentoring new teachers, and the National Association for Music Education. Samantha’s Informal Learning Communities were teachers in her district upgrading their teaching license by completing a Master Teacher designation<sup>7</sup>, an Orff Facebook group page, a school district teachers’ Facebook group page, and a LinkedIn professional network. She was most involved with the Master Teacher learning community in her district.

Samantha pointed out a full set of hand drums for which she had written a grant and commented that she had started a drumming group for her students. She showed me binders full of the workshop and course trainings concerning the Orff workshops and drumming workshops she attended. There was a lot of transience in her district; therefore, often times, she did not know her teaching schedule until after the school year started.

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<sup>6</sup> In order to complete a level 1 certification in TI:ME (Technology for Music Education Institute), a teacher must complete two courses, TI:ME 1A addressing “Music Notation Software, Music Production (aka Sequencing), and Electronic Instruments” and TI:ME 1B concerning “Basic Skills in Music Technology: Instructional Software, The Internet and Digital Media” (Technology Institute for Music Educators, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> According to the state, there are two ways in which teachers may upgrade their teaching license. They may complete a Master Teacher designation which involves an application process that includes putting together a portfolio to achieve Senior Professional Educator License. Then, to complete the highest tiered license, the Lead Professional Educator License, a teacher must complete coursework associated with the Teacher Leader Endorsement. The second way is a bypass of the Senior Professional Educator License to the Lead Professional Educator License by completing National Board Certification.

My biggest struggle with curriculum, and I think this is a uniquely urban problem, is that all of the other music teachers that I know and have met, leave in June, know what their schedule is next year, what classes they are teaching... (Many) are seeing all of their kids once a week, or all of their kids twice a week for X amount of time. We don't know what our schedule is going to be until usually the day before school starts. If not, the week after school starts. Then, there is almost a 100% chance that the schedule will completely change at the end of the first marking period due to the staff assignments because no one really knows where the kids are going to show up.

Samantha found a challenge in creating a set curriculum every year due to all the changes. Instead, she adapted pre-set lessons from workshops to fit her immediate needs. Everything that she collected at workshops was valuable to her in her being a successful, adaptable teacher with resources of curriculum and the knowledge of how to implement it.

**Tabetha.** With 16 years of teaching experience, Tabetha's current position was teaching 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grades general music and 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade choir at a suburban elementary school. Tabetha's previous teaching experiences in elementary general music consisted of a private school, subbing in two districts, and teaching in two other districts. Her goals for her program were to develop "a life love that they will enjoy."

The process by which she attained her goal was to:

provide students' ownership of music, begin to instill skills for them to read and write music, to explore the instruments and their bodies and their voices' music, to create as well as learn songs in the hopes it will plant a little seed

inside of them so when they go on to middle school and high school they still want to be involved in music and have the skills to want to be able to read and write music as well as enjoy it.

Tabetha had undergraduate and master's degrees in music education. She had a Kodály certification and Level I Orff Certification. Tabetha enjoyed exploring all methodologies and hoped to be certified in multiple areas. Currently, Orff-Schulwerk was her main interest:

I am exploring Orff more, and getting instruments and getting students involved with that process, being creative and composing and that kind of thing.

I did quite a few workshops at the Orff conference with a presenter through the

Dalcroze method, so I am very interested in doing that, too. So that will be next.

Other future professional development goals included completing Orff Level II and Orff Level III. She was investigating the possibility of obtaining *music learning theory* training, something that she was introduced to at a Kodály workshop. She was a member of both the national and local chapters of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association and the Organization of American Kodály Educators. She was involved the most in the national and the local chapters of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association and her local Kodály chapter.

Most influential in determining her curriculum was the Kodály philosophy, the Orff process, and Dalcroze. Immediately noticeable in Tabetha's room was the multiple voice barred instruments organized in rows by instrument type and voice. There were boxes of percussion and recorders. On the walls were displays of folksongs, a music word wall, and multiplication tables to assist students in test taking strategies. On the

board there were rhythms using Kodály symbols and magnets of children demonstrating the formation of a folk dance.

**Ursula.** A tenured teacher, Ursula had eight years experience teaching 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades general music in a suburban elementary school and received National Board Certification this year. Within a few weeks of her interview, she was asked to be one of 20 teachers in the state to participate in a panel with the U.S. Department of Education discussing a program for the future of teaching. She described the vision of her program:

I would say in general, I am most strongly aligned with the Orff-Schulwerk approach where I think that it is really important that kids are creating and it comes out of their own approach and their own learning. I would say that, in general in a day, we would spend probably a third of our class time singing (and) doing pitch development, and then we spend a third of the time doing instrumental work, and a third of the time doing some movement so that all of the learning styles are represented, whether it is visual, kinesthetic, or aural learning.

Ursula had an undergraduate and a master's in music education. She completed Orff Level I, and hoped to obtain additional levels in Orff and Kodály. She contemplated a certification in Dalcroze. She was a member of the national and local chapters of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association, the Organization of American Kodály Educators, and the National Association for Music Education. Her learning communities included two local Orff chapters, a local Kodály chapter, the state music association, mentoring new teachers in her district, formal partnerships with a

university, the National Board Association, elementary music teachers in her district, a school improvement committee, and her building related arts teachers. She was involved the most with the local Orff chapter located in her city where she held a leadership position and shared ideas. Also, Ursula actively collaborated with a small group of general music teachers to help rewrite her district's curriculum to incorporate more assessments.

Orff level work and workshops were the most influential in Ursula's curriculum development. This was confirmed in her 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade lesson plans that she provided. She referenced the title and the date of a workshop if the activity originated from one. Additional details included a list of the National Standards and state content standards that each lesson addressed. Most noticeable in Ursula's room was the display of three rows of 23 different voiced barred instruments. Open cabinets displayed basal music series (*Silver Burdett*) materials, recorders, manipulatives, and hand percussion. On the walls there was a word wall, a list of "I can" statements per grade level, a vision statement of the school, a solfège poster, and a display of maps.

**Common Experiences.** Diane, Grace, Isabelle, Jade, Qiana, Samantha, Tabetha, and Ursula chose to be part of the communities of Orff-Schulwerk, wished to receive more training, mentioned movement as a part of their curriculum, and stated that Orff-Schulwerk influenced their curriculum. The settings in which the teachers taught were five rural, three suburban, and one urban school district. All but one teacher completed Orff Level I certification. Diane, Grace, Isabelle, Jade, Qiana, Samantha, Tabetha, and Ursula belonged to their local Orff chapters and attended



workshops there. The teachers displayed instruments in their classrooms which included barred instruments, an aid in implementing the Orff-Schulwerk methodology.

The common experiences related to Orff-Schulwerk Learning Communities that primary members described involved applied teaching techniques and curriculum. There were two areas mentioned related to teaching application: one was an approach to teaching musicality to students, and the other mentioned child-centered teaching techniques. Child-centered teaching techniques in Orff-Schulwerk included musical independence and child-led projects. Sometimes the two approaches, musicality and child-centered approaches, blended together. For Diane, the Orff-Schulwerk community influenced her musicality. It has allowed her to “(Get to) that gentle side of things. I've certainly encouraged a lot more musical expression since I've been involved with these other groups.” Grace felt that the Orff Schulwerk Learning Community gave her several options in extending creativity. Also, Grace said:

As I've grown and seen, whether it is in other cultural studies or if it is in Orff-Schulwerk, I have been able to see that there are ways that you can guide, but step back and let the kids have ownership of what they are doing, and (and to allow them to have) creative input.

As a result of Orff-Schulwerk Learning Communities, both Jade and Qiana learned about movement and discovered how to incorporate it into their curriculum in a thoughtful way. Samantha and Tabetha felt more confident in teaching instruments in their classroom. At some point in their interviews, all primary Orff-Schulwerk Learning Community members mentioned their community's influence of alternative ways in approaching the development of musicality in their classroom.

Often, Orff-Schulwerk workshops or certification levels resulted in direct transfers of lessons into the teachers' class curriculum. This resulted in the creation of integrated demonstrations for their school and/or adjusted the way a teaching sequence of Orff-Schulwerk unfolded. Isabelle said that several years after she attended an Orff-Schulwerk workshop, she had the confidence to create a multicultural program from a suggested book. She said:

they are not only tying (together) their music skills and their musical knowledge, their sight reading skills, their instrument playing skills, but they are also tying that to the literature, tying it to the artwork in the picture book that we talked about.

Another example included the integration of new knowledge at a school district. Ursula bridged together knowledge from her multiple pedagogical learning communities to help create the assessment initiative in her district. The result deepened both her and her students' understanding of why and how the students learned musical concepts.

Inspiration for Diane, Grace, Isabelle, Jade, Qiana, Samantha, Tabettha, and Ursula formed from involvement in Orff-Schulwerk Learning Communities or Multiple Learning Communities in which Orff-Schulwerk was included. Jade, Samantha, Isabelle, and Qiana found inspiration directly from an Orff-Schulwerk community. Jade appreciated the energy of the clinicians, while Samantha was inspired by what other people taught in an Orff-Schulwerk curriculum. New information sparked lesson plan ideas for Isabelle. Qiana conceptualized a new approach to classroom learning: "the idea of students creating music for themselves in some way, creating their own experience. The music classroom belonging to the students." Both Tabettha and Ursula

spoke of renewal and inspiration gained through participation in Multiple Learning Communities inclusive of Orff-Schulwerk. For Tabettha, it extended “the desire I have to learn.” Whereas Ursula found that laughter and learning gave her a chance to rejuvenate her joy of teaching. Diane appreciated finding out what other teachers created in their classrooms while Grace valued collaboration and new ideas. The common thread among all of the teachers was the exposure to new material through new experiences. It enabled them to begin a new direction in thinking and to implement a new concept into their practice of teaching.

**Meaningful Experiences and Implementations.** In different capacities, Diane, Grace, Isabelle, Jade, Qiana, Samantha, Tabettha, and Ursula mentioned that learning to teach Orff-Schulwerk methodology was a meaningful experience to them. They either revealed an episode while they were teaching when they gained insight to the Orff-Schulwerk approach or a time when they were by themselves reflecting about the Orff-Schulwerk approach. They all equated the meaningful experience to their students’ deeper understanding of music. Some teachers shared their thoughts on the methodology of Orff-Schulwerk and how it brought a new direction to their teaching.

Diane, Grace, Jade, and Tabettha had a meaningful experience while implementing Orff-Schulwerk in their classrooms with their students. Diane experimented with a new recorder technique to promote musicality, while Tabettha tried improvisation. Tabettha elaborated:

there was a session where he taught a song and did a step-by-step process on getting them to improvise. So, I tried it last year with third grade and I followed that process, and I am like- wow- this is awesome!

Both Diane and Tabetha learned the technique from a workshop and both related that their students were successful. During a chapter share<sup>8</sup> at an Orff workshop, Grace tried an integrated literature, movement, and instrument lesson which allowed her to examine her teaching process among adults, and to be aware of her teaching process when she taught the same lesson to her students. Jade's meaningful experience occurred while she was teaching. She had developed a line of questioning to problem solve during lessons as a result of her training in Orff-Schulwerk.

Because of my involvement with learning communities, I take a step back, slow down, and review my teaching process. I think about how I can break down the elements of what they need to learn and put it into a smoother teaching process.

All four of the teachers were able to practice a new approach of teaching and be able to reflect about how it was successful in their classrooms. This achievement of success was meaningful to them.

Another way some primary Orff-Schulwerk Learning Community members identified meaningful experiences was making connections on their own outside of the learning community in reflection of their experiences within the group. Isabelle, Qiana, Samantha and Ursula developed individual insights. Isabelle was able to implement successfully her own integrated music program as a result of a workshop. Qiana introduced a new approach to creative movement in her classroom which enhanced the way she taught expression.

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<sup>8</sup> A chapter share is when members from the local Orff chapter share tried and true lessons using the Orff-Schulwerk methodology.

It has made me a more creative teacher. It has certainly given my students more experiences to be creative and expressive and to listen to music and think about not just the melodic pattern and the rhythmic pattern, but the expressive qualities the composer might be trying to say or express.

Samantha said her views about teaching Orff-Schulwerk changed dramatically after completing Orff Level I. She pointed to her binder of Orff-Schulwerk workshop handouts and stated that it finally made sense to her. When speaking about how Orff-Schulwerk impacted her students, Samantha said:

It is completely different- again with the student leadership aspects. Handing over more control to the students. I have always been a project-based teacher. But I would definitely micromanage a lot of what they did, so that it came out the way it should. When I let go of that, I let them roll with what they are doing.

Ursula had introduced her multiple pedagogical learning communities to her district curriculum group by giving the curriculum group information from a session about assessment. Next, she integrated information from the learning communities and her district curriculum group and brought a new approach to assessment to her classroom. Thus, her meaningful experience was the ability to document growth in her assessment approach. This resulted in her recorder students learning how to assess themselves. She said, “They can automatically say back- -‘oh we need to work on our tone, we were blowing too hard’.” All four teachers spent time reflecting and making connections to their curriculum when they were not with students to implement the Orff-Schulwerk methodology. The results were approaches to teaching music and success stories of students achieving understanding.

Diane, Grace, Isabelle, Jade, Qiana, Samantha, Tabettha, and Ursula chose to be a part of an active music making community that implemented teaching methodology for children. While all spoke of different concepts of Orff-Schulwerk, all of their meaningful experiences addressed learning in relation to the process of applying the methodology. The result identified the teachers' interest in Orff-Schulwerk and the value of their professional growth while refining their approach to the method in their classrooms.

### **Kodály Focused Learning Communities**

A Kodály learning community is a group of teachers with a shared Kodály philosophy and practice. Formal groups occur at professional development offerings of Kodály or through leadership positions with the Organization of the American Kodály Educators. From these experiences, informal groups in which teachers guide their own learning of Kodály emerge. Additional descriptive information is found in Appendix G. Three out of the 24 exemplary mid-career teachers emphasize Kodály as their Primary Learning Community. Each teacher in this group is introduced with their vision statements of their program, their connection to the Kodály Learning Community, their experiences in professional development, and documentation of the implementation of their learning community in their workplace. The section concludes with discussing the teachers' common and meaningful experiences in the Kodály Learning Community and their interpretation of how it influences their teaching and their students' learning.

**Bria.** With 13 years of teaching experience, Bria had taught in nine elementary schools and one middle school. Her current teaching position was in a brand new rural public school outside of a major city teaching grades 1-5 and beginning band. The

district was fast developing and eventually will be identified as a suburban district.

When explaining how she became involved with Kodály, Bria said:

I felt really impassioned to be involved. I would say at first, I became involved by going to chapter workshops. I just wanted to learn more. I was just a first-year teacher, and I wanted to learn as much as I could.

In explaining her vision, Bria stated:

I am looking for a community that finds a lot of joy in music; joy of music is always my number one priority. I am looking to improve students' singing, their enjoyment of singing, and their musical literacy. By that, I don't just mean reading and writing music, but they are able to create and explore and improvise. As a whole, I am hoping to build a community, which includes not just students, but also parents, teachers, and administration(s) that find a lot of joy in music where we can explore a lot of cultures together. So, I am really hoping to build kind of a community open to music of many cultures, (a community) who enjoys making music together.

Bria had an undergraduate and a master's degree in music education from two different schools. Her master's degree had a focus in Kodály. She received certifications from a U.S. Kodály school and from the Kodály Institute in Hungary. Future professional development interests included taking Orff Level I and a dulcimer class. Bria was an active member in the communities of the National Association for Music Education and the local, regional, and national chapters of the Organization of American Kodály Educators. In addition, she was involved with the state music education association. Bria was a part of a study group created by Kodály educators

through Facebook where they shared elementary general music strategies. She was a teacher educator of Kodály Level 1 in a certification program during the summers. From that group, she was involved with an email group that discussed Kodály-related topics. She was involved highly with the local, regional, national, and teacher education Kodály groups. She held many leadership positions in the association which demonstrated her commitment and enthusiasm for the Kodály method. She served as a co-leader of the elementary general music teachers' group in her school district and she assisted in teaching her peers how to implement the district's formative assessment initiative.<sup>9</sup>

Major influences upon her curriculum included her Kodály training, continued professional development, and the formative assessment training provided by her district. Documents that she provided which supported her point of view were a handout from a presentation she held at a Kodály workshop about assessment, a unit that identified instruments using the formative assessment process which she developed in collaboration with other teachers, and a Japanese music program that she wrote which included authentic folk songs, dance, and taiko drumming. Her building was brand new. The music room contained a full set of xylophones (15), a SMART Board, a basal music series (*Spotlight on Music*), classroom keyboards, a composer display, decorated paint buckets used for taiko drumming, and a world poster to identify songs. On the walls were formative assessments "I can" statements such as "I can sing, read,

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<sup>9</sup> Goals associated with formative assessment include: "to establish clear learning targets for students; collect and document accurate evidence of student learning; provide effective feedback; and prepare students to engage in self-assessment, peer feedback, and goal setting" (Battelle for Kids, 2012, para. 2, ln. 3-7).



and write sol-fa.” There were other posters that asked the questions “Why do we use hand signs?” and “How are sol-fa (like sol and mi) related to one another?”

**Noelle.** An elementary (grades K-4) and middle school (grades 5-6) general music teacher, Noelle had 10 years teaching experience. Noelle had taken a break from teaching to raise her children. Noelle was introduced to Kodály when she returned to teaching. She explained:

I had taught, then I was out of education teaching for a while, and I was staying home at one point with my children. I was ready to go back into teaching, and my children's music teacher had Kodály as her strong emphasis. So, I started back into teaching by getting my certificates renewed by attempting the Kodály training held locally. That is how I got back into music and what I do now.

Noelle felt that:

I want my students to become independent musicians to the best of their ability for where they are because they will not always be with me, and I will not be able to help them when they are on their own. I want them to be knowledgeable students.

Upon Noelle’s return to teaching, she subbed in many districts before obtaining her current job in two public schools in a rural area. Over 50% of students in her elementary school building was economically disadvantaged as defined by the state for the 2010-2011 school year. Noelle had an undergraduate degree in music. Her pedagogical training post undergraduate studies included Kodály Level I & II, Orff Level I, Brain Gym 101, Kindermusik (0 months to 7 years), and Early Childhood with John Feierabend. Additional training that Noelle wanted to attain in the future included

Body Mapping and Alexander Technique. Noelle belonged to both the local and national organizations of Kodály and Orff. She was involved in the local, regional, and national Kodály Learning Communities and Orff-Schulwerk Learning Communities. This year, she attended the local Kodály chapter for CEU credits and the local Orff chapter for college credit. In addition, she was involved with two Informal Learning Communities - one among district music teachers and one involving a friend.

As an example of how the learning communities influenced her teaching, Noelle provided copies of two documents that charted the sequence of melodic and rhythmic patterns which were posted on her desk. The charts were created from the sequences of the state curriculum and the Kodály and Orff pedagogies. Her room contained percussion, xylophones, a recorder wall, a movement wall, and a basal music series (*Spotlight on Music*). At the front of the room on the chalkboard were visuals that were Kodály influenced, a body percussion chart from *GAMEPLAN* (an Orff-Schulwerk inspired curriculum), a xylophone visual from *GAMEPLAN*, and rhythm cards.

**Rose.** A tenured teacher, Rose taught public school music for 19 years. In the past, she taught grades K-6 music, but currently taught grades K-2 in a suburban school district. Rose became involved with the Kodály learning communities through her college: “The local Kodály chapter I have been involved with (for) probably 20 years. It was a group I happened upon when I was in college and happened to stay with it.” Rose’s philosophy of teaching was:

For me, I really want the kids to enjoy music and everything that it has to offer for their life, not just when they are in kindergarten, first, or second grade. Of

course, I am working on specific skills and concepts with them, but really it is creating a love and a joy.

Rose had an undergraduate and a master's degree in music education from two different institutions. She completed her Kodály certification and was a level three instructor at a Kodály teacher educator's program during the summers. She mentored new teachers in her district and had an informal partnership with a local college. She wished to obtain more professional development in technology and in special education. She belonged to the Organization of American Kodály Educators and the local and regional chapters from which she received CEU's. In addition, she belonged to the International Kodály Society, two study groups created by teachers that met once a month to talk about report cards, and a district group consisting of the related arts teachers that met once a quarter where the teachers share common concerns. Her highest level of involvement was with the local chapter of Kodály and the level III Kodály teacher educator course. Additionally, she had Informal Learning Communities with her friends to reflect upon workshops and issues addressing the Kodály methodology.

The most influence in curriculum in rank of importance included time spent with students, content standards, and available resources. Rose did not offer documents; however, notes were taken about her room. All of the furniture was arranged around the sides of the room. The room had a Mickey Mouse theme and was brightly decorated with children's art, family pictures, encouragement posters, photos of instruments, and instruments. The steps to the right of the door served as built-in choir risers. Areas that reflected Rose's interest in Kodály included a framed picture of her

students on the cover of a Kodály magazine and a picture of her students' hands forming the ascending solfège hand signs that she had been presented at the end of a Kodály level's course that she had taught.

**Common Experiences.** Bria, Noelle, and Rose made the choice to be a part of learning communities associated with the Kodály methodology. Other shared aims of these teachers included their involvement in talking to other teachers of their district to implement change at different levels for all children in their district. In addition, they spoke with music teacher friends about music education and reflected about their experiences in workshops. They had been involved with leadership in a Kodály community at either the local, district, regional, or national levels. All had evidence of the Kodály influence in the form of a solfège poster. While they specified different influences on their curriculum, they all felt that state standards highly influenced their lesson planning. Bria and Noelle taught in rural settings; however, Bria's district was becoming more suburban. Rose taught in a suburban school district.

In describing their experiences within the Kodály Learning Communities, Bria, Noelle, and Rose searched for professional development that involved active music making. Bria explained that professional development in the Kodály Learning Communities had a huge impact on her musicality:

That was really when I felt like for the first time in my education where they really had us focus on musicality and really focus on being a better musician. We had musicianship classes, which were very strenuous and difficult and stressful, but also really improved us as musicians. So, I just really feel like taking those classes, and really working on my voice as well because I am not a

vocalist, I am a trumpet player. So, that was really hard at first to really focus on my voice and I ended taking voice lessons, which definitely helped. So, I just feel like the professional development in the vision of Kodály really shifted (my focus) and improved my musicality.

From Noelle's perspective, she felt the Kodály community was a resource: "For myself, I see it as piquing an interest and researching it." Whereas Rose viewed the Kodály learning community as a place for apprenticeship:

For me, it was a great way to talk to master teachers and to see other music teachers from around the country that I can see and get some great ideas from. And from that, it has developed into friendships that I have made with people that were doing the same thing that I have (been doing and) that we continue to talk about.

Thus, each teacher participated in communities for active music making and benefitted from the different components that the learning community offered.

A common factor among these teachers was the philosophy that focused on the intention of their music programs. Student success inspired all three teachers. Bria realized:

I guess what inspires me the most is the level of excellence that is achievable when teaching children. I didn't understand that. I did not have general music as a child. I started band in 5th grade and that was my first musical experience- really. So, through my professional development and my learning communities, and (by) completing my Master's, it became apparent how high we can set our expectations and how much they can achieve and accomplish. And really kids-

when you start with a great foundation- can be better musicians than a lot of adult music educators because they will have so much better of a foundation.

Noelle's inspiration came directly from her students. She saw a connection between her students' needs and her learning communities:

I have to say the students inspire me a lot because I want to be the best I can be for them. I know that by going to my learning communities, that I will be a better teacher and my students will become, hopefully that is the intention, better musicians, even if it is just listening to music. They can understand it better and be able to select better music over trashy music. That inspires me the most- are the children.

Rose found motivation as a form of inspiration from her learning communities. She discussed how her excitement from learning from other teachers influenced her students' learning:

I guess just seeing others out there doing it and I can always get better. I can always learn something new. I want to bring that back to my students to keep it fresh and to keep them excited. And just continue to work on it. I never quit learning. There are always things that I can do better.

With children as a source of inspiration, all three teachers sought learning experiences within Kodály learning communities. Bria wanted to give her students a music education that she did not have as a young person. Noelle wanted to give her students the best learning environment she could, and that has driven her to learn more for them. Rose, who had been teaching the longest, sought the learning communities as an aid in the continuous learning of a teacher hoping to relate the joy from her communities to

her students. Although Bria, Noelle, and Rose had different stories and experiences, their interest in figuring out new ways to teach children was a shared practice. The shared practice was demonstrated when the teachers described their meaningful experiences.

**Meaningful Experiences and Implementations.** The most meaningful experiences as a result of a learning community identified by Rose, Noelle, and Bria was the learning process within a Kodály environment. They felt strongly about the importance of children and their learning process and all three of them drew inspiration from their students' learning. Bria taught a level 1 Kodály class for teachers and in her reviewing how she could modify her teaching to help an adult student, she had an epiphany about how children learn:

Children often do not raise their hand and say, "I do not get it." They sit quietly and they often do not tell you that they do not understand something. So, it just made me more vigilant to find other ways of figuring out when students are getting it, and when they are not, and when do they need help, and how do I choose another way to explain something to them so that light bulb will go (on).

But what made Bria feel joy in accomplishment was when she saw her students gain understanding of a certain concept- when she saw the light bulb go on. It was at this moment Bria felt inspired and knew that by figuring out what her students needed, that by watching her students, and that by adapting her teaching to different learning styles, she could improve student understanding.

Noelle's meaningful experience took place at a Kodály training in which she was experiencing peer teaching. It assisted her in "knowing when something is done

too soon or not. And it was done in a loving manner, whether it is a positive comment or advice to improve.” She said that this moment reminded her of her students’ feelings when they came into her classroom. Noelle said that:

I want them to have a very positive experience and not a negative experience. Even in their mistakes, I want them to not feel bad about any of the mistakes that they make, I want it to be a learning opportunity for them.

Noelle identified kindness as a characteristic among the music teachers in her Kodály learning community in a way that affirmed her teaching and that positively guided her towards improvement. In learning from that experience, she wished to emulate the caring atmosphere that the Kodály teachers gave her where mistakes can turn into teachable, positive moments.

Rose’s meaningful experience came from participation in a Kodály workshop. She said that the workshop still impacts her everyday:

I had been teaching for a couple of years when I saw (a well-known clinician), and I had advanced training with the Kodály philosophy. But seeing him take us through these lessons, and weave it seamlessly, not even realizing what time it (was). Just playing and having fun, and not even know that I am learning....To see others in the same moment with me, it was empowering.

The high level of applying the Kodály methodology in a seamless manner was awe-inspiring to Rose. She thought that the level of enthusiasm and engagement the clinician demonstrated was a goal to achieve. More importantly, it was the joy the clinician gave to others that Rose wanted to emulate. Rose desired to give her students a type of joy for music that would last their lifetime.



Bria, Noelle, and Rose all believed that active music making and learning processes contributed to their success. They all shared a meaningful experience within the context of Kodály training. In addition, the experiences changed a part of their philosophy of teaching which also impacted the way they approached teaching. Thus, according to Bria, Noelle, and Rose, a meaningful experience represented an active experience using the Kodály methodology that resulted in a change in their teaching.

### **District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Communities**

A District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community is a group of elementary general music teachers who teach in the same district and met to discuss teaching, to implement district initiatives, to arrange continuity between programs, and/or to provide support. Some groups supported by their district meet during professional development days. Other groups meet outside of the school day. Additional descriptive information can be found in Appendix H. Twenty of the 24 teachers interviewed mention their participation in a district music teacher group. Of the 20, six emphasize the district elementary general music group as their most important learning community. Each teacher who emphasizes district elementary music teachers as their Primary Learning Community is introduced with their vision statements of their program, their connection to their community, their experiences in professional development, and documentation of the implementation of their learning community in their workplace. The section concludes with discussing the teachers' common and meaningful experiences in the District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community and the teachers' interpretation of how it influences their teaching and their students' learning.

**Elsie.** A tenured teacher, Elsie taught for 13 years total, eight years in an elementary school. Elsie taught grades K-6 in a suburban school. In the past, she taught middle school choir and high school choir, music theory, and music history. She taught at two previous schools, one public and one private. Elsie's district incorporated the Orff-Schulwerk inspired curriculum, *GAMEPLAN*, into their standards. Elsie's vision of her music program was "to create a really firm foundation of music education. Not just knowing the facts of it, but the love and the passion, and really building a curiosity of music."

Elsie was a member of two district elementary music groups. One group met as a whole department to discuss grade cards and curriculum. The second group was a Professional Learning Community (PLC). She was required by her district to be a part of one group, but it was her choice as to which one. Elsie's PLC was a group of elementary general music teachers that were exploring the use of the SMART Board with the *GAMEPLAN* curriculum. When discussing her chosen learning community of district teachers, Elsie commented:

I think just the sharing of resources is one of my favorite parts of my current learning communities. For me, (at) the technology end, I have a SMART Board now, and there are people within my group that they're very well rehearsed in SMART Board technology and then others that are not. And I am in the middle right now. But that's a great resource to (use to) trouble shoot. Well, I tried that- and it didn't work. We got, I think five years ago, a new curriculum called *GAMEPLAN* that we tried out and are trying out. Just to see that they're using it in their classroom versus mine. So, it goes back to the sharing of the resources.

Elsie had an undergraduate degree in vocal performance and a master's degree in music education. She completed additional coursework in curriculum and classroom management. Elsie would like to receive additional training in technology for the music classroom such as SMART Board. She was an active member in the learning communities with the state music education association. She had a partnership with a university that consisted of working with student teachers and field placements. Participation in study groups formed by teachers included the related arts team at her school, a monthly district elementary music teacher meeting, and the technology/*GAMEPLAN* PLC. Elsie's other learning communities were performance based: a swing band and a theater company.

Students' styles of learning, district schedules, and district/state content standards influenced Elsie's curriculum the most. Curriculum items displayed in her room consisted of her music class mission statement, posters about leadership in the classroom, a monthly calendar of learning targets for every grade level, *Share the Music* basal series, and *GAMEPLAN* materials. Instruments in her room were a large collection of different voiced barred instruments, assorted percussion, and world percussion. Additional items on her walls were playbills, Jazz displays, and a SMART Board.

**Faye.** With 19 years of experience, Faye taught at two different schools in her suburban district. In the first school she taught 6<sup>th</sup> grade only; but at her current school, she taught grades 1-5. Faye felt that her program was a stepping-stone for her students to become readers and performers of music. She wanted to “bring them from nothing to that, and have that appreciation of music.” Faye's most influential community was the

elementary general music teachers of her district. They had been meeting for years on their own outside of the school day until recently, when they have been allowed to meet during late start days while teachers in their buildings work in groups. In describing her elementary music district meetings, Faye said:

What I value the most are the other music teachers in the district. So, all the elementary music teachers meet once a month. And we have different topics that we talk about. And that's where I get most of my learning information. I learn so much from them because they have tried things out. They are willing to share their ideas and we bounce ideas off of each other. Being the only music teacher in an elementary school, obviously, you do not have anybody to do that with. So, like the classroom teachers at the grade levels, they obviously do. For me, there isn't anybody. It is me and me only. So, those meetings are so valuable, so valuable.

Faye had an undergraduate degree in music education with a master's degree in teaching. She took various CEU courses inside and outside of music. She wished to obtain additional training in technology, specifically SMART Board. She was not a member of an association. She had a Formal Professional Learning Community with student teachers in her building. Faye's Informal Learning Communities consisted of her District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community in which she participated the most and an auditioned choir.

The district elementary general music teachers and content standards influenced Faye's curriculum the most. Faye provided documents from her meetings which consisted of notes about integrating music concepts with two books, a handout about

incorporating themes and music concepts, and a list of books categorized by music concept (e.g. fast/slow, loud/soft). Her 5<sup>th</sup> grade worked with hand drums. Faye pointed out that she learned how to hand drum through her district music teachers' group, and over the years she collected 21 REMO drums. Other instruments in her room consisted of barred instruments and auxiliary percussion. Curriculum influenced materials involved American history posters, a world map identifying where different dances originated, the *Music Connection* basal series, state standards lists using language that children could understand, and composer posters.

**Heidi.** With 11 years of experience, Heidi taught K, 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> grade general music in a newer rural elementary school. In addition, she taught 5<sup>th</sup> grade band and 3-5 grade children's choir. Previously, Heidi taught in a different district. Heidi's current district was growing fast and eventually will be identified as a suburban district. As a result of the fast growth of the district, Heidi's school boundaries and school population changed often. Eventually, she wanted to see all of her students be in line with state content standards and the Kodály philosophy. Heidi said:

That is one thing, is to get the whole student body on track with their grade level (and) their age-appropriate material. The next thing that I want to see is the music program flourish with the strings, the band, and the chorus.

Heidi was a part of many learning communities. However, it was the Formal Learning Community, the district music teachers that she shared co-leadership with, that had the most impact on her. Her District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community was defined as a Formal Learning Community because the meetings were

required by Heidi's district. Recently, her district implemented a formative assessment initiative. Heidi elaborated:

I know I am a better teacher because of them, because I am more focused. The more I learn, the better I get. And the better I get, the better they (her students) are. I see a huge difference in the children's musicality and their participation and their ability to go further right now than me being in my 11th year of teaching versus my fourth year of teaching when I was in a different district.

Heidi had an undergraduate and a master's degree in music education. She had a Kodály and Orff Level 1 certification. She wanted to obtain future training in Dalcroze Eurhythmics. Heidi was a member of the National Association for Music Education, the state music association, the American Choral Director's Association, and her local Kodály chapter. Her Formal Learning Communities included her district's elementary teachers, her mentoring of new teachers, and her building leadership team. Her Informal Learning Communities consisted of meeting with another music teacher who works in her building and listservs, which were district online discussion forums for music teachers, teachers in her building, and all teachers in her district. Heidi was involved the most with the District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community and meeting with the other music teacher in her building.

Kodály, formative assessment, and district expectations guided Heidi's curriculum. As a co-leader of the district elementary music teachers group, Heidi contributed to developing an agenda, to facilitating teachers in presenting lessons, and to teaching the group about formative assessment. Heidi provided an agenda for a meeting that was held on a district late start day that contained an outline of the

meeting, an example lesson, technology tips, announcements, formative assessment guidance, and examples of snow day lesson plans. Blank spaces were provided so that teachers could take notes about the session and formative assessment ideas. The questions for formative assessment included “What is Music Reading?” and “What is Music Writing?” In Heidi’s classroom she had a storybook nook with a rug and a rocking chair and a formative assessment pocket system to display the “I can” statements for the day for each grade level. Additional items on her walls included motivational posters, music class rules, Kodály rhythm symbols on the chalkboard, and a poster of the school song.

**Olivia.** A tenured teacher, Olivia had 11 years experience teaching grades K-5 general music in a suburban elementary school. Over 40% of students at Olivia’s school was economically disadvantaged as defined by the state for the 2010-2011 school year. Olivia wanted her students “to come away feeling like they can read music, participate in a number of ensembles, and enjoy a variety of types of music.” For the first time this year, the elementary teachers in Olivia’s district started to meet. She explained:

We are reading a book together on music assessment, “Assessing the Developing Musician” by Timothy Brophy. We’re working on how we know how we assess the learning of our kids in music. Learning how to really know what our kids know and are able to do.

Olivia had an undergraduate degree and master’s degrees in flute performance and was K-12 certified in music. She took three courses in Kodály and participated in Orff Level 1 certification. Additional professional development involved various education

classes in curriculum, classroom management, and SMART Board technology. In the future, Olivia wanted to take Orff Level I, Orff Level II, and a world drumming course. In addition to the district music teachers' meetings, Olivia was an active member in her local Kodály chapter. The previous year she attended workshops at her local Orff chapter.

Kodály and Orff influenced Olivia's curriculum; however, the three areas that influenced her program the most were deciding what to teach, how to make her teaching more student-centered, and how to be more effective. Olivia and the music teachers of her district worked on concept charts and "I can" statements for kindergarten. She submitted a copy of the kindergarten fast/slow concept plan for this study. Organized into different sections, the concept plan included repertoire lists, preparation for different learning styles, lesson ideas, reinforcement, assessment, interventions, and learning targets. The document included "I can" statements. The "I can" statements were organized into three sections: understanding, vocal development, and performance. An example of an "I can" statement was "I can tell when music is the same or different."

In Olivia's classroom, evidence of curriculum included a children's book display, recorder materials, *Share the Music* basal music series, Kodály pedagogy books, Orff pedagogy books, rhythm cards, and the *Rhythmically Moving* series. On her walls she displayed a Kodály poster addressing the whole musician, musical road signs explaining basic note and music concepts, and a pitch village display. Lastly, Olivia had a SMART Board, barred instruments, and auxiliary percussion.



**Whitney.** A tenured teacher, Whitney had 14 years experience teaching with 13 years experience in grades 1-5 general music at a suburban elementary school.

Whitney's first teaching job was in Turkey. Whitney's current school had over 40% of students designated as economically disadvantaged according to state records for the 2010-2011 school year. When discussing her program, Whitney said:

My ideal music program is to create an audience. I had studied Kodály. That was one of the biggest things that I took away was the idea that kids need to be trained to understand and to appreciate music to relate to it. I remember from my youth that you stick with what you know. So, I see it as my goal to allow my students to experience as many different cultures of music and types of music, to keep their minds open, and to keep them interested in the arts beyond elementary.

Whitney's main learning community was the Informal Learning Community formed by music teachers in her district. For many years, the group met after school, and recently added additional time when the district incorporated late start days five times a year.

Whitney started attending "because I assumed that was what I was supposed to do."

She continued because the district music teacher group gave Whitney support expressed by her: "(I get) a lot out of it in terms of support and in terms of information and ideas."

In addition, she said that she already had a level of comfort with the group because one of the members was her elementary general music teacher.

Whitney had an undergraduate and a master's degree in music education. She hoped to receive Orff certification and Dalcroze training in the future. She was a member of the National Association for Music Education and participated at the state

music education association. In addition to membership in her Informal Learning Community with the district music teachers, she also participated in a district elementary music teacher core group that revised the music curriculum. Lastly, she worked with the related arts team in her building to incorporate school themes, a major influence in her curriculum. The previous year's school theme was Jazz and this year it was imagination.

In the past, Whitney held a leadership position in the informal district elementary general music teacher group scheduling meetings. She provided a schedule of meetings, themes, and goals for one year. Some of the topics consisted of incorporating technology, dancing, and reading integration. When visiting her classroom, noticeable displays on the wall outside her classroom were web posters in which 5<sup>th</sup> graders described their interpretation of imagination which was their designated school theme. Inside of her classroom, Whitney had some barred instruments, Feierabend materials, books in tubs organized by subject used for reading stations, four computer stations for music theory, and glow stars on the ceiling. Posted next to Whitney's desk was a handout listing characteristics of highly effective teachers.

**Common Experiences.** Except for Heidi, primary members of the District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Communities chose to be a participant. Elsie, Faye, Olivia, and Whitney described different ways in which their membership with a District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community began and characterized the topics covered as depending on the music teachers within each district. This described an Informal Learning Community, a group where training was led by the teachers' interests. Heidi's district required her participation and the

implementation of a learning initiative. Elsie, Faye, Heidi, Olivia, and Whitney had different stories about getting started with a District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community, and topics covered seemed to depend on the interest of the music teachers within each district. Additionally, Elsie, Faye, Heidi, Olivia, and Whitney had different experiences in degrees attained, in associations joined, in influences encountered, and in continuing education earned. Elsie, Faye, Olivia, and Whitney taught in suburban school districts. Heidi taught in a fast growing rural school district that will be designated as a suburban school district in the future.

Elsie, Faye, Heidi, Olivia, and Whitney mentioned either in their pre-interview survey or in their interview that the district directly influenced their music curriculum. Four out of five teachers supported this claim by submitting documents that showed the influence of their district music teacher group with their curriculum. One teacher submitted a collaborative district music teacher concept plan for kindergarten that included “I can” statements. Three teachers submitted district elementary general music teacher agendas for a school year. Topics of the district meetings included resources for “I can statements,” resources organized by musical concept, snow day lesson plan instructions, and literacy integration collaboration opportunities. Elsie, Faye, Heidi, Olivia, and Whitney stated that goals that they achieved as a result of their learning communities included active music making and sharing. All discussed the importance of tried and true lessons implemented into their curriculum. While Elsie, Faye, Heidi, Olivia, and Whitney mentioned different ways that learning communities inspired them, they all valued interacting with colleagues. Their views were supported by their

meaningful experiences. All of their meaningful experiences were a result of conversations with peers.

Elsie, Faye, Heidi, Olivia, and Whitney stressed the importance of sharing with district music teachers and described what happened as the result of it. Elsie, Faye, and Heidi discussed how they valued the sharing of successful lessons. Elsie stated:

When we come together, especially the district music teachers, there's a sharing. And I love that part because you kind get to the nitty gritty of it. That- okay, I tried it, it did not work. What are you doing differently that it does work with your kids? Or can you watch me teach it? Or here are some of the pitfalls I came up against. That is my favorite part- the sharing and the figuring out what works and what doesn't.

Faye valued the lessons shared in her district meetings because the ideas came from people whom she respects and because the teachers deal with a similar teaching environment. Faye explained:

Number one, I respect the references. I respect the other teachers that are giving me the ideas and the resources and the lesson plans of what to use. Things have already been tried and tweaked and discussed and re-tried. As far as teaching it, it's not the first time that I've done it. You do a lesson, and then I always run back to my desk and write notes as to what worked and what didn't work and how I'd want to change it next time and so on and so forth. You kind of skip that first step of it being so brand new.

Lastly, Heidi spoke about the value of meeting with music teachers. Heidi said the following in reference to music teacher groups in general:

There are times where I may be in professional development, mandated by the Curriculum department district-wide, and it has nothing to do with music. That may inspire me, but that is not going to inspire me the most. What is going to inspire me the most (comes from) my other music colleagues in that learning community (and that) is something that I can take right back to my kids and I know that I can apply and I know why (it works).

The practicality of tried and true lessons helped Elsie, Faye, and Heidi in the development of their music programs. It not only saved them time, but also allowed them to grow and to adapt from the shared experiences of others.

Elsie and Faye described supportive experiences that could result from meetings at the district level. Elsie described the benefit of having a district elementary general music group:

I think I always feel very, very good after I leave some of our big meet-ups; (when) it is one of our institute days, you leave with a purpose. So, if anything, it strengthens what you are doing when you are hearing other music teachers talk about their experiences- good or bad. There's just kind of camaraderie of music teachers, I guess. So that would be my main thing. It is just this bond between the music teachers and we're all there for a purpose, and it just reaffirms what our goals are as music teachers.

Faye spoke about the good and bad that could emerge from a meeting. She said:

I know that my job is important. I know (that) what I give to these kids and (that) what they give me is extremely important. Sometimes, you walk away from the meetings after discussing the political involvement of valuing what you

do. Whether it is (at) state level or (at) district level, and sometimes you walk away frustrated, but that doesn't drive what I do. It's like with any job.

Both teachers felt that their job was important despite the difficult issues they addressed in their district learning communities. An important factor of participation in their group was that they were able to talk through the difficult issues, even if the issues were not resolved in the same day. In the end, Elsie and Faye knew that what they gave to their students was the most important part of their job.

The meetings with district elementary teachers were a form of motivation for Whitney and Heidi. Whitney stated:

Being around everyone else, and hearing them talk about something that they are doing makes me realize (that) if it is something that I am not able to do yet, I need to learn it. So, it has pushed me.

Heidi saw involvement in her district as a form of motivation as well:

I talk to the other music teachers and (see) what they are doing and it is motivating. It is motivating to see somebody doing something that you are not doing and how cool is that! So, learning by other people's examples is motivating and seeing that you are not the only person who may have an issue with this problem (is important).

Seeing other music teachers as both a source of inspiration and a source of evaluating the effectiveness of their music programs motivated Whitney and Heidi. It allowed them to work out questions they had with their program by observing and speaking to others.

Whitney and Olivia spoke about how mentorship can arise in a District Elementary General Music Teacher group. Specifically, Whitney mentioned how her district group served the need of mentorship from teachers she respected:

It is really nice to have somebody like that who then will sit down and say, well, my first year, it stunk. It was horrible to do. It reminds you that she did not get there overnight. She did not just wake up and be (like) that.

Olivia addressed mentorship as a resource to help with the realities of the daily planning of beginning teachers:

I think getting involved whether it be (with) the other teachers in your district getting together and talking about where you are, I just think that it is extremely important. It is a huge benefit. It would help you (to) shape what you do day-to-day. You haven't been doing this job very long, so, there are so many people that you can learn from that have experiences and (that have) answers to questions that you have. You are going to come up with questions. How do you do this? There might be a problem that you see in your teaching or your classes that you do not know how to address, and there might be somebody in one of these learning communities that might have an idea for you- and you can try it- and it might be the answer that you are looking for. I think beginning teachers need to find that secret.

Both Whitney and Olivia valued the insight gained from experienced teachers which assisted them through the bumps in the road that occurred in the day to day teaching of elementary music. It was this practical application of issues that was designed

specifically for their own situation that was valued. This information was gathered by interactive conversations at the district meetings.

While sharing was a theme that connected all of the primary participants in District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Communities, different themes resulted from it. There were stories of the importance of shared lessons, support, affirmation, motivation, and mentorship. The teachers were from different backgrounds and they brought to the table different experiences and perspectives.

**Meaningful Experiences and Implementations.** Elsie, Faye, Heidi, Olivia, and Whitney mentioned meaningful experiences in their learning communities as a result of interactive conversations. Although all of the conversations and the teachers' insights resulting from them were different, all the discourse had a positive outcome for the teachers' students. Elsie, Faye, and Whitney spoke about enhancing an aspect of their curriculum within the context of a District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community. Elsie's elementary general music teacher group wrote a grant for SMART boards and learned how to use them. This experience "had really bonded (them) together." Elsie relayed this experience:

I was so excited to get this SMART Board going and to share the knowledge that I now had with my students. So I think that's how it translated. The excitement or the buildup within that community, it just flowed (then) right into my classroom.

Faye said an interactive conversation with her District Elementary General Music Teacher group allowed her to develop a unit plan in more depth. Because the music teachers in her district were no longer allowed to take third graders to a live



performance of *The Nutcracker*, the teachers problem solved about how to make Faye's unit on Tchaikovsky more interactive. Faye said:

And they said; well, what about teaching the kids different dances? I said, oh-that's an awesome idea. Do you know any? Well sure. So, then we all stood up, and they showed me different dances.

This result allowed Faye to be "more engaged." She said, "The more prepared you are, the better they are going to absorb it." Whitney's experience addressed assessment, an area in which she struggled. A conversation in her District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community led to a veteran teacher sharing how she assessed progress in her classroom. The experience of the conversation gave Whitney insight: "I began to realize (that) there are things that I can assess and (that) there are ways that I can do better at what I am doing." This resulted in giving Whitney confidence to try teaching new instruments to her students. She was able to assess the results and to differentiate instruction to accommodate the different learning rates of her students. Increased teacher engagement was the result of Elsie, Faye, and Whitney's involvement in their learning communities. This allowed the teachers to transfer the learned engagement to their classrooms which increased their engagement with their students.

Olivia and Heidi had meaningful conversations with their District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community as well. However, their meaningful experiences were not about implementing a musical concept in their classrooms. Olivia's meaningful conversation happened as a result of a side conversation in her district book discussion group. A teacher relayed an insight she received as a result of a discussion at a workshop addressing how kids feel while a teacher is instructing: If a

teacher is only acknowledging the accomplishments of a few, what message does that give to the other students? This question gave Olivia a deepened awareness of her relationships with her students: “I think that it has helped me appreciate where every child is and look for the good in each child.”

Heidi’s meaningful experience came from her active participation in her District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community. She was a co-leader and her participation in organizing and leading the conversations in the group became meaningful to her. In order to prepare professional development for her peers, she “had to get really good at formative assessment in order to convey the message to the others.” Heidi stated that it resulted in “higher accountability, definitely, and ownership of the process because I have to be a leader and an example for other people.” When Heidi was asked how that translated to teaching her students at the elementary school, she said, “If I am a better educator, they are going to get a stronger education and they are going to come out being better musicians.” The united concept both Olivia and Heidi addressed was the awareness of where they stood with their students and of how they implemented their teaching. As a result of their individual group conversations, Elsie, Faye, and Whitney increased their awareness of teaching concepts which allowed these teachers to become more engaged in their application of teaching.

Primary members in District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community groups represented different backgrounds, opinions, and interests. However, what unified the teachers was their value of interactive conversations among their colleagues within their districts. Three teachers addressed curriculum topics, one teacher explored classroom awareness, and one teacher spoke of the benefits of leading

conversations. All discussed a positive outcome for students as a result of their participation in their District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Communities. The interactive conversations increased engagement in all the teachers, allowing them personal growth and aiding in increased awareness within their classrooms. This resulted in higher engagement with their students.

### **Building Learning Communities**

A Building Learning Community is a group of teachers from the same school building that meet to discuss teaching, to implement district or building initiatives, to arrange continuity between programs, and/or to provide support. Additional descriptive information is found in Appendix I. Seven of the 24 teachers emphasize a learning community in their building. Of the seven, three emphasize the Building Learning Community as most important. Each teacher who emphasizes building groups as their Primary Learning Community is introduced with their vision statements of their program, their connection to their community, their experiences in professional development, and documentation of the implementation of their learning community in their workplace. The section concludes with discussing the teachers' common and meaningful experiences in the building learning community and their interpretation of how it influences their teaching and their students' learning.

**Lynne.** A tenured teacher in her 10<sup>th</sup> year, Lynne taught grades K-6 general music, 4-6 grades choir, 6<sup>th</sup> grade guitar, and 6<sup>th</sup> grade keyboard in a suburban elementary school. Formerly, she taught general music at an elementary school in another suburban district. When discussing her music program, Lynne said: "The vision of my current program is that all students will have an equal and fair opportunity

to explore music through singing, dancing and movement, creating, playing instruments, and learning historical background while having fun.” An additional part of Lynne’s vision was incorporating performance into her music program.

Lynne explained that being a part of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) was a requirement of her district. However, it was up to the teachers to choose in which learning community to participate. Another requirement by her district was that each building in her district had to have a theme. Lynne’s building theme was wellness, and she was eager to be a part of it. However, she felt that she needed to stay in contact with the music teachers of her district, so she chose to be a part of both learning communities. As a result of her building’s wellness initiative, students wrote fitness goals, wellness was integrated into their school’s curriculum, the school had a garden, there was a before school walking club, they developed indoor recess activities, and the whole school participated in morning exercises. Lynne incorporated wellness into her curriculum and created a music program based on learning about health. She said, “I’d like to just see as the years go by with this renewal of wellness, how it impacts our students and how they’re thinking about their individual health.”

Lynne had an undergraduate and master’s degree in music education. Lynne completed Kodály Levels I, II, and II. In addition, she attended Orff workshops, guitar workshops, and other continuing education music classes. Future professional development goals included Orff Levels and obtaining her Ph.D. She was an active member in the professional learning communities of the National Association for Music Education and her state music education association.

In organizing her music program, the three most important aspects to Lynne's music program were that for each lesson, students could successfully sing, create, and play instruments. As an example of how the Building Learning Community influenced her teaching, Lynne shared a copy of the wellness musical that she created.

**Xola.** In her 10<sup>th</sup> year of teaching, Xola was a global integration specialist in music for grades 1-4 in a suburban school. Her previous experience was as a general music teacher in the same district and in another district. This year was the first year of the incorporation of the global integration team. Xola explained:

It started primarily because of budget restraints. A levy didn't pass and so they had to make 12 million dollars in cuts. The cuts were a big bulk of it; 2 million dollars of it were in the area of the K to 6 specials. They cut the program in half. At least they didn't completely eliminate it, but they did cut it in half.

Instead of one music person in each building K to 6, now there is one person for every two buildings. Then, in order to make that program work, we have a team of four people for two buildings. So, the four people include a music teacher, an art teacher, a gym teacher, and a technology specialist. Basically, of those areas, it was completely cut in half. There are ten buildings (with grades) K-6.

Now there are five teams to cover those ten buildings.

The district and its integration team were figuring out how to coordinate collaboration among themselves, the classroom teachers at two schools, and the district. So, in describing her vision, Xola said:

We have been told that we are not responsible for teaching music standards.

We are to teach the common core and the new standards for the core

subjects and integrate music into that. So, the vision would be, I guess, to enhance student learning, (to enhance) deeper learning through the arts. Does that make sense? It is still a work in progress. We are still trying to figure it out.

As a part of the district initiative, a number of different groups formed. There was the larger community of the district global integration team and there were teams that formed smaller groups. The groups that Xola participated in were the district music integration specialist group and her building global integration team: herself, the gym teacher, the technology teacher, and the art teacher.

Xola's primary focus was the building global integration team. They met every day during the planning period that all the teachers receive at the beginning of the day. She explained how the program was implemented at the building level:

We meet with the classroom teachers to go over lessons with them and get ideas from them about what they would like to see taught and how we can help in their classroom. This year, thank goodness, they have allowed us a lot more time to plan since this is all new. We have seen the kids a total of ten times from each building because we do a three weeks residency. So, we are in one building for three weeks, and then we have a week or two of transition time and meeting time to regroup, and then we go to the next building for three weeks. Again, we have a couple of weeks in between to plan, regroup, and meet together for professional development.

Xola had an undergraduate and a master's degree in music education. She obtained a Kodály certificate and hoped to receive additional training in technology,

integration, and project-based learning. Xola received two university credits for all of her work with the communities of integration specialists. Xola was a member of the Organization of American Kodály Educators and her local Kodály chapter.

Xola's largest influences in her curriculum were other music teachers in her district, her instructional coach, her building team, and collaboration with classroom teachers. The purpose of her job was to serve as an instructional support for classroom teachers. To demonstrate examples of the results of her learning communities, Xola provided "I can" statements from the third and fourth phase focus, a lesson plan developed by her building integration staff team as an example to teachers at the beginning of the year, and the global integration website.<sup>10</sup> Phase three 3<sup>rd</sup> grade "I can" statements had a math focus: "I can develop an understanding of fractions as numbers." The fourth phase "I can" statements for first grade were about literacy and music (ballads, stories). The fourth phase "I can" statements were posted in Xola's room. Also, in Xola's room was a large display of children's books. A basal music series, *Spotlight on Music*, was on a cart, covered with plastic ready to move to the team's next building.

**Yvonne.** A tenured teacher in her 13th year, Yvonne taught grades 1-5 general music in a suburban elementary school. Previously, she taught in three different districts. Some of her past teaching experiences were at a middle school teaching vocal and general music and at a community college teaching voice lessons. Yvonne wanted her students to have a choice in what they are learning and emphasized, "enrichment-based and project based learning." When discussing her music program, she added:

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<sup>10</sup> The phase represented a period of time dedicated to a specific integration team focus which could last up to the full three weeks that they were in a building.

I also want my students to appreciate and understand music as a part of their daily lives. Just enrich them through experiences whether it is through singing, playing, dancing, listening, and even watching performances of musicians to create a spark in them, to have some sort of passion for music. They may not go on to have a career in music, but sometime in their life, they are going to be an audience member or a member of a community group or they might have children down the road who get involved with music programs. I really want them to have an appreciation for music and understand why music is such an important part of our culture. Just to have fun, too.

Her district encouraged teachers to explore the concept, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills.<sup>11</sup>

As a result, she worked with the art teacher and the gym teacher (the related arts team) at her building about the concept. Finding common assessments among the related arts team's classrooms was another goal. Yvonne explained that the team wanted to:

find consistency so that as a student travels to and from the art room, the music room, and the gymnasium, they are discovering things about themselves and about the stuff they are learning...in their (main) classroom, but (from) a different discipline. The three of us work together a great deal to find ways to commonly assess students, not only working through our curriculum, but (also) adopting the 21st Century educator standards. We are really big on the c's that are used in the 21st Century Skills, which are collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking.

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<sup>11</sup> 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills is a teaching initiative in which provides a current framework for successful student outcomes and support systems (Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, 2011, *Framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning*).



As a result of their work, her building related arts group planned to put together presentations about 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills to present at conferences.

Yvonne had an undergraduate degree in the arts, a music education certification from a different university, and a master's in music education. Yvonne completed her Kodály certification and wanted to upgrade her Professional Teacher's License to a Leader Teacher's License. She was not currently a member of an association, but she was involved in the learning communities of the local Kodály chapter, the state music education association, a group from her master's program, and mentoring new teachers. Her Informal Learning Communities consisted of a building book study about communication tools, a building 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills learning group, a building related arts staff group that addressed 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and assessment, a group of district music teachers that met to create common assessments, a community choir, a learning group she formed with other music teachers as a result of her graduate training, an online forum through a university that addressed classroom management practices, and an online forum through a university that addressed special learners. The online forums were Informal Learning Communities because the discussions were lead by teachers.

Standards, technology, and students' interests were the three most influential elements in Yvonne's program. To demonstrate the incorporation of her learning communities in her teaching, Yvonne provided a flier listing dates for district forums on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, a draft of a brochure for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills presentation by her related arts team, her building's related arts team agenda for a collaboration session, an example of a new computer program her district purchased to document assessment growth for students throughout the year, and an example of a project-based unit that

incorporated 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills philosophies. In her classroom, Yvonne had a SMART Board, Kodály notated rhythms on her whiteboard, posters of the band Police, buckets for drumming, and recorders. At the back of the room on a bulletin board there was a title that read “Did You Know?” Underneath the title was “Sol is on the fourth line.” There were examples of student work identifying sol on the fourth line. There was a folder stapled to the board for assessment sheets for her students. Near Yvonne’s desk on her bulletin board, she posted 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills district forum meeting dates and a list of questions to help teachers improve his or her teaching.

**Common Experiences.** District initiatives influenced Lynne, Xola, and Yvonne’s experience with their Building Learning Communities. Lynne and Yvonne had the choice to be a part of the building initiative; Xola did not have a choice. All three teachers had 10 to 11 years experience, a master’s degree with a Kodály emphasis, and Kodály certificates. The teachers believed in communicating with other teachers in their building so that they could develop consistencies among classrooms and project-based lessons. With this, they mentioned sharing as an important aspect in continuing engagement within their Building Learning Communities. Lynne, Xola, and Yvonne provided documents that demonstrated the implementation of their Building Learning Communities in their classroom. These documents consisted of an integrated music program, an integrated lesson, and an integrated unit plan. In addition to building groups, Lynne, Xola, and Yvonne were involved with the District Elementary General Music Teachers Learning Communities. Lynne, Xola, and Yvonne taught in suburban school districts.

Lynne, Xola, and Yvonne described the influence of the district initiative associated with their Building Learning Community. Lynne explained that the wellness Building Learning Community was a part of her district's initiatives to implement professional learning communities (PLC) into professional development for teachers and to establish individual building goals. Lynne said, "Every building within our district has to have a theme, and the whole school- all lessons and every subject- has to somewhat go with that theme. Ours is wellness." In the building wellness learning community, Lynne and the other teachers in her building planned and integrated concepts such as "hygiene, eating healthy, and exercising" into their lessons. Because of budget cuts, Xola's school district reorganized their related arts team into global integration specialist teams. Xola said, "we are to teach...the new standards for the core subjects and integrate music into that."<sup>12</sup> As a result of this new approach, a global integration specialist team (formerly a related arts team) that included music, art, physical education, and library teachers collaborated with classroom teachers to support the core curriculum. Lastly, Yvonne's district introduced the concept of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and provided forums and information about this concept for teachers throughout the district. Yvonne's related arts team and classroom teachers at her school were:

working on 21st Century Skills (by incorporating them) into our teaching, our students' learning and creating almost a school within a school where we are working on large scale projects that are student driven with lots of choices, (that are) project based, and (that) also often tend to have a underlining theme of

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<sup>12</sup> The core subjects Xola spoke of included language arts, math, science, and social studies.

reaching out or giving back to the community because we want our students to know that they are also very fortunate.

In fact, her building-related arts team took the concept to a higher level by preparing a conference presentation about how an integrated arts team could implement 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills.

The district initiatives had varied influences upon the teachers' building groups. In addition, there were different levels of choice in how the initiative was implemented. Because Xola's district initiatives had clear boundaries and desired work outcomes incorporated into the global integrated specialists' job descriptions, the teachers were required to create collaborative learning communities with classroom teachers and with each other. Lynne spoke of the requirement of participation in her district's Professional Learning Community initiative:

We only have to be in one. I chose to be in two. But, from our administration, we do have to be in at least one. And I wanted to be in one where I was involved with the teachers here at my school. And one where I was involved with other elementary music teachers.

Yvonne, on the other hand, explained her long-term interest in keeping her collaborative relationships with the other related arts teachers in her building. She said:

I would say from the get go, when I started teaching, that was something that I always had sought and made sure that I've stayed involved with. I have been very fortunate to have, regardless of what building that I have been in, a related arts staff that (we) work very well together.

Implementing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills was a choice in Yvonne's district. She spoke about why the related arts team and other teachers in her building began to implement the concepts into their rooms. They:

have as a district meeting what are called monthly 21st Century forums where people are coming together- all levels, all content areas- and sharing experiences that they have had in their classroom utilizing 21st Century Skills or project based learning, student choices, and things of that sort... The district does support it. But, it hasn't been a mandate or this is something that you have to do. Right now, it is still kind of new and folks are still kind of learning about it and becoming involved with it.

All three teachers' stories about a district initiative related to their Building Learning Communities show varying influences on the participation of teachers in a Building Learning Community. Certain questions resulted. Do the professional interests of teachers guide the formation of the small, Informal Learning Communities? Does less administrative involvement for these learning communities prove a better learning environment for the teachers in the Building Learning Community?

Lastly, Lynne, Xola, and Yvonne drew inspiration from colleagues. Xola specified that her time with music teachers was most inspirational:

I think the part that I have gotten the most out of is when we are collaborating as the music part of the integration team when we break it down into the disciplines. I've really enjoyed bouncing ideas off of the other music teachers. Then, also the local Kodály workshops, I also get a lot out of those.

The classroom teachers in her building and the music teachers across the district inspired Lynne. Lynne said:

I think that I am inspired the most by the teachers around me because I often feel like I am by myself, being the only music teacher in the building. And then when I get together with other music teachers and see the great things that they are doing, I'm very inspired and pleased with what they're working on. And then with the teachers here, seeing all of their wellness ideas and how they are incorporating it. It's very impressive.

Finally, Yvonne had the broadest interest in teacher collaboration:

Colleagues that have a shared vision and a shared passion for student success. When I hear through discussions or readings about educators that want their students to achieve everything that they can possibly achieve but learn as much as they can and just be a true kid. That is what gets me really excited about what I do.

The familiar theme that connected Lynne, Xola, and Yvonne was the interest in engaging with colleagues who possessed a shared interest.

Even though there were varied levels of participation in the district initiated Building Learning Communities, there were common threads among the members who primarily identified with Building Learning Communities. The teachers' participation resulted in better communication, in more consistency in implementation of lesson plans, and in the deepening of student learning. Lynne, Xola, and Yvonne placed high value in engaging with colleagues about children; each mentioned a community that possessed a shared interest of theirs when discussing what inspired them.

**Meaningful Experiences and Implementations.** Lynne, Xola, and Yvonne mentioned building collaboration as a way to deepen their students' thinking processes as meaningful. Lynne was inspired by her collaborations with her building wellness learning community. She created a musical about wellness that not only impacted her growth as a teacher, but also taught her older students to educate younger students.

Lynne said:

I realized that on my own, I came up with an idea that was going to impact the whole school and kids were teaching kids. And that taught me how important it is when you put something like that, the teaching, into the kids' hands. And so that made me think that I should do more activities where initially I teach them, but then I pass it along and they're teaching each other.

At a meeting with her global integration specialists at her school, Xola had an epiphany when the team leader questioned the process of an activity center lesson in her classroom. Xola said that conversation impacted both her and her students:

In that case, ever since then, I am always thinking about, well, why are we doing this? I am trying to figure out how to explain it to them why we are doing it.

We have those discussions in class now. It is not just me telling them that starts it, but I always involve them in the discussion. So, I think that it is important for the kids to be involved with that also.

Finally, Yvonne adapted a meaningful experience from her masters' program to evaluate her music program through conversations with staff at her building about the lasting impact of feedback. Yvonne learned that communication and feedback were

very important in the success of her teaching and she taught her students how to communicate feedback to her. Yvonne said:

I think that I learned through the process that I needed to make sure that I'm constantly getting feedback from other people, not just (at) an administrator evaluation that comes in twice a year. Oh- yeah you are doing a great job. But, somebody who truly understands what it is I am doing and what it is I am teaching. I think that feedback from the kids is just as reliable as someone who has a Ph.D. in music pedagogy. They are the ones that are learning and they are going to be able to tell me what I doing is making sense to them and if they are able to in turn, learn or grow in the way that I am asking them to grow.

Lynne, Xola, and Yvonne had common interests in creating collaborative, integrated experiences for children. The teachers recognized the importance of communicating with the teachers around them to make these experiences successful. The result of the integrated experiences not only provided insight for the teacher through observation and feedback, but also taught children how to talk about their experiences. The ability to talk about integrated experiences demonstrated greater student understanding within multiple subjects which included music.

Ultimately, the meaningful experiences of the primary members of Building Learning Communities reflected the strong interest of the school's whole environment for their students. By being on the same page with other teachers in their building, teachers extended learning during music class and could contribute to the collective growth of students in their school. With students discussing what they learn in music class and relating it to building initiatives, students were engaged in a building-wide



dialog. The result led to deeper understanding among students and their communities and introduced a larger picture of how the building initiative connected to other subjects.

### **Other Learning Communities**

Other Learning Communities are learning communities in which exemplary mid-career elementary music teachers from this study have chosen to participate. These communities are not common choices. Additional descriptive information is found in Appendix J. Five out of the 24 exemplary mid-career teachers emphasize learning communities that have not been discussed previously in this study. Each teacher in this group is introduced with their vision statements of their program, their connection to the other learning community, their experiences in professional development, and documentation of the implementation of their learning community in their workplace. The section concludes with discussion of the teachers' common and meaningful experiences in the Other Learning Community and their interpretation of how it influences their teaching and their students' learning.

**Aya.** With 18 years of teaching experience, Aya taught five years outside of the United States and 13 years in the United States. Aya's current position was grades K-5 general music in an urban setting. Over 50% of students at her school was economically disadvantaged as defined by the state for the 2010-2011 school year. Aya held National Board Certification and Lead Professional Educator License in Music (K-12) and Chinese (P-12). When discussing her classroom, Aya said: "My vision is to create a comprehensive music program that helps our students to develop their

musicianship, but in a way they can explore learning, creativity, and...how to discover themselves.”

Aya was a part of many learning communities. Aya’s major learning community emphasis was through the city’s Greater Arts Council that provided access to local artists and musical groups and through Aya’s own initiative to contact local artists and musical groups to present to her classroom. She enjoyed:

to try new things and learn new skills. One year, I might do Chinese dance. Now, I am thinking about what if I like to do African dance. How can I learn? So, I will try to reach out and to do my research and to think where and who will provide those things like that so I can learn. So, that to me is exciting, and it's challenging...And I also see the benefits, cause I see my students’ eyes, I just know they think, "Oh, that is so fun." I am not just doing that because somebody said that we should just do global or multicultural education.

Aya brought different groups to her school such as the city opera, the city ballet, and musicians from local Jazz ensembles. She added that because of her life experience and cultural background:

I believe that teaching is the kind of career you are always looking for things to learn and study. In a way, kids see how you do that. So, we continue to learn. Sometimes when we hear people saying that to become a life-long learner, I think that it is so important, especially for our profession, that's what we do. And we can always learn and get better. For kids, I think that it is so important for them to see, oh- "so, this is something new, too."

Aya had an undergraduate degree in social studies education and music education from a university outside of the United States. She had a master's degree in music education from a university in the United States. Aya was a member of the National Association for Music Education, the state music education association, the National Education Association, and the city education association. Aya's Formal Learning Communities consisted of partnerships with a university, National Board Certification, National Association for Music Education, the state music education association, district professional development workshops, a district project for achievement (in reading), a district leadership summit, district music teachers, and building meetings. In addition to her informal connections with local musicians and ensembles, Aya's Informal Learning Communities consisted of friend groups and family meetings about educational issues and shared stories regarding professional learning experiences.

Aya's cultural background, life experiences, and feedback from others influenced her curriculum the most. When we met, Aya showed me a notebook of her grant projects in which she had students create their own flip book based on what they learned about their musical. The books were displayed at the musical performances. Prominently displayed on the whiteboards at the front of the room were 27 pictures of Aya's students during classes, rehearsals, and performances. Aya called these pictures superstar posters because they celebrated her students and reminded them of their accomplishments. On one side of the room were elaborate set posters that Aya and the students created for a past musical. Written on the whiteboard for the drumming ensemble were rhythms based on an authentic Incan rhythm. Equipment in the room consisted of hand percussion, barred instruments, tubanos, a SMART Board, and choir

robes. Curriculum items were a *Share the Music* basal series, a *Making Music* basal series, a classical music display, an articulation display, and a poster from a teacher workshop in the district about asking questions.

**Chad.** A tenured teacher, Chad had eight years experience teaching grades 2-4 general music in a suburban elementary school that consisted of both urban and rural students. Chad had National Board Certification and previous experience as a 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade band assistant and a long-term sub for grades K-5 in another suburban district. Chad's vision was:

I always try to make sure that I am following the course standards and meeting all of those expectations of what is given by the state. Well, I guess something that is equally important to me is to maintain an environment in my room where the kids are coming in, engaged in music learning, and enjoying it and having fun while also learning my objectives...In my curriculum, I try to incorporate all of the different philosophies of music education. I borrow from, for example, Orff and Kodály, and assess those effectively. And I do a lot of movement from the Dalcroze philosophy. I try to encompass a wide variety of styles to my room.

Chad participated in several learning communities, one with the other music teacher in his building and one with the district music teachers. However, it was the lasting experience with a group of teachers obtaining their National Board Certification where Chad had a meaningful experience. Chad said:

When you watch yourself teach for two hours with a third grade class, you really get to see how effective you are. It was great to critique my teaching

and better myself...it allowed me to see better the way I assessed my students (and) to make sure that the kids are actually learning what I am teaching...I guess that it was an extreme test of what I practice.

Chad had an undergraduate degree in music education and Jazz performance and a master's degree in teaching. He completed Orff Levels I & II, and hoped to obtain an Orff Level III certification and a license in administration. At the time of the interview, he was not a member of a professional association but wanted to attend more music workshops and conferences. His active learning communities consisted of teachers who are National Board Certified and the grades K-6 music staff in his district. He participated regularly in an Informal Learning Community with a music teacher in his building. Chad said, "My co-worker next door teaches the same grades that I do. So, I am constantly talking (with her to be) in line with what she is doing."

The top three influences in Chad's curriculum were current music content standards, his students, and the maintenance of a positive, educational environment for his students. Near Chad's desk, posted on the wall was a sequential list for music concepts, music content standards, Bloom's Taxonomy, a handout about student management, and children's art. Near one end of the room, 14 barred instruments were arranged in rows, with a poster on the wall describing a pattern by which students were to switch instruments. Other instruments included an assortment of percussion and world percussion. Posters around the room portrayed instruments around the world, world percussion, Jazz, Sol-fa and rhythm notation, Curwen hand signs, and xylophone posters. Teaching materials included a book of rounds by Gilpatrick, a dance

curriculum (*Rhythmically Moving*), a German folk tale program, and a *Spotlight On Music* basal series.

**Kala.** In her 14<sup>th</sup> year of teaching, Kala taught grades K-6 general music in a suburban setting. She did not teach 4<sup>th</sup> grade general music and assisted with the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade band. Kala's vision for her program was "to create a comprehensive music program that helps our students to develop their musicianship, but in a way they can explore learning, creativity, and some of the things like how to discover about themselves."

Kala's main learning community was through her master's program in curriculum and instruction. Her emphasis was in music education. She said:

It has helped out a lot because I have got more into the different methodologies. I learned a lot more about them than I did in college. So I have been able to apply that a lot more to the classroom. And I think that helps out my students a lot, too. I have been able to include more active things, more movement. I just feel like if you don't go out and do those things and learn those things, the kids are never going to know, because you are stuck in the same thing. So, I am always the one that is looking for something new and something to keep things fresh and things like that.

Kala expressed an interest in being a part of more learning communities but mentioned that she did not get a chance to meet with others very often. Her district music teachers met about once a year. Kala was a member of the National Association for Music Education and her state association for which she was recently asked to submit an

article about her best teaching practices. She had a formal partnership with a university as a mentor teacher.

Kala had an undergraduate degree in music education and was two classes away from completing her master's in education. She attended general music workshops and hoped to receive more training in Orff, Kodály, Dalcroze, *music learning theory*, and John Feierabend. Master's work, preparing students for future ensemble participation, and encouraging active participation in the classroom influenced her curriculum. She provided a copy of the article that was to be published in the state music association journal about lesson planning. Next to Kala's desk were the school mission statement and the classroom vision statement. The curriculum oriented items in Kala's classroom were a Curwen hand sign poster, a *Share the Music* basal series, a display listing popular songs, a word wall, an instrument wall, a composer wall, and a list of composer birth dates which were on the door of the classroom. Instruments included many collections of auxiliary percussion, two tubanos, and band instruments stored on shelves along a wall of windows.

**Pauline.** With nine years of experience, Pauline taught 1-5 grades general music in a suburban elementary school. Her previous experience consisted of teaching at four other elementary schools. Three of the schools were in two different urban school districts. In discussing the vision of her program, Pauline stated "I understand that most of my students will not be professional musicians, but I feel that having a skill base and knowledge base is important to choosing music experiences later in life."

Pauline's most active learning community that influenced her music curriculum was her involvement in the local and state association of TI:ME, Technology Institute for Music Educators. She explained:

I got the SMART Board before I got involved with TI:ME. But I've learned so much more about the SMART Board from being in TI:ME that I think that it has made (the students) more literate, and not just in SMART Board, but also in other technology. So, I think that is huge for these kids.

Her interest in technology expanded beyond TI:ME in that she was not only involved with online forums, but she was also the technology coordinator for the building which was a stipend position where she "helped design the professional development series we have been doing this year as a staff with the new SMART Board that our PTO purchased." Another community in which she was an active participant was an accelerated Principal's License program that she planned to finish that summer. Though not directly related to her teaching, the program set the groundwork for a future shift in her career. She said:

The principal licensure cohort stemmed from a senate bill. Last spring when it all came down, I was scared to death about teaching in general and what would it mean if I didn't have union protection as a music teacher, not being a tested subject area. Okay- if I am not going to have the union protection, I want to be the boss.

Pauline had an undergraduate degree in music education and a master's in teaching and learning: language, literacy, and culture. In addition to having a Professional K-12 Music License, Pauline held a Reading Endorsement K-12. Besides involvement in her



Principal License program, Pauline had other non-music education training in Drama, Language Arts, Literacy, and Reading (DLLR). She said that she would be completing coursework for a Technology Endorsement and would like to complete the National Board Certification in elementary music. Pauline was a member in the national and local organizations of TI:ME, National Association for Music Education, and the Organization of American Kodály Education. Her Formal Learning Community besides TI:ME and the Principal Licensure cohort was the building's Intervention Assistance Team (IAT). Pauline's Informal Learning Communities were a summer Renaissance choir group, district elementary music teacher meetings, a building Book Talk about math instruction, an online music education technology forum, and an online music education chat on Twitter.

The most influential pieces in Pauline's curriculum were her undergraduate training, technology resources, and elementary music teachers whom she admired in her district. Pauline provided her webpage as an example of how her learning communities influenced her teaching. There were two sections. One was for her students that included composer of the month, music games, and grade level specific information about what the students were learning. There was a parent section that had a podcast of class projects and a feed from her Twitter music education learning community. Pauline's classroom equipment included a SMART Board, recorders, three drums, barred instruments, and four large screen Apple computers hooked up to four keyboards. Displayed on Pauline's walls were a newspaper article about the city opera performing at her school, rules of good singing, a composer display, and Curwen hand

sign posters. Near Pauline's desk was a sheet of paper posting seven characteristics of highly effective teachers.

**Violet.** Violet taught 1-5 grades general music for nine years in a rural elementary school. Concerning her music program, Violet said:

I follow the Kodály method of teaching. It is mostly a philosophy of teaching music through the joy of singing. I would say that the vision for my program is to teach music through the joy of music, be able to learn through folk songs, be able to really enjoy everything that they are doing, and learn the basics of music through that.

Violet's Formal Learning Community in which she was involved the most was a chorus and quartet that was a local chapter of an international barbershop association for women. Violet held many positions in the group including assistant director, section leader, and educational chair. In discussing how she became involved, Violet said:

The first reason why I become involved was my mom was a member of it, and that's how I came to know about it. Then, as I was becoming a music educator, I really saw how that is another avenue for learning because I was an instrumental major. Working in the general music field, it really helps me with the vocal aspect of it.

Although currently not a member of Kodály, Violet stated that her master's program had an emphasis in Kodály and that it had a lasting impact on her curriculum. Violet's Informal Learning Communities included her District Elementary General Music Teachers group, unified arts at her Building, and a community choir. She was not a member of a professional association at the time of the interview.

Violet had an undergraduate and a master's in music education. She had Kodály certification and attended professional development within her district. In the future, she wanted to obtain a teaching license in elementary education. State content standards, Kodály training, and district directives influenced her curriculum. In providing an example of how learning communities influenced her classroom, she provided a rubric of music objectives based on building initiatives, a first grade song spread sheet that listed what Kodály standards the students met, and a curriculum map that the District Elementary General Music Teachers created. In Violet's classroom was a large rubric of music objectives based on building initiatives posted on a bulletin board next to the door. One side of the chart listed classroom activities: singing, dancing, playing, board work, seatwork, and general. There were different degrees of each music example explained according to the following categories: respectful, responsible, caring, and capable. By listing this on the board, Violet set an expectation that her students would know how to achieve. Other items in her room were a *World of Music* basal music series for grade 1, a *Share the Music* basal music series for grades 1 through 5, an area for learning music theory on three computers, a list of learning targets with "I can" statements next to them, and a collection of manipulatives. Lastly, Violet had an ipad that she received from a building grant to use as intervention for students with special needs.

**Common Experiences.** Aya, Chad, Kala, Pauline, and Violet identified Other Learning Communities as their primary group. Other Learning Community has been defined as learning communities that were not common choices among participants in this study. As unique as the learning communities Aya, Chad, Kala, Pauline, and Violet

chose, so were the inspirations they received as the result of them. All stated it was their choice to be a part of their learning community and expressed that sharing was involved with their participation. Aya, Chad, Kala, Pauline, and Violet were involved in both Formal and Informal Learning Communities. They were all involved with their District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community, and almost all of them were involved with Building Learning Communities. With the exception of one person, the teachers each had at least one degree outside of music education. The teacher who did not have a degree outside of education wished to receive a teaching license in early education. Two other teachers wished to receive a license outside of music education. At the time of the interview, two teachers were National Board Certified and all teachers either had obtained a master's or were pursuing it. The teachers either held leadership positions in their learning communities or wished to possess a leadership position. All together, the school districts in which they taught represented one rural, three suburban, and one urban district.

While Aya, Chad, Kala, Pauline, and Violet did not make the same choices in learning community participation, a shared attribute was that they followed a personal interest when choosing their Primary Learning Community. In addition, their interests were unlike their peers in their school district and different from the other participants in this study. Their independent inquiry into different learning communities brought unique ideas to both teachers and students.

Both Aya and Violet participated in learning communities that involved music performance. Violet had a long-term interest in women's barbershop singing groups and had been a part of one since age 17. Her participation had expanded to leadership

in the group both musically and administratively. She elaborated on what inspired her the most:

I think just really great music making inspires me because you can see that this is the end result of the basics that you have been teaching. Because at the level at we teach, it does not always get as technically beautiful or as the final result of an adult choir or an adult band or something like that. So you can see how all the little things right now can turn into something more sophisticated later on. So, that inspires me.

Violet valued her experience in a performance group and that inspired her to teach students how to be a part of a music group. Her personal interest in singing translated to her classroom. Violet said “I think that it influences my musicality just by how I am able to produce sounds for the kids to hear. So the way that I've learned how to sing influences my musicality and how I teach them how to vocalize.” Aya also demonstrated an interest in performance groups; however, her focus was to research performance in multicultural music and dance. Aya sought local performance groups and artists to research how to teach different genres of music. She was driven by both a personal interest in multicultural music and an enthusiasm to give her students different experiences. Aya explained, “When that happens, not only my kids learn, I learn a lot too.” Both Violet and Aya had a vested interest in the areas of performance and had been successfully translating their experiences to their students. Violet set her music goals with her personal experience as a base. Aya’s personal experiences in multicultural music encouraged her to bring knowledge of multicultural music to her students through musical programs.

Chad, Kala, and Pauline's Primary Learning Community involved various types of formal professional development through university studies. However, it was the nature of the groups formed as the result of the programs that diversified their experiences. Becoming a National Board Certified teacher was a part of Chad's master's program. He had the opportunity to observe and to collaborate with other teachers obtaining the National Board Certification. Chad said, "When you watch yourself teach for two hours with a third grade class, you really get to see how effective you are. It was great to critique my teaching and better myself." Chad's interest in being a better teacher was reflected not only in his choice to obtain National Board Certification, but also in the lasting influence of self-reflection which he continued to incorporate into his teaching. At the time of the interview, Kala was working on her master's in curriculum and instruction. Since the university near her did not have a music education master's degree, she incorporated her interest of improving her music program into her graduate program. She attended local music pedagogy workshops at the university and applied the knowledge to the creation of a new curriculum for her music program. She stated:

It has helped out a lot because I have got more into the different methodologies. I learned a lot more about them than I did in college. So, I have been able to apply that a lot more to the classroom. And I think that helps out my students a lot, too. I have been able to (include) more active things, more movement. I just feel like if you don't go out and do those things and learn those things, the kids are never going to know, because you are stuck in the same thing. So, I am

always the one that is looking for something new and something to keep things fresh and things like that.

Pauline was the only teacher who was a part of two Primary Learning Communities. One was through her principal's licensure program at a local university, and the other was through TI:ME, Technology Institute for Music Educators. Both were equally important to Pauline from an interest perspective; however, it was TI:ME, another Formal Learning Community, that impacted her classroom the most. Pauline said:

I just needed some refreshing. I think that is what TI:ME has allowed me to do, and these online communities. To come up with some interesting technology ideas to fresh(en) some lessons that I've been doing for nine years. I think that is the main reason that I do these things, is to not get stagnant and passive in what I am doing because then it is not fun anymore.

Chad, Kala, and Pauline followed their interests which led them to Formal Learning Communities initiated by universities or an association. Like Violet and Aya, they focused on an interest and pursued it further through a learning community that may not have been the same choice as the peers in their school districts.

**Meaningful Experiences and Implementations.** Aya, Chad, Kala, Pauline, and Violet focused on a specific interest through a learning community and reinterpreted it for their own use in their classroom. This was demonstrated through the teachers' descriptions of meaningful experiences and was transferred to their teaching and their students' learning. In examining their meaningful experiences, Aya and Pauline transformed their training from their learning communities into integrated experiences for their students. Aya, who became inspired by creativity and by actively gathering

resources, collected information from local artists to create a yearly multicultural integrated music program. The performances featured art, dance, and multicultural music and this year she received a grant for students to create their own books exploring the subject of the musical. Aya said that teachers in her building commented: “This teacher will say- - I have never seen my kids write this well before... We can hardly get them to write two paragraphs, and now we have a book.” Every time Aya created an integrated musical, it became a learning process not only for her students, but also for herself. When preparing for the musical, Aya integrated music and core classroom subjects at the same time. The creative integrated process transformed Aya’s teaching and allowed Aya and her students to discover learning in the process. Pauline experienced inspiration from teachers in her District Elementary General Music Learning Community and from workshops sponsored by TI:ME. Music technology resources collected after a TI:ME presentation at a conference sparked her interest in exploring technology integration into her classroom in more depth. These resources included online communities with other music teachers who practiced integrating technology into their classrooms. Pauline’s interest and expertise grew and this led her to become involved in adult education and in technology leadership both in her building and in TI:ME. In integrating more technology in her classroom, Pauline felt that she could engage her students more. She said:

Because of the type of blog that I use, I can track exactly what people are clicking on when they go to my site. I know exactly what games the kids are clicking on, what they are playing. I know when I've got a really popular composer of the month because they're watching the videos over and over again.



I think that it helps me be in tune with what the kids are interested in outside of the classroom. I am teaching them certain skills here, but what they are seeing briefly, maybe on my website, and then they are going home and sharing it with their parents. Then, the parents are emailing me and asking me questions. It has been really insightful what the kids are doing outside of school.

Pauline's blog allowed her to engage with both students and their parents outside of her classroom. Pauline implemented what she learned about technology in a new way to increase engagement and learning in her students.

Chad, Kala, and Violet spoke about formal training from a university that inspired involvement in a learning community as a meaningful experience. This learning community experience helped them develop their music programs and influenced how they taught. As previously mentioned, Violet's main learning communities were associated with choral groups which reflected what inspired her: a good musical performance. However, it was an experience in a Kodály certification class for her master's degree that she named as meaningful to her. Violet stated:

We would do a lot of practical things in the class. Just being able to teach in front of other teachers was an event that was very helpful to me in trying to make my plans more successful...Because I guess that is the hardest audience you would have is teaching in front of other music teachers. Those kinds of things were always very helpful.

Violet added that the learned artistry and the experience from her choirs helped implement a Kodály curriculum into her program. She explained:

I think that it influences my musicality just by how I am able to produce sounds for the kids to hear. So the way that I've learned how to sing influences my musicality and how I am teaching them how to vocalize.

From her involvements in the choir and in the Kodály certification class, Violet developed her confidence teaching and in turn, improved the clarity of her instruction.

Kala's meaningful experience was a culmination of her master's work at a nearby university. The state music education association asked her to write an article about practical applications in an elementary general music room.

I took a lot of the things (that) I learned from that community (nearby university) as far as the workshops and things and then how I applied it all to my teaching, (and) kind of transformed things that I did from the past into a lot (of) better things for my students. I guess that was kind (of) revealing to me that someone felt that what I was doing was good enough to share with others.

Kala stated that when she created her music program, the result was more joyful for her and her students. It also taught her to evaluate and adjust her lessons so that more active music making occurred. Chad's meaningful experience preparing for National Board Certification with a group of teachers throughout his master's program inspired more consistent reflective thinking about his program. The experience has greatly impacted Chad's teaching:

Ever since then, not that I always did this stuff before, but it made me think more deeply about it, how the students are interacting with one another and how I am meeting the needs of every student in the class...I am always trying to assess what I am doing and what the students are doing, making sure they are

understand what I am doing. I guess in my teaching now, I am constantly thinking about the National Board.

By intensifying his teaching practice, Chad created an internal dialog which helped guide him through refining and adjusting his teaching. He continued to search for different ways to increase student engagement among all students attempting to cater to students with different learning styles.

Aya, Chad, Kala, Pauline, and Violet revealed through their stories of meaningful experiences with learning communities a vested interest in talking about self-reflection, self-growth, and transformation. Independently, they developed an interest not commonly found among teachers in their district and among teachers in this study; they actively sought experiences in alternative learning communities. From these meaningful experiences, they creatively reinterpreted their learning for themselves and for others and they created their own teaching process based on experiences outside traditional elementary general music education methodology.

### **Secondary Learning Communities**

Group memberships that are important to teachers but are not their main choice are labeled as Secondary Learning Communities. All the teachers in this study have a Secondary Learning Community and every teacher is included in this section. In fact, some teachers have two or more secondary memberships. Even though the Secondary Learning Community is not primary to their professional development, the memberships influence their teaching and their students' learning; this distinguishes the difference between Secondary Learning Communities and marginal involvements in learning communities. The extent of teachers' participation mentioned in both their

interview and their pre-interview survey determines the teachers' Secondary Learning Community. Fifteen teachers identify with one primary group and one secondary group; five teachers identify with one primary group and two secondary groups; one teacher identify with one primary group, and three secondary groups; one teacher identifies with one primary group and more than four secondary groups; one teacher identifies with two primary groups and more that four secondary groups; and one teacher identifies with multiple primary groups and multiple secondary groups.

Multiple Learning Communities will be examined further in Part Two of this chapter.

Organized by the previously identified communities, Orff-Schulwerk, Kodály, District Elementary General Music Teachers, Building, and Other, common themes among secondary members of each group are discussed. In each group, shared characteristics of primary and secondary members are acknowledged. At the beginning of each previously identified community, teachers' names are placed within parentheses containing their Primary Learning Communities. The Secondary Learning Community section concludes with descriptions of patterns that are found among all secondary memberships.

**Secondary Orff-Schulwerk Members.** Chad (Other primary), Noelle (Kodály primary), and Olivia (District Music Teacher primary) were secondary Orff-Schulwerk Learning Community members. Olivia had an additional secondary membership in a Kodály Learning Community and Chad had two additional secondary memberships in a Building and a District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community. Chad and Olivia taught in a suburban school district and Noelle taught in a rural school district. Both Olivia and Noelle's building had over 40% of students who were

economically disadvantaged as defined by the state for the 2010-2011 school year.

There were different ways Chad, Noelle, and Olivia participated in their secondary Orff-Schulwerk Learning Community. While Chad and Olivia attended Orff-Schulwerk workshops and training in the past, they were not current members. They wished to receive more training in Orff-Schulwerk and actively practiced and identified with the methodology. Chad said:

Balancing (student joy) with the curriculum, I maintain a well-balanced curriculum as they learn all of the music standards that we need to teach the kids. At the same time, it needs to be an experience, which is really inline with the Orff philosophy. It is all about the experience.

Chad had multiple interests represented by both Primary and Secondary Learning Communities. But his primary focus was Other Learning Communities. However, his interest in multiple music pedagogies was secondary because the influence of National Board Certification was his main focus at the time of the interview. Olivia's interest in Orff-Schulwerk came from her aspiration to discover ways to engage her students in creativity. She said:

The Orff classes: I love them because the one part of my teaching that I feel needs to be improved is the ability to help students be creative, take what they've learned, and then do something on their own with it whether it is through movement or improvisation.

Olivia also participated in a Kodály Learning Community. Multiple music education pedagogies formed her Secondary Learning Communities, however, her current focus was the District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community.

Noelle was a current member of the local and the national chapters of Orff-Schulwerk. When she spoke of her learning communities, she mentioned both the Kodály and the Orff-Schulwerk groups. The reason she attended these groups was to evaluate her music program and to spark new ideas.

The learning communities let me know what is going on. They help me see changes in the present, as well as the foreseeable changes. And it helps me see (what) I need to be researching or looking into. It also helps me keep on track on what needs to be done.

All three had different perspectives on how the Secondary Learning Community fit into their curriculum. Though it was not the source of their meaningful experiences, the Orff Schulwerk Learning Community provided support in developing a specific aspect of their music program.

Common traits shared among Chad, Noelle, and Olivia included a range of different topics. They were involved with their respective district's music teachers' groups and they mentioned that how they related to their students was meaningful to them. At the time of the interview, Chad, Noelle, and Olivia had obtained their Level I Orff certification. Chad had completed Level II Orff certification, whereas Noelle had completed Level II Kodály and Olivia was close to completing her Kodály certification.

Chad, Noelle, and Olivia expressed that they wanted to learn new trends in music methods in their learning communities. This was demonstrated in the way they practiced multiple pedagogies. Using the Kodály methodology along with Orff-Schulwerk was a common practice among them. They spoke about movement and, at some point in their interviews, expressed an interest in Dalcroze. Their multiple

pedagogical interests were supported in the items in their classrooms and the documents that they supplied. In their classrooms, Chad, Noelle, and Olivia had recorders, barred instruments, solfège visuals, movement curriculum, and Kodály rhythms displayed. They had a list of sequential music concepts posted in their room and/or provided a document that contained sequencing in a concept plan. In support of their multiple interests, they also had nonmainstream training aspirations such as Body Mapping, Alexander Technique, principal licensure, and world drumming. Chad, Noelle, and Olivia expressed that they found affirmation in any learning community in which they participated as it validated the work that they did. Lastly, all three of the teachers' descriptions of meaningful experiences included an account of a conversation with other teachers.

There were a few characteristics secondary Orff-Schulwerk members shared with primary Orff-Schulwerk members. Besides choosing to take part in the practice of the pedagogy, both primary and secondary members had obtained Orff Level I certification. All mentioned that they wished to have additional training with the exception of secondary member, Noelle, who received additional training by attending Orff-Schulwerk workshops. All belonged to their local Orff-Schulwerk chapter, with the exception of Chad and Olivia who had been members in the past. In their classroom, both primary and secondary members had varied collections of barred instruments which are often used in implementing Orff-Schulwerk methodology. All mentioned movement as a part of their curriculum. Finally, discovering how to implement a teaching concept was the focus of all primary and secondary Orff-Schulwerk members' meaningful experiences with their learning communities. The

main difference between primary and secondary groups in the identified Orff-Schulwerk Learning Community was that the Primary Learning Community's teaching concept involved Orff-Schulwerk methodology, whereas the secondary members spoke about more broad concepts such as learning to analyze their teaching approach in different situations.

**Secondary Kodály Members.** Heidi (District Music Teacher primary), Jade (Orff-Schulwerk primary), Olivia (District Music Teacher primary), Qiana (Orff-Schulwerk primary), Tabettha (Orff-Schulwerk primary), Violet (Other primary), Xola (Building primary), and Yvonne (Building primary) were secondary Kodály Learning Community members. In addition, Heidi had a secondary Building Learning Community; Jade participated in a secondary Other Learning Community; Olivia was a secondary Orff-Schulwerk Learning Community member; Xola was a secondary District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community member; and Yvonne was a secondary Other Learning Community member. Heidi, Jade, Qiana, and Violet taught in rural school districts, while Olivia, Tabettha, Xola, and Yvonne taught in suburban school districts. Olivia and Qiana's buildings had over 40% of students who were economically disadvantaged as defined by the state for the 2010-2011 school year.

Secondary Kodály Learning Community membership was expressed in varied ways. The teachers were influenced by the Kodály Learning Community either through attending meetings, referring to a past experience during their certification, or creating an Informal Learning Community to explore the Kodály methodology. Reasons for involvement in a Kodály Learning Community consisted of a continued interest in the sequencing of musical concepts and a development of personal musicality through



singing. Olivia, Qiana, Tabettha, and Xola regularly attended meetings of their local Kodály chapter. Olivia, Qiana, and Tabettha discovered the Kodály methodology early in their teaching careers, whereas Xola joined upon returning to teach after taking a break to raise her children. Because Xola was responsible for creating music lessons that supported common core subjects in her district, going to workshops to discuss her changing curriculum with other music teachers was helpful. Xola said, “Talking to other people and things like that is a good way to figure out how to integrate that.” Olivia, Qiana, and Tabettha shared an interest in learning more about the Kodály process and different music methodologies. Olivia said:

When I first started, I had a course of study, but I had no idea what was most important, where to begin. Those courses helped me come up with a sequence that I felt worked. I think that it made me a better musician. It trained my ear. And the Orff, Dalcroze, and all of that have helped add an aspect - it gives my students a variety.

Qiana who discovered different pedagogies through Kodály commented:

You have to continue going on in training. If you are going to, it should be in your specific field, learning from the best people who are available to share. Both (Kodály & Orff-Schulwerk) groups that I am involved with provide those leaders by sharing. They have helped me to refine my teaching immensely.

Lastly, Tabettha explained the interest in combining the multiple pedagogies as:

I guess it is a thirst and a hunger within myself to learn more. I love what I do. And I am passionate about what I do. I get so much more life and enjoyment in

what I do when I go into these enriching experiences, and teach them to my kids because I see the excitement in them.

Variety of learning techniques, sharing ideas, and excitement of learning were common characteristics that current members of a formal Kodály Learning Community identified. This demonstrated the teachers' interests in other methodologies and in other topics concerning music education.

Violet and Yvonne shared that meaningful experiences emerged from past experiences of their certification. Violet appreciated teaching in front of peers because it gave her more confidence. Although Kodály was an active methodology in her program, Violet was identified as a secondary member because she placed more emphasis in adult performance groups and expressed a lack of support for professional development in her district. Yvonne's primary focus was her Building and her Informal Learning Communities. As a secondary Kodály member, Yvonne took the process that she learned in her master's program with a Kodály curriculum emphasis and developed an Informal Learning Community to continue developing her program. Again, the review of her teaching from peers during her master's program influenced her to continue to have peers review her teaching: "Even (after) the master's program, I now am constantly seeking feedback whether it is having somebody come in and observe my class and give me feedback."

Heidi and Jade participated in informal Kodály Learning Communities.<sup>13</sup> Heidi worked with another music teacher at her school who was also Kodály certified. She said, "I love learning from other people so I can get better. I would much rather learn

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<sup>13</sup> In this study, an Informal Learning Community has been defined as teachers who create their own group and guide their own learning.

from my colleagues, than sit there and read a book. (laugh) Way more fun too.”

Heidi’s strong interest and involvement in implementing Kodály methodology mirrored her strong interest in being involved with her Building and District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Communities. Jade commented on the reason why she participated in an online informal Kodály Learning Community: “Though I have not been attending Kodály workshops since I have started attending the Orff chapter workshops (only because it is too costly financially and time-wise to commit to both Orff and Kodály chapters), I stay connected to the Kodály chapter through an email exchange.” Jade shared a SMART Board lesson which she posted with the online group. Kodály, like the Orff-Schulwerk methodology, provided similar support in creating a music learning sequence for her curriculum.

Common characteristics describing Heidi (District Music Teacher primary), Jade (Orff-Schulwerk primary), Olivia (District Music Teacher primary), Qiana (Orff-Schulwerk primary), Tabettha (Orff-Schulwerk primary), Violet (Other primary), Xola (Building primary), and Yvonne (Building primary) were that they all held graduate degrees and they made a choice to be a part of a Kodály Learning Community. All of their meaningful experiences focused on an experience of discovering how to refine one’s teaching. As a part of their meaningful experience, adult interaction helped them achieve a deeper understanding about their teaching process. Although their meaningful experiences were diverse, these experiences reflected the teachers’ varied interests inside and outside a Kodály Learning Community. All but one teacher had Kodály training and that teacher stated that budget restraints prevented her from obtaining her certification. Six teachers received Kodály training in association with a

master's degree program. Six teachers were a part of a local Kodály chapter and two teachers had been members in the past. All of the teachers had documentation of the influence of the Kodály methodology in their room or had Kodály materials in their room that included rhythm symbols, sequential music concepts, or posters of solfège. All but one teacher incorporated the influence of the Kodály philosophy in their vision statement. Shared vocabulary included direct references to Kodály initiatives (Appendix G): the whole musician, music literacy, and folksongs. Seven teachers shared stories of curriculum building and six teachers mentioned directly that their learning communities helped to support their curriculum. Six teachers mentioned participation in Informal Learning Communities. Lastly, six teachers mentioned the importance of teacher musicianship and being a good model for their students. Half of the teachers belonged to their state music education association.

Characteristics secondary Kodály members shared with primary Kodály members included the same 2:1 ratio of rural to suburban settings. Both primary and secondary members mentioned that it was their choice to be a part of a Kodály Learning Community. Everyone had evidence of Kodály materials either in their classroom or in documentation of the implementation of a learning community in their classroom. In addition, all supported the integration of active music making into their classrooms. Both Kodály Primary and Secondary members cited learning a teaching process as a meaningful experience. However, primary members' teaching processes involved the Kodály methodology. The secondary members' teaching processes did not involve the Kodály methodology. Instead, the Secondary Kodály members displayed a range of insights not limited to the Kodály methodology their teaching practices.

**Secondary District Elementary General Music Teacher Members.** While almost all participants mentioned district music teacher groups, teachers identified as secondary District Elementary General Music Teacher members mentioned more involvement in the group and a heightened impact of the District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community in relation to their professional development. Bria (Kodály primary), Chad (Other primary), Diane (Orff-Schulwerk primary), Isabelle (Orff-Schulwerk primary), Lynne (Building primary), Ursula (Orff-Schulwerk primary), and Xola (Building primary) were secondary District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community members. Some teachers participated in additional Secondary Learning Communities; Chad was a secondary Building Learning Community and Orff-Schulwerk Learning Community member and Xola was a secondary Kodály Learning Community member. Bria and Diane taught in rural school districts, while Chad, Isabelle, Lynne, Ursula, and Xola taught in suburban school districts.

Secondary District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community membership was either a part of a district led initiative or an interest directed by the music teacher interviewed and/or the other music teachers in their district. Bria, Xola, Isabelle, and Lynne came from districts that required music teacher group interaction. Bria's district initiated the concept of formative assessment and encouraged music teachers to collaborate with each other. Bria said, "I think that my vision has changed to actually include more curriculum because my work with my district and formative assessment. So, I like that. I really feel like I am teaching a more well rounded music education." As a part of her participation, Bria co-led the music teacher group in her

district to explore formative assessment in general music. Xola's district no longer implemented music content standards. Instead, her district focused on core curriculum that supported classroom teachers. The purpose of her participation in the district music teacher group was, "To be able to talk to each other and (to) collaborate and get ideas from each other; (it) has been very helpful." Isabelle and Lynne came from a district that required a Professional Learning Community (PLC), an informal learning group. They shared ideas in a technology-oriented learning community for general music teachers. Lynne found it helpful: "Bouncing ideas off each other... that is really valuable to me." Isabelle added:

It is not just SMART Board stuff. I mean that's the reason why we come together, but we inevitably talk about other things like district initiatives, using "I can" statements and learning targets, and that sort of stuff. Having an opportunity to discuss that with other teachers, then, allows me to focus more on goal setting with my students, particularly our district initiative towards learning targets and "I can" statements.

District initiatives influenced all four teachers' memberships in their District Learning Communities. In one case, a teacher transformed her experience with her learning communities to create a district initiative. Ursula brought music assessment information learned from her local music education pedagogy learning communities to her district curriculum development committee. As a result, the fusing of her learning communities' ideas set forth a new district approach to assessing general music.

Chad and Diane's secondary membership in their districts was through the initiative of teachers. Diane and Chad came from smaller districts. Diane briefly

mentioned interacting with other music teachers in her district, whereas Chad elaborated on the reasons why their informal group began:

The learning community from my school started three years ago because we noticed that a lot of the kids were going from one teacher to another. We were finding that the kids coming to us from first grade, for example, did not know a music concept we thought that they should know. We became a little frustrated. So we finally said okay- let's get together and talk about what we are doing in K-1 and how we can make the transition more smooth from there to here. That was mainly why it got started. It's become a regular thing, which is kind of cool because we get to share ideas and talk about what is working, what is not working, and what we are doing in the programs and things like that.

Both Chad and Diane were motivated by their own initiative rather than by a required school district initiative to meet in a learning community with peer music teachers.

Characteristics in common among Bria (Kodály primary), Chad (Other primary), Diane (Orff-Schulwerk primary), Isabelle (Orff-Schulwerk primary), Lynne (Building primary), Ursula (Orff-Schulwerk primary), and Xola (Building primary) included that they all had their master's degree, obtained some form of music education pedagogy certification, believed sharing information with others was important, participated in Informal Learning Communities, and attended district music teacher meetings. All but one teacher desired Orff-Schulwerk training. Six out of seven teachers had barred instruments and student goals posted somewhere in their classroom. Five out of seven were tenured teachers. Four out of seven teachers shared documents that demonstrated the influence of their District Elementary General Music Teacher

Learning Community in their classroom. They had different meaningful experiences in relation to their learning communities: two resulted through conversations, two were a result of a teaching experience, and three were influenced by a music education pedagogy workshop.

Characteristics secondary District Elementary General Music Teacher members shared with primary District Elementary General Music Teacher members were that they attended district music teacher meetings and that they felt sharing with others was important. Almost all had Informal Learning Communities. Lastly, most teachers shared documents that demonstrated the influence of their district group in their classroom.

**Secondary Building Members.** Chad (Other primary), Heidi (District Music Teacher primary), Rose (Kodály primary), and Whitney (District Music Teacher primary) were secondary Building Learning Community members. There were teachers who participated in additional Secondary Learning Communities: Chad was in a District Elementary Music Teacher Learning Community and an Orff-Schulwerk Learning Community; Heidi was in a Kodály Learning Community. Heidi taught in a rural school district which will be designated as a suburban school district soon, while Chad, Rose, and Whitney taught in suburban school districts.

Secondary Building Learning Community membership was expressed by collaboration with either the building related arts team or another music teacher who worked in the building. A related arts team in a building typically included teachers who taught music, art, physical education, and library. Rose mentioned that she met with her related arts team in her building. Her building team was an extension of their



district related arts team, a new initiative in her district. Rose explained:

This year our focus has been rubrics and how we can incorporate them into our classes. We often times start as a whole group, and then we will go and meet, like the three of us, like the music teachers, the art teachers, and the P.E. teachers and then come back together. There are a lot of commonalities going on in my room versus going on in the art room that we can share ideas and brainstorm ideas with each other.

Whitney's related arts team's collaboration was based on an interest in establishing a school theme. Specifically, Whitney collaborated with the art teacher at her school. She said:

Last year, the art teacher and I worked together to teach about Jazz to the whole school. We wrote a grant. Jazz permeated everything that we did. The artwork, the performances that came, everything that I taught.

For both teachers, the end goal was to create learning consistency between classrooms.

On a regular basis, Chad and Heidi obtained curriculum consistency and new ideas with a music teacher who was a co-worker. In Chad's experience, the District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community decided to unite their curriculum for consistency. Chad sought the same goal in his professional relationship with his colleague at his building. He said:

It has always been good to hear what's been going on next door. I couldn't imagine just being by myself because I'd probably feel like I'd get into a rut. It is nice to keep being aligned with someone else and keep in touch with other music teachers.

Heidi appreciated her colleague's expertise in Kodály methodology and both their effort to maintain consistency in their music program. In addition, she recognized both interest and enjoyment in learning from her colleague.

I do better by experiencing than reading and reiterating what I read. I am more likely to do a new song with the kids if my colleague across the hall (does), we have been doing this all year because he is better at the intermediate songs than I am. He will come over and teach my fourth grades the song that I want to do with them and show them the game. So, I learn it. And then I know it. Instead of having to sit down and find the song, teach myself the song, (and) teach myself the game. It is like the time frame is so much shorter and it is fun to learn from other people...I would much rather learn from my colleagues, than sit there and read a book.

In collaborating with other music teachers in their building, both Chad and Heidi had established consistency in their program and had been inspired by their colleagues' ideas and skills.

Common characteristics among secondary Building Learning Community members were that almost all taught in suburban schools, all had a master's degree and some music education pedagogy certification, all participated in Informal Learning Communities outside of their Building Learning Community, and all attended district meetings in relation to music. They described different curriculum influences and three out of the four teachers wished for more music education pedagogical training. All believed that sharing ideas with others was a valuable source of information. In addition, three out of four teachers had Kodály materials in their room, and two out of

four teachers had Orff-Schulwerk materials in their room.

Characteristics secondary Building Learning Community members shared with primary Building Learning Community members were that they had similar school settings. Most of the teachers were from suburban schools with a small group from rural schools. All of the teachers had a master's degree with some additional training in music education pedagogy and were involved in their district music teacher groups. All commented that sharing with others was an important part of their job. A connecting theme among all groups was the need to create consistency within their buildings. Interestingly, two out of three memberships in the Primary Building Learning Communities were influenced by a district initiative. Only one membership in the Secondary Building Learning Community was prompted by a district initiative. The three remaining Secondary Building Learning Community members created their own learning communities. This was the second highest ratio of Informal Learning Communities to Formal Learning Communities in one group in this study.

**Secondary Other Members.** Aya (Other primary), Elsie (District Music Teacher primary), Faye (District Music Teacher primary), Grace (Orff-Schulwerk primary), Jade (Orff-Schulwerk primary), Kala (Other primary), Pauline (Other primary), Samantha (Orff-Schulwerk primary), and Yvonne (Building primary) were secondary Other Learning Community members. In addition, Aya, Grace and Pauline had multiple secondary Other Learning Community memberships; Jade and Yvonne had a secondary Kodály Learning Community membership. Aya and Samantha taught in urban school districts; Jade and Grace taught in rural school districts; and Elsie, Faye, Kala, Pauline, and Yvonne taught in suburban school districts. Aya's and Samantha's

buildings had over 40% of students who were economically disadvantaged as defined by the state for the 2010-2011 school year.

Secondary Other Learning Community membership was demonstrated in diverse ways. Aya and Samantha, both from urban schools, had secondary Other Learning Community memberships that gave both academic and social support. Aya had several friends with whom she kept in contact. She said:

I hope that I continue to grow; continue to get good advice from people reflecting on my own teaching and learning. I appreciate all my friends. I just think I am the luckiest person in the world (laugh). I get to be around educators who are so outstanding who really have their heart in the right place. So, I stay in contact with all those people. And I stay focused and continue to push myself to learn.

Samantha's secondary communities were those within her district. One was a group of teachers working on upgrading their teaching license by obtaining a Master Teacher designation and the other was associated with her involvement in her union. Being informed of the issues in her district helped Samantha because the district's scheduling influenced her curriculum. She said:

The scope and sequence really doesn't work too well for me because it doesn't fit. We don't have any district wide consistency with scheduling. It is a building by building situation.

Thus, for different reasons, support and gathering new information in order to be more efficient were important to help Aya and Samantha become better teachers.

Elsie, Grace, and Yvonne participated in performance groups. Elsie sang in

musicals and a swing band. She mentioned that she had friends in her district who also performed. She said:

It's nice to share not just topics, but we're all at such different points in our lives as music teachers; so, some of us are more performance oriented, some of us are less. I happen to be a part of (the teachers) who are still performing in my area, voice. So, it is nice to share that with the other musicians of the group, too.

Grace performed in a salsa group and a taiko group and was a part of an online community that practiced Portuguese. Eventually, she incorporated her interests into her classroom curriculum. Grace said:

When I have immersed myself in something new, something exciting, something that is not related musically right a way, I usually find ways to bring it into my teaching in some manner.

Yvonne felt that being a member of a performing group helped her teaching. She said:

That gives me the chance to perform on a regular basis. I feel that it is really important for me as a musician to continue to practice my craft so that I am not only a great teacher, I am a great musician. If I am going to provide feedback to my students on their performances, I need to be a performer (who is) evaluated and critiqued as well.

Elsie, Grace, and Yvonne, were a part of a performance group which was an outlet that allowed them to develop their own musicality.

Faye, Jade, Kala, and Pauline were influenced by Formal Learning Communities with their secondary Other Learning Communities. Faye's relationship with a nearby university included involvement as a coordinating teacher for a student teacher. Faye

explained “I love being able to number one share my program with someone, but also help them problem solve in the way they are teaching to make it the most effective way for them to reach the kids.” In the process of guiding the student teacher, Faye said that despite her years of experience, she always learned something new from her student teachers. Jade taught flute lessons in addition to elementary general music. She mentioned that her city’s flute association was her first learning community. In addition to sharing ideas with other flute teachers, she said, “I recently hosted a Flute Pedagogy Roundtable at my home where we shared our methods for improving student playing in specific areas, such as vibrato, embouchure, and phrasing.” As a result of Kala’s achievement in her graduate program, she was asked to write an article for the state music education association journal about best elementary general music practices. This acknowledgement from the state music education association was meaningful to Kala. By submitting the article, Kala felt, “So, I guess, maybe, wow- I am doing things in my classroom that I can share with others.” Lastly, Pauline’s involvement in the National TI:ME Convention led her to social network resources concerning elementary music and technology. These groups inspired her to continue to use technology in her classroom. Pauline said, “They find things way before I would find them on my own and post about them and that's nice (to) find different apps and tools and things that I can integrate into the classroom.” Faye, Jade, Kala, and Pauline found different interests that came from Formal Learning Communities. From their interests, they were able to continue their learning and to broaden their insights about teaching practices.

Common characteristics among Aya (Other primary), Elsie (District Music Teacher primary), Faye (District Music Teacher primary), Grace (Orff-Schulwerk

primary), Jade (Orff-Schulwerk primary), Kala (Other primary), Pauline (Other primary), Samantha (Orff-Schulwerk primary), Yvonne (Building primary) were that they had at least one university degree, college degree, or specialized training outside the major of music education. All of them had trained teachers and had participated actively in a learning community associated with a personal interest. All teachers participated in multiple Formal and Informal Learning Communities. Eight out of the nine teachers attended district meetings related to music. Secondary Other Learning Community members had the highest participation in the state music education association (six teachers) and the National Association for Music Education (six teachers). From the ranking of their pre-interview descriptive survey, they had the second highest average of job satisfaction. Although they diverged in what inspired them, there were two types of meaningful stories in relation to their learning communities. They had a meaningful experience with their learning community either as a result of an integrated project at their school or as a result of training. Teachers' application of teaching changed as a result of both types of experiences.

Group characteristics shared between Secondary and Primary Other Learning Community members were that teachers had an educational experience outside of music education or wished to obtain one. The educational experiences consisted of at least one degree or specialized training outside the major of music education. Everyone had active participation in a learning community specific to their interests. In both primary and secondary groups, teachers were from a mix of suburban, rural, and urban areas. Three secondary Other Learning Community members, Aya, Kala, and Pauline, were also primary Other Learning Community members. Finally, the meaningful learning

community stories from both primary and secondary members were either about an integrated project or about an inspirational training.

**Connections Among All Secondary Members.** Secondary members shared some characteristics with primary members of the same group. The secondary and the primary learning communities of Orff-Schulwerk and Kodály shared curriculum interest, materials and meaningful experiences that were tied to figuring out a skill. In both groups, the skills for primary members were tied with the learning community's methodology, but with the secondary members, it was not. What was unique to Orff-Schulwerk and Kodály secondary groups was that many members practiced multiple pedagogies outside the focus of their secondary communities. This expressed the diverse interests of secondary members outside of the methodological learning communities.

Sharing information with others was an important part of self-growth and teaching application for primary and secondary members of the District Elementary General Music Teacher and the Building Learning Communities. But there were diverse, meaningful experiences among the secondary District Elementary General Music Teacher and the Building Learning Communities members. Almost all the secondary members of the District Elementary General Music Teacher and the Building Learning Communities belonged to one other community which mostly was associated with a pedagogical music community. Secondary members of the Building Learning Communities were involved to form new ideas and to improve their music program by seeking consistency within their district. Three out of four secondary Building Learning Community members initiated the creation of a group. Two out of seven



secondary District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Community members were a part of an Informal Learning Community. This emphasized that most secondary District Elementary General Music Teacher members participated because of an initiative in their school district. The diverse meaningful experiences of secondary members in both the District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Communities and the Building Learning Communities demonstrated the varied interests of the teachers participating within the groups.

Primary and secondary members of the Other Learning Communities had the most diverse interests. There were similarities within the primary and secondary members of the Other Learning Communities. Everyone had training or an interest in training outside of the subject of music education. In addition, their diverse meaningful experiences had two themes. Their meaningful experience was a result of either an integrative project or an inspirational training. In both groups, teachers concentrated on an interest and became extremely involved in a learning community that would support it.

Although secondary membership involvement of music teachers was not the primary focus of this study, secondary memberships did play an important part in the teachers' development. Secondary memberships represented the teachers' diverse interests outside of the focus of their primary community. While the teachers in the secondary membership groups did not display all the characteristics of the primary group members, there were shared ideas and similar classroom materials among the groups. Both primary and secondary Other Learning Communities members not only chose atypical learning communities, but also the members shared the common trait of a

formalized training and/or an interest in learning outside the discipline of music education.

### **Part Two: Confluent Themes**

Part Two addresses related themes among all participants and groups. The four themes are (a) Multiple Learning Communities, (b) Membership Rationale, (c) Job satisfaction, and (d) Professional development. Each theme is introduced with an operational definition and is described by patterns of the teachers' experiences within these themes. The section concludes by revealing a sequence in which teachers describe their meaningful experiences in their learning communities.

#### **Multiple Learning Communities**

**Definitions.** Multiple Learning Communities was defined as the participation in more than one learning community. In this study, it was documented that all exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers had more than one learning community and every teacher in this study participated in a Primary and a Secondary Learning Community. A Primary Learning Community was a group that was the main focus of the teacher. A Secondary Learning Community was a group that was important to a teacher, but was not her or his main focus. Within these two types of learning communities, there were other groups called Variant Learning Communities. A Variant Learning Community was a group that formed as a result of the influence of a Primary or Secondary Learning Community.

Many combinations of Primary, Secondary, and Variant Learning Communities were documented. Because a defined learning community was a new concept to the

teachers, more learning communities were recognized during the interviews than documented in their pre-interview surveys. Learning communities listed in the pre-interview surveys by the teachers but not mentioned in their interviews were identified as Marginal Learning Communities. A Marginal Learning Community was a group that entailed limited involvement. Multiple Learning Communities is explored further in this section by examining unique occurrences and trends among the exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers. Finally, topics teachers address while discussing Multiple Learning Communities are mentioned.

**Multiple Learning Community trends.** Table 1 illustrated the diversity of the interests of the teachers and showed the Multiple Learning Communities in which the teachers participated most often. Table 1 was organized by (a) the highest number of secondary memberships, (b) the highest number of primary memberships, and (c) the teachers' names alphabetically. The purpose for the order was to determine relationships and identify unique characteristics among primary and secondary memberships of the teachers. A typical Multiple Learning Community pairing for teachers was a District Elementary General Music Teacher group and a music oriented group of the teacher's interest. The high numbers of memberships in both primary and secondary groups came either from teachers extending their learning based on similar topics or from individual teachers exploring different topics among different communities. Other teachers had fewer learning communities but increased their participation in the groups. All groups listed in Table 1 represented a moderate to high level of teacher participation and an influence in the teachers' teaching skills and in their students' learning.

Table 1

*Emphasized Secondary and Primary Learning Communities*

Name	Setting	Primary Type	Primary Memberships	Secondary Type	Secondary Memberships
Aya	Urban	Multiple Other	> 4	Informal family and friends; District	> 4
Pauline	Suburban	Two Other	2	Technology, District, Building, Online Technology, Performance	> 4
Grace	Rural	Orff-Schulwerk	1	Multicultural Performance, Online Language Learning	> 4
Chad	Suburban	Other	1	Building, District, Orff-Schulwerk	3
Faye	Suburban	District	1	Other	2
Isabelle	Suburban	Orff-Schulwerk	1	District	2
Heidi	Rural *	District	1	Building, Kodály	2
Jade	Rural	Orff-Schulwerk	> 4	Kodály, Other	2
Olivia	Suburban	District	1	Kodály, Orff-Schulwerk	2
Ursula	Suburban	Orff-Schulwerk	2	District	2
Xola	Suburban	Building	> 4	Kodály, District	2
Yvonne	Suburban	Building	> 4	Kodály, Other	2
Bria	Rural *	Kodály	> 4	District	1
Diane	Rural	Orff-Schulwerk	1	District	1
Elsie	Suburban	District	2	Other	1
Kala	Suburban	Other	> 4	Other	1
Lynne	Suburban	Building	1	District	1
Noelle	Rural	Kodály	2	Orff-Schulwerk	1
Qiana	Suburban	Orff-Schulwerk	3	Kodály	1
Rose	Suburban	Kodály	> 4	Building	1
Samantha	Urban	Orff-Schulwerk	3	Other	1
Tabetha	Suburban	Orff-Schulwerk	2	Kodály	1
Violet	Rural	Other	3	Kodály	1
Whitney	Suburban	District	2	Building	1

\* This school district will be designated as a suburban school district in the near future.

The Variant Learning Communities were formed most often from Primary Formal Learning Communities. These derivatives were formed from associations or educational institutions that were linked with the teachers' emphasized interests. The multiple Secondary Learning Communities were not typically Variant Learning Communities. In most cases, the Secondary Learning Communities were not related to one another. This suggested that teachers formed learning communities based on their primary interest and that they participated in Secondary Learning Communities to explore new interests. Usually, if the teachers participated in a higher number of Variant Learning Communities, they would have only one or two Secondary Learning Communities. However, there were two exceptions: Aya had multiple Primary and Secondary Learning Communities and Pauline had two Primary Learning Communities and multiple Secondary Learning Communities.

Further analysis of Aya's communities revealed a unique characteristic; she had both multiple Primary Learning Communities and multiple Secondary Learning Communities. Aya's Primary and Secondary Learning Communities were those that represented her philosophy as a teacher. Collaboration with others was a part of her personal growth. With her Primary Learning Communities, she examined information about different musical techniques from different cultures. With her Secondary Learning Communities, she sought advice from family and friends in addition to exploring the educational resources of her school district, music education associations, and general education associations. Aya said, "The conversation there, it is so amazing. To me, it is an inspiration." Aya's interest in collaboration expressed a flow of learning

and an interest in exploring. Aya stated that both her educational background and her cultural background inspired her to seek collaboration from others.

All teachers who had more than four Primary or Secondary Learning Communities had strong interests in learning communities associated with their jobs. They expressed their interests by seeking out new resources from multiple groups. As previously stated, teachers who had more Variant Learning Communities were more likely to have fewer Secondary Learning Communities. However, there were a few teachers who had many Variant Learning Communities and held leadership positions in Secondary Learning Communities. Examples of these were Bria and Rose, both of whom developed leadership skills in their Kodály groups and then transferred their skills to a different learning community.

Individual interests inspired some teachers to be participants in more than four Secondary Learning Communities. Aya, Pauline, and Grace had a singular, separate interest. Aya's Secondary Learning Communities stemmed from multiple Informal Learning Communities with friends and family and from Formal Learning Communities associated with her school district. It was her philosophy as a professional to learn from others as much as she could. Pauline's Secondary Learning Communities stemmed from her interest in technology and from her desire to learn from the other teachers in her school district. Finally, Grace's Secondary Learning Communities were associated with her dedication to learning more about different cultures and were linked with related cultural performances. Overall, a positive experience in a learning community resulted in participation in multiple interest groups (Secondary Learning Communities).

Not enough data was collected to determine the source of participation in all of the Secondary Learning Communities.

**Patterns in common themes.** Pedagogy was the most frequent topic discussed in all interviews about Multiple Learning Communities. Most frequent pairings were of pedagogy and curriculum development or of pedagogy and assessment. Olivia participated in two different pedagogy communities to develop her curriculum. She said, “When I first started, I had a course of study, but I had no idea what was most important, where to begin. Those courses (Kodály & Orff-Schulwerk) helped me come up with a sequence that I felt worked.” Ursula said that Multiple Learning Communities assisted her in her vision. She stated:

Since I have expanded and joined other groups with the suggestions of my colleagues from within my district community, I see that there are multiple approaches and things that I can take from each one. I think that it helps me keep challenged and growing. I think that, overall, my vision keeps kind of revising and growing.

In addition, Ursula fused ideas from her Multiple Learning Communities by bringing forward new assessment ideas specific to elementary general music in her district. Both Olivia and Ursula utilized the common pairings of pedagogy and practical application, but each had an individual approach to developing their curricula.

Another pattern involved teachers who had more than three learning communities. These teachers mentioned teaching process exclusively as the reason for their involvement in their learning communities. Of the group of teachers with three or more learning communities, more than half of the teachers delineated assessment as a

skill they wished to refine. Less frequent topics mentioned among all the teachers when discussing Multiple Learning Communities involved their school district, their professional development, and their personal interests outside of music education.

### **Membership Rationale**

Membership stories about learning communities emerged among the general music teachers that provided insight to beginning membership, continuing membership, and supportive benefits as a result of membership. Membership Rationale was defined as the reasons for a teacher's participation in a learning community. The section begins with a summary of what has been found previously about memberships for Primary, Secondary, and Multiple Learning Communities; it continues with a summary of starting and continuing in a learning community; and it concludes with common themes among all teachers when discussing membership.

**Primary Learning Communities.** Primary Learning Community members in Orff-Schulwerk and Kodály expressed that their membership was an extension of their methodological interests. Primary Building Learning Community members stressed the importance for building communication in order to improve student success. Members in District Learning Communities emphasized continuous conversations to maintain the sharing of tried and true lessons. With Other Learning Communities, teachers sought out alternative communities in order to develop diverse individual interests.

**Secondary Learning Communities.** These groups resembled the respective Primary Learning Communities. But there were slight differences in defining membership themes. Secondary Orff-Schulwerk and Kodály members expressed diverse methodological interests. Primary and secondary members stated an interest in



figuring out how to teach a skill when they discussed their meaningful experiences. However, secondary members did not attribute their secondary methodology as the reason for refining their teaching practice. Secondary District and Building groups agreed that sharing was an important aspect to their memberships. Secondary Building members sought consistency and also were interested in forming ideas related to the District Elementary General Music Teachers Groups. Secondary and Primary Other Learning Communities groups' rationale for membership were alike in that the members sought to find a community in which to develop and to support their unique interests.

**Multiple communities.** Variant Learning Community memberships developed from Primary Learning Community memberships. This revealed a strong connection to the Primary Learning Community and the teachers' needs to develop that connection. Multiple secondary memberships typically were not related to one another and represented the diverse, individual interests of the teachers. Teachers with three or more learning communities expressed a desire to refine their teaching process as a major reason for their memberships.

**Starting and continuing membership.** At the beginning of the interview, teachers were asked for reasons why they participated in learning communities and why their participation persisted. Reasons for participating in a learning community fell into two categories. Either the learning community was introduced through a Formal Learning Community such as a college or a school district or the teacher discovered the learning community on her or his own. Reasons for self-discovering their learning communities included (a) developing a personal interest, (b) managing their own

professional development, and (c) arranging their own professional development with other teachers holding similar interests. General themes about continuous participation reported by the teachers consisted of (a) an avenue of sustained learning for themselves, (b) an approach to learning in which their students benefited, and (c) a source of renewed energy for themselves.

The teachers grew more comfortable discussing their learning communities as the interview progressed. As a result, more communities emerged throughout the interview accompanied by additional Membership Rationales. The revelation of teachers' experiences with learning communities was organic in growth in that the teachers learned to discuss this theme as the interview proceeded. Consequently, a more in depth description of Membership Rationale occurred and themes were collected among identified Membership Rationale passages throughout the interview.

**Other themes of Membership Rational.** The themes of Membership Rationale which represented both common and unique perspectives of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers were reviewed in Table 2. Sharing was cited by 92% of teachers as the most important part of their involvement in their learning community. Specifically, teachers were interested in the sharing of (a) conversations, (b) skills, (c) ideas, and (d) resources. Personal growth (75%) and teaching refinement (71%) was the second and third theme most mentioned by the teachers. Personal growth themes were represented by (a) stating an interest in life-long learning, (b) challenging them to grow, and (c) encouraging them to be a better teacher. Teaching refinement addressed goals of (a) modifying curriculum, (b) reevaluating sequences, and (c) developing new connections with methodology. Only 38% of teachers

Table 2

*Membership Rationale Themes*

Topic	% Mentioned
Sharing	92
Personal Growth	75
Teaching Refinement	71
Supporting with Job Issues	54
Teaching Refreshment	50
Beginning in a Learning Community	50
Being with Teachers with Same Interests	38
Preventing Isolation	38
School District Initiatives	33
Expectations as a Professional	29
Camaraderie	25
Job Affirmation	25
Motivation	25
Networking	25
Appraising Other Teachers	21
Helping Kids	21
Forming Informal Groups	13
Financial Barriers	8
Finding Groups that Work for Them	8
Creating Integrated Projects	8
Communicating with Others	8
Supporting Changing Interests	8
Helping Other Teachers	4

mentioned learning community membership as preventing isolation in their job. This may have implied that more than half of the exemplary mid-career teachers had teaching environments in which they did not feel isolated. Least common themes of Membership Rationale were (a) helping other teachers, (b) identifying financial barriers, (c) finding groups that worked for them, (d) creating integrated projects, (e) communicating with others, and (f) supporting changing interests.

### **Job Satisfaction**

In this study, Job Satisfaction meant the degree to which a teacher was content with her or his job. During the teachers' interviews, one question addressed how teachers felt that learning communities influenced their view of their job (Appendix E). This question and the rating of job satisfaction in the pre-interview survey (Appendix C) initiated a sub-theme of Job Satisfaction.

**Job Satisfaction ratings.** For the pre-interview survey, teachers evaluated their overall job satisfaction using a scale from one to five. One represented not satisfied and five represented very satisfied. The 24 participants rated their overall job satisfaction within a range of three (somewhat satisfied) to five (very satisfied) with an average rank of 4.12. Teachers rated their job satisfaction as high: 13 teachers were very satisfied; two teachers were nearly very satisfied; four teachers were mostly satisfied; and three teachers were somewhat satisfied. Two teachers did not answer the question. One teacher rated her overall job satisfaction as very satisfied, but she was somewhat satisfied with how she accomplished her job. Both of her rankings were included in the overall interpretation of job satisfaction. In studying the Primary Learning Community groups' job satisfaction scores, it was noted that teachers who were in the Orff-

Schulwerk Primary Learning Community were the most satisfied with their jobs. Teachers who chose Secondary Other Learning Communities were the second most satisfied group. Because the job satisfaction scores were high, the differences among the groups of teachers were slight.

**How learning communities influenced teachers' jobs.** Twenty-three out of 24 teachers said that their learning communities contributed to a positive attitude about their jobs. For this group of teachers, many of their learning community experiences were positive and contributed to their overall job satisfaction. Nineteen teachers addressed Job Satisfaction in relation to their learning communities more than once during their interviews. Because of the unique experiences of the teachers, Job Satisfaction themes occurred at different times throughout the interviews. The exception was that 42% of teachers expressed Job Satisfaction when they spoke about how her or his learning communities inspired them.

**Job Satisfaction themes.** The individual experiences of the exemplary mid-career general music teachers resulted in varied responses about Job Satisfaction. However, the teachers' comments were categorized into (a) identifying what they loved to do and (b) what they needed to do to sustain job satisfaction. Teachers said that they loved (a) their job, (b) their students, (c) their sharing, (d) their music, (e) their teaching, and (f) their final projects. Factors teachers mentioned that sustained interest in their jobs were (a) sharing, (b) support, (c) fun, (d) continuous learning, (e) personal satisfaction, (f) being better for their kids, (g) preventing isolation, (h) maintaining values, (i) being valued, (j) transforming their teaching skills, (k) their school district,

(l) motivation, (m) appreciation for their job, (n) confidence, (o) flexibility, (p) inspiration, (q) accountability, and (r) love of job.

The most common theme in Job Satisfaction was excitement associated with continuous learning (58%). Half of the teachers mentioned that sharing with other teachers was fulfilling. Slightly fewer than half of the teachers associated job satisfaction with (a) support over time, (b) the love of teaching children, and (c) the importance of being valued. Themes of Job Satisfaction revealed the teachers' strong interests and how their learning communities helped support their interests. Teachers described qualities that learning communities provided to support their jobs and that provided them with long-term sustenance.

### **Professional Development**

In this study, Professional Development was defined as the skills and knowledge teachers acquired as a result of participation in learning communities. Themes were analyzed by questions specific to the teachers' Professional Development. The questions included (a) how the teachers' learning communities inspired them, (b) what the teachers achieved as a result of their learning communities, (c) what types of Professional Development teachers wanted, and (d) what teachers wanted from their learning communities in the future.

**Inspiration.** Like the diverse experiences and views found among the participants, the sources of inspiration from the teachers' learning communities varied. However, all teachers wished to return to their learning communities to learn more from them. The three main ways learning communities inspired teachers were through (a) being a part of a group of teachers (88%), (b) seeing how their learning community

knowledge transfers to their students (63%), and (c) building a repertoire for their teaching (21%). Being a part of a group was important to the exemplary mid-career elementary teachers because they (a) were around like-minded teachers, (b) had access to the expertise of experienced teachers, (c) learned by appraising others, (d) gathered new ideas, (e) gained support to move forward, and (f) received materials that applied directly to their classroom. Teachers who gained inspiration from their learning communities through their students' experiences mentioned (a) how their heightened engagement transferred to their students' engagement, (b) how their learning community impacted upon what they could give to their students, and (c) what their students could achieve. The process of teachers building and sharing their teaching repertoire with a learning community inspired them through (a) new ideas, (b) gathering resources, and (c) developing creativity.

**Accomplishments.** When teachers discussed their accomplishments as a result of their involvement with their learning communities, 92% of the teachers discussed student learning while 63% of the teachers discussed their own learning. Fifty-eight percent of the teachers overlapped between the two groups. Musical skills were the most common achievement mentioned describing students' accomplishments from the following list: (a) musicality, (b) creativity, (c) composition, (d) improvisation, (e) tuneful singing, (f) listening, (g) movement, (h) instruments, (i) self-assessment, and (j) integration of technology in music. Topics associated with the teachers' own accomplishments as a result of a learning community were (a) increased student engagement, (b) improved self-learning, (c) enhanced music skills, and (d) completed integrated projects. How teachers obtained and renewed their learning in order to grow

was a prominent theme when teachers spoke about inspiration and accomplishments associated with their learning communities. They enjoyed being a part of a group of teachers and seeing how their learning community experiences transferred to their students. When the teachers saw the results of their participation, they were eager to return to their learning communities.

**Future Professional Development needs.** In examining what the teachers wished to receive from their future Professional Development, information from the pre-interview survey and from their interviews emphasized skill building. Future Professional Development topics mid-career elementary general music teachers wanted to explore were (a) methodology (16), (b) other miscellaneous topics (7), (c) technology (5), (d) additional licensure (3), (e) graduate work (2), and (f) National Board Teaching Certification (2). Methodology interests specified by the teachers were (a) Orff-Schulwerk certification (13), (b) Dalcroze Eurhythmics (6), (c) Kodály certification (2), (d) Alexander Technique (1), (e) Body Mapping (1), (f) *music learning theory* (1), (g) Feierabend<sup>14</sup> (1), (h) TI:ME 1B<sup>15</sup> (1), and (i) World Drumming (1). Additional licensure teachers wanted were (a) administrator (1), (b) elementary classroom teacher (1), and (c) technology endorsement (1). Other topics suggested by the teachers for increasing their Professional Development were (a) dulcimer classes (1), (b) integration techniques (1), (c) project-based learning (1), (d) special education (1), and (e) workshops (1).

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<sup>14</sup> John Feierabend wrote two music methods: *First Steps* and *Conversational Solfège* (Feierabend Association for Music Education, 2012, *John Feierabend*).

<sup>15</sup> TI:ME 1B addresses “Basic Skills in Music Technology: Instructional Software, The Internet and Digital Media” (Technology Institute for Music Educators, 2011).



**Future learning community needs.** When the teachers were asked what they wanted from their learning communities in the future, the most popular answer was new ideas (14). Their answers were categorized into (a) building a repertoire for their teaching (88%), (b) being a part of a group of teachers (67%), and (c) receiving the same things they had received in the past from their learning communities (25%). While discussing their future involvement in their learning communities, teachers wished to build their teaching repertoire with (a) new ideas (14), (b) new skills (5), and (c) collaboration (4). Reasons teachers gave for taking part in a group were that they wished (a) to grow (7), (b) to move forward (7), (c) to be inspired (5), (d) to be with like-minded teachers (3), (e) to network (1), and (f) to be with friends (1).

A connection emerged between what inspired teachers and what teachers wanted from their learning communities. Being with a group of teachers was inspirational for 88% of the teachers and 67% reported that they wanted to continue to meet with teachers in a group in the future. Developing their teaching repertoire was inspirational for some teachers (21%) and was the reason that most teachers returned to their learning community (88%). By seeking to develop their teaching skills in learning communities, teachers received extra benefits from being a part of a community. The source of inspiration for most teachers was not the learning of the skill, but was with the importance of (a) being around like-minded teachers, (b) accessing the expertise of experienced teachers, (c) appraising others, (d) gathering new ideas, (e) gaining support to move forward, and (f) receiving materials that applied directly to their classroom. Teachers' participation was reinforced with access to new information that benefited their students while at the same time provided them with support through inspiration

and social interaction. Studying this cyclical relationship increased the awareness of the intricacies of sustainable long-term professional development.

### **Emergent Theme Pathways**

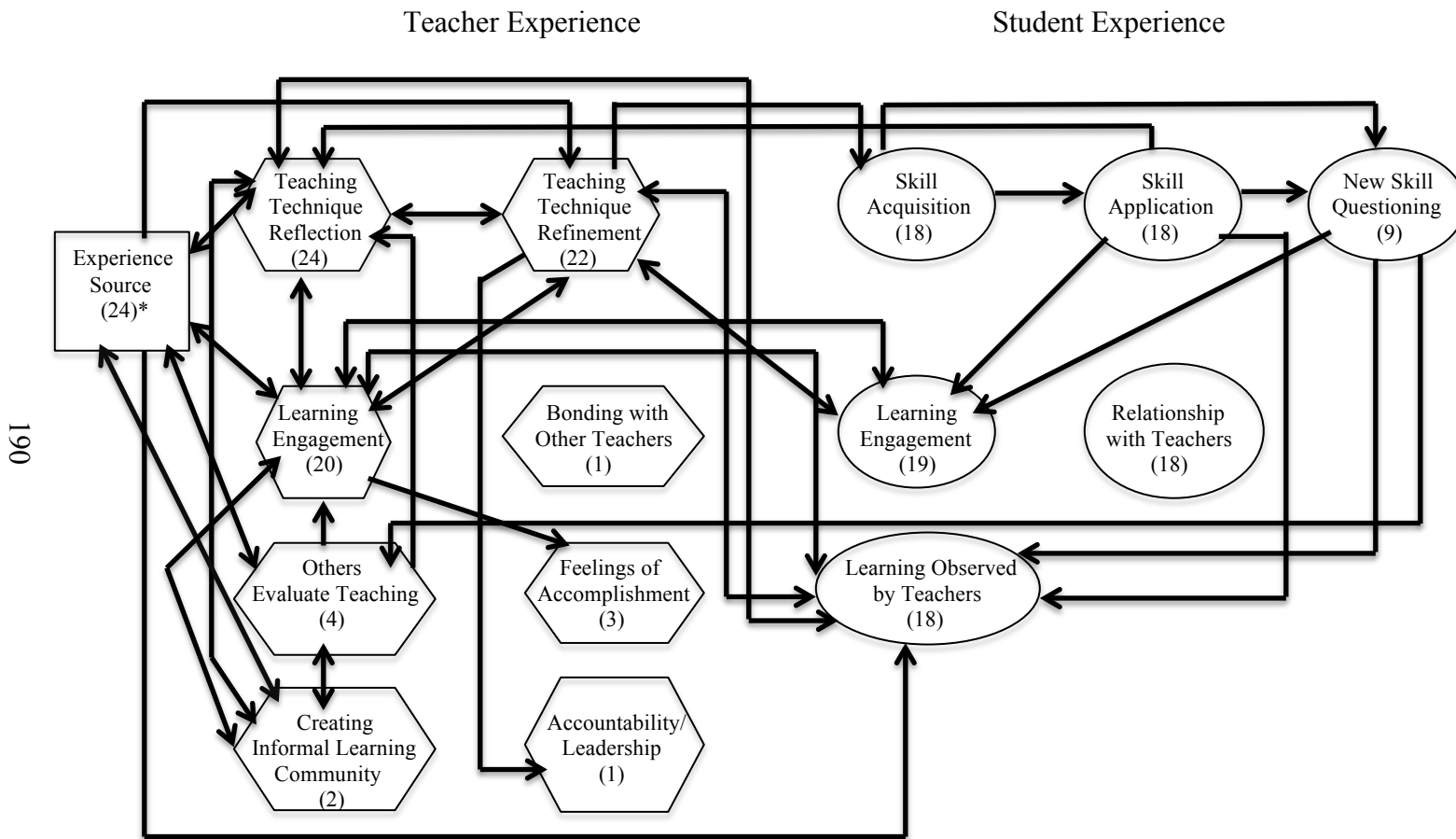
Patterns arose when teachers described how they transformed and implemented their meaningful experiences into their teaching and their students' learning. Key topics emerged while outlining the pathways of the teachers' stories (Figure 4.1). Although there were several ways in which teachers described their meaningful experiences within their learning community, the descriptions moved (a) from the experience source, (b) to the teacher's experience, and finally (c) to the teachers' descriptions of their students' experience (Figures 4.1 - 4.5). An explanation of the charted documentation will precede a description of the findings.

**Documenting pathways.** The way in which teachers spoke about their meaningful experiences within their learning communities was documented (Figure 4.1). Teachers tended to introduce the experience source<sup>16</sup>, to discuss their experience as the result of the source, and then to relay how they felt that impacted their students' learning. The themes within the discussion of the teachers' experiences included (a) teaching technique reflection, (b) teaching technique refinement, (c) learning engagement, (d) bonding with other teachers, (e) others evaluating teaching, (f) feelings of accomplishment, (g) creating informal learning community, and (h) accountability/leadership. Others evaluating teaching meant learning that occurred as the result of peer teachers or students evaluating the teacher. The themes within the

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<sup>16</sup> The experience source represented the form in which the meaningful experience took place. For this study, teachers explained that their meaningful experience resulted from either a formal professional development training, a conversation, an integrated project, or teaching adults.

**Figure 4.1.** Flow of How Teachers Described Meaningful Experiences from their Learning Communities



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Figure 4.1. Flow chart outlining the way teachers in this study spoke about their meaningful experiences as a result of their participation in learning communities.

**Figure 4.2.** Flow of How Teachers Described Professional Development from their Learning Community as Meaningful

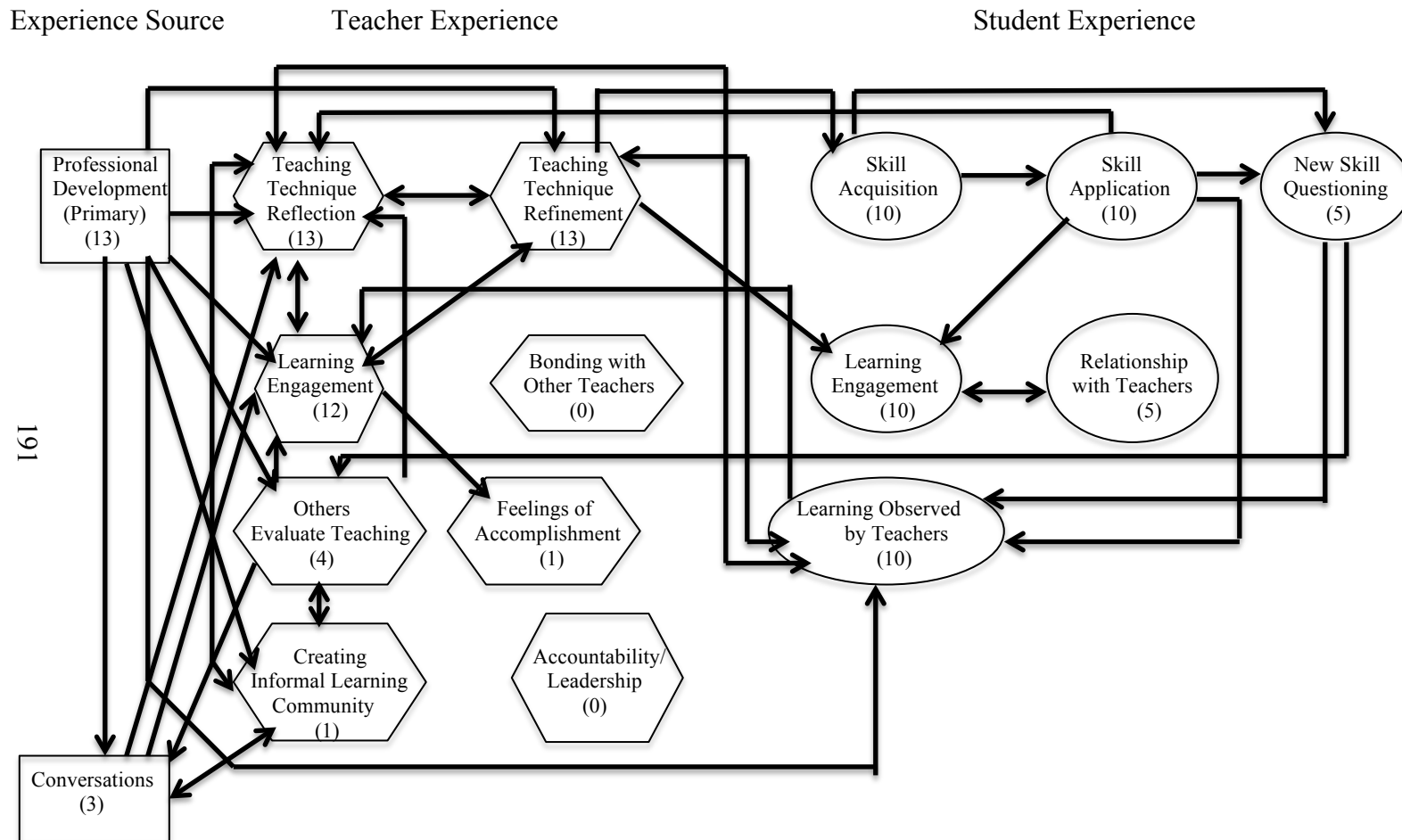


Figure 4.2. Flow chart outlining the way teachers in this study spoke about professional development (workshop, certification, and graduate work) as a meaningful experience from their learning community.

**Figure 4.3.** Flow of How Teachers Described Conversations from their Learning Community as Meaningful

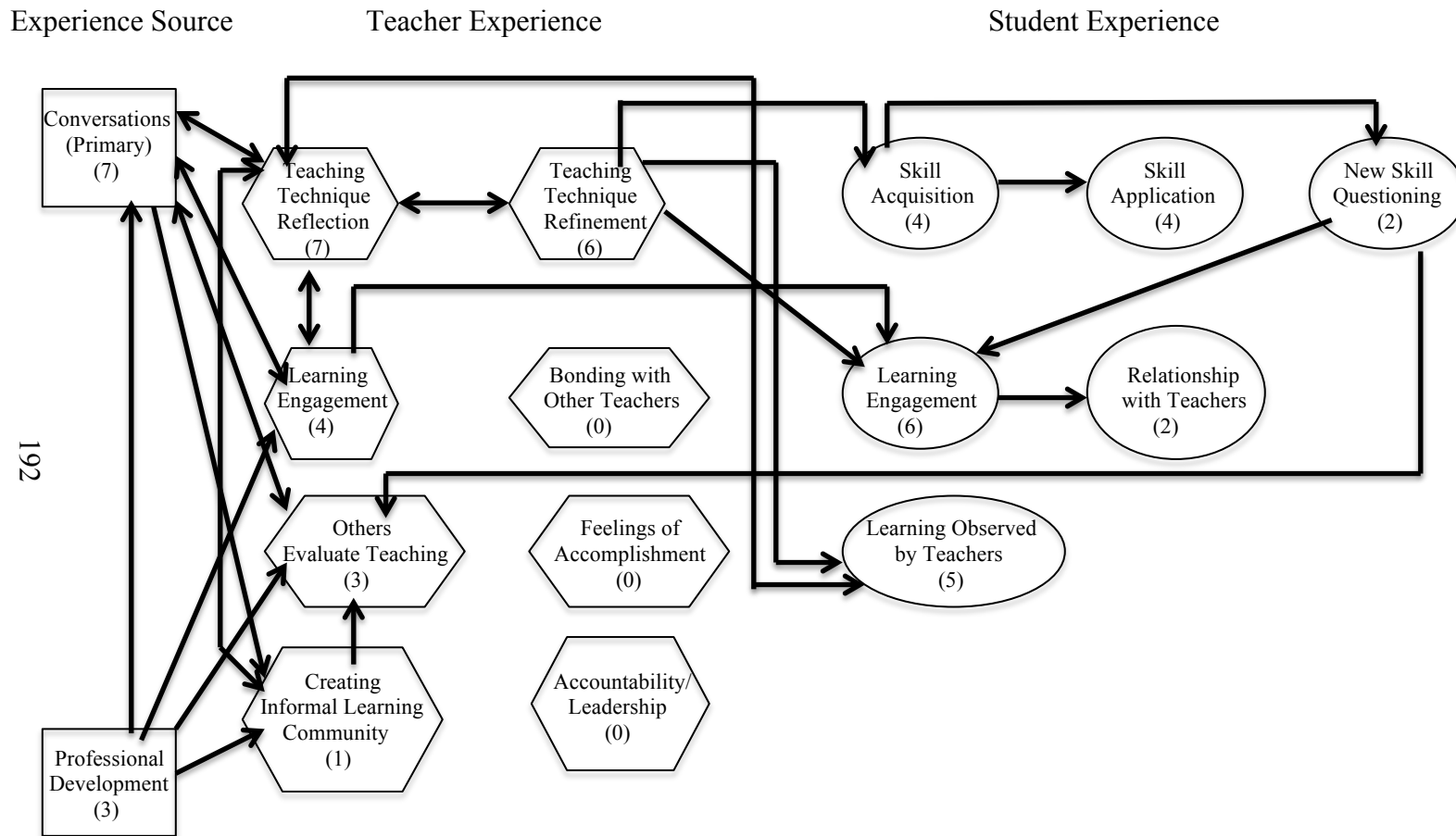


Figure 4.3. Flow chart outlining the way teachers in this study described their meaningful experience as a result of conversations in their learning community.

**Figure 4.4.** Flow of How Teachers Described their Projects Influenced by their Learning Community as Meaningful

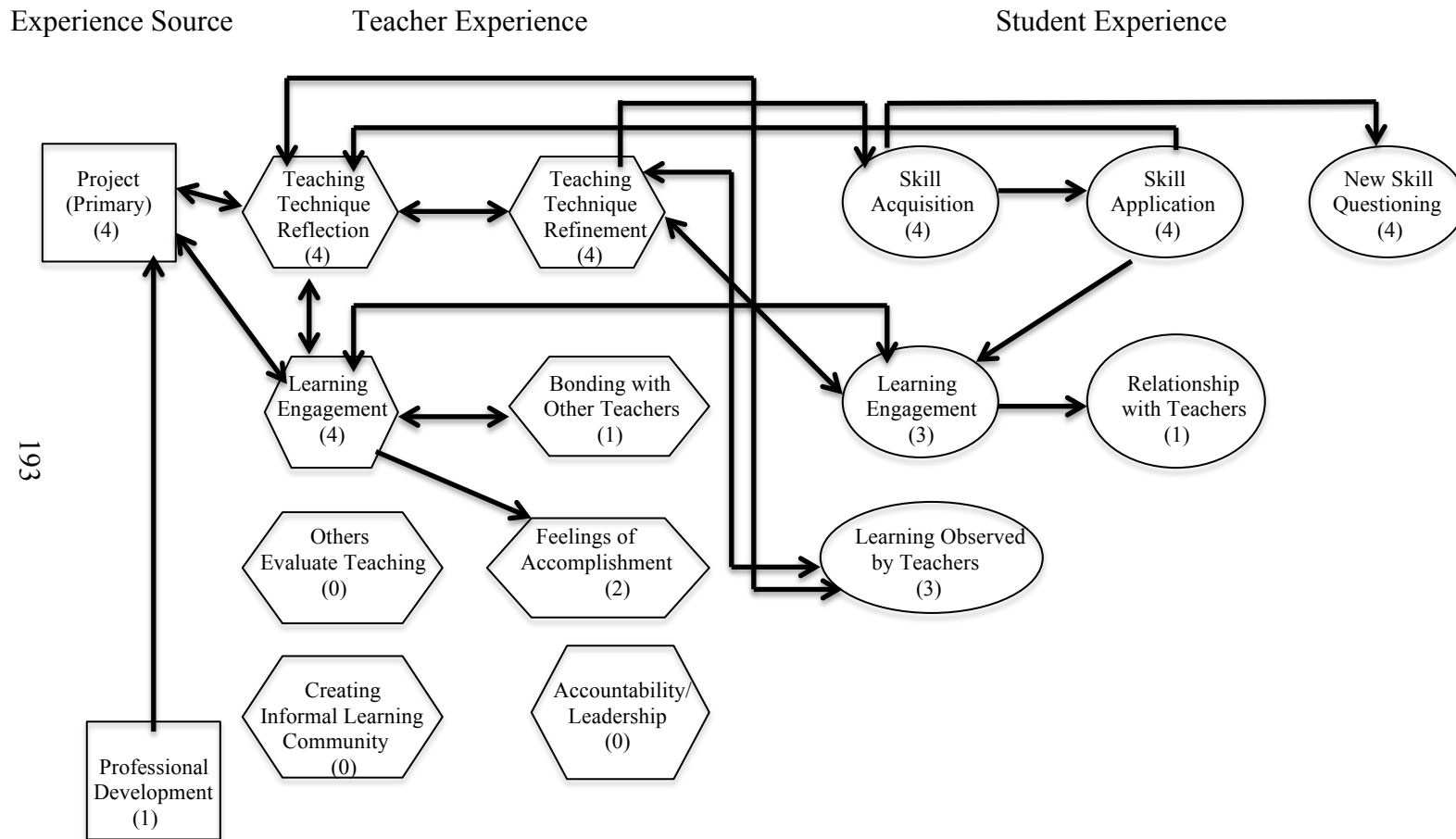


Figure 4.4. Flow chart outlining the way teachers in this study described their meaningful experience associated with a project influenced by their learning community.

**Figure 4.5.** Flow of How Teachers Described Teaching Adults in their Learning Community as Meaningful

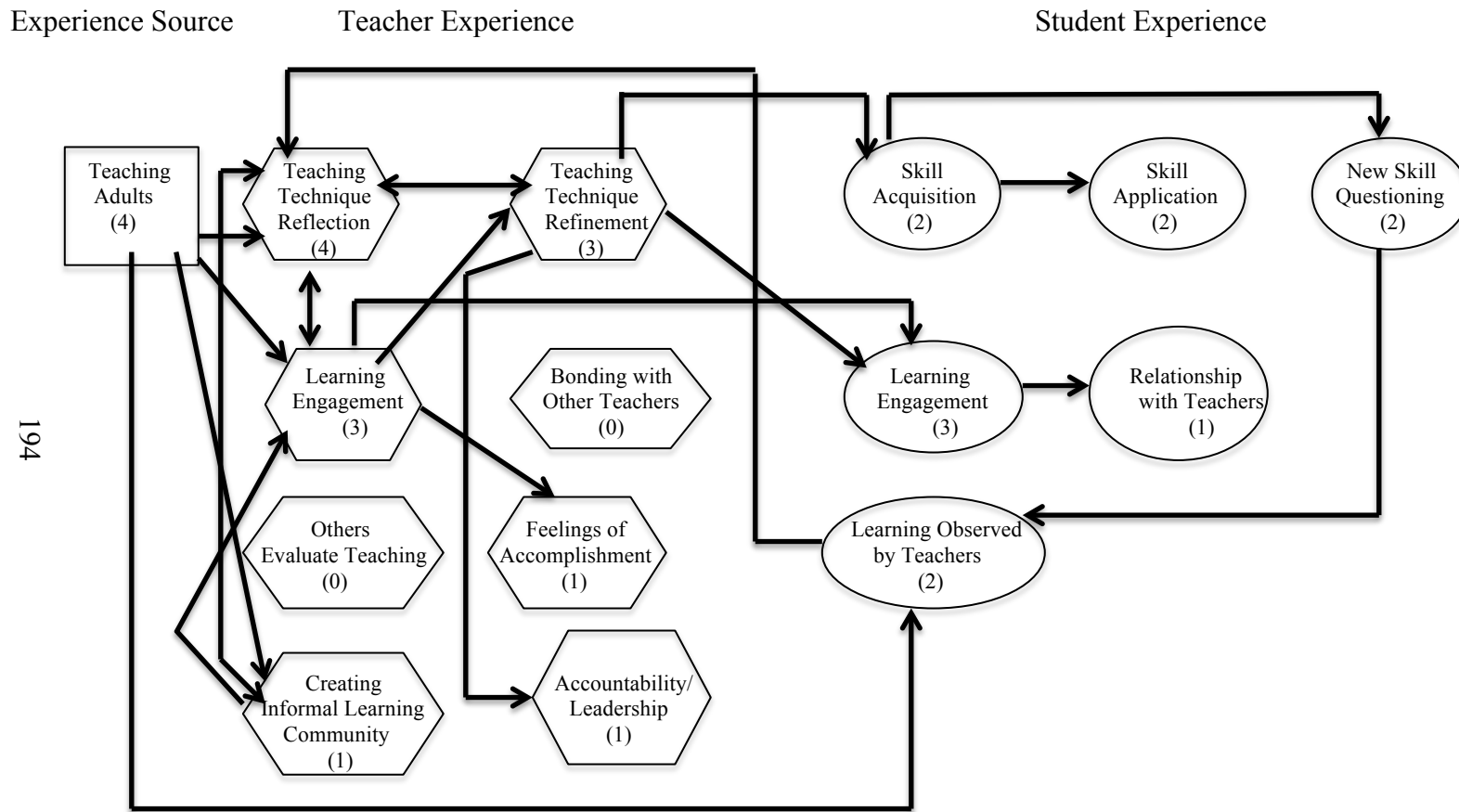


Figure 4.5. Flow chart outlining the way teachers in this study described meaningful experiences as a result of teaching adults within their learning community.

discussion of the students' experiences included (a) skill acquisition, (b) skill application, (c) new skill questioning, (d) learning engagement, (e) relationship with teachers, and (f) learning observed by teachers. New skill questioning meant that when students questioned a new skill that had been taught to them, the experience was incorporated into the teachers' reflective processes in a sequential manner. Student learning engagement signified teachers observing high interest in the students as the result of learning new skills. The numbers underneath each theme represented the number of teachers who spoke about it (Figure 4.1). Arrows in Figures 4.1 - 4.5 denoted the order in which they spoke about the themes. Figure 4.1 demonstrated that teachers chose different pathways in explaining their meaningful experience but shared some common topics. If a teacher stated a relationship between two themes, a two-way arrow represented this. For instance, several teachers said that if they were engaged more in their own learning process, their students would be engaged more in their own learning process. Thus, a two-way arrow was placed between teacher learning engagement and student learning engagement.

The most common themes among the descriptions of meaningful experiences were teachers' (a) learning engagement (20), (b) teaching technique reflection (24), and (c) teaching technique refinement (22). The most common themes involving students were (a) skill acquisition (18), (b) skill application (18), (c) new skill questioning (9), (d) learning engagement (19), (e) learning observed by teachers (18), and (f) relationship with teachers (8). Once either teacher learning engagement or teacher technique reflection was initiated, a learning, refining, and applying cycle emerged with each experience. This was demonstrated by the high number of teachers associated



with two-way arrows connecting (a) experience source, (b) teacher learning engagement, (c) teaching technique reflection, (d) teaching technique refinement, (e) student learning engagement, and (f) learning observed by teachers (Figure 4.1).

**Documenting four experience sources.** Four sources of meaningful experiences emerged from the teachers' stories about their learning communities: (a) professional development (54%), (b) conversations (30%), (c) projects (17%), and (d) teaching adults (17%). Figure 4.1 represented a flow of description among all teachers' experiences. To find patterns among the four experience sources, the sequences of how teachers spoke about them were documented (Figures 4.2 - 4.5). The inclusiveness of the key topics within a learning, refining, and applying cycle varied slightly across the experience sources, but there were a few noticeable differences among them.

Conversations and projects created the most cyclical pattern among (a) experience sources, (b) teacher learning engagement, (c) teaching technique reflection, (d) teaching technique refinement, and (e) learning observed by teachers (Figure 4.3 & Figure 4.4). Both experience sources had an element of interaction needed in order to develop. Unique to conversations was the interaction of evaluation within the cycle which reinforced the interest in assessment as noted in the Multiple Learning Community section. Teachers who described projects as meaningful also stressed the importance of how their learning engagement influenced their students' learning engagement and vice versa. For teachers who described professional development and teaching adults in their learning communities as meaningful, the flow of the description revealed a type of learning in which a teacher observed an experience and reflected upon it, rather than interacting with the learning experience source (Figure 4.2 & Figure

4.5). It was the experience itself that ignited the cyclical pattern of teacher reflection, learning engagement, and teaching technique refinement. As a result, the sequence in which teachers revealed information reflected cyclical patterns in the learning, the reflection, and the implementation of meaningful experiences from their learning community to their teaching and to their students' learning.

### **Chapter Summary**

There were two parts to Chapter 4. Part One introduced exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers according to their Primary Learning Community which was Orff-Schulwerk, Kodály, District Elementary General Music Teacher, Building, or Other Learning Communities. Descriptive profiles of the teachers revealed the voice of the individual teacher by using information from the pre-interview survey, the interview, the supporting documentation provided by the teacher, and the field notes of her or his classroom without students. Details of the data consisted of the goals of their music program, the reason for aligning with their Primary Learning Community, their educational background, their interest in professional development, and their interest in learning communities. At the end of each learning community section, common experiences of primary members were discussed. The section concluded with the primary members' meaningful experiences and how these experiences were implemented in their teaching and in their students' learning.

A finding of the study was that every teacher had more than one learning community. At the end of Part One, secondary membership was addressed. Organized like the Primary Learning Community section, teachers were listed and their experience in secondary membership was described by learning community: Orff-Schulwerk,

Kodály, District Elementary General Music Teacher, and Other Learning Communities.

In each group, common factors among secondary members were examined and connections between secondary and primary members were discussed. The section concluded with the examination of trends among all secondary members.

Part Two revealed emergent themes among all participants. Multiple Learning Communities, Membership Rationale, Job Satisfaction, and Professional Development provided additional insight to the exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers in this study and to their learning communities. Multiple Learning Communities allowed teachers the opportunity to explore areas of interest; this relationship was confirmed in the study of Membership Rationale. The introduction of a new learning community through a Formal Learning Community influenced membership. Some teachers demonstrated their strong interest in the content of their Primary Learning Communities by joining Variant Learning Communities. Secondary Learning Communities were typically not related to each other which demonstrated exploratory areas of individual teachers' interests. Membership Rationale addressing continual participation in a learning community included (a) sustained learning, (b) benefits for students, and (c) a source of renewal for the teachers. Sharing, personal growth, and refining their teaching were the most common reasons the exemplary mid-career elementary music teachers gave for membership. Teachers in this study had high job satisfaction overall and almost all of the teachers stated that their learning communities had a positive impact on their view of their jobs. When discussing Job Satisfaction, teachers' comments could be categorized into (a) what they loved to do and (b) what they needed to do to sustain their job satisfaction. Finally, Professional

Development revealed cyclical patterns which connected learning community inspiration to learning community goals for the future and which reemphasized what the teachers accomplished as a result of their learning community. The flow of meaningful experiences reported from the teachers' learning communities uncovered a cyclical learning, refining, and implementing pattern which provides insight for sustained long-term professional development for elementary general music teachers.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

The experiences of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers were multi-layered. In Chapter 4 Part One, the teachers' unique experiences were voiced. For Chapter 4 Part Two, analysis of their experiences revealed convergent patterns that characterized exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers, the learning communities in which the teachers participated, and the transfer of the teachers' meaningful experiences in these learning communities to their teaching and to their students' learning. The teachers' descriptions led to insights about career longevity, professional development needs, and long-term sustainable professional development. Chapter 5 addresses a summary of the study's research questions, a discussion of the findings, a statement of implications, and an account of need for future study.

### **Summary**

Previous research about elementary general music teachers emphasized themes of classroom activities and of the teachers' expertise. There was a lack of research that characterized the elementary general music teacher and her or his experiences. In order to develop the voices and the experiences of elementary general teachers, this study focused on exemplary teachers at mid-career and the learning communities in which they participated. How teachers searched for, interacted with, and learned from their

experiences and then transferred these experiences to their teaching offered insight into characteristics of exemplary mid-career elementary general teachers and into how they became resilient educators. The study design complemented emerging research in music education which examined teachers at different times in their careers and which explored the professional needs of experienced teachers (Conway, 2008; Eros, 2009, 2011, AB).

Concepts from Dewey's *Experience and Education* served as a reference for this study. Dewey stated that personal experience was the most important part of a teacher's learning and that not all experiences facilitated learning. Value from a teacher's experience must be reflected upon in order for impactful learning to take place. When applying Dewey's philosophy to my study, exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers demonstrated that they were successful when the environment of the learning communities encouraged learning and met their individual needs. Furthermore, when the teachers' experiences incorporated active reflection, meaningful learning took place.

My study reflected the diverse choices that teachers made concerning professional development and highlighted the meaningful experiences that resulted from participation in a learning community. The research questions were:

- What are the characteristics of the learning communities of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers?
- What meaningful experiences do exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers describe as a result of their participation in learning communities?

- How do they think their meaningful experiences transfer to their teaching practice and to their student learning outcomes?

Additional areas explored included how learning communities influenced music teacher development, attitudes, and longevity.

Twenty-four exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers were selected by criterion and snowball methods. Teachers completed an interview and a pre-interview descriptive survey. Optional forms of data collected included observations of their classrooms without students and documents that represented the implementation of the teachers' learning community in their classrooms. Three pilot tests took place. The first pilot was for clarity of the descriptive pre-interview survey. The second pilot was not successful because four cross-checkers could not agree on themes within the interview at a sentence level. The third pilot, a peer review, identified four broad themes among all interviews: (a) Multiple Learning Communities, (b) Membership Rationale, (c) Job Satisfaction, and (d) Professional Development.

A process of interpretation materialized during the study that enabled teachers' voices to be highlighted revealing their individual and collective experiences. The results of the study were intended to describe the group of teachers who participated and should not be generalized to other groups. Triangulation of data, use of rich description, member checks, code comparisons, and explanation of research bias established consistency and reliability.

Organization of the data occurred in two parts. During the first part of Chapter 4, profiles of the teachers were grouped by their focal learning community. Teachers' responses in each group were analyzed to determine their common characteristics. The

five Primary Learning Communities were Orff-Schulwerk, Kodály, District Elementary General Music Teacher, Building, and Other (Appendix F-J). All teachers participated in Secondary Learning Communities. Thus, Primary and Secondary members of Orff-Schulwerk, Kodály, District Elementary General Music Teacher, Building, and Other Learning Communities were compared. There were common characteristics found between Primary and Secondary groups. Secondary groups differed enough to reflect the diverse interests of the teachers.

The second part of Chapter 4 addressed themes found among all teachers who participated. Table 1 demonstrated the diversity of the teachers' choices in Multiple Learning Communities and the number of their memberships in Primary and Secondary Learning Communities. Trends and unique perspectives were discovered. Membership Rationale included how they were introduced to a learning community. Teachers found their learning communities while in college or discovered them by following an interest. Reasons for continuing participation were (a) continued learning, (b) improved student learning, and (c) for self-renewal. The most common reasons for joining a group were for (a) sharing, (b) personal growth, and (c) teaching refinement. Overall, teachers were satisfied with their jobs and believed that their learning communities had positive impacts. Themes within Job Satisfaction were (a) what the teachers loved about their jobs and (b) what the teachers needed to do to sustain their job satisfaction. Professional development through learning communities inspired teachers by (a) being in a group of teachers, (b) seeing how the teachers' learning community knowledge transferred to their students, and (c) building a repertoire for their teaching. When teachers were asked what they accomplished by participating in their learning



communities, almost all of the teachers identified learning how to teach a musical skill to their students. When teachers were asked what they wanted to gain in the future from their learning community, they said (a) developing their teaching repertoire, (b) being in a group of teachers, and (c) receiving the same things they had received in the past. A cycle was identified between what the teachers wanted from future professional development and what inspired them. Teachers also received inspiration by building repertoire within the learning communities which also reinforced their future participation in these groups.

The meaningful experiences that teachers associated with their learning communities addressed (a) professional development, (b) conversations, (c) projects, and (d) teaching adults. A second cycle that revealed a process of learning, refining, and applying was discovered when charting the flow of how the teachers spoke about their learning communities. There was a clear distinction among themes of the experience source, the teachers' experience, and the students' experience. Conversations and projects interplayed with the learning, refining and applying cycle. When teachers discussed professional development and teaching adults, they described an experience from their learning community that they reflected upon outside of the learning community. Through independent reflection, teachers increased their understanding of the experience and recognized the value in that experience. This initiated the cycle of learning, refining and applying which was transferred to their school music program. Cycles and experiences found within the themes of Professional Development and Emergent Theme Pathways provided insight into long-term sustenance and growth of mid-career teachers.

## Discussion

Prominent themes are reviewed in the context of current research. A discussion of the findings in relation to the research questions occurs and then a description of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers is developed.

### Research Questions

Three research questions were posed at the beginning of the study. Findings from the study were integrated with applicable research to explore and describe the exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers' learning communities and the meaningful experiences derived from them.

- What are the characteristics of the learning communities of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers?

Teachers participated in different types of learning communities. These include both Formal Learning Communities and Informal Communities.<sup>17</sup> Formal Learning Communities were experiences guided by higher education, a school district, a method of instruction, or an association. Informal Learning Communities were experiences in which people with shared interests created and guided learning groups. All teachers had a Primary Learning Community whose content was the main focus of the teachers. The five Primary Learning Communities found among the teachers in this study included Orff-Schulwerk, Kodály, District Elementary General Music Teacher, Building, and Other Learning Communities. The origin of the Orff-Schulwerk and Kodály Learning Communities came from the support of national pedagogical associations and

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<sup>17</sup> Operational definitions are listed on pages 11 to 14.

represented an extension of the teachers' methodological interests. The District Elementary General Music Teacher learning communities were groups that were formed by peer music teachers in a school district or groups required by the school district's curriculum department. The groups appreciated conversations and the sharing of tried and true lessons. Building Learning Communities were groups formed by peer teachers in the same school building or were groups required by the school district's curriculum department where teachers sought unification among other teachers to improve student success. The Other Learning Communities reflected individual teachers' unique interests.

All teachers identified a Secondary Learning Community which was a group that was important to a teacher, but was not her or his main focus. Secondary Learning Communities echoed the categorization of Primary Learning Communities: Orff-Schulwerk, Kodály, District Elementary General Music Teacher, Building, and Other Learning Communities. When comparing the Primary and Secondary Learning Communities of teachers within the same category, teachers had similar repertoire in their classrooms and expressed common values. However, teachers who participated in Secondary Learning Communities expressed views and interests beyond their individual Primary Learning Community's subject matter.

This study found that teachers had multiple learning communities. The multiple experiences of teachers were expressed in the diverse choices and distribution of memberships in learning communities. A typical pairing of learning communities included a group that celebrated the interest of the teachers and a group consisting of their district elementary general music teachers. When teachers discussed Multiple

Learning Communities, developing pedagogy was the most frequent theme. They would pair pedagogy and curriculum or pedagogy and assessment. The Variant Learning Community was a group that formed as a result of the influence of a Primary or Secondary Learning Community. In this study, it was found that the Variant Learning Community happened most often as a result of the influence of the Primary Learning Communities. Multiple Secondary Learning Communities were typically not related to one another and represented teachers exploring their individual, outside interests. Marginal Learning Communities were groups that implied limited involvement of teachers. Teachers did not speak of these groups in their interview but mentioned them in their pre-interview descriptive survey.

Learning communities were embedded deeply in the practice of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers. This emphasized that throughout the process of interviews, teachers recognized additional learning communities in which they participated. This confirmed the criteria of an expert teacher that Steffy et al. (2000) described, one who participates in learning communities. Teachers participated in multiple communities which reflected their diverse interests and their desires to refine their skills as teachers. Almost all of the teachers said that sharing with other teachers was an important component of their learning communities. This value was expressed through shared repertoire, shared end products, and shared values. Shared values were reported in previous studies about music teachers working in groups (Gruenhagen, 2008; Stanley, 2009, 2012). Other reasons teachers returned to learning communities were for (a) personal growth, (b) refinement of teaching, (c) refreshment of self, and (d) working through specific issues. In previous studies of learning communities and music

teachers, researchers identified adaptations to needs of the communities' participants when groups of teachers were problem solving together (Gruenhagen, 2008; Stanley, 2009, 2012). Reasons for continued participation in learning communities included (a) sustained professional development, (b) increased benefits for students, and (c) the need for teacher renewal. Steffy et al. (2000) claimed that teacher reflection and renewal were important parts in personal growth. The learning communities inspired teachers by (a) being a part of a group, (b) witnessing the transfer of what they learned in the learning community to their students, and (c) building a repertoire for the school music program. Almost all the teachers said that by being a member of their learning community, they acquired a positive view of their job, students learned new skills, and they learned new skills. These descriptions lent insight to what teachers needed and described criteria of successful accomplishments in the learning communities of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers.

There were two ways in which teachers became involved in their learning communities. Some teachers were introduced to their learning communities through college or pedagogical training. Other teachers found a community based on their interests. Teachers chose when and how they would participate in their learning communities. Most teachers chose to participate in Formal Learning Communities. The highest number of Informal Learning Community memberships was in the Primary District Elementary General Music Teacher group and the Secondary Building group. In addition to seeking professional development, teachers sought inspiration from being with a group of teachers. This encouraged continuous membership in a learning community. Some teachers were limited from pursuing their interests due to

geographical and/or financial limitations. Thus, some interests were expressed through online groups or through the use of social media. Also, the learning community served as a place where teachers would be exposed to new ideas and would initiate a reflective process in which the teachers could practice new ideas or continue to consider their new ideas independently. The learning communities supported the interests of the teachers, and for many, fulfilled a need in curriculum development, became a source of new information, and furnished a sense of renewal. Common characteristics with previously documented learning communities in general education research included "shared values and vision, reflective professional inquiry, collaboration," and an openness to extend beyond school communities for learning (Stoll et. al., 2007, p. 226-227).

- What meaningful experiences do exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers describe as a result of their participation in learning communities?

Four sources of meaningful experiences emerged from the teachers' stories about their learning communities: professional development (54%), conversations (30%), projects (17%), and teaching adults (17%). Professional development occurred in Formal Learning Communities in which the modes of learning consisted of workshops, certifications, graduate work, and conferences. Conversations transpired in Formal Learning Communities and Informal Learning Communities. In this study, the Formal Learning Community conversations took place in a music education certification program where two out of three teachers were receiving credit towards their master's degree and during a building meeting that implemented a district initiative. The Informal Learning Community conversations took place during meetings

of District Elementary General Music Teacher groups that the teachers had arranged for themselves. The projects influenced by Informal Learning Communities involved grants in which one teacher implemented an integrated literacy and multicultural program and the other teacher received a SMART Board for her room. Meaningful experiences arising from projects within the Formal Learning Communities involved a program based on a building-wide initiative and a program influenced by a workshop that implemented music education methodology, literacy, and multicultural music. Meaningful experiences emerging from teaching adults in Formal Learning communities were identified in music methodology environments, in a District Elementary General Music Teacher group, and in a state music education association.

In reviewing multiple meaningful experiences of teachers, different types of learning occurred. The most traditional format was presented in Professional Development where teachers learned and implemented a skill. Projects became an extension of multiple skills which culminated in an integrated program. When teachers accumulated skills and recognition in a Formal Learning Community, they demonstrated leadership by teaching other teachers. Learning community research in general education suggests that leadership and teacher talk within a learning community are forms of learning (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1995; Lieberman & Mace, 2009; Richmond & Manohare, 2010). In addition, conversations with the opportunity of collaboration have been documented in music learning communities (Gruenhagen, 2008; Stanley, 2009, 2012). In this study, topics which teachers felt were meaningful addressed the evaluation of their own teaching practice and the solution of their own problems. Meaningful conversations that teachers experienced demonstrated

the implementation of reflection about their values; this is a quality that Dewey (1938/1998) expressed that must take place in order for meaningful learning to take place.

- How do they think their meaningful experiences transfer to their teaching practice and to their student learning outcomes?

Self-renewal occurred in the learning communities of exemplary teachers as they shared their meaningful experiences. Teachers discussed how these experiences transferred to their teaching and to their students' learning; their descriptions demonstrated sequential thoughts and common themes (Figure 4.1). A cycle of learning, refining, and applying appeared which suggested a sequence in which teachers gathered, reflected, and applied information from their learning communities. Most common themes of the teachers' experiences were (a) learning engagement (20), (b) teaching technique reflection (24), and (c) teaching technique refinement (22). Most common themes mentioned in students' experiences were (a) skill acquisition (18), (b) skill application (18), (c) new skill questioning (9), (d) learning engagement (19), (e) learning observed by teachers (18), and (f) relationship with teachers (8). When viewing the sequential thought processes from the meaningful experience source (professional development, conversations, projects, and teaching adults), different pathways emerged (Figure 4.2 -4.5). Experiences in learning communities initiated processes in professional development and in teaching adults. But by experiencing conversations and projects within a learning community, teachers interacted with that learning community as a part of their sequential process.



Steffy et al. (2000) mentioned that reflection and renewal facilitated the movement among the different stages of teachers' careers. Stories of reflection and renewal were prevalent among all of the teachers; teachers demonstrated a pattern in which they learned and applied their experiences. These teachers sought meaningful experiences in learning communities for themselves and for their students. Dewey (1938/1998) said that in order for thoughtful learning to take place, there must be intention associated with a learning experience and value appraisal. When discussing how meaningful experiences transferred to their teaching and to their students' learning, teachers pinpointed an event that sparked a reflective process in which value was determined. In turn, the teachers transformed that experience by adapting it to their teaching process. Identifying processes in which value can be identified, analyzed, and applied by teachers lends insight to teacher educators to develop this process and to understand how the learning community contributes to sustainable, long-term professional development.

### **Characteristics of Exemplary Mid-Career Elementary General Music Teachers**

Themes in describing exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers were recorded (Table 3). Teachers were able to transfer personal, meaningful learning experiences to their teaching and to their students' learning. In previous studies of exemplary elementary general music teachers, teacher sequencing (Hendel, 1995) and confidence in predicting and diagnosing student learning (Anderson Nickel, 1997) were documented. Teachers responded by committing to life-long learning. Enduring commitment was an aspect of a teacher job satisfaction framework (Huberman, 1993).

Table 3

*Characteristics of Exemplary Mid-Career Teachers in this Study*

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Overall Qualities

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- Loved music and loved teaching kids music.
  - Reflected about their teaching practice in a systematic way.
  - Dedicated to refining their teaching and to developing their curriculum.
  - Responded to change which was exhibited through learning community membership.
  - Revealed an intrinsic drive towards being a life-long learner.
- 

Teachers Responsible for Own Growth

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- Searched to find what professional development worked for them and their students. See also Conway (2008).
  - Possessed insight in their professional needs.
  - Emphasized that sharing with other teachers was most important.
  - Knew what inspired them and what they needed to do to sustain their inspiration.
  - Demonstrated that inspiration was a source of long-term learning.
  - Wished to receive future professional development in music methodology (67%).
  - Wanted to increase their repertoire for teaching (88%), to participate with a group of teachers (67%), and to receive the same things that they had received in the past from their learning communities (25%).
- 

Learning Communities of Exemplary Mid-Career Elementary General Music Teachers

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- Embedded in the teachers' practices.
  - Were multiple.
  - Involved high participation.
  - Represented the diverse interests of the teachers.
  - Displayed teachers' values in shared repertoire and in refined teaching skills.
  - Established avenues for exposure, interaction, and application of new experiences.
  - Enabled sustained long-term learning.
  - Inspired them by participating in a group of teachers (88%), seeing how learned skills transferred to their students (63%), and building a repertoire for their teaching (21%).
-

Learning Communities were a result of the teachers' interests in gathering multiple sources to adapt to their learning and to their students' learning over time. Exemplary mid-career elementary teachers searched for experiences that would cater to their needs in attaining goals for their students. Teachers perceived what fulfilled them and what forms of support they needed in order to sustain inspiration. Inspiration was a prevalent theme in teachers describing the experiences that maintained their teaching practice and continued their excitement in long-term learning.

Learning communities were involved in the teachers' practices to the point that teachers were discovering new learning communities during their interviews. Learning Communities depended on the teachers' interests, education background, and access. General education theories suggested that independence (Huberman, 1993) and leadership opportunities (Fessler & Christiansen, 1992) for mid-career teachers provided an environment for them to grow successfully. The learning communities in this study provided these experiences because the opportunities for development were multiple and rich. Teachers were highly involved in their learning communities. The more that teacher learning experiences took place outside of traditional music education, the more diverse the teachers' interests were. However, all of the teachers demonstrated multiple interests. The most extreme differences in interests were found with teachers who were exposed to extended learning outside of music education. Other experiences that teachers expressed as inspiring were (a) participating in group of teachers (88%), (b) seeing how learned skills transferred to their students (63%), and (c) building a repertoire for their teaching (21%).

Themes about exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers collected *a priori* were similar to what Conway (2008) and Steffy et al. (2000) stated about teachers. Conway found that mid-career teachers searched for her or his own professional development. Steffy et al. (2000) defined expert teachers by the following statements:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Teachers are members of learning communities (p. 78).

Criteria of sequencing and learning from experience were documented in the learning communities of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers. The way in which teachers described how an experience from their learning community was meaningful and how it transferred to their learning and to their students' learning was systematic in demonstrating how the teacher managed their students' learning (Figures 4.1-4.5).

### **Conclusions**

In examining the learning communities of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers, this study illustrated characteristics of the group of teachers, examined what the teachers wanted from future professional development, and documented how teachers attained sustained professional development. The exemplary

mid-career elementary general music teachers were (a) dedicated, (b) loved music and loved teaching music, (c) practiced systematic reflection, (d) responded to change, and (e) revealed an intrinsic drive towards being a life-long learner. Teachers (a) sought their own professional development, (b) reflected about their professional development needs, and (c) valued sharing with other teachers. Teachers were aware of what inspired them and what they needed to do to sustain inspiration. In the discussion of their learning communities, teachers described that they returned to professional development experiences if these experiences met their personal needs and inspired them. Learning communities were involved in the practice of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers. In addition, learning communities were multiple and diverse and they reflected the interests of the exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers. Teachers found value and received inspiration from their learning communities. In analyzing the descriptions of teachers' meaningful experiences in learning communities, patterns of reflection supported complex, differentiated, creative thinking which transferred to their teaching and their students' learning.

While determining characteristics of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers and their learning communities, insight into teachers' career development emerged. The analysis of teacher outcomes and student outcomes provided an example of teacher resilience and an illustration of what exemplary teachers brought to their students. The exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers described how to be a life-long learner by:

- Finding inspiration.

- Developing personal interests.
- Adapting to change.
- Participating in learning communities.
- Reflecting about their experiences and applying these insights to their teaching and their students' learning.
- Communicating.
- Sharing with other teachers.
- Demonstrating an intrinsic drive for learning and teaching.
- Knowing themselves.
- Figuring out how to work through adversity.

In addition, they imparted wisdom in how to sustain life-long learning by:

- Finding inspiration
- Loving what you do.
- Being dedicated to personal growth and to students' growth.
- Knowing where to receive support.
- Adjusting to change.

Inspiration and change were themes in both becoming a life-long learner and sustaining that learning. Resilient teachers were resourceful in finding inspiration and adapted to change.

Insights about life-long learning demonstrated how teachers changed to meet their own needs and their students' needs. The results of the teachers' investments in their own professional development in learning communities provided their students with:

- Unique creative lessons adapted to their needs.
- Teaching influenced by collective wisdom from learning communities.
- Increased teacher engagement that facilitated increased student engagement.
- Enhanced communication with teachers.

Ultimately, learning communities provided teachers with sustainable long-term professional development catered to their specific interests at their specific level of expertise. The impact sustained their engagement in their community, in their personal development, and in their students' learning needs. In discussing meaningful transfers from their learning community to their teaching and their students' learning, teachers revealed a systematic way in reflecting about their experiences and adapting them to fit the needs of their students and themselves.

### **Implications**

There is a lack of research describing elementary general music teachers. This study contributes to developing characteristics of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers and to describing their choices of participating in learning communities as professional development. By developing characteristics of these exemplary teachers during a specific time in their career, researchers have a foundation for studying teachers' development and teachers have a means to understand themselves better. Teachers pursue multiple interests within their learning communities which demonstrates diverse interests at mid-career. This also allows teachers to gain access to a variety of professional development options to meet the needs of their expertise level and of their students' learning environment. Moreover, the importance placed on the

learning community emphasized by the teachers' strong values requires additional research. The teachers' and their students' learning outcomes can serve as a base for future research of the learning community for sustainable continuing professional development in music education beyond graduate work.

Implications for professional development programs include the ability to understand how to create learning environments for the exemplary mid-career elementary teacher. Additional considerations include:

- Guiding teachers towards personal interests as a form of sustenance.
- Understanding how exemplary teachers sustain life-long learning and adjust to change.
- Analyzing how exemplary teachers seek value from a meaningful experience in a sequential way.
- Discerning how teachers gain access to learning communities.
- Recognizing the importance of inspiration in conjunction with learning and with sustaining engagement in teachers.

In knowing more about elementary general music teachers, teacher educators can adapt professional development to cater to the specific needs of these teachers. Keeping mid-career teachers engaged in learning nurtures their enjoyment of life-long learning and their ability to react to the changes that occur. This can result in increased teacher retention.



## **Need for Future Research**

My study of the learning communities of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers allows an examination of sustained professional development among teachers with similar expertise. This approach adds new areas in music education to explore. Few studies in music education address characteristics of elementary general music teachers and mid-career teachers. Most common research about elementary general music teachers addresses expertise and classroom activities. Voices of elementary general music teachers are underrepresented in research literature. In addition, the learning community as a subject is not researched extensively in general education and music education.

Emergent themes surfaced when studying the learning communities of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers. Further research in the following areas is suggested:

- What is the biography of an elementary general music teacher at different stages in her or his career?
- How does inspiration fit into the framework of life-long learning and longevity in teaching?
- How do elementary general music teachers sustain themselves throughout their career?
- How do professional development needs change throughout a teacher's career?
- How is a teacher's identity influenced within a learning community?

- What is the long-term impact of a teacher while she/he is participating in a learning community?
- How does learning community participation differ among music teachers?
- How does learning community participation differ throughout the career stages of teachers?
- What are the characteristics of successful learning communities?
- How does individual and group learning occur in a learning community?
- How are shared repertoire and shared language developed in music learning communities?
- How do shared experiences increase teacher engagement?
- What are effective ways to create and to support informal learning community experiences?
- What role does a successful learning community play in helping to support the creative process of elementary music teachers?
- What are the ways in which students benefit from teachers' participation in learning communities?

Dewey (1938/1998) stated that external factors must be present in order to learn from them. In addition, education must be adapted in order to meet the needs of the recipients. In understanding more about elementary general music teachers, teacher educators can create professional development opportunities that enhance teachers' encouragement towards life-long learning thus contributing to career longevity.

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## **Appendix A.1: Letter for Suggested Participants**





**School of Music**

Music Education Area  
110 Weigel Hall  
1866 College Road  
Columbus, OH 43210-1170

Phone (614) 292-7940

Dear :

Your name was suggested as a potential participant to take part in a research study about exemplary mid-career teachers and their learning communities. This topic has yet to be explored in music education research. The study is for my dissertation, and will take place during winter 2012. Involvement includes filling out a survey (25 minutes) and an interview (35 minutes) with a possible follow up interview for clarification. A transcript of the interview will be sent to you to check for accuracy. If time permits, I would like to take observation notes of your classroom without students to see if there are connections of learning communities and curriculum (30 minutes). All information will be kept confidential.

If you agree to participate, I will contact you to schedule an interview. Prior to our meeting I will send a packet to your school including the pre-interview survey and a consent form. Both will be collected at the time of the interview. Thank you for considering participation in this study. Your input is greatly valued.

Sincerely,

Christina Pelletier  
Graduate Teaching Assistant  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Ohio State University

## **Appendix A.2: Email for Suggested Participants**



**School of Music**

Music Education Area  
110 Weigel Hall  
1866 College Road  
Columbus, OH 43210-1170

Phone (614) 292-7940

Dear :

Your name was suggested as a potential participant to take part in a research study about exemplary mid-career teachers and their learning communities. This topic has yet to be explored in music education research. The study is for my dissertation, and will take place during winter 2012. Involvement includes filling out a survey (25 minutes) and an interview (35 minutes) with a possible follow up interview for clarification. A transcript of the interview will be sent to you to check for accuracy. If time permits, I would like to take observation notes of your classroom without students to see if there are connections of learning communities and curriculum (30 minutes). All information will be kept confidential.

If you agree to participate, I will contact you to schedule an interview. Prior to our meeting I will send a packet to your school including the pre-interview survey and a consent form. Both will be collected at the time of the interview. Thank you for considering participation in this study. Your input is greatly valued.

Sincerely,

Christina Pelletier  
Graduate Teaching Assistant  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Ohio State University

### **Appendix A.3: Phone Call for Suggested Participants**

**Part I: Introduction and Explanation**

Pelletier: Hello is \_\_\_\_\_ there? Hello, my name is Christina Pelletier. I am currently a student at Ohio State earning my doctorate. As a part of my dissertation, I am conducting a study of exemplary mid-career teachers, and I was given your name as a potential participant. I was wondering if now would be a convenient time to discuss what the study would involve.

**Option A:**

Participant: Yes.

Thank you. I am studying exemplary mid-career teachers and their learning communities. This topic has yet to be explored in music education research. The research will begin in winter 2012. Minimum involvement includes filling out a pre-interview survey which lasts 25 minutes and an interview for 35 minutes with a possible follow up interview for clarification. The transcript of the interview will be sent to you to double check for accuracy. If there is time in your schedule, observation notes of your classroom without students would be taken for 30 minutes to see if there are connections of learning communities and curriculum. All information will be kept confidential. Also, you can leave the study at any point. Would you be interested in participating?

**Option B:**

Participant: No, but I am interested in learning more.

Pelletier: When would be a good time to call you back? (Schedule time). Thank you and talk to you soon. Good-bye.

**Call back:**

Pelletier: Hello is \_\_\_\_\_ there? Hello, this is Christina Pelletier and we had spoken on the phone on \_\_\_\_\_ about my study of exemplary teachers. Is now a good time for you?

Participant: Yes.

Pelletier: Thank you. As I said before, I was given your name by \_\_\_\_\_. I am currently a student at Ohio State earning my doctorate. I am studying exemplary mid-career teachers and their learning communities. This topic has yet to be explored in music education research. The research will begin in winter 2012. Minimum involvement includes filling out a pre-interview survey which lasts 25

minutes and an interview for 35 minutes with a possible follow up interview for clarification. The transcript of the interview will be sent to you to double check for accuracy. If there is time in your schedule, observation notes of your classroom without students would be taken for 30 minutes to see if there are connections of learning communities and curriculum. All information will be kept confidential. Also, you can leave the study at any point. Would you be interested in participating?

**Option C:**

Participant: No, I am not interested.

Pelletier: Okay. Thank you for your time. Good-bye.

**Part II: Response to Participation**

**Option A:**

Participant: Yes I would like to participate.

Pelletier: Thank you. The next step is to schedule a time to meet. We can meet at your school or a place of your choice. When are you available? (Schedule meeting) Are you available for me to observe your classroom?

Pelletier: So, our meeting will be on \_\_\_\_\_. This week I will send a packet to your school including a pre-interview survey and a consent form. You may skip any questions in the survey that you do not wish to answer. Both will be collected at the time of the interview. Do you have any questions?

(Answer)

Thank you for your time. Good-bye.

**Option B:**

Participant: No, I would not like to participate.

Pelletier: Thank you for your time. Good-bye.

#### **Appendix A.4: Letter for Known Participants**



**School of Music**

Music Education Area  
110 Weigel Hall  
1866 College Road  
Columbus, OH 43210-1170

Phone (614) 292-7940

Dear :

I am writing to ask if you would be interested participating in a research study about exemplary mid-career teachers and their learning communities. This topic has yet to be explored in music education research. The study is for my dissertation, and will take place during winter 2012. Involvement includes filling out a survey (25 minutes) and an interview (35 minutes) with a possible follow up interview for clarification. A transcript of the interview will be sent to you to check for accuracy. If time permits, I would like to take observation notes of your classroom without students to see if there are connections of learning communities and curriculum (30 minutes). All information will be kept confidential.

If you agree to participate, I will contact you to schedule an interview. Prior to our meeting I will send a packet to your school including the pre-interview survey and a consent form. Both will be collected at the time of the interview. Thank you for considering participation in this study. Your input is greatly valued.

Sincerely,

Christina Pelletier  
Graduate Teaching Assistant  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Ohio State University



## **Appendix A.5: Email for Known Participants**



**School of Music**

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Music Education Area  
110 Weigel Hall  
1866 College Road  
Columbus, OH 43210-1170

Phone (614) 292-7940

Dear :

I am writing to ask if you would be interested participating in a research study about exemplary mid-career teachers and their learning communities. This topic has yet to be explored in music education research. The study is for my dissertation, and will take place during winter 2012. Involvement includes filling out a survey (25 minutes) and an interview (35 minutes) with a possible follow up interview for clarification. A transcript of the interview will be sent to you to check for accuracy. If time permits, I would like to take observation notes of your classroom without students to see if there are connections of learning communities and curriculum (30 minutes). All information will be kept confidential.

If you agree to participate, I will contact you to schedule an interview. Prior to our meeting I will send a packet to your school including the pre-interview survey and a consent form. Both will be collected at the time of the interview. Thank you for considering participation in this study. Your input is greatly valued.

Sincerely,

Christina Pelletier  
Graduate Teaching Assistant  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Ohio State University

## **Appendix A.6: Phone Call for Suggested Participants**

Pelletier: Hello is \_\_\_\_\_ there? Hello, this is Christina Pelletier, I am currently working on my doctorate at Ohio State. As a part of my dissertation, I am conducting a study of exemplary mid-career teachers. I was wondering if now would be a convenient time to discuss what the study would involve.

**Option A:**

Participant: Yes.

Thank you. I am studying exemplary mid-career teachers and their learning communities. This topic has yet to be explored in music education research. The research will begin in winter 2012. Minimum involvement includes filling out a pre-interview survey which lasts 25 minutes and an interview for 35 minutes with a possible follow up interview for clarification. The transcript of the interview will be sent to you to double check for accuracy. If there is time in your schedule, observation notes of your classroom without students would be taken for 30 minutes to see if there are connections of learning communities and curriculum. All information will be kept confidential. Also, you can leave the study at any point. Would you be interested in participating?

**Option B:**

Participant: No, but I am interested in learning more.

Pelletier: When would be a good time to call you back? (Schedule time). Thank you and talk to you soon. Good-bye.

Call back:

Pelletier: Hello is \_\_\_\_\_ there? Hello, this is Christina and we had spoken on the phone on \_\_\_\_\_ about my study of exemplary teachers. Is now a good time for you?

Participant: Yes.

Thank you. As I said before, I was given your name by \_\_\_\_\_. I am currently a student at Ohio State earning my doctorate. I am studying exemplary mid-career teachers and their learning communities. This topic has yet to be explored in music education research. The research will begin in winter 2012. Minimum involvement includes filling out a pre-interview survey which lasts 25 minutes and an interview for 35 minutes with a possible follow up interview for clarification. The transcript of the interview will be sent to you to double check for accuracy. If there is time in your schedule, observation notes of your classroom without students would be taken for 30 minutes to see if there are

connections of learning communities and curriculum. All information will be kept confidential. Also, you can leave the study at any point. Would you be interested in participating?

**Option C:**

Participant: No, I am not interested.

Pelletier: Okay. Thank you for your time. Good-bye.

**Part II: Response to Participation**

**Option A:**

Participant: Yes I would like to participate.

Pelletier: Thank you, your input is appreciated. The next step is to schedule a time to meet. We can meet at your school or a place of your choice. When are you available? (Schedule meeting) Are you available for me to observe your classroom?

Pelletier: So, our meeting will be on \_\_\_\_\_. This week I will send a packet to your school including a pre-interview survey and a consent form. You may skip any questions in the survey that you do not wish to answer. Both will be collected at the time of the interview. Do you have any questions?

(Answer)

Thank you for your time. Good-bye.

**Option B:**

Participant: No, I would not like to participate.

Pelletier: Thank you for your time. Good-bye.

**Appendix B: Study Welcome Letter**



**School of Music**

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Music Education Area  
110 Weigel Hall  
1866 College Road  
Columbus, OH 43210-1170

Phone (614) 292-7940

Dear:

Thank you so much for your participation in my study of exemplary mid-career teachers and learning communities. Enclosed you will find a pre-interview survey that will take about 25 minutes to complete. Please answer the questions to your best ability. You may skip any questions that you do not wish to answer. Also, there is a consent form that describes your rights as a participant, including the right to withdraw from the study at any point. All information will be kept confidential. Please complete these forms prior to our meeting on \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedule. Your opinion and experiences are valued highly.

Sincerely,

Christina Pelletier  
Graduate Teaching Assistant  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Ohio State University

## **Appendix C: Pre-Interview Descriptive Survey**



*A learning community consists of people who have a similar interest, learn from one another, and share resources. Members build and maintain community relationships over time. A learning community is made of formal and informal group learning experiences. A formal learning experience is one that is guided by higher education, a school district, a method of instruction, or an association. People with shared interests create and guide informal learning experiences. When asked to list your learning communities, please list all to which you belong. There is no ideal number.*

**PRE-INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1) What is your current job title? *Please include the subjects and grade levels that you currently teach.*

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Please describe your school and school district environment (i.e. private/public; urban/suburban/rural).

\_\_\_\_\_

3) How many years have you taught? \_\_\_\_\_

4) How many years have you taught elementary general music? \_\_\_\_\_



*If you have held a different teaching position from your current assignment, please answer questions 5 through 7. If you have had only one teaching position, you may skip to question 8.*

5) Please list all the school districts in which you have taught.

\_\_\_\_\_

6) If you have taught another subject area, please list the subjects and grade levels, and how long you have taught them.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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7) Please list the other schools in which you have taught.

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8) What type(s) of degree(s) do you have?

Undergraduate in \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_

Master's in \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_

PhD in \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_

9) Are you tenured?  Yes  No

10) What teaching licensure do you hold? *Please check from the list below.*

Professional K-12 Music  National Certified Board Teacher

Senior K-12 Music  Leader K-12 Music

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

11) Please list any additional certifications or licenses.

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12) After initial music teacher licensure, what types of education have you received?

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13) What additional training would you like to receive?

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14) Which professional associations do you belong to? *Please check all that apply.*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Choral Director's Association   | <input type="checkbox"/> Ohio Choral Director's Association            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Orff-Schulwerk Association      | <input type="checkbox"/> Ohio Dalcroze Association                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Central Ohio Orff Chapter            | <input type="checkbox"/> Ohio Music Education Association              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dalcroze Society of America              | <input type="checkbox"/> The Organization of American Kodály Educators |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Gordon Institute for Music Learning  | <input type="checkbox"/> Suzuki Association of the Americas            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> National Association for Music Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Tri-City Kodály Educators                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                             |  |

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15) Are you involved in a learning community?

**Part One:**

*Please check the communities in which you currently participate.*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Choral Director's Association   | <input type="checkbox"/> Ohio Choral Director's Association  |
| American Orff-Schulwerk Association<br><input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> Regional (non-local)              | The Organization of American Kodály Educators<br><input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> Regional (non-local)         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Central Ohio Orff Chapter  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tri-City Kodály Educators   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dalcroze Society of America  | <input type="checkbox"/> Partnerships with colleges or universities<br><input type="checkbox"/> Formal <input type="checkbox"/> Informal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dalcroze State Chapter-Ohio  | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Gordon Institute   | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate School- Master's   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research Community   | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate School- PhD  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research with a university or college<br><input type="checkbox"/> Formal <input type="checkbox"/> Informal | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring New Teachers<br>(within school district)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suzuki Association of the Americas   | <input type="checkbox"/> National Board Certification  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TI:ME  | <input type="checkbox"/> National Association for Music Education  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> World Music Drumming   | <input type="checkbox"/> Ohio Music Education Association  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other ( <i>Please see parts 2 &amp; 3.</i> )   |  |

Based on the checked communities above, how many gatherings did you attend last year? Did you receive college credit or CEU's? *Please list below.*

Learning Community	Number of Gatherings	Credit	CEU
_____			
_____			
_____			
_____			
_____			

**Part Two:**

**Study Groups Created By Teachers:** Please list all study groups in which you participate initiated by teachers. For the purposes of this survey, a study group consists of an in-person or an online group whose members meet regularly to discuss specific topics. It should be noted that:

- The column, “How do participants know each other,” refers to the population in which the group originated. Examples include school, district, local, national, and religious organization.
- The column, “Who participates,” represents the types of teachers in the study group such as music teachers, special area teachers, K-2 classroom teachers.
- The column, “Discussion topics,” stands for the primary focus of your meetings.

**Group Type    Credit/CEU    How often?    How do you know each other?    Who participates?    Discussion Topics**

**Example:**

<b>Math &amp; Arts</b>	<b>None.</b>	<b>Once a month. In person meeting.</b>	<b>Work at same school.</b>	<b>Special Area &amp; K-2 Teachers</b>	<b>Math integration</b>
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**Part Three:**

**Other Learning Communities :** Please list the other learning groups that you have not included in part one or part two of question 14. The other learning groups can be an in-person, online, music lesson, or music performance group. It should be noted that:

- The column, “How participants know each other,” refers to the population in which the group originated. Examples include forums, social networking sites, course work, and course work associated with a degree.
- The column, “Who participates,” represents the types of teachers in the study group such as music teachers, special area teachers, K-2 classroom teachers.
- The column, “Discussion topics,” stands for the primary focus of your meetings.

<b>Group Type</b>	<b>Credit/CEU</b>	<b>How often?</b>	<b>How do you know each other?</b>	<b>Who participates?</b>	<b>Discussion Topics</b>
<b>Example: Online forum</b>	No	one a month	<a href="http://www.music.com">www.music.com</a>	elementary music teachers	music lessons

16) Please rate the your level of involvement in your learning communities on a scale from 1 to 5. (1 not involved 3 neutral 5 very involved)

<b>My Learning Community</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Volunteer</b>	<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Clinician or Presenter</b>	<b>Share Ideas</b>	<b>Other</b>

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17) What are the three biggest influences on your curriculum as you currently teach it?

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18) Please rate your current level of job satisfaction on a scale from 1 to 5: \_\_\_  
(1 little job satisfaction    5 very satisfied)

19) Are there any documents you wish to share that demonstrate the impact of your learning community at you school? (i.e. curriculum, programs, professional development)



## **Appendix D: Consent Form**



**School of Music**

Music Education Area  
110 Weigel Hall  
1866 College Road  
Columbus, OH 43210-1170

Phone (614) 292-7940

## **The Ohio State University Consent to Participate in Research**

**Study Title:** Learning Communities of  
Exemplary Mid-Career Elementary General Music Teachers

**Researcher:** Patricia Flowers & Christina Pelletier

**Sponsor:** None

**This is a consent form for research participation.** It contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate.

**Your participation is voluntary.**

Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and will receive a copy of the form.

**Purpose:**

The purpose is to provide a thick, rich description of learning communities of mid-career exemplary elementary music teachers. The intention is to identify characteristics of learning communities and meaningful experiences that result from participation in them in order to examine how they influence music teacher development, attitudes, and longevity.

**Procedures/Tasks:**

You will complete a pre-interview survey to provide your professional background. The survey will take about 25 minutes. Then, you will participate in an interview with the co-investigator that will last about 35 minutes. If time permits, the co-investigator will take observation notes of your classroom without students for about 30 minutes. Once the interview has been transcribed, you will receive a copy to check for accuracy. There is a possibility of a follow-up interview for clarification.

**Duration:**

To clarify information gathered from the interview, you may be contacted for a follow-up interview for 30 minutes.

You may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision will not affect your future relationship with The Ohio State University.

**Risks and Benefits:**

For the pre-interview survey, you may skip any of the questions that you do not wish to answer.

You may decline to answer any of the questions as a part of the structured interview. All interview data will be kept confidential and will remain in a secure location. You may stop the interview at any point.

Your participation in this study adds to the knowledge of learning communities and professional development for mid-career elementary music educators. Also, it will create knowledge for teacher educators about learning communities and professional development for elementary general music teachers.

**Confidentiality:**

Efforts will be made to keep your study-related information confidential. However, there may be circumstances where this information must be released. For example, personal information regarding your participation in this study may be disclosed if required by state law. Also, your records may be reviewed by the following groups (as applicable to the research):

- Office for Human Research Protections or other federal, state, or international regulatory agencies;
- The Ohio State University Institutional Review Board or Office of Responsible Research Practices;
- The sponsor, if any, or agency (including the Food and Drug Administration for FDA-regulated research) supporting the study.

**Incentives:**

**There are no incentives.**

### **Participant Rights:**

You may refuse to participate in this study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you are a student or employee at Ohio State, your decision will not affect your grades or employment status.

If you choose to participate in the study, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. By signing this form, you do not give up any personal legal rights you may have as a participant in this study.

An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at The Ohio State University reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research.

### **Contacts and Questions:**

For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study, or if you feel you have been harmed by participation you may contact **Patricia Flowers ([flowers.1@osu.edu](mailto:flowers.1@osu.edu))**.

For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

## Signing the consent form

I have read (or someone has read to me) this form and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form.

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Printed name of subject

---

Signature of subject

AM/PM

---

Date and time

---

Printed name of person authorized to consent  
for subject (when applicable)

---

Signature of person authorized to consent for subject  
(when applicable)

AM/PM

---

Relationship to the subject

---

Date and time

**Investigator/Research Staff**

I have explained the research to the participant or his/her representative before requesting the signature(s) above. There are no blanks in this document. A copy of this form has been given to the participant or his/her representative.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of person obtaining consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person obtaining consent

AM/PM

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date and time

## **Appendix E: Interview Questions**



Today is Thursday, January 26, 2012 at 1:30. I am interviewing teacher AA at her elementary school who has an understanding that we are discussing this topic of learning communities.

*A learning community consists of people who have a similar interest, learn from one another, and share resources. Members build and maintain community relationships over time. A learning community can be made of formal and/or informal group learning experiences. A formal learning experience is one that is guided by higher education, a school district, a method of instruction, or an association. People with shared interests create and guide informal learning experiences.*

This is for my study of the learning communities of exemplary mid-career elementary general music teachers.

- 1) Please describe the vision of your current music program.
- 2) Please describe the current professional learning community or communities in which you participate.
- 3) When did you become involved? Why did you become involved?
- 4) Why do you continue to be involved?
- 5) How does your involvement with the professional learning communities influence your teaching? Your curriculum? Your musicality?
- 6) What goals have your students achieved as a result of your participation in the learning communities?
- 7) How do the learning communities influence your view of your job?
- 8) How does the learning communities play a part in the vision of your program?
- 9) How do you balance your vision with curriculum requirements?
- 10) What do you hope to learn from your learning communities in future gatherings?

- 11) What do you see as the benefits in participating in a learning community for yourself and for beginning teachers?
- 12) What inspires you the most as a result of your participation in your learning communities?
- 13) Please describe an event in which you gained insight in your teaching practice as a result of your involvement with your learning communities.
- 14) How does this meaningful experience influence your teaching and student learning?

## **Appendix F: Orff-Schulwerk Learning Communities**

According to the American Orff-Schulwerk Association (AOSA), “Orff Schulwerk is total, active involvement in music making that incorporates speech, singing, movement, and instrument playing in a creative environment. It develops the whole child with a balance of emotional and intellectual stimulation” (American Orff-Schulwerk Association. (n.d.), para. 8). In providing the balance, there is training specific to Orff-Schulwerk which is sometimes addressed in undergraduate studies. Certification programs in Orff-Schulwerk are approved by AOSA. The training has three different levels: I, II, and III. Core training includes Orff process, movement, and recorders. After level III, Orff-Schulwerk Master Classes are available that provide more intense study. Master teachers who have completed an apprentice program can become instructors in the Orff-Schulwerk certification programs. Ongoing training for all levels continues through the yearly national convention, regional conventions, and local chapters. Local chapters host three to four workshops during the school year that consist of national AOSA approved clinicians and member lesson sharing sessions. For a community to form, a core of dedicated teachers must volunteer to provide the services to run the workshops.

Orff-Schulwerk is known for creativity, composition, movement, and improvisation in a process that is developmentally appropriate for children. Based on speech and interdisciplinary skills, the teaching approach aims for the holistic intellectual development of the child. Typically, speech patterns, body percussion, and other movements prepare the student to transfer rhythms and melodic phrases to pitched and non-pitched percussion. Barred instruments and recorders help develop the melodic side of this method. A goal for Orff teachers would be to have available a range of

different voiced barred instruments: xylophones (soprano, alto, bass), individual double bass bars, metallophones (soprano, alto, bass), and glockenspiels (soprano, alto). Orff teachers have all different types of hand percussion, some which include African drums, tympani, and other auxiliary percussion.

Different applications of teaching the Schulwerk would come in the form of learning songs by rote and using written Orff arrangements that come from the *Music for Children* series, the *GAMEPLAN* series, general music basal series, compositions from other music teachers, or compositions that the children have created. An end product may be a performance that incorporates singing, movement, and instrument playing at the same time. Another characteristic of Orff-Schulwerk involves learning that is guided by the teacher and is explored by students who make creative choices towards a final music performance. Eventually, a project can be completely managed and created by students. All the aspects associated with teaching and understanding Orff-Schulwerk are a continuous practice for teachers participating in the methodology.

In the Orff Learning Community, a teacher can expect to attend local, regional, and national workshops. They can share ideas with others in person or over informal social media outlets. Most often, teachers keep touch with other teachers who were a part of their training since the teachers spent extended time with each other. There are a quarterly journal and a newsletter that share ideas and information about the Schulwerk. Some establish informal groups to continue learning about the methodology.

## **Appendix G: Kodály Learning Communities**

The Organization of the American Kodály Educators (OAKE) states that the Kodály philosophy is a teaching concept that addresses music literacy, best practices, and experienced based process. Music concepts include singing, folk music, solfège, quality music, development of the complete musician, and sequencing (Organization of American Kodály Educators, (n.d.)). Some training is introduced in college or university method courses. To become certified, a music teacher must complete Kodály Levels I, II, and III at an OAKE approved teacher education program. Training includes musicianship, conducting, choral ensemble, music literature, teaching process, and skills. Before achieving certification, the teacher must create a full year of sequenced lesson plans for each grade level taught. Teachers who have completed their Kodály certification and have demonstrated five years of successful implementation of the Kodály methodology may be asked to become teacher educators in a Kodály certification program.

The Kodály methodology is known as a sequence of teaching children music literacy through the use of authentic folk songs and games. By the end of a successful implementation of a Kodály program, students are able to sight sing, read, and write music. Kodály teachers' materials might include rhythmic and melodic visual manipulatives such as magnetic hearts to represent a steady beat, magnetic circles to demonstrate intervals, posters of solfège or rhythmic patterns, and curriculum maps indicating a sequence of introducing melodic intervals and rhythms. Additional materials a teacher may possess include sequenced lesson plans for each grade level, folk song music books, supplemental Kodály textbooks, basal series that implements the Kodály method, and solfège posters.

In a Kodály Learning Community, teachers may attend local, regional, and national workshops. They can share ideas with other teachers in person or over informal social media outlets. Most often, teachers keep touch with other teachers who were a part of their training since the teachers spend extended time with each other. Local chapters host two to three workshops during the school year that consist of Kodály clinicians and lesson sharing. For a local community to form, a core of dedicated teachers must volunteer to provide the services to run the workshops. There are a quarterly journal and a regional newsletter that share ideas and information about Kodály. Some establish informal groups to continue learning about the methodology.



**Appendix H: District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Communities**

In some cases, District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Communities are encouraged by their district to meet on assigned professional development days. Other times, the only way the group can meet is on their own time. Teachers in this study reported a range of topics that they addressed in District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Communities: assessment, formative assessment, report cards, problem solving, curriculum mapping, and implementing current education trends in the district. Twenty of the 25 teachers interviewed mentioned their participation in a district music teacher group. Of the 20, six emphasized the district music group as their most important learning community. As there is no previous data published, the information gathered for this learning community will be characterized by the data collected in this study. The descriptions of the District Elementary General Music Teacher Learning Communities in this study do not represent a generalized description of other district elementary music teacher groups.

## **Appendix I: Building Learning Communities**

There is limited research about elementary general music teachers and the professional communities they create with other teachers in the same school. In this study, some teachers met regularly with their related arts teams that included library, physical education, and art teachers. Some elementary music teachers met with classroom teachers to discuss how to implement connections from other subjects into the music classroom curriculum. If another music teacher worked in their building, some elementary teachers discussed how they collaborated with each other. Topics included integrating assessment, building goals, district goals, and technology. Seven of the 24 teachers emphasized a learning community in their building. Of the seven, three emphasized their building learning community as most important. As there is no previous data published, the information gathered for this learning community will be characterized by the data collected in this study. The descriptions of Building Learning Communities in this study do not represent a generalized description of other building groups in which elementary general music teachers participate.

## **Appendix J: Other Learning Communities**

There is no research in music education about the varied learning communities of elementary general music teachers. Teachers who chose to be in Other Learning Communities had extensive reasons why they were a part of the group and how it related to their development as a teacher. Other Learning Communities with which teachers in this study primarily identified include local arts groups, National Board Certification teacher group, graduate school community, TI:ME (Technology Institute for Music Educators), principal licensure group, and national barbershop association. As there is no previous data published, the information gathered for this learning community will be characterized by the data collected in this study. The descriptions of Other Learning Communities in this study do not represent a generalized description about other groups in which elementary general music teachers participate.