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I Did That Wrong and It Sounded Good: An Ethnographic Study of Vernacular Music Making in Higher Education

Victor Ezquerra
University of South Florida, vicezquerra@gmail.com

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by

Victor N. Ezquerra

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Major Professor: David A. Williams, Ph.D.
C. Victor Fung, Ph.D.
Antoinette Jackson, Ph.D.
Clint Randles, Ph.D.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the infinite beauty of sounds and noises, particularly those that we call music.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this ethnographic study was to examine vernacular music making in higher education. The participants, undergraduate music education majors (*N*=23 for Fall, *N*=10 for Spring), were investigated throughout the course of the 2012-2013 academic year. A constructivist philosophical framework was applied and data were collected using several methodologies including participant observation, journals, interviews, and audiovisual and multimedia methods. Results showed that students were able to successfully learn, create, and share music in a vernacular manner. Participants took a pragmatic approach to making music. Furthermore, students engaged several aspects of music making they had not encountered in traditional music education. This study demonstrates how traditional and vernacular music cultures can be synthesized; the study also suggests that vernacular music cultures should be further examined and should be made part of the music education curriculum.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

I grew up in a suburb outside of Atlanta, Georgia with music as an integral and necessary part of my life. Some of my earliest and most striking memories were of my parents singing and dancing with me; I can still vividly remember the excitement when I purchased my first album (a Jimi Hendrix “Are You Experienced?” cassette tape); there seemed nothing more pleasurable than to turn up my headphones as loud as possible and immerse myself in aural ecstasy. Thus, when I finally found a guitar in my parents’ basement and began to learn how to play it, I knew that music and musicianship would leave unalterable impressions on me that would affect my entire life. Like many music educators, I found that my love for music grew so much that it eventually began to affect the lives of others. I say this not just as an anecdote, but also as a reminder of the incredible joy and burden that we must endure as music lovers and music educators: providing pedagogical, experiential, and epistemic needs for something that humans love so much—music.

Early on as a musician, I began to notice two different approaches, two different *cultures*, of music making. When I was playing percussion in the middle school band (I specifically wanted to learn how to play drum kit) a more traditional, institutional

approach was used to teach the students. While taking private guitar lessons, I noticed a more aurally demanding, vernacular pedagogy was applied by the instructor. In the former I was told what to play and how to play it, while in the latter I was asked what I wished to learn and given the knowledge and tools to do so. In school a director gave authoritarian instructions at rows of students, while outside of school I received personalized, up-close interaction from my guitar teacher and other peer musicians. Inside the classroom there were restrictions, limitations, and my input was neglected. Inside basements, bedrooms, garages, and my guitar teacher's studio, I was given freedom, agency, and my input was valued. Music educators such as Kratus (2007) and Williams (2011) have also noticed a disjunction between musical experiences in school and musical experiences outside of school, suggesting that the rigid process and autocratic director be reconsidered in the music education curriculum.

The disjunction described by Kratus and Williams was something that drove me away from school music as an adolescent. Instead of conceiving vernacular and traditional approaches as different "worlds, " "pedagogies," or "styles," I preferred to think of them as *cultures*. Cultures are more complex than mere theories, practices, and products because those concepts can be situated within culture. Furthermore cultures can be shared, blended, and are extremely dynamic; I would not consider traditional or vernacular cultures to be static entities, because they are constantly changing and growing. Other music educators have also considered music education environments as cultures as well (Kingsbury, 1988; Markusen, 2009). Almost immediately, I began to enjoy the vernacular culture much more than the traditional culture.

After less than a year of being enrolled in the school band I decided to quit. I left school music for several reasons. First, it lacked creative freedom and exploration. I wanted to mess around with my instrument, toy with sound, and jam with other people. It was clear that some of my peers wanted to do the same, because they discussed jamming out, forming bands, and when given the opportunity, they would play more popular pieces that they had learned on their own outside of class. Second, it was not fun. I had always associated music with dancing, smiling, and social interaction. The foot stomping, clapping, and dialogues that I experienced while making music outside of school were absent inside of the institution. The final reason I quit arose during our first performance when I was assigned to play the triangle during one piece. While on stage I kept thinking what a miserable experience it was to play an instrument I did not want to play, a song I did not know, like, or care for, for an audience of relatively indifferent people. At this point, I became strictly a vernacular musician.

I did not return to institutional music making until graduate school, over 15 years after my disappointing experience with sixth grade percussion. After earning a B.A. and M.A. in the interdisciplinary humanities, teaching film while earning my master's degree, and teaching philosophy following graduation, I was accepted into both doctoral programs in music education to which I had applied. It excited me to know that music education valued vernacular musicians such as myself, and also thrilled me to find out the field had begun to express interest in vernacular music making. My first year in the doctoral program was spent learning about the field, taking courses, and assisting in a philosophy of music education course. During my second year of studies, the university

I was attending began offering undergraduate courses that focused on vernacular music making: “Creative Performance Chamber Ensemble,” or CPCE, and “Progressive Methods,” or PM. The former was basically a vernacular music making course where students formed groups and made music, and the latter was a methodology course that critically discussed vernacular pedagogy. Not only did the existence of these courses make me happy; I was also privileged enough to instruct these courses. It was during this time that I sharpened my research skills and also conducted a pilot study in roughly the same manner that this study was conducted.

By the fall of 2012, I had finished my comprehensive exams and only had two major concerns: teaching vernacular music education courses by myself and conducting research in these courses for my dissertation. Despite my elation over the presence of CPCE and PM courses and the chance to instruct them, something else shook my nerves regarding traditional music culture when I began teaching these courses. I was astounded that music education majors who have been active musicians for most of their adolescent lives struggled when they had to be creative, lacked improvisational confidence, had trouble working cooperatively with others, were bewildered when they were given so much agency, and had difficulty “letting loose.” By no means was this because they were bad musicians (they were good musicians); the students simply had not been presented with an opportunity to cultivate certain musical skills in a traditional setting. It quickly became clear that the students with prior vernacular experiences excelled in these areas more so than those who did not.

As someone who had been writing songs, improvising, and having fun making music since elementary school I could not believe my ears when I heard these pre-service music teachers say things like: "we don't get any opportunities to be creative," "I have never improvised," and [grinning from ear to ear] "I have never felt like that after playing!" Thus, my two major concerns of teaching and research immediately became tremendously significant because I wanted to provide my own students with those valuable vernacular experiences, and furthermore I wanted to spread knowledge and interest in vernacular music making though research.

Going into this ethnographic study, I had accumulated a substantial amount of experience with vernacular music making. As a musician, I had learned, played, created, and performed music in vernacular settings for roughly 19 years when the research was conducted—this type of setting was a familiar one for me. Since I came from a more non-traditional musical background, I had always been more comfortable making music without the constraints that institutions put into place (emphasis on notation, lack of student agency, little to no creative tasks, etc.). As an academic, I had experienced, studied, and employed vernacular music making inside and outside of the classroom, both as a student and as a teacher. Outside of institutions, I had taken part in vernacular music pedagogy as a student (learning in vernacular settings), teacher (teaching others informally), and colleague (working with others cooperatively).

Furthermore, I had conducted prior research in this topic during a pilot study that examined creativity and popular music culture. The pilot study not only streamlined this research study but also allowed me to become more familiar with how vernacular music

making fits into academia. Thus, I was well accustomed to and conscious of the language, technical knowledge, and the “feel” that were required to critically understand and interpret vernacular music experiences. Because I had dealt with vernacular music making on several levels (as a musician, an academic, and a researcher), I was able to apply a unique perspective in the classroom and in the research that could broaden the understanding of this innovative approach to music education.

My own experiences making music inside and outside of institutions brought me to several realizations regarding vernacular music making. Vernacular music making tends to foster aural skills, improvisation, creativity, and socialization between musicians. The noticeable absence of such skills in pre-service music teachers indicates that vernacular music making should be included in the music education curriculum sooner and more frequently. The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) indirectly suggested that vernacular music culture (and all musics for that matter) should be taught in schools according to the association’s national standards. Phrases like “a varied repertoire of music,” “music in relation to history and culture,” and words like “composition” and “improvisation” could easily be brought to realization in the classroom through vernacular music making (National Association for Music Education, 2013).

I also realized that there is a great deal of interaction between traditional and vernacular cultures. What existed first outside of school eventually spilled its way into academia, and strictly academic matters moved to vernacular settings. This has been a common and reciprocal practice, especially in music education (Caswell & Smith, 2000).

I did not consider appropriation of ideas from either culture as lacking “authenticity” or being misappropriated. Rather, two bodies of knowledge, practices, or both were blended in the Hegelian fashion, forming a new and exciting synthesis. The communication, dialogue, and exploration created new and sensational musical experiences.

Finally, although the means are different, musicians in and out of school have the same end: to make music. These are not two disparate worlds, but rather two cultures that wish to accomplish the same goal. Should music education adopt some vernacular cultural attributes, new cultures could be created: an academic culture that incorporates vernacular traits, and a vernacular culture that has been informed by institutional practices (Caswell & Smith, 2000; Karlsen, 2012).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

I have not been the only student, musician, or music educator that has shown concern about the “cultural clash” between vernacular and traditional approaches. The divide between music in the school and music outside the school mentioned by Kratus (2007) and Williams (2011), was something that had been ostensible in music education for quite sometime: “Toward the end of the 1960s it became increasingly apparent that there was too much divergence between ‘school music’ and what the children listened to outside school” (Keene, 2010, p. 397). Many music educators recognized that vernacular music making was a topic of major interest to the field that had recently

grown rapidly (Allsup & Olson, 2012; Folkstead, 2005; Karlsen & Väkevä, 2012). Although there have been significant advancements in theory, practice, and research in Nordic countries over the past several decades (Karlsen & Väkevä, 2012; Karlsen, 2012), in the United States inquiry and application of vernacular music making was still in its nascent phase (Rodriguez, 2012). Much of the existing research in vernacular music had been theoretical and had not provided suggestions of how to design a course or how to teach, so there had been requests for researchers to provide examples of successful vernacular music making instruction (Clements, 2012; Karlsen & Väkevä, 2012). This study aimed to offer such an example.

Jaffurs (2004) also juxtaposed vernacular and traditional music through “versus theory” that placed the two approaches in opposition. In response to the 1967 Tanglewood Symposium’s shocking statistic showing that only 20% of high school students in the U.S. were in school music programs, Williams (2007) urged music educators to engage “the other 80%,” which were referred to as “non-traditional music students” (p. 2). Campbell (2010) and Green (2005) have suggested the existence of a vibrant and important musical culture that is not nurtured by institutional music education. What all these music educators have agreed on is that something was missing from the curriculum, and the vernacular music culture could be a good source of fresh ideas, energy, and music making. Not only was the majority of music learning being done outside of schools, but students were bringing in aspects of their rich and diverse musical culture into schools as well (Folkstead, 2005; Marsh, 2011).

Music educators had also taken note of the need to include techniques that are normally learned vernacularly into the curriculum, such as ear ability, creativity, composition, social engagement, musical play, and student agency. Woody and Lehmann (2010) noted much better aural skills in vernacular musicians when compared to traditionally taught musicians. Burnard (2006) expressed the importance of creative development for children, and suggests that children's creativity informs adult creativity because it breaks theoretical and sociocultural boundaries. Ruthmann (2007) investigated classroom composition through the use of a less traditional "workshop" environment. Scholars also believe the exercising musical "play," "tinkering," or "doodling" alone and with others has been vital in the formation of a well-rounded, successful musician (Jaffurs, 2004; Marsh, 2011; Sosniak 1985a, 1985b; Vygotsky, 1978). Dalcroze's (1972) notion of "eurhythmics" emphasizes the importance of bodily, kinesthetic movement. As mentioned above, dancing and clapping are extremely rare in the neatly seated rows that are arranged in institutional music.

Finally, student agency has also been a topic of interest; Allsup's ethnography (2002, 2003) explored "democratic action" in the music education classroom noticing successful musical outcomes. Music students should be experienced in these skills, and the vernacular culture could be a useful and appropriate introduction to them. Wiggins (2011) also emphasized the importance of agency in music making stating it is "at the core of capacity for learning" because of the empowerment that it provided (p. 91).

Since the Music Educators National Convention (MENC, now called NAfME) Tanglewood Symposium of 1967, focus on multiculturalism, pluralism, new methods,

new pedagogies, and expansion of the music education curriculum have been major topics of interest within the field. Although during the time of the Tanglewood Symposium there were several factors that brought about changes in music education such as civil rights, school reform, and technology, all of these issues still continue to be relevant and remain pertinent to our educational decisions (Mark & Gary, 2007). Furthermore, Tanglewood may have brought many neglected issues into the foreground, but music educators continued to believe that there is an unnecessary rift between music education inside the classroom and outside the classroom (Keene, 2010; Kratus, 2007).

This study contributes to the existing research that has examined vernacular learning and vernacular musical cultures like the ones cited already, and many cited later. Not only has vernacular music culture grown in interest recently; the importance of understanding the topic has become a priority for several reasons. First, music educators can benefit greatly from vernacular music making methods and approaches because they broaden the curriculum and offer new possibilities for music education. If music educators better understood how vernacular musicians make music, that knowledge could be applied in the classroom to create diverse ways to teach students music. Second, it will broaden the audience to people who can potentially take interest and find enjoyment in music education—this could mean more subject matter, more subjects, and more structures to support a growing interest in music. Third, understanding vernacular music culture could be used to improve and enrich the fields of music education, general education, music, and anthropology by offering new

meaning to vernacular music making. Not only could other cultures (higher education, street musicians, music appreciators, etc.) gain some appreciation of vernacular music making, the communication between these groups could be facilitated through the research.

Fourth, the research could help improve both my own future teaching of future music courses, and the educational experiences of other music education colleagues (students and faculty) I have interacted with in my own local community. Fifth, the review of literature indicated that research in vernacular music, ethnography, and constructivist theory blossomed in the late twentieth century and has increased ever since. The interest in these areas indicates that they could prove to be valuable assets in the music education curriculum. To my knowledge, there has been no research that examines vernacular music making culture in higher education in the United States. Thus, there seems to be a need for research studies like this one because they have been few and far between in the field and need to be investigated further. Finally, there is intrinsic value in learning about vernacular music culture—pursuit of knowledge and truth are always worthy causes, because knowledge has intrinsic value. Because of my background in philosophy, I wholeheartedly believe that learning, exploration, educational growth, and human curiosity should not (and will never) cease. Such is the academic spirit that dates back far in Western culture; as once expressed by Horace and echoed later by Immanuel Kant: *sapere aude* (dare to know)!

CONCEPTUAL UNDERPINNINGS/THEORETICAL BASE

A constructivist paradigm has been useful for general education because all of the various stakeholders involved in the pedagogical process have different constructs of how the educational system should function. For example, an administrator's construct of education differs from a teacher's, a teacher's construct of education is different from that of a student's, and a student's construct of education differs from a parent's construct, etc. Inside of the music education classroom, constructivism could adequately be employed in several ways. The active, social nature of constructivism has been akin to the socially engaged, democratic, and cooperative nature of vernacular culture (Green, 2002, 2005, 2008). During this study, student agency and creative freedom allowed for various musical constructs; because there was no objective musical process or product, the students created their own musical experiences.

Dissatisfaction with the status quo, another constructivist trait (Kivinen & Ristelä, 2003), seems to be an underlying emotion felt by music educators (Keene, 2010; Kratus, 2007) as well as music students (Williams, 2007). In the context of this research, constructivist theory was useful because it allowed for various constructs to be used as data in the study: student ideas and music, finished pieces, field notes, researcher notes, and most notably, participant observation.

Ethnographic research was suitable for examining vernacular culture because the immersion required for ethnographers (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010) was similar to

the enculturation experienced by vernacular musicians (Green, 2008). Since vernacular culture was being incorporated into traditional academic culture, the rift between the two described earlier by scholars (Jaffurs, 2004; Keene, 2010; Kratus, 2007; Williams 2011) was greatly narrowed if not negated during the study. As suggested by Caswell and Smith (2000), the ivory tower and the streets can interact and share knowledge and experience, forming new and exciting ways of teaching and learning. Ethnographic research was an apt methodology to study the dynamic and vibrant phenomenon of vernacular culture in higher education, since the holistic approach and researcher reflexivity provided animated and comprehensive data (Patton, 2002; Wolcott, 2008).

Apart from my own love for vernacular music culture, Green's (2002, 2005, 2008) research on vernacular musicians served as the academic stimulus for this research study. The impetus for using constructivist theory and ethnographic methodology to investigate vernacular culture stemmed from three studies that used the same mixture of constructivism and ethnography: Jaffurs' (2004) study that investigated "informal learning principles" in a "garage band;" Allsup's (2002) dissertation that discussed democratic action in the classroom, and Campbell's (1999) "collaborative ethnography" that included students' own research constructs as part of the study. Although my aims were much different than those of Jaffurs, Allsup, and Campbell because my purpose was to study vernacular culture in higher education, the continued use of constructivism and ethnography in music education research suggested their sustainable viability in the field. Furthermore, other music educators continued to view great potential for constructivist theory (Wiggins, 2007) as well as ethnographic research (Roulston, 2006)

in the field. Thus, ethnographic research and constructivist theory were appropriate tools not only for this specific study, but also for music education. The limited use of constructivism and ethnography in the field has left them ripe for utilization, and moreover the lack of any study that investigated vernacular music making in U.S. higher education warranted exploration.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this ethnographic study was to investigate the application of vernacular style music making in a higher education classroom. The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do musicians in an academic environment learn and create music in vernacular music making cultures and how is musical knowledge represented, communicated, and passed on while making music?
2. How do vernacular musical experiences in an academic environment differ from musical experiences found in traditional music classroom settings?
3. How can academia and music education benefit from knowledge of vernacular music culture and vernacular music making techniques?

The following hypotheses were expected during the study:

1. Students would successfully create and perform music in a vernacular fashion; music would be made alone and in small groups.
2. Constructivist learning (ranging from cognitive to social constructivism) would be utilized throughout the music making process, resulting in a plethora of constructs in the form of processes and products.
3. The music making process and the research would spill outside the initially established boundaries (pedagogical, institutional, and research boundaries).
4. Students would naturally develop motivation to make music on their own. This self- and peer-inspired motivation could be recognized through supplemental time and effort dedicated to music making, exemplary musicianship, as well as increased concern and activity during the entire music making process.

LIMITATIONS

It should be noted that a convenience sample was used and that the sample size was not large. Furthermore, this study was neither focused on generalization nor intended to represent an entire population; the small sample size provided qualitative depth as well as a close look at a unique group of participants.

Another limitation that has played some role in every research study was subjectivity. Even in some quantitative studies that claimed to be more objective, a

(fallible) human was collecting and describing data using (fallible) manmade instruments. However because this was an ethnographic study, subjectivity could be used to an advantage. Immersion in the field and inclusion in the studied phenomenon required a certain degree of subjectivity in order for the researcher to experience and explain the phenomenon, particularly when the researcher served as an active participant throughout the study—when I made music with various groups instead of passively observing. Thus, subjectivity has been beneficial because this very subjectivity allowed me to jump between *emic*, inside the phenomenon, and *etic*, outside the phenomenon. These emic and etic experiences were able to provide varied and unique data points (Patton, 2002, 267). The subjectivity was kept in check through researcher reflexivity (maintaining a synergistic balance between total immersion and complete observation) as well as data triangulation (consulting various sources for data collection and analysis and corroborating them).

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

This section is dedicated to the key terms that were used throughout the study. It should be noted that these definitions were created explicitly for the context of this research. Of course they can be used outside of this study, but they have been specifically chosen for their practical use within the bounds of this research.

1. *Construct:* In constructivist theory, humanly formed and organized ideas, ideologies, concepts, or any combination of those that can be simple or complex.

2. *Constructivism*: A philosophical theory that can be identified by three major tenets: A) Objective knowledge does not exist; there is no single truth but rather a plethora of constructs created by humans. B) Human created constructs differ. Depending on several physiological, sociocultural, and contextual factors, humans create constructs of the same object that can be starkly different from one another. C) Learning is active; learners actively engage knowledge and experience instead of passively receiving knowledge outside of its intended context.
3. *Creative Performance Chamber Ensemble or "CPCE*:" An undergraduate music education course that focused primarily on performance. Students were required to create, rehearse, and perform music in a vernacular fashion. This course was examined during the pilot study (Spring 2012), as well as the main research study (Fall 2012 through Spring 2013). The second semester of this course is part two, and is referred to as "CPCE2."
4. *Creativity:* A term that has been used to describe talent and innovation (Ely & Rashkin, 2005). Edensor and others (2009) mentioned that creativity stretches from transcendental "individual geniuses," to "improvisation…across all forms of cultural activity" (p. 8). In music education, Reimer (2003) distinguished the grandiose and idealistic notion of "creativity with a capital C" from the everyday and basic notion of "'small c' creativity" (p. 104). It should be noted that Randles and others (2013) studied the same participants as this study, and concluded that the students with the "highest creativity ratings" were those that had the most experience with vernacular music making (p. 24). In the context of this study creativity implied not only assorted

social and cognitive processes but also diverse physical and metaphysical products; all humans could be creative to varying degrees. Furthermore, creativity was conceived of in musical and extra-musical bases.

5. *Culture:* According to Spradley (1979), “Knowledge used to interpret experience and generate social behavior” (p. 5). For the scope of this study, I would like to alter this definition a bit. Culture is knowledge *created* to interpret experiences and objects, which in turn generates social behavior and physical artifacts. Furthermore cultures tend to have noticeable “patterns,” and have been considered “communities of practice” (Wolcott, 2008); I believe Wolcott’s term to be appropriate particularly for this study because the research was focused on communities of musical practice. Culture is also shared between humans, has symbolic meaning, and is learned through experience. This study focused on two major cultures (vernacular music culture and traditional music culture), and proposes the existence of a mutual, reciprocal relationship between vernacular and traditional cultures.
6. *Ethnography:* A research methodology that uses a holistic approach, immersion in the field, researcher reflexivity, and contextual awareness to study various cultures. Ethnographic research has been employed for collecting several sources of data in various ways (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Patton, 2002). This ethnographic study used participant observation, field notes, audiovisual methods, interviews, and artifacts as data collection points.
7. *Participant Observation:* A means of data collection that can function on multiple levels ranging from complete immersion to complete detachment and observation

(Bernard, 2011). Participant observation is considered a generalized term that describes a "strategy" because participant observation can be done using several tools and functioning on several levels (Wolcott, 2008).

8. *Progressive Methods or "*PM*:"* An undergraduate music education course designed to introduce vernacular pedagogies to students. Students were not only taught theories and techniques, but also required to teach courses using their progressive music education knowledge as a practicum. This course was investigated during the pilot study (Spring 2012), as well as the main research study (Fall 2012 through Spring 2013). The second semester of this course is part two, and is referred to as "PM2."
9. *Traditional Music Culture:* "Educational institutions from primary schools to conservatories, partly involving or entirely dedicated to the teaching and learning of music" (Green, 2007, pp. 3-4). In the context of this research, it is important to note that traditional music culture tends to be formal, rigidly designed, overlooking of student creativity, focused on notation, and authoritarian. Traditional music making could be described as "presentational," because there is a sharp divide between audience and performer, and an emphasis placed on virtuosity and technique (Turino, 2008)
10. *Vernacular Music Culture:* A musical phenomenon that has been described as a setting (Caswell & Smith, 2000), a process (Green, 2002, 2005), and a genre (Green, 1993). Vernacular music making tends to be cooperative, learned outside of institutions, focused on ear playing, democratic, socially and influentially active for

participants during music making, and more chaotic than traditional music making. Vernacular music making could be described as “participatory,” because it is universally inclusive as well as less controlled (Turino, 2008). Other terms that have been used to describe the same vernacular culture have been “informal music” (Jaffurs, 2004), “non-traditional music students” (Williams, 2007), and “music out-of-school” (Lamont et al., 2003).

SUMMARY

Vernacular music making has the potential to be a vehicle for teaching new material, introducing different pedagogies, contributing theoretical models, and expanding the music education curriculum. The general neglect of creativity, improvisation, musical socialization, and student agency in traditional music making as well as decreasing enrollment and interest in traditional ensembles (Williams, 2011) suggested that a new approach should be taken: not as a replacement or supplement, but rather as an integral and indispensable part of music education. Ethnography was used as a methodology to explore the culture that is created when vernacular music making was done in a higher education setting. A constructivist theoretical lens was applied while teaching and doing research, because student agency and creative freedom allow for various constructs of the music making processes and products. Ultimately, the purpose of the study was to investigate how vernacular style culture was manifested in a university classroom. Despite the limitations of the sample and

researcher subjectivity, students were expected to successfully create music in a vernacular fashion while applying constructivist learning through the entire process.

This study was moderately organized based on dissertation guidelines developed by Theobald (1991). The next chapter presents a review of existing literature regarding the major points articulated during this study: the constructivist paradigm, ethnographic methodology, and vernacular music making. The literature is synthesized and placed into the context of this research study and the field of music education. In chapter three the methodologies used in the study are detailed and discussed. A rationale for the inclusion of the methodologies in the research is provided, as well as description of the participants, environment, and ethical concerns. Chapter four is dedicated to the analysis of the data. The data that was collected during the study is presented and the "story" of one academic year of vernacular experiences in higher education is told. The final chapter focuses on the findings, conclusions, and implications that were created by the research. To conclude, this study and vernacular music making are situated in the context of music education, education, and music.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The lack of creativity and student agency in the classroom led music education researchers to the exploration of vernacular music making. However, little research had been conducted on vernacular culture, and to my knowledge no music education researchers had examined a higher education course that was centered on vernacular music making in the United States.

Literature from the major themes of this study (constructivism, ethnography, and vernacular music making) is reviewed in this chapter. Firstly, the paradigm that was selected for the study is examined. Scholarship on constructivist theory, constructivism in research, and constructivism in practice is examined, followed by a conclusion that suggests how constructivism could be applied in music education. Second, the methodology used throughout the study is discussed. The second section contains examples of ethnography being used as a methodology in general education research, ethnographies in music research, and ethnographies in music education research. Major ethnographic figures and overarching themes in the literature are identified as well. The section concludes with some brief thoughts on the future of ethnography in music education.

Finally, the last section of this chapter is a review of the literature on vernacular music making. Vernacular music making is expounded upon, then examples of vernacular music making in music education are provided. In order to look at vernacular music making more closely, rock music was examined. Rock was chosen because although it has played a central role in musical culture in the world, it has been largely neglected by traditional music education. Discussing rock within education provided a useful example that paralleled the notion of vernacular music in higher education. The final section concludes with rationalizations for including vernacular music making in the music education curriculum.

CONSTRUCTIVIST THEORY

Introduction

The constructivist paradigm was adopted for the research. First, an overview of constructivist theory is provided that outlines the definition, major trends, and prominent figures in constructivism. Next, education research and music education research that employ constructivist concepts are cited, followed by examples of constructivist learning theory put into practice. To conclude, the potential benefits, drawbacks, and applications constructivism offers for education and music education are discussed.

Constructivist Theory

Scholars have expressed difficulty defining and describing constructivism because of the vast theoretical perspectives and polymorphic manifestations of what people have argued to be constructivism. Constructivist theory has been called "shape-shifting" because educators frequently found themselves asking: "*which* constructivism?" (Oxford, 1997) Some of the variations on constructivism included neo-constructivism, radical constructivism, realist constructivism, mediated constructivism, cognitive constructivism, and social constructivism as well as feminist and postmodern takes on the theory. Taking the opposite approach, Meyer (2009) provided a very general definition of constructivism by saying it is "a theory of how ideas come into being" (p. 338). Making matters even more difficult, the use of the words "construct" and "constructing" in academic literature spread throughout the humanities and social sciences, and created problems for scholars because of their frequent use and ambiguous meanings (Humphreys, 2006; Kivinen & Ristelä, 2003).

Despite the confusion over what constructivism really means, three main foundational tenets of the theory that could be used to create an operational definition of constructivism were identified: 1) *Objective knowledge does not exist*. As the name suggests, constructivism is based on the notion that knowledge is constructed by humans; this stood in opposition to the notion that humans could understand an external, objective, "real" world. Instead, "constructs" (humanly formed and organized ideas, ideologies, concepts, or any combination of those that can be simple or complex) are formed when humans interact with themselves and their environment. Thus,

constructivism rejects a single “Truth;” one version of knowledge is just as real or valuable as another.

2) *Human created constructs differ*. The diversity of culture, society, environment, psychology, and physiology among humans presupposes a variation of constructs. Whether these constructs are created through cognitive or social processes, the resulting products differ from one individual to another or from group to group—the way I mentally construct the notion of “a horse” would differ from my professor’s conceptualization of a horse, and the way scientists envision a horse would differ from the way equestrians conceptualize a horse. Likewise, the word “music” triggers different associations for teachers, students, parents, faculty, administration, professional musicians, and local communities (Froehlich, 2007).

3) *Learning is active.* For constructivists, the learner actively intermingles with the self, the environment, and other learners to construct knowledge. Constructs are frequently and actively formed, evaluated, compared, revised, rejected, and integrated. Cognition is construction (Matthews, 2002). This is contrary to the position that fragments knowledge by removing it from its original context and sees the learner as passively receiving knowledge. Social constructivists tend to focus more on actively engaging the environment, communal interaction, socialization, collaboration, and cooperation; cognitive constructivists stress learner independence, formation of internal structure, and the freedom to actively pursue and construct knowledge. The difference between social constructivism and cognitive constructivism is expounded below.

A final and sometimes understated similarity among constructivists is their dissatisfaction with the *status quo* (Kivinen & Ristelä, 2003). This is sometimes expressed as criticism of past theory and practice, but can also come in the form of suggestions or revisions for the future. Displeasure with the condition of current theory and education has been an underlying theme of constructivism because many constructivists believed that their theory could improve the teaching and learning procedure.

Although constructivism had been identified with having theoretical roots dating back to ancient Greece (Oxford, 1997), Medieval Europe (Meyer, 2009), and enlightenment thinkers (Kivinen & Ristelä, 2003), constructivism fully came to fruition in the mid-twentieth century and grew ever since (Windschitl, 2002). Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky were usually identified as the main influences in constructivist theory (Meyer, 2009), but frequently mentioned in constructivist literature were John Dewey, Ernst von Glasersfeld, and Thomas Kuhn. Of course many other noteworthy scholars contributed to constructivism, but this research focused primarily on these major figures because they represented the leading constructivist camps.

The Breadth of Constructivism

Jean Piaget (1896-1980) was a psychologist who deeply impacted cognitive constructivism through his developmental theory that proposed children go through four phases of understanding the world from birth to sixteen years old. He focused on how

young children made sense of their experiences, referring to a learner as a “lone scientist” who investigated both the self and the environment. For Piaget, constructing knowledge was centered on the individual, who created constructs (which he called “schemas”) by assimilating and imposing knowledge when confronting the world.

Schemas are constructed through past knowledge and experiences, individual psychology/physiology, social interaction, and the active interplay between all those elements. The creation of those schemas leads to new experiences and new “assimilations,” and in turn, the learner experiences organic growth from this process (Piaget, 1954). Piaget was not concerned with the social aspect of constructing knowledge, but he still recognized its existence and its influence during the construction process. Often times Piaget has been regarded as one of the most influential figures in constructivist theory, particularly in the cognitive constructivist camp (Oxford, 1997).

Influenced by Piaget, Ernst von Glasersfeld (1917-2010) was most famous for his “radical constructivism.” He took cognitive constructivism to the philosophical extreme by claiming that not only was reality constructed in the mind, but there existed *no* reality outside of the mind (Oxford, 1997). Von Glasersfeld viewed knowledge as conceptual structures created by individual experience (Matthews, 2002). The epistemological position of von Glasersfeld was challenged for completely rejecting an external world (Meyer, 2009).

If Piaget was the ambassador of cognitive constructivism, a Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) was seen as representing the other side of the spectrum—social constructivism. For Vygotsky, cognition was inseparable from society;

human learning was social by nature (Garrison, 1995). Instead of focusing on how the individual constructs knowledge, he investigated learning in a group or community context. Vygotsky claimed that constructs were shaped in large part by culture, and knowledge was acquired through interaction and participation in society (Oxford, 1997; Windschitl, 2002).

A noteworthy concept he discussed was the “zone of proximal development.” Vygotsky (1978) defined it as: “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). This notion introduced by Vygotsky suggested that for mental functions to properly develop, learners must be supported with a collaborative environment where they are allowed to explore but are also nurtured by knowledgeable agents. Another useful idea of Vygotsky’s was the notion of “play,” which referred to how children developed abstract meanings through games. By participating in games, children also learned social rules because play served as a “transitional stage” where learners actively engaged constructs mentally, physically, and socially (Vygotsky, 1978). Both of Vygotsky’s ideas mentioned above have seen significant exposure among constructivists and educators.

Normally regarded as a pragmatist, John Dewey (1859-1952) was cited in numerous texts as having several commonalities with constructivism (Garrison, 1995), having a significant impact on constructivist theory (Kivinen & Ristelä, 2003) as well as educational practice (Windschitl, 2002), and was even called a constructivist (Oxford,

1997). Furthermore, Dewey's views on learning were shared by new learning theorists; the construction of knowledge, context-situated learning, and the importance of socialization were emphasized by new learning theorists and Dewey (de Kock, 2004). Dewey saw learning as socially constructed, where the mind manipulated meaning and emerged through social participation. He sketched out broad areas of study where the interaction between the "organism" (learner) and the environment created ideas; of central importance to Dewey was putting those ideas to action (Dewey, 1981). Dewey, who believed in "learning by doing," stressed the active aspect of constructivism. Action was involved in the construction of ideas, but Dewey saw those ideas as worthless until they were actively put to use (Kivinen & Ristelä, 2003).

If one were to sketch out a continuum of constructivist theory based on who was doing the constructing (individual or groups), it would look thusly: von Glasersfeld would be at the extreme individualist side because of his rejection of a reality outside of the mind, with Piaget less extreme because of his acknowledgement of the social influences. Vygotsky would be somewhere in the middle slightly toward the social side because he envisioned the individual learning within the context of society. At the other extreme end, the socially constructed side would be Thomas Kuhn (1922-1996).

Kuhn argued that knowledge and truth could not be established objectively, rather, communities constructed different accounts of reality. His (1962) book *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* brought widespread awareness to the contestation of objectivity by suggesting that "paradigm shifts" demonstrated how dominant groups had created bodies of knowledge, and when that knowledge was no longer regarded as

valid, a new group's version of knowledge and reality was adopted. Kuhn's work has greatly influenced science education by demonstrating human fallibility and by including science as a field that acknowledges constructivist theory (Matthews, 2002).

Several efforts were made to balance the cognitive and social sides of constructivism in education (Windschitl, 2002). Attempting to reconcile some of the differences, Shepard (2000) blended these cognitive and social aspects with hopes that the new community of educators that embraced constructivism would come to some conclusion as to what should have been kept and what should have been discarded from constructivist theory. Shepard termed his more unified theory the "social-constructivist model." Although it was mentioned that this model favors the social side of constructivism, Shepard nonetheless incorporated cognitive elements into the model that were blended neatly with the sociocultural features (Shepard, 2000).

In music education, Wiggins (2007) championed the constructivist position that "people construct their own understanding of experiences" to form knowledge and meaning (p. 37). She proposed a curriculum in music teacher education that included an introductory course, teaching and learning courses, music theory and history courses, methods courses, performance courses, and philosophy courses. In response to the atomistic approach of teaching using musical elements, Wiggins envisioned an "authentic" music experience that was holistic and engaging: "…people learn by constructing their own understanding of their experiences, then teaching is essentially a process of designing experiences and providing support for learners as they actively and interactively engage in those experiences. The education of music teachers, then,

is designing experiences that enable them to construct understandings of music, of learning and teaching, and of music learning and teaching" (Wiggins, 2007, p. 38).

A common criticism of constructivist learning theory had come from those that claimed its lack of objectivity causes the theory to collapse into relativism. Matthews (2002) called this the "evidential dilemma" faced by educators who wished to use constructivist theory, because one learner's opinion was just as valid as another's (p. 127). Despite these claims, an epistemological position that stated that knowledge can be constructed allowed for diversity and contextual depth in the classroom. Constructivists responded by mentioning the objectivity claimed by scientists was not objective at all—these were still philosophies and methodologies created and interpreted by humans and did not represent "reality in itself."

Constructivist Research in General Education

As mentioned above, constructivist theory was not a topic of interest for scholars until the mid-twentieth century. Likewise, constructivism had not been fully explored in educational research and music education research until the 1960s-1970s, with music education trailing general education by a decade or so. By 1995, there was "enormous and growing educational literature on constructivism" (Kivinen & Ristelä, 2003, p. 363). Music education research that investigated "cooperative learning" and other collaborative learning environments based on construction of knowledge existed in primary and secondary schools beginning the early 1970s (Smialek, 2006).

Piaget's (1954) case study looked closely at the developing child (0-2 years) and how children learned about the world around them. Specifically, he was concerned with how the children came to understand time, space, causality, and physical objects. Piaget's research refined his developmental theory and also made a significant contribution to cognitive construction—theorists, educators, and researchers all utilized Piaget's ideas and practices.

Desforges (1995) investigated teachers' experience, and found that without reflection, experience could have a negative impact on teachers. Based on the constructivist idea that the learning process should be active, Desforges proposed that teachers who did not actively revise and reconsider their teaching became habituated to teaching passively by simply going through the motions. Because of the nature of constructivism, his research study challenged the widespread idea that a more experienced teacher equated to a better teacher.

Brown (1994) helped inner-city grade school children learn long texts using constructivist practices such as the implementation of Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" and through creation of a collaborative community of learners. Brown did so by allowing students to enact various educational roles, and also by nurturing an exchange of discourse and active practice. This study depicted the zone of proximal development as something that extends "beyond the classroom walls," and also demonstrated how constructivist theory can be successfully applied in education (Brown, 1994, p. 7).

Within education, constructivist-influenced research was conducted in several areas. Without providing an exhaustive list, some of these areas included nursing education (Brandon & All, 2010), science education (Matthews, 2002), mathematics (Mwakapenda, 2002), and educational technology (Bopry, 1999). Thus, even disciplines that were usually conceived of as objective, like mathematics, adopted constructivist theory to advance teaching and learning in their respective fields.

Constructivism in Music Education

In music education, research rooted in constructivist theory was harder to come by than in general education. A possible reason for this was that music educators were slightly delayed in their adoption of constructivism, but it may have also been because the broader field of general education was more fertile ground for research to be conducted. The *Dictionary of Music Education* (Ely & Rashkin, 2005) endorsed the following about constructivism: “In music education, constructivism provides a natural basis to explore and research epistemological foundations by focusing on aspects of music that are inherently constructive. These include listening, performing, composing, and improvising” (p. 102). Therefore, it was not surprising to find that much of the constructivist research in music education was conducted in the areas of listening, performing, composing, and improvising.

Smialek and Boburka’s (2006) research suggested that listening to music cooperatively was a more effective means of learning critical listening skills over a

lecture-based approach that did group work sometimes. This research followed Vygotsky's model of constructivism that suggests knowledge is socially mediated.

Della and Campbell (1995) found that a constructivist approach was useful for teaching improvisation to secondary school students, and suggested that the theory be used more frequently in music pedagogy because the learner autonomy emphasized by constructivism could illuminate musical expression. Della and Campbell's work stressed the importance of musical play, and the investigation examined the individual experiences and constructs of improvisation created by the students.

In a study of 43 novice music teachers, Campbell (1999) applied constructivist theory in collection and interpretation of the data. The student participants in the study also played the role of researchers, so the collection of data was done through the generation of teaching concepts created both individually and socially. Furthermore, data were interpreted with three "interpretive lenses," which reflected various levels of constructed information. The "monological" lens was meant to be a more objective, third-person perspective based on notes, journals, and video recordings; the "subjective" lens included personal accounts, beliefs, physiological states, and the subjective worlds of individuals; the "dialogical" interpretive lens was used to compare first-, second-, and third-person perspectives as well as the interactions that occured between them. This research study provided an excellent example of how at times, there seemed to be "no boundaries between theory and practice" (Campbell, 1999).

Constructivist Practice

Eventually the presence of constructivism became an unavoidable topic in education. By 2001, constructivism seemed to dominate educational debates with regards to learning, particularly in teacher education (Kivinen & Ristelä, 2003). Meyer (2009) mentioned that constructivism was no longer radical thinking, and that it was an "integral part of pedagogic mainstream" (p. 332). Furthermore, constructivism had been applied in education internationally and had influenced educational change in Malawi (Mwakapenda, 2002), Israel (Strier, 2011) and the Netherlands (de Kock, 2004) just to name a few. In music education, application of constructivist theory was mostly seen in research, but had increased towards the end of the twentieth century. The recent "mainstream" ideas found in music education had their roots in constructivist theory (Wiggins, 2007, p. 37).

Many schools and learning communities had put constructivist theory to practice by creating a learning environment that reflected the constructivist model of learning, rather than the traditional model that regarded students as drinking glasses that the teacher filled with "knowledge juice." The reorientation of classrooms required an evaluation of all aspects of the educational structure (Windschitl, 2002). Brown's (1994) research was conducted in an inner-city grade school during a project called "Guided Discovery in a Community of Learners." In this project, students were assigned a certain theme and told to form groups where individual students researched various aspects of that theme, and became "experts" on the subtopics. The students then shared their expertise in the group, allowing everyone to form an understanding of the theme. This

type of learning environment fostered active participation of individuals, communal exchange of discourse, and a sense of socially constructed ideas (Windschitl, 2002).

A science instructor utilized constructivism when teaching a high school marine biology class (Tobin, 1993). The constructivist emphasis on learner freedom was actualized by letting students choose their own topics, investigate those topics using any manner they wished, and present their final product however they wanted to. In this example, students had to actively engage themselves, other students, environment, teacher, and subject matter to complete the assignment. Tobin's (1993) book provided several examples of successful applications of constructivism in science education.

In music education, Denis and Jouvelot (2005) discussed the *Cha-Luva Swing Festival project,* which was an attempt by music educators to teach instrumental music in collaborative settings. By using video game controllers instead of traditional musical instruments, creativity was fostered through musical freedom and active participation as an individual within a group. The purpose of the project was to: "spur players' musical curiosity and increase their motivation for traditional instrument study, helping them overcome learning plateaus" (Denis & Jouvelot, 2005, p. 462).

The learner autonomy and active construction of concepts emphasized by constructivism were well suited for musical improvisation, as was Vygotsky's notion of "play" (Della & Campbell, 1995). Even though Barron (2007) situated his constructivist influence in the context of jazz music, it was also mentioned that constructivist theory can be applied to any situation within the practice of music education. As stressed in

constructivist theory, the interactive and communal nature of the experience of jazz could be viewed as a “synthesis of experiences into meaning” (Barron, 2007, p. 19).

Conclusion

If constructivist learning theory is to be developed in the music education classroom, its strengths are of central importance. The active nature of learning should be highlighted: constant examination and evaluation of the learning process is critical for teachers and students as well. Social constructivist theory in the classroom promoted dialogue, not just between educators, but also between all of the “stakeholders” that surrounded the educational community (Windschitl, 2002). This social awareness allowed educators to remain culturally relevant in their communities, and reminded music educators “schools are not islands” (Brown, 1994, p. 8). Active social participation as prescribed by constructivism creates a vibrant learning atmosphere with a sense of communal solidarity.

The influence of constructivism has made the roles of the educator and music educator more demanding, as now “infinitely skilled teachers” are expected not only to understand constructivist theory and know how to apply it in the classroom (Windschitl, 2002, p. 131). This means teachers must understand the philosophical, pedagogical, sociocultural, and political ramifications of constructivist theory—a formidable task. Furthermore, teachers must articulate and sometimes convince various stakeholders in the educational world that constructivism is useful and should be utilized in education.

Of course, persuading educators and music educators to abandon more familiar, traditional approaches is demanding as well. Some criticized constructivist theory in teaching because if the learner accomplishes everything independently, there is no need for a teacher. Sutinen (2008) responded to this criticism by including the teacher as part of the environment with which learners interacted, and also by saying that the teacher was responsible for constructing the learning situation for the self and for the students as well.

I found it silly as well as upsetting that constructivist scholars struggled and debated so much over what constructivism was or should be—isn't variation of constructs (like the construct of constructivism itself) expected by constructivists? While some constructivist theorists expressed hopes that a unified theory will emerge, I think it is appropriate for a theory that is based on multiple ways of constructing knowledge to have multiple manifestations of that knowledge. Likewise, applying constructivist theory in education and music education requires various approaches depending on the educational situation—not one single approach. In the end, the critical discussions regarding the nature of constructivism brought to light benefits and drawbacks, forced intellectual rigor, and also refined the theory for potential applications in education and music education.

Some suggested that constructivism is merely a trend, and that it will no longer be *en vogue* when researchers have thoroughly investigated when it can be appropriately applied and when the topic has been exhausted by educators. Much like behaviorism swept through education and eventually fizzled, constructivism could

merely be a trend that passes after scholars figure out how to keep the good and discard the bad (Humphreys, 2006; Matthews, 2002). While some saw the prominence of constructivism as the theory *du jour* (Windschitl, 2002, p. 164), others believed that constructivism was part of an "emergent paradigm shift" that would revolutionize educational institutions (Shepard, 2000, p. 2). When all is said and done, constructivist learning theory has impacted education and music education and will continue to stir up academic discussion.

To conclude, constructivism has rapidly gained popularity in the fields of education and music education, and should continue to be a topic of central importance for years to come. Constructivist learning theory is bound to be utilized in the classroom because of its awareness of learners' singular independence and also its emphasis on social transactions: "Education is the medium in which the creative and constructive actions of individuals come together in a social environment" (Sutinen, 2008, p. 1). While some see multiple versions of reality as incongruent, the freedom for humans to create, manipulate, and interpret knowledge is one of our most important qualities, and should not be taken for granted. Brown (1994) elaborated on this point: "One of the most interesting things about human learning is that we have knowledge and feelings about it, sometimes even control of it, metacognition if you will" (p. 6).

ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

Introduction

The general aim of ethnographic research is to better understand culture—not just as some entity that is "out there," but as a dynamic concept that requires immersion in the field, a holistic approach, reflexivity on the part of the researcher, and contextual awareness to be studied properly (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Patton, 2002; Wolcott, 2008). As ethnographic research grew and changed over time, different researchers approached ethnography in different ways, studied different cultures, and came to different conclusions regarding culture. Without providing an exhaustive list (one could write several books on this topic), this section offers a review of some of the literature that has utilized ethnographic research, mainly in the fields of education, music, and music education. To conclude the section, major figures, common themes, and the future of ethnographic research will be considered.

Ethnography in General Education

Despite the fact that anthropology and education had been deeply connected through theory as well as organizations like the Council on Anthropology and Education, which evolved out of meetings in the late 1960s, the field of education did not fully begin to utilize ethnographic research until later in the twentieth century (Wolcott, 2008). The

“crisis of representation” and the confusion over culture throughout the 1970s and 1980s were two issues that were suitable for ethnographic investigation, and generated interest in several disciplines (Eisenhart, 2001; Stauffer & Robbins, 2009). In the early 1980s, the American Educational Research Association (AERA) included only a handful of ethnographic research studies, whereas by 2001 ethnographies accounted for over half of the research in the AERA (Eisenhart, 2001). Thus qualitative research, including ethnography, emerged from roughly the 1970s and 1980s, and began to really create a outpouring of interest among educators in the 1990s (Bresler & Stake, 1992).

Despite the rise of popularity of ethnography in educational research, researchers noted that ethnographic research in educational settings required a special approach apart from other ethnographies (Eisenhart, 1988, 2001; Erickson, 1984; Wolcott, 2008). Furthermore, it became somewhat obvious that education was inextricably linked with larger social processes and structures (Lundquist, 1986). Ethnography in formal education had evolved from the anthropological approaches of scholars like Bronislaw Malinowski, to more scientific means of engaging research in search of a better ethnography, suggesting that the field was aware of both the necessity for a specialized approach to ethnographies in education and the implications of this research could have on greater human communities (Bresler & Stake, 1992).

One of the first and most important ethnographies in education was Wolcott’s (1973) study of an elementary school principal. This work provided an excellent example of ethnographic research and also offered the reader an insightful look at how a single position in an educational institution can be studied in order to understand

greater social phenomena. Wolcott wondered if this study “introduced into the field of education the idea that customary educator ‘roles’ fall within the ethnographic net as legitimate subjects of inquiry” (Wolcott, 2008, p. 210). I think the rise in popularity mentioned above was a strong sign that many educational scholars considered ethnographic research to be a valid methodology. Since *The Man in the Principal’s Office* was written in 1973, ethnographic researchers examined teachers (Smith, 1977), novice teachers (Campbell, 1999), and of course, students (Tobin et al., 1989, 2009). Thus, while it was uncertain whether Wolcott (2008) introduced the possibilities for ethnographic research in education, many followed suit and “cast the ethnographic net” by studying other aspects of education using ethnography (p. 210).

Recognizing that ethnographic research is extremely useful for researching several levels of social activity, some proposed ethnographic research for analysis of the complex relationships that existed in formal education. The relationships formed in schools occurred between a variety of individuals—students, teachers, administrators, parents, staff, etc. (Eisenhart, 2001; Ogbu, 1981). Because schools can be thought of as representing an intersection of several sociocultural pathways, ethnographic research can be of great use when attempting to understand such social networks (Erickson, 1984). While all of the authors mentioned above were well aware of the benefits of ethnography, they were also equally mindful of its pitfalls. Erickson (1984) discussed why traditional ethnography is inappropriate for schools, and mentioned the drawbacks of subjectivity and lack of guidelines for research. Erickson suggested a “disciplined subjectivity” be used during research, with the researcher being aware of

potential biases; he also proposed some rules for ethnographic research that managed the specificity of each study along with the comparative nature of ethnography (p. 61). Eisenhart (1988, 2001) did an excellent job juggling issues such as validity and reliability, standardization, and overall methodology. Not only did she clearly explain the "muddles" that ethnographic researchers dealt with in the field of education, she also gave counterarguments and solutions for these issues. Eisenhart (2001) and Erickson (1984) both agreed that in order for ethnography to remain valuable in education, it had to be reflexive, adaptive, contextually aware, and socially relevant.

A methodology used by Tobin and others (1989, 2009) to study preschool children merited some attention because of the unique and animated nature of the study; the authors referred to it as "multivocal, video-cued ethnography." This cumbersome term referred to the researchers recording video footage in all of the schools, showing these videos to various academics and educators, and recording/analyzing their responses to questions regarding the culture of the schools. The 2009 study included the term "diachronic" because a large part of the research was dedicated to how the preschools (the same ones from the 1989 study) and their respective nations changed over time. All of the various elements of data collection and analysis added a different aspect to the study. The video recording technique allowed for a vivid recorded account of everything that occurred at the school, as well as great footage that was disseminated and made the project come alive for those interested in the study. When these videos were shown to audiences, they produced a range of vibrant, multivocal responses that left the researchers with rich data to analyze.

Both the diversity and the intricacy of ethnographic research in education have grown since its beginnings in the 1970s, when authors like Wolcott (1973) were part of a larger trend of “bringing anthropology home.” This postmodernist trend of doing away with the “other” as well as the “culture wars” of the 1980s and 1990s, issues that dealt with the conception and situation of identity in society, stirred up discussion and curiosity with regards to the value of ethnographic research in education (Eisenhart, 2001). Despite some disagreement over the applicability and adequacy of ethnographic research in the field of education, educational researchers continued to successfully use ethnography as a methodology and revealed illuminating awareness into various aspects of education.

A 2011 publication in the *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* provided some insight into the diversity of current ethnographic research in education. This issue contained studies from the United States, Spain, and Fiji; the topics covered included identity, diversity, globalization, and nationality; the educational levels ranged from kindergarten to higher education. The aforementioned issue of *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* was only presented as a snapshot of ethnographic research in education—it merely skimmed the surface of the potential applications for ethnography. According to LeCompte and Schensul (2010), proper application of ethnographic research could influence educational practice, improve educational processes, instigate change in policy, support advocacy, and contribute to the existing body of knowledge.

Ethnography in Music Research

Ethnographic research of music implies a special branch of researching music because the music studied is framed within social and cultural contexts, and is often compared with the music of other cultures. The etymology of the word "ethnomusicology" literally means "the branch of knowledge that deals with the music of people(s)." Thus, if one wanted to review the existing research of how culture and music have interacted, ethnomusicology would be an appropriate place to begin.

In McLeod's (1974) review of ethnomusicological research in anthropology (which is the first such review in its respective journal), she characterized the years from 1882 to 1954 as falling into one of these four categories: unilateral evolution, diffusion of music, defining the musical areas, and culture-area concepts. Respectively, these focused on how music came to be, where it came from, how to classify or categorize music, and context specific versus comparative approaches. These early trends in ethnomusicology, according to McLeod, tended to be very general and attempted to use simple descriptions to explain the incredibly complex phenomenon that is music. Prior to 1882, the study of non-Western music was left to missionaries and explorers, and prior to 1954, there was no study of music as "interrelated parts;" culture had been neglected as a factor in the musical experience (McLeod, 1974, p. 100). Davidson (2004) also recognized Farnsworth's (1954) study as the first to research music with respect to social behavior. The focus of examining music from non-western cultures tended to be on individuals or a society, and "rarely as a product of individuals in society" (Blacking, 1995, p. 32).

From the early beginnings, anthropologists like Franz Boas pointed out the need for a more comprehensive approach to ethnomusicology; music required representations that gave its intricacies and social significance proper consideration. The “modern trends” McLeod identified, which spanned from 1954 to when the article was written, described a linguistic approach to musical analysis (which was problematic because it separated musical texts from spoken texts) and also a focus on the relation between music and culture (p. 105). The latter was of primary interest because although language did play a large role in ethnographic research, the greater umbrella of “culture” provided greater depth and breadth for potential research. In the end, she remained agnostic by saying there is “no simple answer to the relationship between music as patterned structure and culture” (McLeod, 1974, p. 110).

R. Murray Schafer’s (1977) concept of the “soundscape” was a vibrant representation of how nature, people and culture interact sonically; the soundscape gave anthropologists a unique way of considering ethnographic research. Schafer defined the soundscape as: “The sonic environment. Technically, any portion of the sonic environment regarded as a field for study. The term may refer to actual environments, or to abstract compositions and tape montages, particularly when considered as an environment” (p. 275). Samuels and others (2010) noted that one of the problems with the soundscape is the overuse of the term, which had been used in urban studies, anthropology of sound, sonic studies in science, technology, communication, and other areas. Although the soundscape as described by Schafer could have been bound more clearly, the term provided a dynamic concept that

researchers in several fields could investigate. The strengths of the soundscape were in the term's ability to tie together society, culture, environment, and humanity to sonic experience.

Blacking's (1973) book *How Musical is Man?* was an exploratory ethnographic study that examined the Venda of South Africa, and noted how their musical experiences were consequences of sociocultural influences. This book provided an excellent example of one of the first research studies of music that situated music within society, culture, and the human condition. He believed that in order to fully understand music, it must be taken in a sociocultural context because music is not a closed system and it would be impossible to remove music from its intrinsic link to culture. Blacking stated that the "extra-musical" aspects needed to be understood if one wished to study music comprehensively. Music and musical communication were described as being contingent upon subjective perception, cultural membership, and human consensus. Blacking also noted that not only was music a product of culture and society, music also contained aspects of culture and society within itself; music was reflexive and generative of culture (Blacking, 1973, 1995).

Although McLeod's (1974) review was useful, her characterization of Western and non-Western music was incredibly reductionist. Possibly because of the age of the article, it seemed that ethnomusicologists were characterized as studying only non-Western music, which changed drastically. Beginning in the late 1980s the push for "world music" and the impact of globalization created new interactions and access points between people scattered across the earth, which in turn created new border

zones. The “West and the rest” were linked in unprecedented ways. In turn, the 1990s were filled with sharply opposed theories of world music: some sided with Veit Erlmann, who believed that global music stressed difference, exploitation, and Western dominance. Others, like Dan Slobin, saw no cohesive flow or structure to the movement (Stokes, 2004). Yet another issue was the authenticity of world music; whereas some believed that true authenticity was impossible to the outsider who looks in, others focused on the hybridity of music that mixed styles from around the globe. Some even proposed that the new hybridity of blending world musics had become the new “authentic” world music. While people like Alan Lomax were concerned with cultural “gray out” that occurs when authentic musics are tampered with, others saw the intercultural mixture as new opportunities for academia, music, and humanity at large (Stokes, 2004, p. 65).

Since the 1990s, the blurring of traditional boundaries brought about interesting ways of envisioning musical communities. Tsing (2002) envisioned global projects that treated the world as a canvas in which each project “painted” local and global attributes of their project, which was projected as a dream. Appadurai (1996) contended that technology and imagination allowed communities to go beyond the nation-state and other traditional boundaries. Thus, the ethnomusicological field that had such simple beginnings by studying “exotic” cultures and proclaiming: “X music came from Y and means Z,” grew to a complex and convoluted analysis of discourse, power, hegemony, locality, meaning, and representation and how these sociocultural dynamics related to music. Echoing Schafer’s claim that humans do not listen carefully, Samuels and others

(2010) believed that anthropology has neglected sound, recording, and listening. So the call to action remained: researchers (and humans in general) needed to pay closer attention to the role sound played in human activity.

Another prominent area where ethnographic study of music grew was in the area of popular music. Frith (1981) commented that popular music research needed more ethnographies, and Cohen (1993) continued this desire by mentioning that ethnography would contribute to our understanding of popular music and beyond. Cohen criticized ethnomusicologists for being too general in their approach to popular culture, and suggested that the micro- levels should be taken into deeper consideration. This broad approach may have come from the 1990s tendency that focused on globalization and the macro- levels. Cohen's own (1993) research focused on locality, but she also mentioned that identity had been an interest of popular music ethnographers.

According to Merriam-Webster's (2012) definition, ethnomusicology, the "study of music in a sociocultural context," should study "races, peoples, cultures, and groups," hence the prefix ethno-. Although the dictionary did not stress that all of these groups are to be studied within ethnomusicology, it would be an obvious oversight and gap in the field to exclude any of them. In a 2011 issue of the publication *Ethnomusicology*, the locations discussed in the journal include Peru, Brazil, New Guinea, United States, United Kingdom, and Zimbabwe; some of the topics covered were popular music, musical time, representation, performance, church music, and jazz. Issues of this publication also included recording reviews, which added an extra aural element to how ethnomusicologists conceive research.

The specialization and concentration that were part of the “modern trends” proposed by McLeod (1974) seemed to have persisted in ethnomusicological studies up to this point, but the field also added more general notions of how music functions on a global level through increased theories on globalization, among many others (p. 105). While earlier ethnomusicologists viewed music as a fixed product of a certain culture or society, more contemporary notions of music saw a musical piece as dynamic process that changes throughout time and location. Not only has the field of ethnomusicology grown, the concept of music has as well; John Cage’s proposition that any sound is music truly allowed ethnomusicologists to fully “shake the tree” to yield a plethora of aural fruits. Davidson (2004) agreed that there was a assortment of research techniques that could now be used to study music as a social behavior.

Ethnography in Music Education Research

The link between ethnomusicology and music education research was a strong one: “Ethnomusicology provides an important model for ethnographies in music education research. The key difference is that while ethnographies in music education center around educational issues-those issues directly related to the teaching and learning of music” (Bresler, 1995, p. 5). Much like the trend of ethnographic research in the larger field of general education, music education researchers began to make use of ethnographic methods at the end of the twentieth century. As in general education, music education researchers had to deal with the postmodern crisis of representation

and the “culture wars” as well; these issues drew attention to concepts that begged for ethnographic research across several disciplines.

Just as some education researchers such as Wolcott (1973) and Erickson (1984) noted the potential for ethnography, certain researchers saw the music education world as ripe for ethnographic description as well (Stauffer & Robbins, 2009). Lundquist (1986) expressed an eager disposition for “sociomusical” research: “Possibilities could not be more promising for the support of research that could change the social climate for music in education, as well as provide, for the society, continuing evidence of the effects and need of an education in music” (pp. 55-56). Thus, education and music education acquired similar anthropological roots in their research methods from scholars like Margaret Mead and Bronislaw Malinowski (Roulston, 2006).

According to Bresler and Stake (1992), one of the first and most important ethnographic studies in music education was the Pillsbury Foundation Study finished in 1951. Through observation of unrestricted musical “play,” a conductor and a composer were among the first to test out the research methodology on music learning. Despite the emergence of interest in qualitative methods in several disciplines, by the 1980s qualitative research as a whole, including ethnography, was barely recognized in the field of music education (Bresler, 1995). In one of the leading publications in music education, the Journal of Research in Music Education (JRME), only 3.1% of the total publications were qualitative in the years of 1984-1995 (Yarbrough, 1996, p. 200). Although other journals published a greater amount of qualitative studies, the presence of ethnographies in music education was minor to say the least. The earliest

ethnographies in music education focused on meaning, community, and group music making. This interpretive search for meaning allowed for music educators to explore new ways of representation in research (Stauffer & Robbins, 2009).

An excellent example of an earlier music education ethnography that focused on a music learning community is *Music, Talent, & Performance: A Conservatory Cultural System*. In this ethnographic look at the musical conservatory system, Kingsbury (1988) stated: “musical meaning is a social meaning, and musical structure a social structure” (p. 110). Throughout the book, Kingsbury used vignettes and a variety of sources to examine the “polysemous” and “polymorphic” world of the conservatory, which he referred to as a “cultural system” (Kingsbury, 1908, p. 80). By tackling issues such as history, structure, power, aesthetics, and talent, Kingsbury’s ethnography provided contextual depth as well as interesting insight into the culture and music that existed in the conservatory.

Although ethnographic research had emerged in music education around the late 1970s and 1980s, it was still largely unexplored in the mid-1990s (Bresler & Stake, 1992; Bresler, 1995). Thus, scholars in music education such as Bresler argued for the legitimacy of ethnography by discussing the methodology in-depth, focusing on issues such as validity, reliability, collection, analysis and dissemination (Bresler & Stake, 1992; Bresler, 1995). By the close of the millennium, music educators were applying ethnographic research toward several areas of inquiry.

Campbell (1999) conducted a case study of novice teachers aimed to investigate how students constructed concepts of teaching. In this interesting use of ethnography, both students and researcher were participants in the study, and both played the role of researcher in the study as well. Such novel research methods challenged the boundary between *emic* and *etic*. In an ethnography where the researcher had more of an observational role, Kanellopoulos (1999) studied how young children conceived of improvisation by looking closely at how they interpreted the music-making process.

Even *JRME,* a journal that had published reasonably less ethnographic research than other music education journals, began to publish ethnographic research. In the journal, Kennedy (2002) studied how high school musicians composed music in order to improve how adolescents are taught composition. A different Kennedy (2004) tracked male voice change at the American Boychoir School for six months, taking into account concepts of confidence, gender, and development. Allsup (2002, 2003) investigated the group culture and democratic music making of instrumental students by comparing a rock ensemble with an ensemble made of traditional instruments. The home environment, culture, and identity of children in Singapore were under investigation in an ethnography written by Lum (2008).

The above paragraph citing ethnographic publications in *JRME* was merely an indicator that the field had begun to view ethnography as a useful research methodology that deserved consideration and could possibly reveal valuable information regarding teaching and learning music. As mentioned by Roulston (2006), the possibilities for this type of research in music education are truly limitless. The

presence of ethnography in music education evolved from being merely an idea to entertain, to being a way of conducting research that was used by a minority, to being a methodology that deserved further usage and refinement because of its past (albeit brief) success and future potential. This evolution suggested growth should continue as music educators scrutinized over the use and value of ethnographic research, while researchers continued to utilize ethnography as a methodological approach to investigating musical phenomena. Burnard (2006) noted that within music education, the "profession has shifted away from 'large-scale studies'…towards ethnographic qualitative approaches, and to research focusing on the actual site of operations and practice" (p. 111). This study provided an example of such research.

Major Figures in Ethnography

Two of the most important figures in ethnographic research were anthropologists Franz Boas (1858-1942) and Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942). Both men strived to enter their fieldwork as objective, neutral, detached, authoritative researchers that applied the scientific method to ethnographic research (Cohen, 1993). Boas focused on the local rather than the global, and seeing the arts as a rich source of culture, sought to collect cultural data before Western influence could "stain" other cultures (McLeod, 1974). Malinowski was interested in local meaning and the "actor's" point of view, something he had learned through close observation of culture in New Guinea when he could not return to Europe because of the first World War (Bresler, 1995; Erickson,

1984). Both Boas and Malinowski were mentioned in numerous ethnographic studies across several disciplines, and both were viewed as irreplaceable innovators of the ethnographic method.

Mieczyslaw Kolinski (1901-1981) was a Polish-born ethnomusicologist who focused on the analysis of tonal structures that existed in human cultures around the world. Departing from a musicologist's perspective, Kolinski also sought out objectivity and rigor in ethnomusicological research by primarily studying melody and harmony on a scientific basis (Kolinski, 1967). Another focus of his was reflecting on how to account for the overwhelming musical diversity on earth; was cultural difference responsible for creating vastly different, incompatible musical styles or was there an underlying structure? For Kolinski, in order for ethnomusicological research to be objective, comprehensive, and meaningful, the extent of diversity between cultures and the nature of human psychophysical constrictions had to be taken into account (Kolinski, 1967).

Alan P. Merriam (1923-1980) was an ethnomusicologist whose work *The Anthropology of Music* (1964) had gained praise for approaching musical studies from an anthropological standpoint that situated music within the context of culture (Merriam, 1966). He defined ethnomusicology as: "not as the study of extra-European music, but as 'the study of music in culture.'…a universal aspect of man's activities" (Merriam, 1960b, p. 109). Merriam struggled with defining ethnomusicology and also with the dual nature of the field, which he saw as divided between ethnology and musicology. Merriam confronted these issues of defining and bounding the field in the literature, and also in his classroom and around his students (Merriam, 1969; Wild, 1982)

Clifford Geertz (1926-2006) was an American anthropologist who gained recognition for “symbolic anthropology”: an interpretive approach to studying culture that grew out of literary interpretation and viewed culture as a “text” that contained meaning (Cohen, 1993). Geertz was less interested in methodology and more interested in representation and how meaning was created. Instead of pursuing objectivity and detachment in the field, he discussed purpose and judgment from a moral and ethical standpoint (Stauffer & Robbins, 2009). Scholars in music, education, and music education have utilized “thick description,” which was a term Geertz used in his 1973 book *The Interpretation of Cultures* to describe human behavior that was made meaningful by describing human behavior as well as the context in which it occurred.

Simon Frith was a scholar that focused on popular music culture, notably in *Sociology of Rock* (1978) where he discussed mass media, youth identity, and rock philosophy. Since then Frith has expanded on these ideas: consumption and production, as well as copyright laws have been discussed in his (1988) publication, the ideology of rock youth culture had been explored by Frith (1981) as well. More recently, he wrote about how music and television interact and the role that they play in society (Frith, 2002). Frith provided an excellent example of how ethnography has contributed to the study of postmodern phenomena in music such as globalization and technology.

Themes

One commonality found in much of the literature was a call for an interdisciplinary approach. Because of the depth and breadth of aural experiences, scholars quickly realized that studying music spilled into fields beyond the humanities. Well before the more contemporary research trends reared their heads, “The study of even a single traditional ballad was ceasing to be a one-man job; that it required instead the joint efforts of a folklorist, a musicologist, an anthropologist, a psychologist, and a literary scholar. He might well, perhaps, have added a linguist, among others, to this list; but his statement in itself is an accurate expression of the feeling we folk song students share as we contemplate the ever-increasing magnitude of our tasks” (McLeod, 1974, p. 105).

Tan and others (2010) provided a nice overview of these various ways of studying and understanding music departing from a psychological standpoint. Cage urges for all humans to work together, not in unison, but with each group or individual contributing what they can, no matter their background (Cage, 1996). For Schafer (1977), the “home territory of soundscape studies will be the middle ground between science, society, and the arts” (p. 3). In music education, Yarbrough (1996) urged scholars to develop “interdisciplinary knowledge and skills” (p. 190). Stauffer and Robbins (2009) expressed with eagerness that cross-disciplinary research would be beneficial for music education.

Another element that was present in all of the literature was the impact of technology. No field or approach to studying music remained static throughout all of the

technological advances made from the late nineteenth century onward. Stock (2004) discussed the importance of the phonograph in 1877 as well as other means of collecting data that emerged through the twentieth century such as photo, audio, and video recording. Such new technologies allowed researchers to compile deep and rich depictions of various studied individuals, groups, or communities as were exemplified in the Tobin and others' (1989, 2009) studies. The technology allowed for a thorough ethnographic account of preschools; Tobin and others were able to use video to collect, analyze and disseminate data. Not only was technology a tool for researchers to use, it was also a contemporary addition to the classroom and to the musician that was to be investigated. Fetterman (2010) stressed the viability of multimedia and digital technologies in ethnographic research, and noted that they serve as valuable tools that enhance the "human instrument" that ultimately dictated qualitative research.

Emmons (1998) dissertation was an example of how research could inform our classroom choices regarding technology. If scholars such as Lundquist (1986) were interested by the effect of communications technology on music, education, and society then, today they should be nothing short of enthralled. John Cage viewed technology optimistically—as something that could create more possibilities for improving and broadening humanity (Konstelanz, 2003). On the other hand, Schafer (1977) viewed many new technologies as having a negative impact on our sonic environments. While the interpretations of these technological changes varied, no one could deny the gravity of their influence.

There were several other themes that occurred often enough so that ethnographic researchers had come to notice them: giving agency to the studied culture and the anthropologist's ethical responsibility as a researcher (McDonald, 2000), the emic versus etic dichotomy (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010), and the dispute over the meaning and use of the term "culture" (Hill & Baba, 2009; Stauffer & Robbins, 2009). Unfortunately because of limitations, not all of these themes could be elaborated during this study. The themes mentioned in the previous paragraphs were neither more nor less important than any other themes that have emerged from the literature. Despite the fact that some scholars believed certain themes required more attention or particular precedence given to subjects, I presented the above themes only as commonalities within the ethnographic literature, not as the most important themes.

Conclusion

To say the least, I believe that the future of ethnographic research is promising. As a methodology, ethnography has grown and evolved; it has spilled over well beyond its original home in anthropology and grabbed the attention of researchers in disciplines like education, music, and music education. The increased interest by a broad base of researchers, the large amount of literature written on the subject, the past success of various studies, and the refinement of the methodology all suggested that ethnographic research will persist in academia and that it has contributed valuable insight as a form of investigation.

In order for ethnographic research to be successful in the future, researchers must keep it dynamic, maintain it relevant to society, and exploit its strengths. The reflexivity of the researcher, a holistic approach of dealing with data, an immersed field experience, ethical consideration of cultures, contextual depth, and incorporation of multiple perspectives—these are the crucial aspects of ethnographic research that made it great and will continue to do so in the future.

VERNACULAR MUSIC

Introduction

The following section of the chapter was dedicated to the final (and possibly most important) aspect of this research study: vernacular music making. First, vernacular music making is described, discussed, and compared with traditional music making. The next section focuses on vernacular music making in the context of music education; literature regarding beliefs and applications of vernacular music are cited. Finally, an examination of rock as a vernacular culture within education provides a more specific example of vernacular music making. The section concludes with a rationale for studying vernacular music making.

The Vernacular Phenomenon

Vernacular cultures have normally existed outside of formal musical training, and are not usually found in educational institutions. Vernacular music refers to music that is not traditionally learned, often occurring away from schools and absent from close teacher supervision. Philosophically, vernacular music making has been conceived of as a contextual setting (Caswell & Smith, 2000), a process (Green, 2002, 2005), and a genre (Green, 1993). Some music educators (Jaffurs, 2004) have used the term "informal" music making to describe the same phenomenon as those who used vernacular as terminology (Caswell & Smith, 2000; Karlsen & Väkavä, 2012; Woody & Lehmann, 2010). The term "out-of-school music" has been used as well (Lamont et al., 2003), and Williams (2007) referred to the same group as "non-traditional music students" or "NTM." In the past scholars expressed difficulty bounding and defining what vernacular music actually was, mentioning that it has been a "problematic tag" ever since the term's original application. Words like "vernacular" shift across "social boundaries" and change (Green, 1993, p. 40).

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2012) defined vernacular as a noun: "the terminology used by people belonging to a specified group or engaging in a specialized activity;" the dictionary also provides a definition of vernacular as an adjective: "Of arts, or features of these: Native or peculiar to a particular country or locality." Although it was originally applied to language, when applied to music making the former definition emphasized the *activity* of vernacular music. This definition was useful because of its emphasis on the explicit social (group) nature of music making (the specialized activity).

The active aspect also ran congruent with a constructivist tenet—actively engaging people and environment to learn. The latter definition referred specifically to the arts, and spoke to the environment or context in which music was being made. I felt that the term “informal” had certain pejorative connotations and “vernacular” provided a more suitable means of describing the musical phenomenon, so the following research has utilized “vernacular” instead of “informal” or any other comparable terms.

Most likely the first written references to vernacular music were made in New York during the 1930s, by people like Marc Blitzstein and Charles Seeger. Blitzstein claimed to incorporate vernacular music in the vocal patterns of musical drama, and Seeger referred to vernacular music as descriptive categorization of music. Aaron Copland also described aspects of his own music as vernacular (Green, 1993). Vernon (1995) seemed to consider vernacular music as a genre comparable to folk or indigenous music. As per Vernon’s conceptualization, vernacular music stretched back as far as folk or indigenous music. This use of the term “vernacular music” seemed vague and extremely generalized, possibly because Vernon did not provide a proper definition of vernacular music. By the end of the twentieth century, vernacular music was pluralistic and dynamic by definition and in practice.

In the past, traditional, formal music making had been the dominant force in music education. It had been so “all-encompassing” and “pervasive” that most music educators conceived of curricular change as supplemental to the large ensemble model (Williams, 2011, p. 52). Green (2007) defined formal music making, as opposed to informal or vernacular music making, as: “educational institutions from primary schools

to conservatories, partly involving or entirely dedicated to the teaching and learning of music" (p. 3). Traditional music making settings featured a single director that chose the music to be played, and many times also prescribed expression (Woody, 2007). Each institution had a system of valuation that was shared between a specific group of people that existed within the larger hierarchy of society (Froehlich, 2007). Although the same could be said about vernacular culture and the level of agreement varies, the value system that dominated schools was much more rigid. Breaking the rules and divergence are normally frowned upon in a traditional setting. The student's role was one of apprenticeship and was given little authority, while the teacher's was the all-knowing and all-powerful entity—the structure of the classroom somewhat resembled a highly regimented authoritarian system (Westerlund, 2006).

Traditional music culture often featured "direct instruction," where learners followed a strict set of rules and guidelines set by the instructor if they wished to be successful by traditional standards (which tended to be more demanding than vernacular culture, which never had true standards). "It is not simply teacher centered; the institution must be organized and systematic" (Colwell, 2011, p. 95). Direct instruction involved clear directions and goals, mastery of individual musical elements through repetition, and a focus on learning by rote (Colwell, 2011).

The repertoire for traditional music was usually confined to the past 300 years of European music (Newman, 1971) and the instrumentation tended to exclude instruments used in more contemporary popular music (Westerlund, 2006). Often times traditional music making focused on canonized works viewed through an objective lens;

music was often decontextualized (Caswell & Smith, 2000). Instead of making music in a real and authentic musical context, hammering away scales, repetitive exercises, and an obsession with notation all contributed to the decontextualization of music in traditional music practices. Instrumentation in traditional music has been limited to those found in band, choir, and orchestra and have tended to exclude more contemporary electronic and digital instruments. Thus, traditional music making was teacher-centered, extremely systematized, and did not favor learner autonomy or creativity.

For over a century, the large ensemble model in music education remained the same. Traditional music making environments had normally been composed of “neat rows of students, reading notation, performing the same piece at the same time, while being conducted or led by the teacher” (Williams, 2011, p. 53). Nevertheless, even in its traditional manifestation, the music classroom was a fantastic place for sharing values, discussion and interaction, cooperation, group work, and group growth (Allsup & Olson, 2012).

As mentioned above, vernacular music making had been defined and characterized in several ways. Although she uses “informal” as her terminology, Green (2007) defined the vernacular music process: “young musicians largely teach themselves or ‘pick up’ skills and knowledge, usually with the help or encouragement of their family and peers, by watching and imitating musicians around them and by making reference to recordings or performances and other live events involving their chosen music” (p. 5). For Green, the focus was placed on the self-taught and peer-directed learning that occurred during casual music making experiences. The peer learning and

peer critique created equality amongst learners (Jaffurs, 2004), and also allowed learners to explore music and come to their own understanding (Green, 2005). Woody (2007) agreed that the high level of musician motivation was one broad conclusion that could be drawn from vernacular music making, and attributed the motivation to the peer tutoring and cooperative learning that occurs when “jamming” (vernacular musical get-togethers). The “natural” nature of this type of musical experience seemed to be more enriching to learners when compared to the controlled and alienating world of formal music education (Green, 2002, 2005).

Archie Green (1993) used vernacular music to refer to a specific genre of American music. Green traced the roots of vernacular music to early twentieth century American composers and U.S. folk music, but as time passed, other types of music were also characterized as vernacular. By the 1980s, many regarded the blues, soul, rockabilly, and western swing as part of vernacular music. Woody (2007) suggested that analysis of this genre of music should be approached in the same manner as music of other cultures, since it is in fact an American subculture. The conceptualization of vernacular music as a binding quality of music not only broadened the definition for music educators, it presented vernacular music as a valuable part of American society and history that merited academic and musical attention.

Other scholars (Caswell & Smith, 2000) considered vernacular to refer to a context in which music making occurred rather than a quality of the music itself. Music did not “embody a social order.” Instead, “interpretive communities” were formed between musicians where the “give and take” of musical information created a

"multilevel dialogue" (Swanwick, 1999, p. 133). Vernacular music making often took place in "garage band" type settings. Woody (2007) mentioned "leisure time, family gatherings, social events, and informal religious activities" as environments where vernacular music making has transpired (p. 36). Vernacular music making has surfaced in any community with music, in settings that are "natural," "spontaneous," and feature little or no direct teaching and evaluation (Jaffurs, 2004, p. 192). Instead of being an objective, pre-determined occurrence, vernacular music has been called a "happening" that was interactive and collaborative amongst members (Binkley, 1969, p. 32). Vernacular music making was a "series of encounters" rather than a "chain of instructions" (Swanwick, 1999, p. 136).

Markusen (2009) described the vernacular music phenomenon as a community of practice, or a culture:

> "Vernacular cultural practices encompass a wide range of activities that are distinguished by their expression of community values and their inclusion of many participants, in contrast to the individualized and professionalized creation or reproduction of art or culture by experts detached from a community form of reference…They can also be defined as what they aren't—part of the elite canon of high culture or fine art in their respective societies (e.g. European classical music)." (p. 185)

Vernacular music making has been characterized as easily accessible; resources like books, radio, television, and the Internet enabled vernacular musicians in their

music making (Swanwick, 1999). For vernacular musicians, the “foundation in musical life is outside of the academy” (Caswell & Smith, 2000, p. 90). Therefore, different and varied methods for transmitting musical knowledge were employed when compared with more formal approaches. Motivated learners pursued musical understanding and experiences on their own, and chose how and what they learned independently. Allsup (2002) noted that the intersubjective nature of learning created shared musical understanding, so not only did the musician have more control over individual learning, but the learner was also given a voice in group decisions. Furthermore, vernacular music making seemed chaotic or unstructured when compared to the rigid teaching and learning methods commonly used in academia. This was probably because vernacular music is flexible (Woody, 2007) and music making sessions were usually unplanned and loosely structured (Jaffurs, 2004).

Another means of characterizing vernacular music was through “versus theory.” Jaffurs (2004) described versus theory as a juxtaposition of “formal” and “informal” music and elaborated on both through this opposition. Many have noted the large gap between the musical culture that existed inside and out outside of school by comparing the two. Caswell and Smith (2000) stated that a hierarchy was created based on this gap. Vernacular music was described as “utilitarian” because of its public nature and functionality, while “aestheticist” music was reserved for scholarly and intellectual endeavors (Caswell & Smith, 2000). The exploration of the social aspects of music has been viewed as a response to the division between music in and out of schools (Barrett, 2007).

Turino's (2008) descriptions of "participatory" and "presentational" fields were similar to this study's discussion of vernacular and traditional cultures (p. 23). Participatory music was described as democratic, inclusive, universal, and used particular musical means as observed in folk music; participatory music shared many traits with vernacular music. On the other hand, presentational music was depicted as more exclusive and rigidly structured. Turino stated that all of the fields he depicted were valuable and unique ways of making music, suggesting that they should all be embraced for what they could provide: "Each field offers different potentials for creativity and being human, and each offers its own constraints" (Turino, 2008, p. 234).

Further investigation showed that the intersection between the traditional and the vernacular was not clear-cut (Jaffurs, 2004). Allsup (2003) argued that the whole binary conception of in- and out-of-school music practices was a "false dichotomy between so called opposing cultures" (p. 25). I agree with Allsup; the commonalities and continuity of music making between the two cultures overrides the need for a reductionist separation of "us and them." Understanding, appreciating, and spreading musical experiences was a goal for both traditional and vernacular cultures, so there was no use in creating divisions. As Dalcroze once stated: "there is only one music" (Dalcroze, 1972, p. 98).

An obvious inference would be to blend vernacular music making and traditional music making. An anthology edited by Karlsen and Väkevä (2012) presented several articles that focused on connections and links in the "formal-informal nexus." Folkstead (2005) mentioned: "formal and informal learning styles are aspects of the phenomenon

of learning, regardless of where it takes place" (p. 26). Likewise, traditional and vernacular communities of practice share a common goal, to make music. Blacking (1973) noticed a similar situation with music: "music is a product of the behavior of human groups, whether formal or informal" (p. 58). Education and music are part of the natural human condition; merging aspects of vernacular and traditional approaches to music making could improve them both. Bridging the gap between school learning and learning outside of schools was an aim of several music educators, and connecting the two was natural because they complemented each other (Froehlich, 2007; Green, 2002, 2008; Karlsen, 2012). In the context of this study, vernacular and traditional music cultures were not envisioned as absolute. Rather, these cultures are dynamic and diverse phenomena that change and evolve alongside humans.

Vernacular Experiences in Music Education

Many music educators noticed a gap between music education and larger society (Jorgensen, 2010; Kratus, 2007; Swanwick, 1999; Williams, 2011; Woody, 2007). This criticism even stretched back to Dalcroze, who stated that music education was "detached from the mainstream" (Swanwick, 1999, p. 127). The 1967 Tanglewood symposium was one of the first major events that began the expansion of the music education curriculum (Herbert & Campbell, 2000; Swanwick, 1999). The Tanglewood symposium was sponsored by *MENC* (now known as the National Association for Music Education or *NAfME*) and urged music educators to incorporate all musical styles and

genres into the curriculum (Woody, 2007). In 1969, the *Music Educators Journal* (*MEJ*, also sponsored by *NAfME*) published a special issue that was dedicated to rock music and its inclusion in music education. While some of the music educators saw potential in rock and vernacular music, others were weary and upset by the possible inclusion of popular music in the classroom.

The 1970s and 1980s brought more literature regarding inclusion of vernacular genres in the field, and the call for rock and popular music to be part of music education grew louder (Herbert & Campbell, 2000). In 1994 the National Standards introduced by NAfME, which at the time was called MENC, stressed “a varied repertoire” of music and also the inclusion of history, culture and other disciplines into music education; this suggested that vernacular music should be studied simply on the basis that it provided musical knowledge and experience situated in various fields (Music Educators National Conference*,* 1994). Although music as a whole (and vernacular music) broadened and progressed over the forty years that passed after Tanglewood, music education had barely evolved (Woody, 2007).

It should be noted that not only did music education not take full advantage of rock music, but it also significantly lacked the valuable learning experiences created by vernacular, out-of-school musical cultures. I related these vernacular music experiences with rock music because often times that is where both have been found: in garages, in bedrooms, in basements—in settings that normally have occurred outside of the ivory towers and high society. The world of vernacular music can be chaotic, unpredictable, and unstructured; these notions are intimidating and seem out of place in the hallowed

halls of educational institutions. Since formal music education has not normally utilized vernacular leaning procedures, many (teachers, students, and the field as a whole) could be enriched with knowledge regarding how vernacular musicians made music.

Previous research examined the nature of vernacular, out-of-school music in order to determine the educational and learning practices that occurred in those types of environments. Green (2002, 2005, 2008) believed that methods seen in vernacular settings have great applicability within the music education classroom. Green's (2002) book investigated 14 rock musicians, aged 15-50, and the process of how they made music. Green found that vernacular music making was very learner-centered; vernacular musicians were excellent at aural skills and proficient at music making without the need for teacher instruction or supervision. Not only had Green studied vernacular music outside of school, she had also successfully applied the vernacular learning methods in classroom settings (Green, 2005, 2008). Green (2008) gave suggestions for how vernacular practices could be applied within formal music education, and discussed issues such as learner autonomy, peer collaboration, motivation, and pedagogical difficulties. Green's (2002, 2008) works have been viewed as landmark works that forwarded the discussion and implementation of vernacular music making (Karlsen & Väkevä, 2012; Clements, 2012).

Other researchers focused on the role(s) of students and teachers; some suggested that having a more democratic classroom would improve music education. Kratus (2007) characterized the music classroom as "autocratic," and argued that other means of teaching may be more effective. Examples of less authoritarian ways of

teaching would be student-centered approaches. When learning is appealing and the learner is interested, the educational process is much more effective (Väkevä, 2012). Literature in the field has shown how these methods were applied in music teaching, demonstrating that giving the students more agency in the music classroom had positive outcomes. Wiggins (2011) believed that agency is a critical part of learning, particularly in a situation like collaborative songwriting. The literature suggested, “critical pedagogy argues for alternative and new models of informal and formal learning that reduce the power of schools but increase the power of each individual in the learning process” (Froehlich, 2007, p. 86).

Ruthmann (2007) successfully allowed students to create their own compositions, and noted that student interest and understanding increased because of the exercise. Allsup’s (2002) dissertation studied two groups of musicians, one vernacular and one traditional, and highlighted the social nature of vernacular music making. Findings suggested that genre was the largest determinant of a group’s musical culture, and also that the traditional group had more difficulty with the communal process of music making (Allsup, 2002). Bennett (1980) was also concerned with the social nature of rock music making, and focused on the nature of the environments where rock music was made.

Woody and Lehmann (2010) investigated students’ ability to play by ear, and noted that the majority of the world transmits music aurally and orally. Several benefits of ear playing were cited, such as lifelong learning, goal imaging, and Gordon’s concept of audiation. The authors urged that vernacular music making, particularly playing by

ear, should be included as part of the music education curriculum. This was suggested not as a replacement for traditional processes and notation, but as a complementary means of learning and engaging music (Woody & Lehmann, 2010).

A quantitative study conducted by Bowles (1991) regarding how adults experienced music education suggested that adult musicians are also influenced greatly by vernacular stimuli; 57% of the respondents mentioned home experiences as their most important musical influence (p. 196). Bowles argued that “adults can be self-motivated” and also “pursue musical skills and knowledge” just like younger music students (p. 202). A summary of some of Bowles (1991) descriptive statistics on vernacular music making is provided below. Negative respondents were not interested in adult music education while positive respondents showed interest in learning music:

> “Concerning informal music learning and experiences not considered a part of traditional music training and not under the direction of a music professional (i.e., self-directed), 24% of the PRs [positive respondents] indicated that they had composed music and 18% indicated that they had arranged music without having had formal composition or arranging classes, 39% had participated regularly in or "jammed" with a nonperforming music ensemble, 32% had learned to play a musical instrument without taking formal lessons, and 15% had read more than 10 books about music, independent of classwork. Even though NRs [negative respondents] reported consistently lower participation rates than PRs in informal music experiences, 10% had composed without formal instruction, 24% had learned to play an instrument without formal lessons, and 20% had regularly

participated in a nonperforming music ensemble. Rock concerts were attended by 3% of the PRs about once per week, but 64% of the PRs reported never going to rock concerts." (Bowles, 1991, p. 195)

Many of the creative processes encountered in vernacular music making such as improvisation, ear listening, and creating one's own music were shown to improve musicianship and contribute to formation of identity (Burnard, 2006; Davidson & Burland, 2006). Burnard noted the importance of creativity to people of all ages, particularly children, while Davidson and Burland focused on how musical experiences and environments, many of them vernacular, contributed to the formation of identity and human sociocultural activity. These readings demonstrated the many ways in which vernacular music making could positively contribute not only to overall musicianship, but also to the formation of subjectivity, both of which stressed the important role that vernacular music can play in human lives.

In a study that investigated vernacular musicians in New Zealand, Brown (2013) noted that when the musicians appropriated existing examples and took creative liberties with them, it gave the musicians a "causal dominion" over their music making. The vernacular approach to music allowed adult musicians in "tramping clubs" to mold the music around their own interests and values, which ultimately empowered them. The empowerment and dominion in music making only came about because several of the musical boundaries that were common in traditional music education were not present; these included "performance standards, fixed roles, delimited repertoires, and etiquette around song ownership" (Brown, 2013, p. 178).

Marsh (2011) observed children on playgrounds and focused on the concept of musical “play,” alone and with others. When children actively played, it was found that they borrowed adults’ ideas from class and the media, changed the songs to their liking, and generated their own musical culture. Play also reinforced the children’s’ identities because the children added lines about themselves or their family’s culture. Marsh suggested that active play is a peer-directed pedagogical tool that could be utilized by music educators; the children who did so endorsed their identities and gained a sense of accomplishment.

Another line of research has focused more on the instruments used to make music in school, arguing that modern popular instrumentation, technology, and newly emerging musical methods could advance music education. Westerlund (2006) cited his experience with rock bands in Finland, which he referred to as “knowledge-building communities,” and stated that music education could learn from these vernacular groups in several ways (p. 121). The technology, instrumentation, and reduced music making prerequisites could all broaden the way music is taught in classrooms (Westerlund, 2006). In a very interesting “cyber ethnographic” study, Waldron (2011) investigated the musical culture of “Banjo Hangout,” an online musical community that used technology to understand, create, and share music both online and offline. Despite the fact that this community was obsessed with music, there was a substantial absence of discussion of school music education within the community (p. 52).

The proliferation of information technology and digital music culture has been noticed in the field of music education (Väkevä, 2012). Campbell (2011) studied children

of immigrant families with Irish, Mexican, Vietnamese, African, and Native American backgrounds that lived in the United States. After noting their interactions and engagements with media and technology from childhood, she posited that media and technology were “transformative” to the childrens’ musical culture. It was also mentioned that the accumulation of diverse musical information allowed young children to compile “complex auditory ecosystems” (Campbell, 2011, p. 77). Watson (2011) connected technology and creativity; his text recommended excellent tools and tips for creative music making using technology. The Watson text was not only cited as a reference for technology in music education, it was also used as one of the course texts for Progressive Methods.

Despite a very different methodology Karlsen’s (2012) work was extremely similar to this study because of the environment where the research took place, a two-year higher education program that focused on vernacular music making. The program, titled BoomTown Music Education or BTME, shared many similarities with the CPCE and PM courses that were investigated in this study. In both instances musicians used student-centered learning to make music alone and with others, students were able to select their own music, select their instruments, had access to an array of equipment, and assessed themselves. Karlsen described an environment that was neither formal nor informal; the central concern was to create meaningful music. Music making became meaningful when the learners connected with the experience in some way: “knowledge enhancement is assumed to happen when the communities’ members relate to its activities, identities, and artifacts” (Karlsen, 2012, p. 85).

Waldron (2011) did an excellent job summarizing his study, but also provided a means of expressing what this entire section has been dedicated to: realizing and actualizing the potential for vernacular music making in music education.

> "As music educators, we have much to learn by examining successful music communities of practice that lie outside of our 'regular' scope of school music and school music genres, and this includes teaching musical skills necessary to be active participants in other genres besides those perpetuated by school music. Neither have we fully understood or utilized the power of the Internet in facilitating informal music learning in online communities. As a profession, we have a lot of catching up to do. But we also have shining examples available to emulate that are literally at our fingertips." (p. 53)

Rock Music as Vernacular Music Culture: A Closer Look

Rock music was examined for several reasons. First, rock provided a great example of a vernacular music culture that has played an essential role in music, but remained grossly underused in formal education. Second, rock seemed to be the major genre of choice for the participants in the research. Third, rock music culture could be considered vernacular culture, so an analysis of rock culture provided insight into vernacular culture. This study was not centered on rock music and vernacular music making is far too complex to understand by only looking at rock, but the many connections between rock and this study merited further investigation.

Because vernacular music making implies an array of things, it is useful to specify a certain type for more in-depth investigation. Some have considered rock as a vernacular music (Green, 1993; Jaffurs, 2004; Swanwick, 1999), and rock musicians as vernacular musicians (Allsup, 2002), so the broad world of rock was an appropriate area to investigate vernacular phenomena. Rock music had a colossal impact in the United States and internationally, not only in the sphere of music, but also in society (Swanwick, 1999) and education (Herbert & Campbell, 2000). Although rock music had been a topic of academic writing since the 1960s, most of this literature was about the major "stars" and events, as well as various interpretations of the genre. It was not until the 1980s that people began to write about how rock music was created (Jaffurs, 2004).

One of the first examples of literature on the rock music making process was Bennett's (1980) book *On Becoming a Rock Musician*, which described the sociological nature of rock music. Bennett actually played the role of the rock musician by going through various steps that one takes when becoming a rock musician; these included buying an instrument and equipment, joining a group, and the performance process. Herbert and Campbell (2000) mentioned several reasons for rock's sustained success: rock has evolved with society over time, rock has been "amplified" to wider audiences by recording and mass media technologies, and rock has also had international success.

Rock has been characterized by "fluency," referring to the "aural ability to image music coupled with the skill of handling an instrument" (Swanwick, 1999, p. 138). Woody (2007) also noted that functional aural skills were one of the benefits of

vernacular music making. Like other genres characterized as being vernacular, rock tended to favor the local and communal because of the grassroots approach to music making rather than the top-down, standardized world of traditional music making (Swanwick, 1999). Making rock music has been shown to improve musicianship in many ways: it developed improvisation (Campbell, 1999; Woody, 2007), allowed more creativity (Herbert & Campbell, 2000), and sparked learner interest and enjoyment with music (Binkley, 1969; Jaffurs, 2004; Newman, 1971).

One interesting point made by scholars was that although rock was born in the United States, other countries like Finland (Westerlund, 2006), the Netherlands (Barrett, 2007), the United Kingdom and Australia (Barrett, 2007) embraced and utilized rock to a greater extent within music education. Rock curriculum was sparse in the United States (Herbert & Campbell, 2000). This was interesting not only because rock was being included more often in education abroad, but also because the countries that embraced rock in schools were those that had a longer-running tradition of European music—something that U.S. music education could not seem to stray from. How one characterized the lack of rock in American schools is subjective, but it did seem extremely silly for the country that gave birth to rock, a country in which rock has had such a deep sociocultural impact, to exclude rock from music education.

The most fascinating aspect of the 1969 issue of *MEJ* that focused on rock music was the reader responses (almost all of them from music educators) that were featured in the following 1970 issue. Some referred to rock as “artless” music that used “the dialect of the ghetto” and led rock musicians to drug abuse; rock was treated like

leprosy and the *MENC* was criticized for “selling out” to an inferior type of music (*Music Educators Journal*, 1970, pp. 5, 11, 14). Newman (1971) mentioned that educators were troubled over *MENC’s* support of rock in schools. Much of this shock and dismay was probably due to the Woodstock music festival in 1969, which many respondents mentioned and associated with the rock “scene.” However other respondents commended *MEJ* for being brave, for being socially aware, and for suggesting changes that could improve music education. Thus, a question arises: why has the U.S. refrained from including rock music in the classroom?

Herbert and Campbell (2000) posed six main arguments against rock’s inclusion in music education and responded to them (p. 16). It was interesting to note that many of these arguments corresponded to reasons vernacular music making was criticized in the field of music education. The arguments against rock are in bold: 1) **Rock music is aesthetically inferior**. As the authors mentioned, anyone with a background in philosophy knew this claim to be nothing more than a value judgment with little backing. This was basically the same as claiming that European music was better or superior to the mambo; only a closed-minded individual would argue in such a manner. Furthermore, rock was a unique type of music that emphasized different aspects of musicianship, so comparing traditional school music to rock was an inadequate comparison; rock did not share the same value system as other genres (Woody, 2007).

2) **Rock is damaging to the health of youth.** This was laughable because it assumed that rock has some intrinsic quality that corrupts people. The volume could be turned down, and the subject matter could be chosen carefully. Herbert and Campbell

(2000) mentioned that many of the sensitive issues discussed in rock could be used in the classroom for valuable discussions as well as active, critical engagement of subject matter.

3) **School is not intended to teach the vernacular.** The third argument was mentioned by several scholars (Caswell & Smith, 2000; Newman, 1971; Woody, 2007) as problematic because many educators were uncomfortable taking rock out of its "authentic" context: "But in order to make itself respectable and to become appropriately institutionalized, popular music has to be modified, abstracted, and analyzed to fit into classrooms, timetables, and the aims of music education. The volume (and impact) is reduced, dancing is out, and the cultural context is shorn away" (Swanwick, 1999, p. 129). "Vernacular idioms co-opted by academia gained status but lost context, function, and social impact; they became another canonic collection in the museum of cultural objects, for from the fields of interplay and communication in which they originated" (Caswell & Smith, 2000, p. 106). Herbert and Campbell (2000) responded by saying that placing rock in an educational context provides a different, fresh rock experience. I would have added that the original context of rock still thrived despite its appropriation; just because rock was added to schools does not mean that it ceased to exist outside of schools. Furthermore, rock in an educational context provided useful knowledge and practices to music education. As mentioned above, other genres had been successfully appropriated into academia from their original context (Caswell & Smith, 2000; Barrett, 2007).

The fourth argument against rock in schools mentioned by Herbert and Campbell (2000) was: **Music teachers are not trained in rock.** They refuted this claim by pointing to the versatile application of rock, which could be used in multiple courses in many ways. As time had progressed, music educators became more and more familiar with rock, so the gravity of this argument seemed to have diminished over time. 5) **Rock encourages rebelliousness and is anti-education.** This position was based on a generalization that all rock music has the same message, which it did not; some rock music encouraged learning while other rock pieces shunned institutions. Additionally, music educators could harness the power and creativity stressed by the lively, rebellious nature of rock (Herbert & Campbell, 2000). 6) **Rock curriculum is underdeveloped and difficult to acquire.** I feel that this criticism was outdated, primarily because technology (namely, the Internet) changed education drastically. Music education information and resources not available before became easily accessible for many.

Despite the arguments against including rock music in music education mentioned above, there were basic responses to those arguments (Herbert & Campbell, 2000). The possible benefits and applications of adding rock to the music classroom were worthy of pursuit and merited further investigation. Increased student interest; more music making experiences involving creativity, improvisation, and composition; better aural training; a strengthened and more democratic musical community; learner freedom; a broadened curriculum—these were some of the potential benefits of

including rock in schools. It would truly be a loss to music education as a whole if rock were discarded simply because of closed-mindedness or lack of initiative.

Conclusion

Not only was it a topic that has recently grown in interest, but also understanding vernacular music making (and rock music experiences) was important for several reasons. Firstly, music educators could benefit greatly from vernacular music making methods and approaches because they broaden the curriculum and offer new possibilities for music education. If music educators better understood how vernacular musicians made music, that knowledge could be applied in the classroom to create diverse ways to teach students music; studying vernacular music making provided insight into student musicianship and teaching (Barrett, 2007). Second, it will broaden the audience of potential people who can take interest and find enjoyment in music education. As mentioned in the rock section, *students love music*, and music educators should take initiative to understand the musical worlds of students (Jaffurs, 2004).

Thirdly, understanding vernacular culture could be used to improve and enrich the field of music education by offering new meaning to vernacular music making; not only could other cultures (higher education, street musicians, music appreciators, etc.) gain some appreciation of vernacular music making, the communication between these groups could be facilitated through the dialogue. Fourth, and this may be of little concern to the reader, researching vernacular music making helped improve my own

teaching of music courses, and the experience of other music educators (students and faculty) in the smaller local community. Finally, there was intrinsic value in learning about vernacular music culture. As musicians and music educators, we must realize that pursuit of knowledge and truth are always worthy causes; musical knowledge has intrinsic value no matter where or how it is found.

SUMMARY

The constructivist notion of actively engaging knowledge and the immersive nature of ethnographic research were both well suited for investigating the dynamic and unique phenomenon of vernacular music making in higher education. The literature cited above seemed to show some general trends. Firstly, music education appeared to trail academia and general education in the incorporation of ethnographic research and constructivism. For the most part, music education did not utilize constructivism or ethnography until the end of the twentieth century. Vernacular music making was also a topic of recent interest. Second, because constructivist theory, ethnographic methodology, and vernacular music making are relatively new to music education, they were ripe for research. These were also areas that were becoming popular in the field while this study was being conducted.

Now that the major themes have been discussed, the manner in which research was conducted is described. In the next chapter, the methodologies that were used throughout the study are discussed. The participants, environment, data collection, data

analysis, and other research tactics are described in-depth; a rationale for selecting the research methods that were utilized during the study is provided as well.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

PILOT STUDY

A pilot study that utilized the same philosophy, methodology, location, and courses (CPCE and PM) that were researched in this study was conducted during the spring of 2012. The class size was much smaller for the spring 2012 semester (5 students) so group dynamics were drastically different, and furthermore the research methodology was not as calculated and organized as it was in this study due to limited resources and planning during the pilot study. Throughout the pilot study, I served as a teaching assistant responsible for teaching the class twice a week, while the instructor of record taught the course the other three days of the week. All of the data collection tools that were used in this study, described in detail below, were tested and refined through the pilot study. The pilot study allowed me to: become acquainted with ethnographic research and the overall research process, experience and fine-tune participant observation as a methodology used to study the phenomenon, practice taking and organizing field notes, rehearse and revise the interview process as well as test the interview questions, and finally to utilize and become acquainted with the research equipment.

The pilot study revealed that: students were able to successfully create, rehearse, and perform music in a vernacular fashion in an institutional setting; everyone involved with the music making (students, teachers, friends, guests, etc.) had a great deal of fun; students relished the opportunity to learn, perform, and create music in a vernacular manner because they had little opportunity to do so beforehand despite being involved in institutional music for many years. Researching vernacular music making in higher education (through scholarly texts as well as practical experience) revealed that adding vernacular-style courses in higher education was not only something that benefited the students and community that surrounded the institution on the microcosmic level, but expanded the field of music education as a whole on a macrocosmic level (Caswell & Smith, 2000; Green, 2008).

PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK

A constructivist paradigm or theoretical framework was chosen for the study because of several relevant commonalities between constructivism and vernacular music making; there were vernacular traits that coincide with the constructivist lens. The dismissal of objective knowledge could be seen in the students' original song creations. There was no objective song or idea that the students were told was "the right way," they built their own path; they *constructed* their own musical realities. And since each student constructed their own musical reality, the musical constructs differed as well. Not only were their songs incredibly different from one another, groups would often

have vastly different interpretations of the same song as well. Both vernacular music making and constructivism focus on the active learner, since often times vernacular musicians are extremely motivated and eager to make music, and vernacular musicians are actively engaged with other members and their surroundings (Green, 2002, 2005, 2008). Instead of being told what and how to play by a director, vernacular musicians tend to be more socially operative with other musicians in the group.

Finally, like constructivism, vernacular music making went against the status quo in higher education. This was because vernacular music making had been so rarely included in the higher education curriculum; it did not necessarily reject the current institutional situation, but instead provided a musical option that the status quo could not. Therefore, constructivism and vernacular music making were an appropriate combination, particularly for the purpose of this study.

Constructivism was chosen over other theoretical paradigms (particularly a more positivistic and empirical approach) because there was no single, observable musical reality that could be studied. This study included a combination of my musical realities as experienced in CPCE and PM courses, as well as those of the students. As per the constructivist tenets, I did not assume that my beliefs, depictions, and interpretations to be the *only* or the *correct way* of doing things; I simply felt that constructivism and ethnographic methodology were contextually appropriate for examining the vernacular phenomenon in higher education.

PARTICIPANTS

In order to answer the research questions posed above, I took an in-depth look at young adult musicians and their music-making experiences while enrolled in the CPCE and PM courses, where I served as the sole instructor. The research took place throughout the fall semester of 2012 and the spring semester of 2013. A small number of participants (*N*=23 for Fall, *N*=10 for Spring) were acquired by asking the young adult undergraduates in both the co-requisite courses if they were willing to participate in the study. This convenience sample was drawn locally in a major research university in the southeastern United States.

Because some students did not take two semesters of the courses, the number of students changed between Fall and Spring semesters resulting in a different number of participants. As with any classroom, the day-to-day dynamics changed; some rehearsals only had two students while some of the performances had a full band made up of ten musicians. Thus, the group dynamics changed from day-to-day as well, since at times entire groups would be present and other instances groups would be fragmented. Outside musicians who rehearsed and performed with the group were other university students invited by the students, other music faculty members, other friends of the students, and myself.

The unit of analysis for this study was the cultural group(s) that was formed throughout Fall and Spring semesters. I did not want to conceive of this as a “case study” because the number of students changed between semesters, and also because

conceptualizing two semesters of ethnographic research as a single case or event seemed problematic. As described by Froehlich (2007), an interactionist approach was taken that looked at the micro-level, individuals, as well as the macro-level, larger culture, and the dynamic interaction of both these levels. Due to the multiple levels of analysis and dynamic nature of the participants' culture, it felt more appropriate to envision the research as cultural groups or communities of practice that grew and changed over time rather than as a case study.

The cultural group investigated in this study was neither wholly vernacular nor wholly traditional, since several aspects from both these cultures were present. The participants' musical background was primarily traditional, but some of them had some vernacular music making experiences and during the study they made music in a vernacular fashion. The research took place primarily in the context of institutional higher education courses, but the atmosphere was much more laid back than a traditional music classroom and the research escaped the confines of the School of Music (e.g. online, various locations around campus). Thus, the unit of analysis, the cultural group(s) that formed during CPCE and PM experiences, exhibited both vernacular and traditional cultural characteristics.

The small sample size allowed me to study the participants carefully and comprehensively, but also provided a manageable amount of rich qualitative data (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). The students were selected because of the unique nature of these courses; making music in a vernacular style was rarely the focus of a course in higher education (the study was conducted during the second year these

courses were offered at this university), and music education majors were seldom offered a methods course based on vernacular music making.

The participants were young adult music education majors; Fall 2012 courses had ten males and thirteen females, while Spring 2013 courses had five males and six females. When the group was at its largest, there were four saxophonists, three vocalists, three flutists, two clarinetists, two trumpet players, two trombonists, one percussionist, one euphonium player, one bassoonist, one horn player, one cellist, one violist, and one pianist. The following were basic descriptive statistics of the participants as musicians gathered by other researchers (Randles et al., 2013) who used the CPCE and PM courses to collect data during the Fall semester: the average number of years taking private lessons on their primary instruments was 7.78, with the most being thirteen years and the least being three years; eleven students had composed music in the past, none of them having more than four years experience; only four students had previous experience in a rock band, all of which had less than two years experience; thirteen students had experience playing in a church band; and twelve of the students had previously used computers to make music (p. 38).

Apart from the student participants, two music education faculty members at the university also participated in the study. These professors were chosen principally because of their propinquity to CPCE and PM courses and musicians, while other school of music professors at the university were excluded from the research because they were not “intimate” enough with the courses. One of the faculty members interviewed was the primary instructor during the first year CPCE and PM were offered

at the university. The second faculty member interviewed was included in the research because this professor played a prominent administrative role with regards to the courses. Both faculty members were also well known to the music education majors at the university—they often took pedagogical, academic, and personal interest with the co-requisite courses. Furthermore, this ethnographic study was seeking depth and immersion, not generalization or consensus amongst participants.

ENVIRONMENT

CPCE and PM courses were held (and researched) Monday through Friday during class time that began at 11 a.m., although the study spilled outside of these bounds several times. Discussions and meetings took place outside of class in many settings: online, before or after class during the semester, between Fall and Spring semesters, and well after the Spring 2013 semester.

Throughout the study, the location of the research changed several times because the musical venue changed. Normally, the class met in the late morning during weekdays inside the music education room, which was on the second floor of the university's music building. There were also visits to the composition lab (a computer-filled room next to the music education room) to master and produce music, and performances in the music building (choral rehearsal hall) and other locations on campus (an open field, a mini-amphitheater). The classes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday were normally fifty minutes long; the Tuesday and Thursday classes ran for an

hour and fifteen minutes. I was present for each class meeting except for one day each semester (two total) that were taught by guest instructors. However, many days were longer than the scheduled time, and many times students met to work on musical endeavors outside of class time and outside the classroom.

The duration and location of the research were chosen because of logistical and practical restraints, but also because the university offered one of the United States' only undergraduate courses where students create music in a vernacular fashion and learn about the methodology. Despite the fact that the music education department included in the study could be described as relatively progressive, these courses were only in their second year of existence. The study also took place online; student journals were posted on the course website, student videos were shared and tracked on YouTube, and even Facebook played a role in the course and therefore the research—all served as a sources for data. Thus, research was conducted in an array of physical and virtual locations.

THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

Throughout the course of the study, I had three major aims stemming from three agendas: the research study itself, the teaching assignment given by the university, and making music with the students. For music educators this is rather common, since their job requires them to handle "social," "cultural," "educational," and "musical" commitments; this study added an extra layer of research (Froehlich, 2007). These

three major aims highlighted the tension in the *emic* and *etic* dichotomy because the responsibilities caused me to shift inside and outside of the research in various directions. Although I was fully dedicated to the research, the precedence that was given to these responsibilities went thusly: teaching the students was the main priority, making music with the students came as a close second as an objective, and the research came third. I had several justifications for this order. Mainly, the teacher's primary concern should be student success, in this case making music, so the instructor's focus was to enable and assist student music making. Sometimes teaching would require instruction or leadership by the teacher, other times it required mere assistance or facilitation, and other times it only required for me to play music along with students. A goal of all music teachers should be to increase their students' musicianship, and although the research could eventually do that, I had an immediate duty to do so with the students at that time. Because I was a part of the musical and educational context, I was "integral" to the phenomenon being investigated (Froehlich, 2007).

There was a direct necessity to concentrate on the students not only because of proximity but also because that is part of an instructor's duty; teachers should feel an ethical and moral obligation to offer the best educational experience they can. Finally, the research did not suffer from placing the other roles ahead of it—quite the opposite! If I had not given preference to teaching and making music, the study would have been in vain because the pedagogical approach I was attempting to research would have been neglected. This research study was completely dependent on the students' experience

of vernacular-style music making in higher education. I believe that this experience would have suffered significantly if the research had been placed first (because of the obligation to the students mentioned above, and also because my own experiences of active participation with students greatly expanded the study). Thus, the researcher's role was multifaceted because of teaching and music making responsibilities.

DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected in many ways, leading to a wide range of sources that revealed in-depth qualitative information. Approaching the research like a "data omnivore," I sought varied and diverse data collection because different sources "cast light" onto different aspects of the studied phenomenon (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Patton (2002) used the term "omnibus field strategy" to describe the combination of several sources of data, which was an appropriate description of how different types of data were collected and integrated with each other (p. 265). Sources of data collection were participant observation, field notes, digital photographs, audio and video recordings, participant journals, physical artifacts, and semi-structured interviews. As Barrett (2011) suggested, collection of various types of data was an attempt to gain a better understanding of material culture (objects, artifacts, structures), social culture (institutions, rules, behaviors), and subjective culture (shared ideas, shared knowledge). As mentioned above, data collection strategies were tested and refined through the pilot study conducted prior to this study.

Despite the fact that LeCompte and Schensul suggested 3-4 sources of data collection, there were several reasons why the sources of data used were appropriate for this ethnographic study. Firstly, the grouping or compartmentalization of data sources was not absolute; the photo, audio, and video could all be blanketed under terms like “multimedia” or “audiovisual” data. Placing an arbitrary limit or label on data collection only seemed like it would hamper research. Second, multiple types of sources allowed for a richer and more vibrant description of the music making phenomenon. Third, researching a dynamic and multifaceted experience such as making music required different media to be studied, communicated, and understood properly. Capturing a musical performance with only words tended to fall drastically short of the actual experience. As the saying goes: “writing about music is like dancing about architecture.” Fourthly, sharing and disseminating the data was made more accessible to many because of the assorted media. Instead of a dense and cumbersome academic essay, the researcher could get a point across with a photo, audio, or video recording. Finally, it seemed safer and more rigorous to collect as much data as possible. Not all the data collected must be used, and the researcher ran a greater risk of not answering the research questions with insufficient data.

Participant observation was the primary method of data collection throughout the study. However, the term “participant observation” is a broadly used term since it can imply several methodological approaches, ranging from total involvement to complete detachment on the researcher’s behalf, participant observation was a generalized term. Wolcott (2008) broadly referred to participant observation as a “catch-all label” that

described a “strategy” rather than a specific procedure (pp. 46, 189). According to DeWalt and DeWalt (2011), there was no clear agreed-upon definition of participant observation.

Bernard (2011, p. 260) explained how participant observation can function on multiple levels of research immersion: a “complete observer” had very little interaction with the participants and was observing rather than engaged in experiences; “participant observers” and “observer participants” focused primarily on one role but at times will switch to either observer or participant; the researcher was considered a “complete participant” when completely incorporated in the studied phenomenon. Although I disagreed with a rigid separation of these roles (it was possible for researchers to change roles or fall between roles during a study), I did assume each of Bernard’s roles at some juncture throughout the study. For example, some days I would merely observe the students as they diligently made music on their own (complete observer), other days required varied amounts musical involvement from me blended with different levels of observation (participant observer and observer participant), and many times I was directly involved with the participants’ music making and played a crucial musical role in the groups (complete participant). Multiple continuums of participant observation have been suggested, but all of them seemed to be based on the range of involvement with the studied culture (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011).

Because of the necessity to perform as a teacher and a musician in groups apart from the research obligations, I ran the gamut of participant observation roles; I would say I was given the “luxury” of experiencing complete immersion, objective observation,

and every mixture that lied between. Therefore, this research (like any other ethnographic study) required a great deal of reflexivity on the part of the researcher because of the various levels of involvement that are implied by participant observation. It was necessary for the researcher to take multiple perspectives into account and remain reflexive when inside as well as outside of the field.

Like all other research tools, participant observation had benefits and drawbacks. On the one end of the spectrum, a complete observer could maintain a distance from the studied phenomenon and participants, but the level of immersion was questionable—building rapport and gathering "inside information" was more difficult when distanced from the participants and their experiences. On the other end of the spectrum, a complete participant, immersed in and involved with the studied phenomenon, benefits from direct interaction with participants but runs the risk of losing objectivity and "going native." Nevertheless, it was common for the researcher's level of engagement to change over time during the research process (Patton, 2002).

Reflexivity was paramount in ethnographic research, so observational consistency was sacrificed for various levels of engagement with participants and observation. Furthermore, reflexivity required personal awareness of the researcher's background, strengths, weaknesses, and biases (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). Here Patton (2002) was referring to the general research strategy of participant observation, not to be confused with Bernard's term mentioned in the preceding paragraph: "Thus, the participant observer employs multiple and overlapping data collection strategies: being

fully engaged in experiencing the setting (participation) while at the same time observing and talking with other participants about whatever is happening" (p. 265).

The omnibus field strategy used directly linked participant observation with field notes (Patton, 2002). Field notes were taken whenever the opportunity presented itself. When I was able to sit back and observe detailed and extensive notes were taken. When I was somewhat engaged with the participants, brief and concise notes were quickly jotted down. If I was completely absorbed in the music making or teaching, notes were written afterward based on memory. The notebook in which field notes were written was organized largely in accordance with Spradley's (1979) suggestions for systematizing field notebooks. Dividing the notebook into sections dedicated specifically to "observations" and "interpretations" aided greatly during organization and analysis.

Following Bernard's (2011) suggestions, times and dates were logged in the notebook, and consistent coding was used to record various aspects of the experiences. The various levels of immersion produced vibrant experiences, deep impressions in my mind, and also interpretations of the music making process, all of which were reflected in the field notes—the notes ranged from extremely comprehensive and unedited note taking (Stock, 2004) to brief, practical logs (Bernard, 2011).

All interview and journal questions were formulated using Spradley's (1979) method of formulating "descriptive" (i.e. "please describe…", "could you tell me about…"), "structural" (i.e. "please name some types of...", "what steps/roles exist…"),

and “contrast” questions (i.e. “what is the difference between…”, “what was the best/worst…”). Furthermore, the Patton (2002) and Stock (2004) texts aided in creating and wording open-ended questions used during the study. Interview procedures such as etiquette (observe respectfully, be a good listener), timing, tricks (do not rush, make sure you interview in a careful manner that provides valuable data), etc. were refined using several texts (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011; Patton, 2002; Spradley, 1979; Wolcott, 2008) as well as previous interview experience on my behalf. Due to consultation of these texts and careful preparation, all of the semi-structured interviews were successful in many ways: meticulous planning provided a solid foundation for interviews as well as a “safety net” that could aid me in case the interview went awry, the interview processes were natural and non-intrusive, and finally I was able to collect valuable data that aided in answering the research questions.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted at several points throughout the study. The student interviews were group interviews conducted during the Progressive Methods classes. During these interviews, the seating was arranged in a circle, and all the students and myself would discuss the topic at hand. The interview questions were incorporated with the discussion of the day’s required reading, so there was no overt knowledge of an interview being conducted. For example, while discussing a Caswell and Smith (2000) article about the incorporation of vernacular music in higher education, several questions (including research questions) were asked that were relevant to the reading but to the research study as well. The topics ranged from

theoretical perspectives to specific examples from the courses. The interviews were not recorded; data were collected in the field notebook during group interviews.

Group interviews were useful because they allowed for dialogue and support between participants, lacked the rigidity and formality of a one-on-one interview, and also provided the researcher with responses that would tend to be more socially constructed rather than interviewing an individual participant (which would seem to yield more cognitive constructivist responses). Sometimes the interviews would only last about half an hour, while other times the stimulating conversations would drive discussion through the entire one hour, fifteen minute class time.

The intrusiveness of the interviews was greatly reduced because of many factors. Firstly, students were comfortable because they were in their regular class setting and surrounded by their piers. Secondly, I attempted to establish “equal footing” with the participants by sitting in the circle, lessening the interviewer/interviewee divide. Thirdly, I recorded notes and referred to questions and discussion cues discretely, so that the conversation was the main priority. And finally, the interview questions were hidden amongst other discussion topics and questions that were included as part of the assigned reading. Thus, the students were unaware that they were answering research questions and believed the discussion was merely part of their assigned readings (which it was as well).

Two faculty members were interviewed on a one-on-one, face-to-face basis. These interviews were conducted inside each faculty member’s respective office, with

each interview lasting roughly 45 minutes. The interview questions, although introduced and presented differently (no two interviews are the same) consisted of the same set of questions, formulated in the same manner as explained above. The faculty interviews were conducted after the Spring 2013 semester, nearing the end of data collection. Faculty member interviews were audio recorded using a laptop computer, which allowed me to focus more on the interview process and the participants. These interviews provided a different perspective from that of the students' and my own perspective, which were useful for a few reasons.

Because data were collected from undergraduate students, a graduate assistant teacher/researcher, and faculty members, several parts of the institutional hierarchy were represented. The faculty also had a unique viewpoint during the study: while they are thoroughly concerned about the success of the students and courses, the faculty could not be there for the bulk of the research study. Thus, the faculty members maintained an interested and involved level of participation in the courses, but were distant enough to offer a more objective stance of the overall experience. Furthermore, the opinion of the music education faculty is paramount because for the most part, faculty members would undertake a very active role in the incorporation of vernacular-style learning in higher education (creating courses, forming curriculums, teaching courses, etc.). Finally, the data collected from the faculty interviews offered another point of departure for data triangulation and validity.

Another form of data collection used during the study was student journals. As part of the Progressive Methods course assignments, students were required to write

journal entries that were submitted online. During each semester, eight journal entries were assigned (sixteen total); each had a minimum length of 500 words and no maximum length. The participants were given open-ended questions and roughly a week to submit each of their journals on the course website. Journal questions were formulated in the same manner as the interview questions described above. Much like the data collected in the interviews, the journal topics varied. Some entries were specifically about course texts, others about general theoretical or methodological ideas; pedagogy and reflections on class experiences and procedures were often discussed, and at times the students were merely told to discuss any class related topic of their choice. It should be noted that response rates varied with student journals, among other things such as verbal responses or musical presence.

In order for the students to feel more comfortable, I was the only person able to read the journals and constantly reminded the participants to be as honest as possible, since the greater concern was discussing the vernacular phenomenon as they truly felt about it instead of simply pleasing or agreeing with me. While the group interviews offered a more socially mediated and therefore socially constructed form of data, the student journals were aimed at collecting more cognitive constructivist type of responses. It should also be noted that similar questions or questions probing topics previously discussed were included throughout data collection.

AUDIOVISUAL AND MULTIMEDIA METHODS

Audiovisual and multimedia technologies have proven to be extremely useful tools for ethnographic research. The increase in the simplicity of technology, the increase in the sheer amount of equipment and programs, as well as the increase of affordable and free resources have all made audiovisual and multimedia technologies more accessible for academics, educators, and researchers (Watson, 2011). Undoubtedly technological advances have given rise to exciting new possibilities for research, particularly in detailed and dynamic areas like ethnography (Fetterman, 2010).

Methodologically, “audiovisual” and “multimedia” were umbrella terms that encompassed various technological ways of collecting data such as audio or video recordings, digital photography, laptop computers, smartphones, etc. Recently these terms had been stretched to cover even more terrain; as the number of audiovisual and multimedia technologies increased in types and applications, so technology has taken on a more multifaceted and expansive role in academic research. Although multimedia methods could be seen to complicate the research process because of technical complexities, they also held many possible benefits for collection and analysis of data. Audiovisual and multimedia methods were used a great deal in quantitative research, but the researcher’s main focus was qualitative applications. The depth, detail, and richness that were needed for good qualitative research could be provided by multimedia methods such as audio recording or video recording.

Multimedia tools placed less strain on the researcher's memory (Stock, 2004), so that the researcher was able to accomplish more collection and analysis of data in less time. Since the digital revolution, many multimedia devices have become more capable, portable, sensitive, and accessible, which also has made these tools suitable for sharing and dispersion of data. One could also view this method of data collection as more "raw" and objective since a video recording captured the "scene" more completely than a human, who would be more selective and subjective; data collected should be as raw as possible (Patton, 2002; Stock, 2004). Where humans were fallible, the camera never lied. Furthermore, audiovisual and multimedia methods could be used for part of the research, such as solely during data collection, or could also play a central role throughout the research process by being used during collection, analysis, and dissemination.

As with any methodological approach, there were a few caveats that all researchers kept in mind if they wished to use multimedia technology. First, the researcher must prepare and be familiar with the actual tools and the environment they will be used in. Not knowing how to operate a recording device or traveling to find no source of power can derail a research project. Before collecting any data, the researcher should become familiarized with all the equipment to be used, and also have that equipment tested before using it for any actual research. A range of unexpected problems could occur in the field with regards to complex and sensitive equipment such as: memory cards being filled, batteries dying, lack of Internet access, noisy or disruptive recording environment, and the dreaded "complete meltdown" of fieldwork

gear. Throughout the study, I had backup gear (extra batteries, memory cards, multiple cameras and recorders, pens and notebooks, etc.) as well as backup strategies (various ways of recording audio/video, secondary locations for data collection, designing other means of collecting data in case the equipment fails, etc.). It was crucial to know the equipment, test it, and have contingency plans for multiple adverse situations. Hope for the best, but prepare for the worst! The same could be said for teaching or playing music.

Second, Patton (2002) suggested that technology be used judiciously, so that the researcher's "intrusiveness" could be balanced and the tools used for research were helpful rather than inhibitory. At no point did I feel that the audiovisual or multimedia methods of collecting data inhibited or intruded participant activities. The two faculty interviews were audio recorded using a laptop computer, and were the only instances when participants mentioned the recording technologies in conjunction with research. Because these faculty members had a great deal of experience with regards to research, the intrusiveness of the recording was minimal.

It is also important to remember that ethnographic research involves the representation of people, and a researcher must remember to take be sensitive throughout the entire research process. It is essential to comply with ethical considerations and observe the utmost respect towards participants when collecting and dispersing multimedia data, particularly photographs and video. Throughout the entire study, I had complete control of the data; ethical concerns are discussed more expansively below. Lastly, the equipment used to collect data was merely an extension

of the researcher—the “human instrument” was the ultimate tool in qualitative research. Audiovisual and multimedia tools provided immense help, but it is up to the researcher to utilize them properly (Fetterman, 2010).

Stock (2004) examined at length the concept of “documenting a musical event” using audiovisual and multimedia methods (p. 15). Because music implies something much larger than just physical sounds, audiovisual and multimedia methods assisted in the collection of the enormous amount of data (music, people, experiences, environments) that go along with studying music. Patton (2002) provided a very brief overview of these methods, but focused primarily on the basic audio and video recorder in research. It was surprising to read that both Patton and Stock seemed to view multimedia methods as supplemental to other methods (maybe they would feel differently now). It could be argued that audiovisual and multimedia could be the primary methodology used in ethnographic research.

One example of audiovisual and multimedia methods playing a central methodological role in research was found in Tobin et al. (2009). In this “video-cued ethnography,” the researchers used video recordings in several ways during data collection, analysis, and dissemination. Thus audiovisual and multimedia methods could be the principal methodology or merely supplemental, but either way these methods provided a vivid and lively form of data that is infinitely useful for researchers.

A great deal of audiovisual and multimedia data were collected. Conveniently, a large aspect of both courses was the use of multimedia tools to create and share music,

so the data were collected for course requirements as well as research purposes. Part of the students' class requirements was to video record rehearsals and performances as well as to record and master musical tracks for a course album. The recordings of rehearsals were done roughly every two weeks to demonstrate and document the students' progress. The participants video recorded their own rehearsals or in-class performances, which may have been less intrusive than me recording video, since students were in control of the recording.

I recorded the "official" performances for course purposes (student assessments, for students to view and share, as a successful musical product to show the department and university) and for research purposes as well (collection and analysis of the experiences). During these performances, the video recorder was placed somewhere amongst the audience, making it quite discrete. Although the audio recordings were recorded using multiple musicians for the most part, the editing, production, and mastering was done by individual students. Students used mainly GarageBand to create tracks, but some students chose to use other software.

Audio and video files were transferred and shared through various programs and devices using mostly USB connection and the Internet; a common example was students' recorded tracks being transferred from the classroom computer to me through a USB drive. Internet sites such as YouTube and Google Docs were used to share and discuss information as well. Digital photographs of music making processes, classroom equipment, and the environments encountered were taken with various devices (tablets, phones, computers, and cameras). Furthermore, the research was stretched by the

participants' inclusion of course experiences on social media sites such as Facebook. These online resources served as excellent means for communicating data during all levels of research: "web-based tools are indispensable to ethnographers today" (Fetterman, 2010, p. xi).

Audiovisual and multimedia methods seemed to be an appropriate choice when considering the fact that a large component of the CPCE and PM courses was the use of technological and multimedia tools for the music making process. Not only did these methodologies provide all of their intended benefits (and very few of the drawbacks) described above, they also gave participants an accessible and fun outlet to enhance pedagogical, musical, and research experiences. Thus, the audiovisual and multimedia facets were a fundamental aspect of the research methodology, because they were used so often: the journals, videos, and musical tracks were electronically created and submitted; faculty interviews were recorded using a computer; audiovisual and multimedia tools were used to collect and store the data. Audiovisual and multimedia methods provided great depth and utility throughout the study.

PHYSICAL ARTIFACTS

Lastly, there were physical artifacts collected throughout the study. Two types of physical artifacts were obtained during the research process. Paper documents were the principal artifacts collected; these included written song lyrics, musical scores, flyers, and even drawings. The second type of artifact, an album of the students' original

music was also created and distributed. The album was the final project that ended the semester and was recorded, produced, and professionally made by the students in CD format. Although my original methodological approach did not include collecting physical artifacts (the album was a course requirement more so than a part of the study), these were collected as a good “data omnivore” would do, and they also provided another interesting type of data that arose naturally from the research.

ETHICAL CONCERNS

Throughout collection, the data were managed appropriately to ensure that no ethical concerns arose. Firstly, the participants gave verbal consent to be interviewed and take part in the study. The participants also gave consent to allow the use of the audio and video recordings for research purposes. There were no additional requirements to take part in the research study beyond the necessary course components. Although I did not reveal myself as a researcher constantly throughout the study, the participants were aware that I was conducting a study concerning CPCE and PM courses.

Second, I was in full control of all the data, and while data were collected and stored they was also protected by using passwords, encryption, and not allowing this information to be accessed (virtually or physically) by anyone apart from myself. Finally, vigilant care was taken to collect the data in a manner that did not place the participants at risk; the research posed no risk to the participants apart from those dangers that

would be encountered on a regular daily basis. Since the music making process remained relatively harmless throughout the study, there were no dangers anticipated to the participants, and none arose.

As mentioned above, the students were often unaware that parts of discussions were dedicated to research (although still relevant to course proceedings), and many journal discussions were also directly related to research questions (also relevant to the courses). Although this could be viewed as slight deception, the means in which the data were collected still provided pertinent and stimulating activities the students could benefit from intellectually, academically, and pedagogically. There were no threats to the participants or the validity of the research.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data omnivore tactic described by LeCompte & Schensul (2010) undoubtedly produced a wide range of data for analysis. In total, the following data were collected: about 85 pages of field notes, over 100 videos of rehearsals and performances, 40 photographs, roughly 30 audio recordings ranging from under a minute (tone shaping exercise) to 45 minutes (two faculty interviews), a dozen electronic files (word processing mainly), about 260 pages of participant journal entries, 34 paper documents (set lists, drawings, written music), and one CD. Respectively, the data were collected for the following analytical purposes: to have a consistent record of the overall experience, to record and share musical progress, to have some snapshots

of moments and environments, to have recordings of socially constructed musical tracks, to have socially and individually constructed documents, to have written accounts of participants that favored the cognitive constructivist aims, to have physical items that could be examined, and to have a final musical product that was created completely and solely by the participants.

The unit of analysis, the cultural group(s) that existed during CPCE and PM experiences, was unique in nature. It was unique because there was always change occurring within the culture and amongst participants. In essence the students were being taught a cultural perspective in the courses that many of them had never explored—vernacular music culture. Thus the unit of analysis was dynamic and unique because blending vernacular and traditional cultures resulted in multiple layers and intersections of communities. The same could be expected if one were to examine other cultural groups that existed inside music education (e.g. marching bands, Orff enthusiasts, glee clubs, Edwin Gordon devotees). This study's unit of analysis illustrated the difficulty in solidifying vernacular or traditional cultures; these cultures did not exist in absolute and their boundaries were permeable.

Generally, the field notes served as the best guide for recapitulating the experience as a whole, since it was a daily chronological record that was consistently kept. DeWalt and DeWalt (2011) commented that field notes are "virtually the only way for researchers to record the observation of day-to-day events and behaviors" (p. 157). On the other hand, the experiences of individual students were best summarized by journal entries because they were the most extensive and isolated responses given by

the students regarding their experiences. The electronic files probably provided the least amount of detail with regards to what occurred throughout the research while the videos were vibrant, detailed illustrations of what transpired. It is worth noting that much of the data were not “found” in the typical sense; it was “co-constructed” between researcher and participants during the vernacular music making (Karlsen & Väkevä, 2012). “Co-constructed” refers to the fact that the students and I worked cooperatively and shared values, practices, and products throughout the study (p. xii).

Participant observation served as a means to gather quality data in the field, but also aided in interpretation of the data. Participant observation was a data collection *and* a data analysis tool; as data were simultaneously being collected and analyzed (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). Analysis began with a raw set of data and without a definite analytical approach (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). The data were analyzed recursively, iteratively, and looked at numerous times through a multitude of angles. An interpretive approach that analyzed shared understandings and experiences that occurred during the research was used. As suggested in the existing literature, this involved switching between expected outcomes and actual outcomes (Miles & Huberman, 1994), moving back and forth from particular instances and the overall experience (Spradley, 1979; Wolcott, 2008), and engagement of several levels of data in order to recognize patterns (Patton, 2002; Spradley, 1979; Wolcott, 2008).

The coding that took place during analysis was primarily inductive and emergent although there were some *a priori* ideas that arose from reviewing the literature (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This has been referred to as “open coding,” which let the codes arise

from the data rather than having designated codes before analysis. For instance, there were several ideas that were expressed many times by multiple sources, and eventually the repetition of these ideas became a recurring theme throughout the study. One example of this was creativity. Encouraging creativity was one of the original goals of the courses imagined by the music education faculty before the courses were first implemented. Creativity was constantly being mentioned and demonstrated by the students, and also being observed and recorded by myself. As Patton (2002) suggested, during analysis I was submerged in the data and essentially relived the experiences several times during analysis. Submergence in the data allowed me to compare, contrast, and have a better understanding of all the data points.

Triangulation, collecting different types of data so it reflects multiple perspectives, was accomplished by comparing and contrasting, cross-checking, and cross-evaluating the many kinds of data collected (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). As recommended by Patton (2002), triangulation is not optional when conducting qualitative research. In this study, it was necessary to triangulate more than one source of data in order to provide the depth and richness that ethnographic research is valued for. Furthermore, collecting a wide range of varied data sources increased the validity when attempting to answer the research questions (Bernard, 2011). Redundancy, or data that suggested analogous knowledge, occurred when these various data points led to a similar conclusion. As one could imagine the data showed that several experiences became “redundant” (not to be taken pejoratively), which implied that ideas or experiences that displayed redundancy

were overarching themes of the vernacular music making experience (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

The data analysis phase of the research was recurrent and perpetual. Even though there was a specific chunk of time dedicated strictly to analysis I still analyzed the data prospectively, instantaneously, and retrospectively throughout the course of the research study. The data were analyzed as they were being collected as well as after data collection had concluded. Thus, analysis was a lengthy and demanding process but the time and effort eventually revealed truly amazing information.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, data collection was done with participant observation, interviews, digital photographs, audio and video recordings, participant journals, and physical artifacts. Although most of the data collected was qualitative, some quantitative information was gathered (number of takes, number of songs, number of people/instruments, length of practice, etc.). By collecting different types of data using different sources, I was attempting to use triangulation (data collected from various perspectives) and redundancy (noting data that points to similar knowledge) to maximize validity and answer the broad range of questions posed regarding a phenomenon as complex as vernacular music making in higher education (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). The analysis, which included coding and sorting through the data in as many ways possible, was constant and recursive.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF DATA

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this ethnographic study was to explore vernacular music making in higher education. The divergence between musical cultures that have existed inside of institutions versus those that existed in larger society has been viewed as problematic by many music educators (Jorgensen, 2010; Karlsen & Väkevä, 2012; Kratus, 2007; Swanwick, 1999; Williams, 2011; Woody, 2007). This chapter does not propose any implications or draw any conclusions, it is only meant to present the data as it naturally unfolded. Furthermore, the data presented is not an exact account of what occurred during the research. What is presented below is simply a discussion of a unique and multifaceted experience with vernacular music making in higher education.

This chapter opens with a discussion of how and why the data were organized in the manner that it was. Then, the story of one academic year of vernacular music making in higher education will be told. The plot of the story was forwarded by the major events and experiences that transpired inside and outside the PM and CPCE courses. Finally, the chapter closes by exploring the research questions and research hypotheses posed in chapter one. The questions are answered according to the data

that was collected, and the hypotheses are either confirmed or denied depending on the data that was collected.

ORGANIZATION OF DATA ANALYSIS

Several texts were referenced that aided in the organization and presentation of the data. The main texts mentioned in chapter one as impetuses (Allsup, 2002; Campbell, 1999; Green, 2002, 2005, 2008; Jaffurs, 2004) provided excellent examples of research that assisted in the composition of this study. Thus, this study was shaped through the consultation of existing literature, previous vernacular music making experiences, and taking into account all the data that was collected.

Individuals were not chosen as the unit of analysis because individuals did not represent the entire class, the number of individuals changed between semesters, and also because much of the course and research was reliant upon socialization and group work. The small musical groups that formed were not chosen as the unit of analysis because they were constantly changing members, individuals took on multiple endeavors in multiple groups, and because groups did not represent the entire class.

Most importantly, the experience of vernacular music making in higher education was greater than individuals and groups; it went beyond theory and practice, it stretched the limitations of any possible divide between in-school and out-of-school—it was a culture. Kingsbury (1988, p. 80) described cultural systems as “polysemous” and “polymorphous,” which respectively, mean, “having multiple meanings” and “having or

occurring in many different forms, styles, or stages of development" (Merriam-Webster, 2013). Likewise, the data showed clearly that throughout the academic year the CPCE and PM courses took on multiple meanings and also manifested themselves in different ways. Therefore, this study considered the communities of practice found in CPCE and PM as a unit of analysis.

The research questions and hypotheses were presented and answered below in a straightforward, descriptive fashion. Responses to the questions and hypotheses were presented after the major experiences are recapitulated, since this was how they actually occurred and this was a logical way to present them.

THE STORY

The Courses

The beginning of Fall semester 2012 was hectic: I had just gotten back from a trip to Britain, had only recently been briefed on my teaching assignment, was reeling from successfully defending my comprehensive examination, and class had been cancelled the first day because of a hurricane. The students did not know what to expect from Creative Performance Chamber Ensemble and Progressive Methods, and neither did I. The class had twenty-three students and I was the only instructor whereas the previous class only had five students and I shared teaching responsibility with a

faculty member; that was only the second year the courses had been offered and both students and faculty were still trying to make the courses a success; almost all of the students had little to no experience with vernacular music making.

The room (music education room) in the music building where we met was rare in higher education because it was stocked with fantastic musical equipment. There were six digital audio workstations (DAW) which each contained a computer loaded with music software, mixing board, headphone hub (all the students could plug in and play but the room stayed quiet), amplified speakers (the students could switch over easily so their playing was amplified), guitar amplifiers, MIDI (musical instrument digital interface) keyboard, professional electric keyboard, and an electric drum set. There were several television screens and speakers around the room including a large projection screen in the front of the room, all of which were used to display course ideas, song chords, play songs, or communicate any other information. The room also had traditional amenities such as whiteboards, an overhead projector, seating for lectures, and an upright piano in the front of the room.

There was also a storage room connected to the music education room that housed most of the musical equipment. This room contained guitars (electric, acoustic, classical), bass guitars, extra amplifiers, microphones, stands, headphones, iPads, effects pedals, and various other music making tools (picks, straps, drumsticks, cables, etc.). There were also several childhood music instruments: Orff instruments, glockenspiels, numerous percussion instruments, and recorders of different sizes.

It was important to note that this *was not* a vernacular setting. There was no smoking, no drinking, no fighting, no mosh pits, the volume was limited, and we were all there for educational purposes. We were still in the confines of a university, so it would have been impossible to recreate a vernacular setting like an outdoor music festival. Väkevä (2012) argued that there was no need to replicate the musical experiences that occured in the real world. Anything that was taught in institutions could be considered "formal instruction" (Allsup & Olson, 2012, p. 16). Instead music educators have the opportunity to create new educational and musical realities. It was my responsibility, as the teacher, to "create a classroom culture that allows for and enables musical thinking" (Wiggins, 2011, p. 109). My main obligation as a teacher was to provide the students with an environment and the resources to enable them to create music.

PM was meant to introduce vernacular methods, pedagogies, and theories to students that were "not traditional ensemble pedagogy" as one faculty member described it. Although learning in this course was more structured, there were exploratory activities as well as a teaching element that required the students to incorporate some aspect of vernacular music making. There were also required readings and class discussions. Furthermore, this course served as both a jumping off point for the CPCE course as well as a place to reflect on the music making in CPCE. Part two of the course, which took place during the spring semester of 2013, featured different readings, required each student to teach a 15-20 minute lesson, and obviously discussed different aspects of their music making since it had changed.

CPCE was intended to be a performance-based course that required students to form small groups, learn and create music, and put on three performances per semester. The more administrative faculty member mentioned that CPCE was “an opportunity for students to practice the concepts and ideas learned in the methods course.” Likewise, the other faculty member stated, “CPCE is the performance component of whatever shape PM takes.” The second semester of the course, CPCE part two, was merely a more in-depth version of the course that focused on more specific aspects of music making. The learning procedure and subject matter for both semesters depended on the student, because it was up to each student to decide what they wished to learn and how they wished to learn it.

Humble Beginnings

After getting to know the students and introducing the courses to them, we discussed their research-related assignments which included journals in the PM course, as well as three performances and a final recording project for CPCE. In order to nurture vernacular attributes of the course, the students were allowed to form their own small groups of their choosing, select their instruments, and also pick the songs they played. The only initial guideline I gave was to form groups no greater than five people, which was immediately broken because one of the groups formed with six people. Initially, there were five groups comprised of one group of three members, one group of four members, two groups of five members, and one group of six members.

Early in the course students were taught instrumental basics and introduced to equipment that would be more associated with vernacular music making than traditional music making: guitar, bass guitar, electric keyboard, drum kit, mixers, amplifiers, iPads, recording software, etc. Overall relatively little technique was taught to the students since vernacular music culture emphasizes playing, rather than learning *how* to play as has been the focus in traditional music education; the intention was to make music outright, not learn how to make music (Folkstead, 2005; Karlsen, 2012). The students naturally learned how to make music during the process of actually making music.

As they began working together, there was frustration and reluctance from some because the success they experienced in traditional music making did not translate into the new setting with new instruments: **"**it's frustrating to not do something perfect or for it to be barely passable. It's not a comfort thing, it's just a pride thing." Some discouraged students were seen sitting with their instrument in playing position but not playing it while the rest of the group carried on playing. Rodriguez (2012) also recalled "awkwardness" (which was a word several students in CPCE and PM used) and "hostility" (which was a sentiment felt by some of the traditionally-fixated students) from some of his students when he introduced them to vernacular music making (p. 120).

Other students were overjoyed with the opportunity to play and try out something they had never done before. Eventually the groups began working together, smiles and laughter emerged, and cacophony slowly turned to organized sounds. The students began to discuss theoretical notions such as theory, structure, melody, and harmony; they also used technology to look up songs to play along with and to locate sources that

had notes or chords for the music. I was hoping that the students would learn technical aspects of their musical equipment as they hammered away at the songs together, which many did.

Throughout this entire learning process, I served mainly as a facilitator; I walked around the room observing and listening in on groups, gave technical assistance when needed, provided aesthetic suggestions, and even played along with some of the groups on various instruments. The motivation levels of the students varied, as occurs in any sustained educational situation, but they were all motivated enough to learn music independently, they were focused enough to practice their music, and attentive enough help each other with problems. The first true demonstration of their progress came during an in-class, mock performance given by each group just a couple of weeks into the course. The students were finally able to see and hear what everyone had been busy learning and practicing. This was an impressive display since all the groups performed their entire songs, the students got a sense of solidarity (as a class because they were supportive of their peers and also as individuals because they saw that others were not perfect as well), and they clearly had fun (there was joking, laughing, clapping, applause, and dancing).

The first performance contained all cover songs except one group who chose to create an original song despite not needing to do so. This performance was held outside, in a large grassy open area on the middle of the university campus. Despite the dreadfully hot weather there was a lot of support from the audience that was composed of the students that were not performing, professors, friends of the students, and

random onlookers. The audience was very responsive: they were singing and clapping along, dancing, interacting with the performers with call and return, and truly enjoying themselves.

Although there were times when lack of preparation could be noticed (timing, volume issues, instrumental problems, technical complications), each group successfully performed their songs. Yes, the students made mistakes, but they took them lightheartedly and gracefully. After incorrectly fretting chords while playing guitar someone in the audience shouted “Yeah!” to the performer, who responded with “You made me miss a note!” It was becoming apparent that students were learning to relax and live with imperfections. Students were smiling and laughing, and following the concert some students posted pictures and videos of the performance on Facebook—one student even made it her profile picture.

It was an exciting beginning to vernacular music making for many. One of the students commented during a discussion of the concert, “I’ve never had so much fun performing!” Interestingly enough, the “hit” from the first performance was the original composition. I also experienced a great deal of enjoyment playing a guitar solo on the original piece and drums on “Beat It” (Jackson, 1983).

A Dynamic Process

The guidelines for the second performance required one cover song and one original composition from each group. Very quickly, two of the groups joined together as

everyone began to decide what and how they were going to play for the second show. While some groups worked diligently and efficiently, other groups struggled to come to an agreement as to what and how to play. Furthermore, even the industrious groups had their moments of down time that involved jamming, talking, or relaxing. In an attempt to recreate the vernacular setting in the higher education environment, I did not correct groups when they seemed off course until it became apparent they had lost motivation.

As the students learned, practiced, and composed songs, one group was having issues communicating and agreeing. They could not decide on what song to cover, and had not even begun writing their original piece. It was more than obvious tensions were mounting amongst group members. One day, disagreement, argument, and crying ensued and the group decided to break up after voting 3-2. The two that voted in favor of the group staying together was a young couple, which ended up forming their own group. Despite the tension, all the individuals involved eventually got over the split and began focusing on making music.

Other groups had issues as well. One group was successful in making music, but could not stick to the same song. This group rehearsed several “extra” songs that they would learn half of during a class, and never revisited them. Although this detracted valuable time from the group, this is common practice in vernacular settings. In the end, it did not seem to affect the group since they enjoyed what they were doing, and they eventually learned and performed the required pieces. Another group practiced “Dream On” (1973) as played by Aerosmith, which was a difficult song for beginners to tackle.

This group practiced the song numerous times and even performed during an in-class performance. Despite ongoing attempts to learn the song, they were not happy with the outcome of their work and decided to scrap the project. Strangely, this group had few problems writing the original composition for the second show, which they did not allow me to hear until the dress rehearsal because it was “a surprise.” Preparation for the second performance was hounded primarily by social struggles, while getting prepared for the first concert had more technical difficulties. The students still overcame any problems and successfully held a dress rehearsal before the show.

Another obstacle that had arisen was the teaching requirement for the PM course. Some of the students had gone out and taught at schools using tools they had learned in the course; the lesson plans they submitted focused on instrumentation, improvisation, and student-centered learning. However, other students’ schedules had not allowed for an opening, and I was also having problems setting up times with the outside teachers. It became apparent that it was not likely that all of the students would make it out into the classrooms.

The second show began with problems of its own. The original outdoor venue (the first venue we played at) we had planned to perform at had no power. Without power, the multitude of electric equipment we needed to use was rendered useless. So after wheeling three large, fully loaded carts worth of equipment out to the venue, we moved everything back to the school of music and played in the choral rehearsal hall. Some students enjoyed playing in this venue because it was a more familiar atmosphere, because being in the school of music brought more of their peers to the

show, and also because the acoustics were the best of all the venues the students performed at. Other students disliked playing in the school of music because it was more confined, reminded them of the rigidity of traditional musical performance, and did not have the exciting feeling of playing outdoors.

Timing was the worst for this performance, simply because we started extremely late and also averaged around five minutes wait between songs because different groups had to set up differently. Unlike the first performance, the entire audience was sitting down which created a sense of expectation for the audience. There were definitely moments when the audience could have felt awkward or confused by the performance. One such moment was after one of the original pieces, a spooky, abstract piece inspired by Halloween, ended. The audience was silent. One of the performers ended the uncomfortable moment by posing with a smile and declaring: “Song!” The entire choral rehearsal room burst with laughter and applause. There was much room for improvement in logistical execution and instrumental performance, but as one student mentioned during a class discussion after the performance: “as long as we enjoyed what we were played, who cares.”

Despite the hardships, the second concert was performed successfully and had several highlights. The crowd turnout was better than the first performance and included students who were not performing, friends, curious music faculty members, and even family members (one student’s mom and younger sisters came). One group dressed up to perform both their songs; one song was played in marching band attire and for their original piece they all wore red because the song was a “mash-up” of songs about fire.

There were people (including myself) dancing to the music with streamers and a diverse mixture of pieces. For me, one of the most touching parts of the performances happened when the group who had prepared a surprise song finally performed; the song was written about me. It poked fun at some of the personal things I had shared with the students, such as not liking raw cheese, and also gave me some praise as a teacher. The first line of the song, and also the first line of the final verse stated (I had told them to call me by my first name as would be done in a vernacular setting): “Hey Victor, you’re the best professor that we ever had.” Not only were the lyrics and song incredibly touching, the students allowed me to improvise a verse and play a guitar solo. It was truly one of the most magical moments in my teaching career.

The students were more comfortable during this show, and openly admitted having fun and improving since the first concert. Once again, many favored this type of performance over traditional concerts: “I felt that the audience was very supportive. Mistakes were more than tolerated, if not welcome. The atmosphere was conducive for fun, as opposed to for professional music-making.” Even though there were technical and musical struggles, the students felt pleasure with their work and were socially engaging with their music as well: “I also felt a lot of pride and ownership in what we were doing. I wasn’t embarrassed by our product and wanted to share it with others.”

Closing the First Semester

For the final concert I thought it would be a good idea to change the members of all the musical ensembles in the CPCE course. Although the groups were dynamic in their instrumentation and members, and they successfully made music, each group had troubles of some kind. Some students were unhappy about the difference of group sizes, and others expressed that the groups were becoming too much like cliques. In response I held a class discussion where the students discussed the types of songs, based on genre, they would like to perform and enlisted based on interest. For most it was a stimulating concept but a couple students dissented against the idea. Of course there was disagreement but eventually the students were able to settle on the songs and group members.

The subsequent groups agreed to perform a ska song, an electronic piece, a combination of gypsy of and Celtic songs, and a hip-hop song. Because I did not want to completely break up the more musically effective groups, my resulting decision was for the final show to feature one original song from each of the groups that performed in the second show and one original song from each of the newly formed groups. Eventually the class began to refer to the new groups as “Groups 2.0”—the students agreed that “secondary groups” sounded depreciatory.

It should also be mentioned that during the fall semester of 2012, a group of researchers (Randles et al., 2013) took interest in the CPCE and PM courses and conducted a study using the students from the courses as participants. The study

concentrated on measuring creativity in pre-service teachers, and also helped provide some quantitative information collected from the students. Although this procedure disrupted their course-related music making for a couple of days, I was more than happy to oblige because the students and myself were eager and pleased to see there was curiosity regarding CPCE and PM.

Preparation for the final show was demanding and multifarious. Among their many other responsibilities (the undergraduate music education degree is highly demanding) each student had to take part in a finished recording, practice with two different groups, write a final paper for the methods course, and prepare for the final concert. Some days were reserved for the old groups, some days were set for new groups, and other days required intermittent silence so that students could record. Many times the day's events would be planned by quickly discussing with the students at the beginning of class what they needed to do, and prioritizing those needs.

During the preparation for the end of the semester there were still additional endeavors that were unnecessary to the student's academic responsibilities, but were pursued simply because of musical curiosity and enjoyment. On a day when the majority of a group was absent, the two remaining members decided to learn, play, and record a song just for fun. Towards the end of the semester when the students' stress level was rising, they wanted to "take a break" from everything and relax making music. That day the entire class got out traditional instruments, Orff instruments, and the CPCE instruments and simply "jammed out." While a traditionally based music teacher would

probably not appreciate divergent and seemingly off-topic activities, these types of behaviors were common in my vernacular music making experiences.

The varied musical undertakings required adjustments to be made so that everyone's needs were fulfilled. For example, the ska piece had a significant number of acoustic instruments. So even though the headphone hubs allowed for all the groups to make music simultaneously with electric and digital instruments, the presence of several brass instruments was insurmountable. This created some conflicts as one student mentioned "getting shit-eating looks" from his peers because of his group's volume. I accommodated the students' needs by setting some students up in a practice room to rehearse and also allowed students to use my office to record and master. If groups with absent members needed to rehearse or record a part, I would fill in. Slowly but surely, the students fulfilled their responsibilities and prepared for the final CPCE performance of the Fall 2012 semester.

In preparation for the final performance, I scouted out several new locations and settled on a mini amphitheater that was just outside of the school of music. This afforded us the luxury of being close to the school of music so other colleagues could attend. The proximity was also beneficial in case the students had forgotten something in the classroom. For every show I had the groups compile lists of the equipment they were using beforehand, but items were still left out and other times equipment would not work. Although the new venue did not have as many random people walking by as the first venue, it was still a very pleasant outdoor location. Along with all the equipment, the students and I set up chairs prior to the show so audience members could sit down.

The students successfully played the last show enthusiastically and with more confidence than any of the earlier performances. The concert had audience members swinging and swaying, “freak” dancing, singing along, laughing, and applauding. At one point, the students were arm-in-arm swaying along with one of the songs, and I joined them. One of the most perfect photographs taken during data collection came when several of the students and I, still swaying together, looked over at a faculty member and he smiled along with us. The hip-hop piece, titled “Composer’s Bitches,” was about the romantic lives of composers and rapped in chronological order by alternating group members. This piece featured traditional, electric, and digital instrumentation; it exemplified creativity, was highly informative, challenged the boundaries of traditional and vernacular, and got the performers and crowd hyped up. One audience member can be heard on the video commenting: “That was awesome!”

The musicians also had a great deal of fun with the final performance. Many of the students had incorporated their own lives into their compositions. The songs provided examples of students who referenced their difficulties with school, commented on the CPCE and PM courses, discussed a failed romance, and considered their ethnic backgrounds. There was Facebook activity sharing videos, pictures, and dialogue from the students and their friends immediately following the show. Once again a student made a photograph from a CPCE concert into his profile picture.

The concert was a fantastic ending to the semester because students left after a great performance with giant grins on their faces. After the show, students still responded to journal entries regarding the courses and continued to visit the music

education room to finish recording and mastering songs. During finals week I was in the room assisting students with their work and jammed with some of them as well. Students recorded, edited, mastered, and produced a total of seven tracks. There were many growing and learning experiences for the students to embrace, if willing, throughout the first semester as one student noted: “Perhaps my most favorite part of the class was watching so many people grow to embrace and enjoy the creative process as the semester progressed--- one could look around the room and see a lot of smiles.”

Looking Forwards and Backwards: Comparison Between the Two Semesters

The biggest difference between the two semesters was undoubtedly class size. As the instructor, I was affected by this change in many ways, almost all of them positive. The smaller class was more manageable, allowed me to have more time with each of the individual students and groups, reduced logistical concerns, contained fewer malcontents, and overall was more “tightly-knit” as an entire class. Some downsides to the second semester were losing valuable members of the class and not being able to bring vernacular music making to as many students as before. Many of the students noticed the presence of negative-minded individuals who were “stubborn” or approached the courses with a “condescending” attitude. After a few weeks in the second semester, one student noted:

"There was a certain level of apathy and even aggravation regarding the music making process that came from certain groups and group members during last semester's class. The smaller class on the other hand has developed a sense of camaraderie and cooperation amongst the students that was not present in the previous semester's class. Needless to say, the dynamic of this class has improved the level of productivity this year."

Some of the students were "happy" that some of their peers had left because the class would be less "isolated" (which was a reference to the "clique-like" culture of the class at times), and others expressed sadness (only one student stayed out of the young couple from the group that had broken up in the first semester). Nevertheless, the spring 2013 classes had a more comfortable and confident outlook on vernacular music making. The students' past experiences and the new, smaller dynamic of the class made them optimistic towards their musical and educational success. When they discussed their outlooks for parts two of both the courses, the students expected the music making to get easier, more efficient, and more enjoyable. I expected things to go more smoothly as well.

Concern was also voiced regarding whether CPCE and PM merited being two-semester courses. Some students believed that because of their many other requirements for the undergraduate degree (other courses, teaching responsibilities, recitals, juries, etc.), it was not prudent to require two semesters of the course. The experiences during the second semester would change the minds of those skeptics. As expressed by one student: "To be completely honest, at times I have felt like this course

set should only be required for one semester. But, as I look back and reflect on what I know, and how comfortable I feel now with the equipment, I am so glad that it was required for two." Discussion of the two-semester long layout is continued towards the end of the "story" section.

While the first semester was meant as an introduction to vernacular music making and its environment, the second semester went more in-depth into vernacular methodology and practice. More was expected of the students during the second semester, and in turn the students expected more from the second semester.

A Fresh Start

As mentioned above the second semester began with optimism and enthusiasm for the students and myself because of our past experiences together, but also because the new semester was an opportunity for a fresh start. The research-related requirements for PM were student journals like those required in the first semester and instructional units where each student instructed the PM class with a brief lesson; this was done because of the scheduling difficulty experienced with the first semester's out-of-class teaching requirements. CPCE2 required three performances during the semester, an original song written and performed by each student, and a fully produced recording from each student at the end of the semester.

After a few days of introduction and general exercises, the class discussed ideas for the first performance. There was some bickering and dissatisfaction, although not as

spiteful as the first semester, as it was obvious that the students all had drastically different conceptions of what to do with the first concert. Some discussed genre, some mentioned style, and several people including myself played examples for the class. Eventually, a theme emerged that seemed to please everyone: songs from video games. Once this theme was set, the students shot into their groups and began working. The end of the first week and the end of the second week were interrupted by events that took place at the university, respectively, a music education conference and a two day visit from community college students and faculty. The events took almost an entire week's time from the schedule.

The students learned the video game songs in several ways: trial and error, online chords or tabs, sheet music, listening to examples, and assistance from me. While some of the students attempted to recreate the original piece, other students changed the instrumentation, mood, or structure of the song. One student turned the end of her piece into a metal song, accompanied by two other students improvising lyrics and myself on guitar. Another student simply loved the tone of the original song and tried, rather successfully, to reconstruct it as closely as possible. Students worked together and were grateful for their classmates' efforts. It was not uncommon to hear phrases like "Thanks for writing the part out for me!" and "*Heck yeah* I'll play with you guys!"

The students worked meticulously as they learned the songs and worked on their tone-shaping assignment. One day in the field notes I wrote down: "four students came to the classroom before me and six were early to class, this never would have

happened last semester." I was astounded because the first semester the class would hesitantly show up either right before class or fashionably late, and now the students had grown accustomed to and fond of vernacular music making. An in-class performance of the songs demonstrated a classroom that was more relaxed and cheerful than the first semester. This was echoed by one of the students during the dress rehearsal for the first show: "there's so much less disagreement."

Highs and Lows

The video game show was an electrifying spectacle because it featured unique music, an ordered and edited video of the games that music was taken from displayed on a large screen (created by one of the students), and was played at the mini-amphitheater outside of the school of music where the previous concert was held. The crowd turnout was not as good; the spring semester class was not as large as the fall semester class, which reduced the audience size. Still, this first concert was creative, used other forms of multimedia, and pleased the audience and performers. However, the second show was not as successful, ending the trend of improving performances each time.

Before it was even put into motion, the second show was rushed. On the syllabus I had set the concert date to be right before spring break, which gave the students a month to prepare for it. Furthermore the second concert was overly ambitions. The class never had a shortage of ideas, and as we prepared for the second show a

multitude of suggestions emerged. The students named and agreed upon several different songs, and also a recreation of “Willy Wonka” which included several songs from the film and acting sequences. A loosely written script was also created on a web-based word processing document where students could access and edit information. It should have been clear to me as that teacher that this was too ambitious, but the students voiced eagerness and showed resolve when they began working on the songs.

There were entire days when the whole class had to work on the Willy Wonka pieces because of instrumental and acting responsibilities. Often times these days were slow because the parts were unclear and students had difficulties learning the pieces due to lack of online resources. Still, the students pressed on and attempted to balance their instructional units, performance obligations, and any outside duties. As the second performance began to loom, students felt the pressure and began to question the likelihood of a show being put on successfully.

The instructional units were very positive. Not only did the student teachers do an amazing job incorporating theory, practice, and equipment from the CPCE2 and PM2 courses, but also the class really enjoyed the exercises that the students created. The lesson plans spanned the K-12 levels, and also included one lesson plan for higher education. Just to give some examples the lesson plans included creating a rap using only vocals and loop pedals, using recording software to create a soundtrack for your favorite character from a story, an elementary school music game show, and a lecture-based presentation on the history of the drum corps.

The Monday before the show, it was apparent that the class was not ready to put on the performance we had planned. Some students were clearly stressed out because of midterm examinations and various other issues. A few had mentioned being concerned about the second concert. As a result, I decided to have the second show in the music education classroom and told the students that the concert would be as informal as any one of the previous in-class demonstrations of songs. Watson (2011) called this type of in-class performance an “informance,” which was an apt description of the second show (p. 100). The students drew a collective sigh of relief, and put together what they had for the second concert.

Although the second concert had a laid-back atmosphere, the actual performance was below the usual standards. It was apparent that many songs had not received enough attention. The Willy Wonka songs were played with no actors, and with the chords and lyrics projected on the screens around the class so that students could follow along. Frustration from lack of preparedness caused one student to become upset and have an outburst after finishing his song; he commented on having to work on other peoples’ songs, while he was unable to practice his. “I had to say it,” he said with resolution. He was right. The organization had fallen apart between the first and second shows. As mentioned before, it was simply too ambitious for the time provided.

There were some shining moments during the second performance. Although there was no implied intent of inviting an audience, five students showed up including two students from the previous semester. For the first time, musicians from outside the class performed with a class member. The piece they played was Metallica’s “Nothing

Else Matters" (1991), except the piece was played on four cellos. This was a brilliant performance whose near-perfect execution left the entire room speechless.

Nearing the End

After spring break several students were early to class, and were already jamming out together when the class started. The objectives were clear: each student had to write and perform one original song alone, record and master their own musical track, and perform a song in the final concert. In theory, the students could accomplish all three tasks with one song, but almost all of them worked on supplementary material, and all of them aided other students with their songs and recordings.

As experienced before in CPCE and PM, there was a sense of setting priorities between the students and planning daily activities around necessity. Until the end of the semester, the work was varied. Some days students were alone at computers writing lyrics or mastering tracks, other days students would form groups and practice, and some days the students who felt more comfortable with their pieces relaxed and "jammed out." Despite the varied tasks that took place, there was vigorous practice and increased effort levels as the semester went on. It was not uncommon to see students working on music well before and well after class time. The high expectations of the final show and the ownership the students felt over their music motivated them to work very hard until their duties were done.

One of the most noteworthy experiences during the CPCE2 and PM2 courses was the songwriting requirement. The diversity of vernacular process and product shone through the most with this project. The subject matter chosen for the songs included lost love, a burnt car, a whimsical song about coffee, religion, and sailing. Each student went through the writing process differently. Some songs began with a feeling, some with a chord structure, others with a melody, and some based on instrumentation. While some students found it easier to write alone, others mentioned that jamming out with their peers “sparked creativity.”

When each student in class finally performed his or her song, each revealed a unique, impressive, and truthful piece the student had written. I was the first to perform, and played a song that I had written a few months beforehand for the class. The students were extremely supportive during the performance of these pieces, and responded by saying such things as “I loved how different they all were” and “each song tells a story and shows some background about the person who wrote it, which makes the songs personal and sentimental.” One student introduced his song by explaining how it helped him cope with stress from his life, and how good it felt to practice. Another student discussed that her song, which had taken a year to write (she had begun it before she took the course), was dedicated to her brother who was serving in the military; her brother eventually saw the video and heard the song. Comparing the songwriting experience to traditional music making, one student noted the unique and vibrant nature of having students write songs. The student mentioned that she would

rather write and perform original music because (referring to Bach and Beethoven): “there’s been 200 years of people playing that stuff.”

For the students and as well as for me, the songwriting was an incredible experience. Sharing was “revealing,” as one student described it. As a result, the entire class grew closer. A student noted: “We have a certain dynamic about us that is uplifting. We have a bunch of good personalities in our group that allows us to be successful, fun, and entertaining. Our learning time is full of laughter and talk. We manage to get our work done and put on a final project that is truly something to be appreciated. My group has successfully worked together over this semester and I wouldn’t trade members for anything.”

The End of a Journey

More preparation went into the final concert than any other performance. The entire week up until the Thursday performance was dedicated to rehearsing the show, which included a dress rehearsal on Wednesday. The students and I expected to play the best show thus far, and everyone seemed mentally and technically prepared to do so. Several students got there early, and for the first time, we were able to have a genuine sound check. The venue was the area outside the music building used for the final concert of the first semester and the first concert of the second semester. Although the class was set up and ready to play on time, the audience did not begin to arrive until about fifteen minutes after the proposed starting time. The students and I filled this time

by jamming out a bit, which spontaneously progressed to an impromptu performance improvised by one of the students.

It was a beautiful sunny day as colleagues, friends, and family came to see the last CPCE2 concert from the 2012-2013 academic year. As in every other show, there was smiling, laughing, and dancing throughout the concert. The lineup for this concert was all original pieces, and all of them were executed successfully. For the first time in any of the shows the students were willing and eager to discuss the songs they had written over the microphone. The show was diverse and captivating. There were passionate and serious songs as well as whimsical and playful songs. During the song about sailors one of the students was “thrown overboard,” and a song about coffee with heavy sexual innuendoes brought laughter and cheers. Another student and I danced and played castanets while a group played a song that ended similarly to a tango. When one of the more reserved students rapped his original song, an audience member remarked: “Well, now I’ve seen it all.”

The final song was titled “A Memoir of Progressive Methods” and was an overtly sentimental piece with two vocalists. One vocalist simply talked and pointed out every member of the class, rhyming their name and stating a positive quality about that person, while the other vocalist sang parts of what was being said in a blatantly sentimental R&B manner. After a brief instrumental introduction, a student emerged from the field behind the audience, wearing a microphone headset, singing, and playing recorder with his mouth and nose. As the song came to a close, the vocalist who was

talking said: “I don’t want to end it.” Although many of the students were ready for the end of the course work, they did not want the music making to end.

The final shows were most of the students’ favorite for both semesters, and the last show of the second semester was the favorite overall. Many students attributed that to the creation of the originally written songs. Nevertheless, the final CPCE2 concert was given successfully, and everyone involved with it left happy. While the venue was being cleaned up, the students collectively shouted, “We love you, Victor!” This moment was also one of the most noteworthy experiences of my entire teaching career.

The second semester ended much like the first one: with students scrambling to finish recording, mastering, and producing their tracks for the assigned class CD. I went to the music education room throughout finals week, since I wanted to ensure the students had access to any resources they needed, and also because I was playing in a few of the recordings. Every student in the class made it into the music education room during finals week, and I provided assistance and support for those who needed them.

Looking Back in the Students’ Words

There were trials and tribulations throughout the academic year that I taught CPCE and PM. However, the students and myself learned from the hardships and failures. Even with all the problems, music was still made successfully using a vernacular music making approach. Furthermore, the successes shone far brighter than the failures.

By the end of the second semester it was clear that the courses warranted a two-semester enrollment because the students continued to learn and grow. I noticed, along with some of the students, that the second semester was more productive than the first: “Last semester we just talked, this time we run it and have repetitions” said one. One of the originally skeptical students in the course, as well as a skeptic of two-semester enrollment wrote in his journal after the full year was over: “All in all, this course over these past two semesters has made us a better-rounded educator for when we go out into the field and teach, and I feel bad for all those who skipped out of the class, because they missed out on an experience of a lifetime.” Another student discussed her own musical growth as well as that of the class: “And from what I have seen, the people who stuck with the class have all become better musicians, both in our traditional sense and the vernacular sense.” One of the faculty members mentioned that two semesters was not enough, and the other one stated: “The second semester is really when you saw people coming out of their shell…It seems like they really turn it on the second semester.”

After taking the courses, students mentioned improvement in many areas including overall musicianship (vernacular and traditional), musical skills (aural skills, expertise with digital technology and vernacular instruments), increased confidence (musical and pedagogical), and levels of creativity (performing, composing, improvising). Furthermore, the students’ minds had been opened to a new world of possibilities they had never considered. This was extremely important from an educational stance because CPCE and PM were meant to make students critically

examine “conventions and static role behaviors that cement society as it is” (Froehlich, 2007, p. 95). Below I have provided some quotations from students in both semesters expressing how CPCE and PM affected them.

“I’m not going to lie, at first this course made me uncomfortable to the point that I did not want to attend class. After a few weeks of learning the different instruments and opening up to the idea of vernacular music, I absolutely loved the music making process. I have always been a classically trained musician and it was really hard for me to get out of my box. Throughout the course of the semester I finally learned how to “jam” and just play what I feel. I feel as if it has opened up my eyes to a whole new level of music and I couldn’t be happier.” (First semester)

“Despite the fact that we were all very different, everyone was still excited about exploring and creating music.” (First semester)

“[With regards to CPCE] …it’s doing incredibly well. I hear students talking about it.” (Faculty member)

“This class has opened up so many doors for me and has also made me a much more open-minded and well-rounded musician. I feel as though I will understand other students when they say that they might be interested in different music styles than what I have to offer as a teacher, and I will now know exactly how to handle that, and if I were able to I would offer courses for many different styles of music so every student has an outlet.” (Second semester)

“The music making in this course makes me feel untouchable. Even if I'm having a terrible day, making music in the class lets me release and puts me in a better place.” (First semester)

“…one of the most positive experiences of my college career…this class made music fun for me again.” (Second semester)

“…makes me feel free from stresses of everyday life.” (First semester)

“I feel that I'm a black sheep at times and that it is very hard for me to relate to my peers- this makes sharing my lyrics or music kind of stressful at times. Now, I've developed an attitude of "this is me. Take it or leave it, but I don't care. I love it!" It's less worrying about what others think and being more excited about taking risks.” (First semester)

“I wasn’t thrilled about vernacular music making only because traditional music making has been the biggest part of my life. But after taking the time to understand it and reading various articles on vernacular musicianship, I’ve come to understand what an amazing process it is for musicians and how it needs to be incorporated into schools…It was easily my favorite class I’ve ever taken and I’m glad I learned how to truly make music.” (Second semester)

“it’s the most interested I have ever been in a college course in my life, to be honest. (I’m not sure if I should be happy about that statement or if I should be concerned, but it is what it is.) :)” (First semester)

“Everyday is a creative day, I always learn something new even if it is a basic chord that I didn't know. It is all about exploration of the music and learning about how to release yourself into the music.” (First semester)

“This class has been, and will continue to be something very special to me in my education and I can’t *stress* that enough.” (Second semester)

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Research Questions

The first research question of three (all in bold) could be considered a descriptive question: **How do musicians in an academic environment learn and create music in vernacular music making cultures and how is musical knowledge represented, communicated, and passed on while making music?**

A typical day in CPCE began with me arriving early, opening up the storage room, and setting up equipment so students could access it easer. Before class, I would either play music on the speakers, or jam out by myself or with students who came early. Class sometimes started with a quick discussion or instructions from me. If there was nothing to discuss, the groups would begin setting up their workstation and begin playing music. When the groups were making music there were spurts of discussion, and even tangents where individuals left to accomplish other things. After playing,

practicing, and discussing, the groups would clean up their workstations. During the entire time, I would either observe the music making, listen in or help groups, or play along with one of the groups.

Often times students created music through trial and error; this was not only observed by me but also constantly mentioned by the students. Learning and playing music in the vernacular manner required increased levels of experimentation and, in a student's words, "on the fly" learning. This included playing along with audio tracks and learning the songs by ear, or jumping into a group not knowing what they were playing and figuring the song out spontaneously.

Musical knowledge was represented in a pragmatic manner throughout the course of the study; students utilized whatever means necessary to symbolize musical actions. This included oral descriptions, aural examples, notation (traditional and tablature), and other written directions. The musical knowledge was communicated primarily between group members, but also obtained from outside sources such as the Internet. As an instructor, I provided guidance and shared my musical knowledge with students. My facilitation of student music making was generally on an individual or small group basis. One student wrote in her journal with regards to the various sources referenced for musical knowledge: "We are referring to ourselves, our teacher, the Internet, and past experiences for help."

The method of communicating musical knowledge depended on multiple variables such as group members, song difficulty, familiarity with the piece, and overall

context. Because each context was different, the mode of communication (aural, visual, kinesthetic, etc.) changed along with the context. Since music was a social behavior, much of the communication and interaction occurred between the students (Davidson, 2004). The primary method of communicating was peer instruction or directions. Sometimes students would discuss or share, other times students would give each other imperative commands: “Use the distortion on there, it sounded cool.” Students also asked their group members their opinions: “How do you want the guitar chord? Low? High?” They were grateful for help from their peers: “Thanks for teaching me bass!” Technology also aided in communicating musical ideas: students were frequently going online to look up examples of music or chords for songs and also sharing information regarding the songs online via email, YouTube, and Facebook.

Some students also developed a “feel” for vernacular music making, where almost no direct communication was used because it was not needed. “Because music is an outward sign of communication, and communication can be achieved with or without audible or visible signals, the inner meaning of a piece of music can sometimes be grasped intuitively” (Blacking, 1995, p. 31).

Once the music had been made there were several ways for the class to publicize it. The performances provided a live venue for the community to watch the CPCE members play live. Videos were posted on YouTube, where those who were given a link could access it. The most watched video from the courses was seen at least 147 times. There were also audio tracks recorded and a CD made. The CD was given

to students after the spring semester. Facebook also served as a platform for discussions, pictures, and videos related to CPCE and PM.

The second research question was comparative: **How do vernacular musical experiences in an academic environment differ from musical experiences found in traditional music classroom settings?**

It was more than apparent that the vernacular experience that took place during the research was an extreme departure from anything the students had ever done in a traditional setting. As one student noted, it was “completely unlike anything I’ve ever done in music before.” The students mentioned several ways in which vernacular music making differed from their traditional backgrounds.

The increased amount of creativity required by vernacular music making, compared to the little creativity required in traditional music making, was noticed by the students and by me; in the words of one student: “We get to make creative decisions about each other's parts and apply our own style to each instrument, which is not something I would normally do with classical music.” It made me somewhat sad to hear from students that traditional music education had not provided them with some critical aspects of musicianship that were provided in only one semester (Fall 2012) of vernacular music making: “It is all from what I come up with or what my group comes up with. Working in a group where you all have equal voices and are able to make creative decisions is amazing; you don’t get that opportunity in a traditional band or choir class.”

The faculty members noted the student agency exhibited in CPCE and PM as the most significant difference between those courses and traditional music courses. This was described as a “bottom-up,” “student-centered” approach to making music where process and product were “emergent.” The faculty members also stated that the creative component of the courses allowed the students to be “creative artists,” rather than being told what and how to play. The students noted the presence of having agency within the classroom. Their journals included statements like: “For once, the responsibility for getting of the ideas together really lies on the students” and “In ensembles I’ve done in school, communication was important but extremely one-sided.” Unlike traditional music education, CPCE and PM courses were shaped by the students’ pedagogical, aesthetic, and musical decisions.

One very noteworthy trait that was exhibited by students during the vernacular music process was an acceptance of errors and a more laid-back approach to music making. As Kingsbury (1988) observed in conservatories, there was a great deal of judgment and critique. The School of Music at the university had a similar reputation to conservatories according to the students’ and my own encounters. In the first semester, a girl felt relieved over not having to play flawlessly: “For once, I feel as though it's okay to not be perfect at something. And it feels GREAT…It is mentally tolling to have to constantly be worry about every note you play.” Another student compared the heavily peer-involved experiences of vernacular music making to the judgmental nature of traditional music education: “Making music with my peers is much more enlightening to me since I don't feel the pressure of being judged by someone that is better than me. I

like feeling like we are all at the same level and we can all trade off teaching each other and being leaders, so we can all have the best learning experience possible." Yet another student mentioned the extreme pressure encountered in the traditional setting: "At times in the school I am scared to make music because of some opinions of the teachers and other students but this class say "It is okay". It is okay to make a mistake it is okay to try something different and I love it!"

Students clearly had been taught things that were detrimental to their creativity and confidence: "Since my first interactions with music, I had always wanted to make my own music and just to play music that was fun and musical but did not need to be perfect. However, I came to think that this kind of music making might be a bad thing because of what I was being taught through the years." One particular statement made by a student shocked me, because this student was so used to following musical "rules," she actually believed that music had rules: "Students can explore their abilities best this way since the 'rules' of the performance are not really applied in this situation." When a student wrote, "I've never had to improvise, ever," I was blown away. I could not believe that an undergraduate music education major that was about to graduate had never improvised. This was hugely disappointing because this student was clearly done a disservice by traditional music education. Apart from it being one of NAfME's (2013) standards for music education improvisation is a fun, exciting, and important part of music.

In the end, some of the students made philosophical breakthroughs that helped them realize that the CPCE and PM courses were not intended to erase traditional

music education or to force students to start rock bands. The point was to find ways to improve the educational process as a whole and to provide as many musical experiences as possible. One student in the first semester realized that the pedagogical methods used in CPCE and PM could be applied in traditional band, choir, and orchestra. During a discussion in class she voiced that traditional music making can be just as much fun as vernacular music, when done correctly: “It’s not the class that’s boring it’s the teacher that makes the class boring.”

Some students overlooked the differences between traditional and vernacular cultures and focused on the greater goals of education and music: “I have a hard time regarding “traditional” music and “vernacular” music as separate entities for the main reason that they both form what human beings call Music.” Despite the differences between vernacular and traditional music cultures, the academic year spent researching CPCE and PM provided examples of how these two cultures could be connected and synthesized. What was experienced was neither vernacular nor traditional—it was a new and unique way of approaching music education. As Karlsen and Väkevä (2012) suggested, combining vernacular and traditional cultures produces original and innovative “musical forms” and “musical realities” (p. 40). There was no doubt that the students and myself experienced the creation of new musical realities during our experience.

The third and final research question was focused on contribution to future endeavors: **How can academia and music education benefit from knowledge of vernacular music culture and vernacular music making techniques?**

Firstly, incorporating vernacular music making in academia would broaden the music education curriculum. The instruments, styles, and pedagogical methods utilized in CPCE and PM could add to the base of knowledge and pedagogy in the field of music education. Music educators would definitely have relished the opportunity to take advantage of the increased creativity, socialization, improvisation, composition, peer cooperation, student agency, aural training, use of technology, and experimentation that took place alongside the research. Music educators from other universities came and observed my classes and noted how special they were. Many of the students mentioned that the CPCE and PM courses opened their eyes to new ways of teaching and making music: “I honestly feel that this was one of the most beneficial courses to me during the course of my education…In view of these things, my final thought on these classes is that they are completely necessary and totally beneficial to all Music Education students for the main reason that it stretches our understanding and our boundaries that we have had in place for a long time.”

Secondly, vernacular music increased the potential audience and participants involved with music education. Not only could more students enroll in courses because previously unexamined areas of music were now being offered, but interest in the courses would grow outside of school as well in other stakeholders (parents, friends, families, other musicians in the community, etc.). Several music education majors at the university showed interest in the CPCE and PM courses, attended the performances, and looked forward to taking the courses in the future. During the outdoor performances, other university students walking by would become curious and ask:

"*This* is a class!? Can I take it?!" Over the academic year, the classes also saw visits from other music educators, interested students, outside musicians, and guest lecturers.

Thus, incorporating vernacular music making brings the vernacular into the institution, but it also brings the institution into the vernacular. There is a cultural exchange that bridges the gap between in-school and out-of-school culture; academia becomes more flexible from the inside and academics seem more flexible to outsiders. A perfect example of this cultural exchange was requiring students to upload performance videos to YouTube. Students and non-students would record and share music in a vernacular manner despite the fact it was for a higher education course, and people in vernacular spheres became involved with institutional matters. The traditional and the vernacular are blended and bound.

Academia and music education could also benefit from the contribution this study has made to the existing literature on vernacular music making, which was very thin. As mentioned in chapter one, there were no studies that examine vernacular music making in higher education in the United States. Not only would this study provide a unique perspective that has yet to be explored, it could also promote the refinement and improvement of existing research tools. I hope that this study will inspire further investigation into vernacular music making and its successful implementation in the field of music education.

Research Hypotheses

The first hypothesis of four (all in bold) arose from the pilot study but was also a major aim of the *CPCE* course: **Students would successfully create and perform music in a vernacular fashion; music would be made alone and in small groups.**

When all the data and experiences were taken into context, it was apparent that both the students and I felt successful in our vernacular endeavors. Each semester in both courses the students came in, began making music of their own accord, and expanded their musical education every day (although some more so than others). At the very least, all the students in both semesters of CPCE and PM accomplished several musical and educational feats many had never even considered doing before. The struggles with time limitations, organization, disagreement, absences, learning new instruments, learning new techniques, working with peers, and learning in a new environment were overcome. The students performed in six shows, wrote numerous original compositions, recorded several audio tracks, and created an entire CD including album art. None of these musical products could have come to fruition without the successful musical processes that preceded them.

Folkstead (2005) mentioned four characteristics that help identify a vernacular experience; in conjunction with these characteristics it was suggested that the students' music making experience could have been described as vernacular. The first was location. The courses were unavoidably set in a formal environment in the university. However, the musical experiences in CPCE and PM also occurred outside of class

hours, at home, during performances, and online. The second characteristic was style of learning. Students had agency over what they learned, how they learned, and the instruments they played with. The only aspect of the learning style that was not comparable to vernacular music making was the presence of the institutional structure (as the instructor who supervised the music making, I fixed time restraints and pre-determined requirements).

Ownership over the music was the third characteristic of the vernacular experience discussed by Folkstead (2005). The songwriting project, the performances, and the final CD were all products over which the students could claim total ownership. From conception to execution, the music making was done on the students' own volition with me serving as a facilitator. The final characteristic mentioned was intention; this refers to whether the aim was to simply play music or to learn how to play music. Because the students were given little technical instruction and told to form groups and play instead, the immediate emphasis was on playing. As expected, the students were able to learn how to make music *while concurrently* making music.

Students were able to make music successfully alone as well as in small groups. There were skills exercises the first semester; one required individual students had to perform on an instrument that was not their primary instrument. Another songwriting exercise required a solo performance during the second semester. Both of these exercises emphasized making music alone. Making music in small groups was also an essential part of this course, so it was necessary for the students to do that in order to succeed in the course. No one failed any of the courses during the entire study.

The level of communication between group members largely governed musical success. As observed by Karlsen (2012) while researching a vernacular music program in higher education, learning required communication of thoughts, feelings, ideas, and experiences in order to function properly. Furthermore, the interactive nature of group learning as experienced in CPCE and PM necessitated for the students to work cooperatively throughout music making. Wiggins's (2011) experiences with collaborative songwriting emphasized the interactive nature of such musical tasks, as well as the necessity for negotiation and mutuality within those settings. During the study, the students often noted that the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful day in class was communication.

Of course, this research question begged another question: what is meant by musical success? One of the major struggles for me as an instructor was deciding how to assess a successful performance. My solution was to have the students grade themselves for half of the performance grade, and I assessed the other half of the grade. The grading rubric was divided between effort (attitude, presence, attendance, contribution) and musicianship (ability to play and sing, musical creativity). The students took this very seriously; some of them were quite harsh and thorough in their assessments. Vernacular music making success was not so much based on an archetypal standard, but rather focused more on emotional and intellectual enjoyment, a sense of fulfillment and pride, and musical exploration and growth. One student illustrated successful vernacular music making perfectly when his group stopped playing, he grinned and said: "I did that wrong, and it sounded good."

Furthermore, there was a greater success yet to be attained: to spread the wonderful experiences that the students and I encountered. Both participaing faculty members mentioned that if these courses were successful, then there would be alumni and other students having the same types of experiences in around six years. If we were truly successful, then much longer in the future our society will be more musically active.

Hypothesis number two dealt with the theoretical framework chosen for the study: **Constructivist learning (ranging from cognitive to social constructivism) would be utilized throughout the music making process, resulting in a plethora of constructs in the form of processes and products.**

Overall, the students seemed to be more responsive to socially constructed experiences since the majority of the CPCE courses required group work. The study conducted by Randles et al. (2013) using students as participants noted that: “the researchers acknowledge that the type of musical learning utilized by the students was social constructivist” (p. 14). During the Spring 2013 semester, one student noted the solidarity between all those involved with the course: “This class (especially this semester) had a common connection amongst the students and professor. Experiences were always enjoyable because I felt very comfortable with all of the people I was around.” Throughout both semesters the students constantly engaged each other and me musically and intellectually. Feedback and discussion of ideas was achieved through group work, in-class performances, online, and during the concerts. The groups were noticeably social in their musical decisions, processes, and products. It was also

worth mentioning that some of the pieces played came to fruition only because peers were engaging each other with musical ideas and practices. One student noted the social nature of vernacular music making: “Making music with my peers is much more enlightening to me since I don't feel the pressure of being judged by someone that is better than me. I like feeling like we are all at the same level and we can all trade off teaching each other and being leaders, so we can all have the best learning experience possible.”

Social constructivism was exemplified in student group work as mentioned in the paragraph above, but also made its presence known several other times. Other examples of social or communal constructs of information were: students would use whiteboards around the room to display and edit musical information, online files were accessed and edited by members of the class, and verbal discussions of performance plans or course ideas were common. Furthermore the performance grades for CPCE were determined by group members and myself, which added both socially (peer assessments within groups) and cognitively (my assessment of each student) constructed information.

The journals provided an example of more cognitively constructed side of the vernacular music experience because these were written when the students were alone, and reflected each student’s individual thoughts on vernacular music making. Also, the final recorded tracks from the end of the second semester were products of individuals, although more than one person contributed to all the tracks except one. It could not have been done without the help of others, but the finished recordings were

edited and mastered by students individually. Thus, the journals and mastered tracks provided excellent examples of how students cognitively constructed their own unique conceptualizations of vernacular music making. A perfect description of a cognitive constructivist stance that resembles Piaget ‘s (1954) notion of the “lone scientist” was provided by one of the students in a Spring 2013 journal: “This class is a big music lab and we are the scientists that play around with all the beakers and serums. Then the concert is the science fair where we show off what we made. This is a class is for anyone who wants to experiment and the concert is for everyone!”

Despite the fact that songwriting was a task that favored cognitive constructivism, the songwriting opened up avenues for social constructivist thought. This occurred because students were eager to share an original composition that revealed aspects of their personality, and also because students enjoyed hearing the work of their peers. Reflecting on the songwriting process, one student wrote: “For the first time, I felt like I was actually sharing a part of myself through my songwriting…I’ve begun to see an entirely new musical side of my classmates.” Thus, songwriting negated any gap between social and cognitive constructivism, because both the processes and products of songwriting were developed cognitively and socially. Some students worked better alone while others preferred the group environment for songwriting.

Overall, students grew as individuals as well as part of an entire group. Meanings and values were created by the students and by me independently, and those meanings and values were situated in the larger context of groups, which in turn were situated in the entire class. Blacking (1973) observed this same phenomenon in his research:

“individual consciousness is nurtured within the collective consciousness of the community” (p. 95).

The third hypothesis arose after I had gained the experience of conducting ethnographic research, teaching, and analyzing the results of the pilot study: **The music making process and the research would spill outside the initially established boundaries (pedagogical, institutional, and research boundaries).**

Pedagogical boundaries were easily breached, because the students taught in non-university classrooms as well as the PM class using vernacularly-inspired tools and lessons. Before they went out to the schools, I reviewed the students’ lesson plans to ensure they were appropriate. In the second semester of PM, each student taught a 20-minute lesson which was also a divergence from the originally planned pedagogy. In fact there was no way to anticipate the pedagogical routes that were taken by the students, and going beyond my established pedagogical boundaries was implied once it was written in the syllabus.

Institutional boundaries and research boundaries were broken in several ways. The Internet provided an excellent means to communicate information. Videos from rehearsals and performances were uploaded to YouTube, allowing the videos to be shared with anyone who had the links to them. The only people given the links were the students and the two faculty members interviewed, yet several of the videos have been viewed many more times than there were people in the course. One of the more moving

examples of the videos being shared was when a student told me that her brother (who was on tour in the military) had seen the original song that she wrote for him.

Music making also spilled outside institutional and research boundaries during performances. The audience members illustrated this, since many of them were not associated with the university. Family members of the students attended the performances, and one of the most noteworthy moments came when a student dedicated her song to her little sister who was in the audience during the second performance of the first semester. The student sang “Hey Jude,” which was her sister’s name; the girl, probably no older than seven, was amazed and danced next to her sister along with the music. Friends of students, some of whom performed with the class, played a large role in supporting the students and helped make the concerts more vibrant. In the Fall semester, one student recognized the value of support from friends: “I was almost hoping that it [the performance] would be cancelled because I was very nervous. However, once I got into the room and started talking to the people in our class and my friends outside of class who had come to support us, I immediately felt better and excited to play. My friends outside of class told me that they were really looking forward to hearing me perform, and I let myself believe them and became more motivated.”

Another way the music making spilled over the established boundaries was through Facebook. Students and non-students posted, shared, liked, and commented on several status updates, pictures, and videos. For those unfamiliar with Facebook, the last sentence simply describes that an array of people added various things to the social

networking site, and an array of people responded to what was posted. Although I expected some students to share their work, I did not expect non-students to share CPCE music making experiences with others. Nor did I expect to have supplemental data to arise from communication that took place on Facebook. Even during the summer, well after the class was over, students and their friends still shared and commented on experiences that took place in CPCE and PM.

The music making also challenged the confines of institution and research through student interest. Students were eager to include supplemental extra-musical aspects to performances, daily practice often involved playing unnecessary pieces for fun, and students openly discussed the courses with enjoyment outside of class. Roughly two weeks after the courses had ended, the students' final album which included artwork and liner notes had been finished and made into CDs (by one of the students). I discussed a location to meet with the students, and we settled on a local restaurant and bar that played live music so we could have an album "release party." Six students attended the release party, including one student who took CPCE and PM the first year it was offered (the year the pilot study was conducted). At the party the students and I also discussed the possibility of getting together and jamming out. Shortly thereafter two of the students from the second year, one student from the first year, and I got together and played music. My music making with them continued well into 2014.

The final hypothesis was proposed solely because of my previous experience with vernacular music making: **Students would naturally develop motivation to**

make music on their own. This self- and peer-inspired motivation can be recognized through supplemental time and effort dedicated to music making, exemplary musicianship, as well as increased concern and activity during the entire music making process.

One way in which motivation was recognized was through students' eagerness to work on pieces of music when they did not need to. On days when they had downtime because of group absences or because they had finished their responsibilities, several students would jam out and create new music or learn a new song just for fun. Sometimes students did this on an individual basis, other times a few students would get together and play. Students pursued vernacular music making even though it went beyond course requirements. On one of several similar occasions, an eager student asked if he could rehearse along with another group for fun: "Do you mind if I try to fart around while you run it?" Furthermore, students would tell me about other musical experiences outside of class that they undertook only because of PM and CPCE.

Motivation was also recognized when students would come in early or stay late. Although this seldom happened the first semester, the second semester there were students constantly showing up early and remaining in class well after it was over. Students were present during extra hours for course responsibilities, but also students came early and stayed late to listen to music, talk about making music, and simply jam out. One day a group of students stayed for an extra 45 minutes because they were so engaged in jamming out and having fun.

Many times students would go above and beyond required and expected effort levels in order to produce better music. Students used outside resources such as instruments, computer programs, and outside musicians to make the music sound the way they wanted. The students also incorporated extra-musical aspects to the performances of their own volition. These included dance routines and other choreography, wearing different attire, a video that went along with the video game themed concert, and student discussion of performance ideas outside of class. The final recordings of the second semester were vibrant and rich multi-track recordings in which all of the students painstakingly recorded, edited, mixed, mastered, and produced music. Student recordings were graded, but students mentioned trying to make it "sound perfect" and commented: "I just want to do this for myself."

The students showed incentive to make music throughout both semesters. Woody (2007) also saw musician motivation as an integral part of vernacular music making. The anger that was felt, the disagreements that took place, the tears that were cried, and the frustration from failure were all displayed because the students cherished the music. One of the students summarized these efforts perfectly: "Yeah, we argue and have our problems. But that just shows that we care."

Summary

This chapter gave an overview of how the data analysis was organized, told the story of one academic year of researching vernacular music making in higher education,

and answered the research questions and hypotheses. The following chapter, the final chapter, will begin with a brief summary of the study including purpose, reviewed literature, and findings. Major themes, implications, and suggestions for the future will be provided; the study ends with reflections on the overall research experience.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

This final chapter begins with a short summary of the research study that included its purpose and relevant literature, followed by the findings from the research. Then, conclusions from the study provide an overview of the major themes encountered during the research. Implications for the field of music education and suggestions for future research follow the conclusions section. Finally, the study is summarized and brought to a close in the final section of the chapter.

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Music educators, including myself, have found the gap between in-school music culture and out-of-school music culture to be problematic (Jorgensen, 2010; Karlsen & Väkevä, 2012; Kratus, 2007; Swanwick, 1999; Williams, 2007; Williams, 2011; Woody, 2007). In order to better understand the dynamic nature of vernacular music making in higher education, a constructivist philosophical framework was used and ethnography was chosen as a methodology. To answer the research questions this study used

several data collection methods: participant observation, field notes, digital photographs, audio and video recordings, participant journals, physical artifacts, and semi-structured interviews.

The research questions that guided the study were: 1) How do musicians in an academic environment learn and create music in vernacular music making cultures and how is musical knowledge represented, communicated, and passed on while making music? 2) How do vernacular musical experiences in an academic environment differ from musical experiences found in traditional music classroom settings? 3) How can academia and music education benefit from knowledge of vernacular music culture and vernacular music making techniques?

The literature reviewed for this study focused on three major areas: constructivism, ethnographic research, and vernacular music making. Theory, practice, and research in these major areas were identified, examined, and synthesized. The literature suggested that all of these major areas are relatively new in music education and suitable for further examination, since none of the major areas became prevalent in the field until the very end of the twentieth century. Furthermore, the literature beckoned for more examples of research and practice that utilized the active and epistemologically diverse nature of constructivism, developed the holistic and contextually complex aspects of ethnographic research, and acknowledged the capability of vernacular music making in the field of music education.

FINDINGS

The data collected during the research showed that students successfully made music during their enrollment in CPCE and PM and had a great deal of fun doing so. Students faced hardships that included time constraints, amorphous course organization compared to their traditional courses, learning new instruments and techniques, disagreements, absences, and musical struggles. Despite these hardships students performed in six shows, wrote numerous original compositions, recorded several audio tracks, and created an entire CD including album art. Music making was done alone and in small groups; communication during music making was exchanged through verbal, written, and aural means. Musical communication was pragmatic and was shared from student to student, from teacher to students, from students to teacher, and from outside sources (primarily the Internet) to class members. Communication was a vital key to unlocking musical success for the students.

Constructivist learning, ranging from cognitive constructivism to social constructivism, was employed during the study. The daily music learning practices provided clear examples of social constructivism, while the student journals for PM exhibited more cognitively constructed reactions to course experiences. The music making and resulting products from the courses spilled out of the initially established pedagogical, institutional, and research boundaries. Respectively, the vernacular experiences expanded educational horizons, challenged the dichotomy of in-school and out-of-school music making, and intersected several different cultures.

Eventually, the students developed comfort and motivation to make music without authoritative instruction from a professor. Even for the students who only took one semester of CPCE and PM, the students mentioned improvement to various aspects of musicianship (traditional skills, vernacular skills, aural skills, improvisation, composition, creativity, socialization, etc.), teaching (new ideas and approaches), teaching and musical confidence, and overall appreciation for music. Students often went above and beyond the course requirements simply because they enjoyed what they were doing. The sustained rate of musical growth and learning suggested that the courses merited a two-semester sequence but also suggested that these types of courses could be offered more frequently and for extended periods of time, much like band and instrumental methods are offered in traditional music education.

Overall CPCE and PM were successful in the sense that the ensemble course effectively created music in several new contexts, and the methods course taught the students new ways of envisioning the music education classroom. It was evident that everyone in the class, including me, expanded their musical horizons and learned a great deal from the vernacular music making experiences.

CONCLUSIONS

The Ambiguity of Vernacular Music Making

The existing literature, this research study, and my own experiences confirmed that vernacular music making should look different in every context. Because something as dynamic as vernacular music making could differ drastically depending on several factors (time, place, participants, means, ends) each manifestation of vernacular music making was different. When a constructivist perspective was taken into account, it was assumed that each student, teacher, administrator, parent, and musician would construct a different concept of vernacular music making.

During an interview, the faculty member who taught CPCE and PM the first year it was offered said, “It’s good that it’s ambiguous.” Each instructor would have a different take on the courses so the manifestations of CPCE and PM, or any vernacular music making course for that matter, would vary depending on the instructor. For example, the instrumental focal point of my courses was often electric guitar, since that was what I knew best and that was what I was most comfortable with. The instructor who taught the courses before me seemed to be more inclined to utilize the digital instruments and equipment (MIDI controllers, iPads, digital effects on the computer, recording software) to teach and make music, so his PM and CPCE students and courses looked different from mine. Not only did the teacher and institution make a substantial difference in the outcomes of vernacular music making, the students who enrolled in the courses also

constructed the culture of the classes. Therefore, one “can’t prescribe recipes that work for everybody because each teacher faces circumstances that are contextually bound and therefore unique” (Froehlich, 2007, p. 3).

Since the students’ greatly shaped the courses with their musical decisions, they also played a major role in determining the final structure and character of the class. My allowing the students to choose their instrumentation and musical style, and giving them control over their learning, led them to develop a flexible musicianship that allowed them to take on several roles (Väkevä, 2012). One student highlighted how the roles confronted in vernacular music making were much more diverse and dynamic than those they encountered in their traditional music experiences: “I think that there are many different roles during the music making process. I also think that people can be all of these roles at different times, and that for a group to function well the roles must switch to compliment each other depending on the task trying to be achieved.”

The teachers and students added to the dynamic nature of the courses, and the fact that the courses changed from day-to-day, from moment-to-moment, and from group to group had an impact as well. There were happy days and sad days, slow groups and productive groups, energized members and tired members. Markusen (2009) discussed the perpetually different vernacular culture: “Vernacular cultural practices are continually challenged and changing. Their development is more diverse than in high culture, since they lack prescribed organizational formats and long-standing public and elite patronage” (p. 198).

The academic year of CPCE and PM was not intended to serve as a standard for vernacular music making, and the study was not meant to be replicated. As mentioned before, vernacular music making was a dynamic phenomenon that could change from moment to moment. I simply attempted to shed light on this phenomenon through this research so that music educators could make some practical use of the knowledge. The aim of the research was not to "produce methods," but instead to produce "useable results" (Folkstead, 2005, p. 24). Because vernacular music making has been shown to be organic, natural, and a "bottom-up" rather than a "top-down" process, there cannot be a "universal" model of vernacular music pedagogy (Clements, 2012, p. 8).

Group Culture

Some students considered their group culture as a complete and unique entity that was formed in the contexts of CPCE and PM: "all of us come from different social and musical backgrounds and we all bring benefits (and probably hindrances) to the group as a whole." Other students formulated group culture as the combined social and community backgrounds of individual students outside of class, which they believed to be the same for the entire group: "As a group we are pretty much in the same ballpark as far as culture. Most of the group members are members of the music fraternity/sorority and we have a lot of classes together. If anything, the four others share the most culture because they all have marching band experience, which is a culture all on its own, and I do not, but I bring my classical and orchestral

background to the group, which I like to think makes us pretty well-rounded." Randles et al. (2013) noted that in the class, "participants' choice of groups has personal meaning to them" (p. 21). This was undoubtedly true because each student attached special and unique meanings to their group and group members. There were group cultures based on individuals, small group cultures, and overall class cultures that all intersected and intertwined during the research.

I played a large role in the culture of the courses because I interacted with the students and class in several ways (playing, teaching, talking, listening, hanging out, etc.), in numerous places (music classrooms inside and outside of class hours, performance venues, online, private houses and apartments, and a bar/restaurant) and on several levels (as a fellow student, as an instructor, as a musician, and as a friend). From a research standpoint I was "living in" the community of practice along with the students. Although the interactions and experiences I had with the students were genuine, they were approached without losing awareness of the research, and eventually interactions and experiences were recorded as data. The rapport established with the students allowed me to access tacit and implicit knowledge to which outsiders would not have been privy to (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011).

There was a great sense of trust placed in the students as musicians, learners, and teachers. I would not have given the students the responsibilities of playing and learning music autonomously if I did not believe they were intelligent, motivated, and musically proficient enough to do so. Trust must be exhibited by any teacher who gives their students agency to promote confidence; trust showed the students I had faith in

them, suggested to the students that they were capable to handle the tasks, and demonstrated to the students that I was open-minded enough to include their own interests as part of the courses.

The students also learned to trust each other. It was evident they formed a level of “cohesiveness” while making music. Ely and Rashkin (2005) defined cohesiveness as: “a group phenomenon that creates a sense of belonging in members of a group that tends to hold the group together. Can be increased by 1) friendly interaction 2) cooperation 3) higher group status 4) shared difficulty, challenge, or hardship 5) an outside threat 6) democratic rather than authoritarian leadership” (p. 83). The students exhibited friendly interaction, cooperated as peers on numerous occasions, shared challenges, and democratically discussed music making. Equality between students was balanced out through various exercises and course requirements; students were able to exhibit their forte at different points in time. One student commented, “We all work together to make our weaknesses stronger.”

Several cultures intersected and interacted during the course of the research. Through manipulation of the environment and resources, facilitation of the students’ activities, and interaction during the music making I created avenues where the students could learn, create, and interact alone and with others during their music making. Kingsbury (1988) had also observed “intercontextual” outcomes from music making. Apart from the students and myself, CPCE and PM attracted other communities of practice. These communities included university students both in and out of the School of Music, music education faculty from in and out of the university, friends, family

members, online community members, and musicians. Froehlich (2007) believed that the “music teacher…becomes a bridge-builder between worlds of school communities, music communities, and political communities” (p. 18). I concurred with Froehlich’s belief after reflection and examination of the vernacular music experiences in the courses.

Teacher/Learner Roles

Balancing freedom and guidelines was a challenge. Watson (2011) suggested that it was sometimes useful to include restrictions to foster creativity, but too many guidelines could have restricted creativity. In an “authentic” vernacular setting there are no real guidelines, so I wanted to nurture aesthetic freedom; on the other hand it was necessary from an educational perspective to produce results, so basic musical requirements were established to ensure progress. Compared to traditional music education, a great deal of agency was given to the students: they formed their own groups, selected their own music, chose their own instruments, learned in a student-centered manner (taught themselves, taught their peers), designated their own roles, and learned in the manner they wished.

While it would seem that the students bared the majority of the educational burden it was up to me to create an environment that cultivated musicality, promote musical creativity, facilitate individual and group learning, fill in for absent members, oversee each student and group, and ultimately integrate all of the parts into a whole.

When it came to creative endeavors, I tried to keep my distance from encroaching on students' aesthetic decisions. As Blacking (1973) mentioned, cultural membership shapes musical valuation. I did not want to push any of my own values onto the students; I wanted for them to consider aesthetic alternatives and also wanted them to share their musical experiences with me. Consideration of student values was an important lesson that every music educator should observe—the students have complex musical worlds and understanding those worlds could be a crucial asset to music teaching and learning.

The fact that students decided many aspects of the courses meant that the structure and process was largely dependent on them as well. Thus, several of the students complained about lack of structure to the process, others were upset they had not received rigorous training on their new instruments, and some were overwhelmed by the endless options that they were given. It was clear that in the beginning of the fall semester, students were uncomfortable with the freedom they were given. Rodriguez (2012) made a similar observation: "because decision-making is not a significant part of formal music education, formally-trained students display a heavy reliance on guidelines" (p. 125). There were times when I would have to arbitrarily make a decision or set a time limit on student decisions so that students could proceed with their music making. It was vital to get to know the students personally, so that useful suggestions could be made based on their instrumental, stylistic, and social preferences. Options were often overwhelming, so it was very important to make sure students made appropriate and swift decisions.

Since the students were given so much agency, many issues were handled democratically. Democratically resolved issues included song selection, aesthetic decisions, performance ideas, and group dynamics. Democracy was sometimes displayed by everyone voicing his or her opinion (e.g. class discussions of what to do for a concert), and other times resulted in an outright vote to decide an issue (e.g. when the group decided to break up in the first semester). Democracy was a sloppy process. It was sloppy because disagreement often resulted in emotional eruptions; voting and negotiation between peers and myself required significant time and energy. Democracy required cooperation and open-mindedness from students and teacher; coming to an agreement was not a simple task because the discussions (which usually involved aesthetic matters) necessitated a substantial level of diplomacy. Furthermore the students were not accustomed to the agency and responsibility that were required in democracy because these were not issues they encountered in traditional music education. When issues were resolved democratically, it was extremely rare for all of the students within a group or all of the students in the class to concur. Even if there was a large majority there was always dissent, and even if almost everyone got what they wanted some people were still left unsatisfied. Although democracy gave students a voice throughout the music making it was sloppy because the consultation, mediation, and dialogue often resulted in incongruity between student beliefs. As mentioned by a faculty member: “When you allow students the creative role, it gets dirty, and it takes time for them to work through the dirtiness.”

The agency given to the students and the democratic nature of the courses required for all parties involved to balance cooperation and leadership. Everyone in the class, myself included, had to switch roles between leader and follower. As a leader it was important to be clear and concise, while as a follower it was important to listen and provide helpful feedback. These roles were largely dependent on the context, but were largely determined by the personality of group members as well; some students were "born leaders" and others were less comfortable assuming a position of power; there were numerous power shifts and changes in group dynamics depending on daily contexts.

Overall, I felt that giving students agency increased their interest, motivation, ownership, confidence, and solidarity throughout music making. The students got to know very deep and meaningful parts of one another's personal lives through songwriting, and worked together to form close bonds while performing live and studio recording on each other's tracks. At times democracy was a dirty process, but in the end students learned valuable teaching lessons regarding organization, time management, and student-centered learning.

Technology

I cannot stress enough what a large role digital and multimedia technologies played throughout the research, teaching, and music making. As suggested by the existing literature (Fetterman, 2010; Patton, 2002; Stock, 2004; Watson, 2011) the use

of audio and video recordings, computers, cell phones, web-based documents, and online social networks were able to serve as dynamic and vibrant research tools. The digital and multimedia tools provided a simple means for gathering rich data during collection, allowed for a detailed account of experiences throughout analysis, and offered a colorful and up-close look at the research for dissemination. These tools were extremely useful for this ethnographic research, and truly opened up the options to collect, analyze, manipulate, store, protect, and share data.

While teaching, technology allowed me to demonstrate more simply (sharing on computers or quickly plugging in an instrument), communicate more easily (through email, the course website, or social networks), and run the classroom more effectively (digital technology allowed for instruments to be plugged in so multiple groups could play at the same time if they wore headphones). Sometimes students would get out their cellphones to tune or look up chords quickly, and DAWs were often used to share music through headphones or speakers. Particularly for CPCE and PM I felt that the courses should have a presence of their own; students were able to share, critique, and see their musical progress through the use of technology. Online technologies stretched institutional boundaries and brought together vernacular and traditional music making cultures.

Technology allowed for diverse and eclectic music making. Digital instruments such as the iPad truly gave the students infinite sonic possibilities, and exciting additions to instruments such as effects pedals, loop pedals, and amplification spurred musical creativity. Instrumentation consisted of solely digital instruments, electric and

digital instruments, digital and acoustic instruments, and digital, electric, and acoustic instruments. The students did not perform any music that did not involve digital or electric instruments; even though they were allowed to do so, the students chose not to have any completely acoustic pieces.

Outliers

Of course not all music educators are “on board” with bringing vernacular music making into the curriculum. Likewise, not all of the students were in accordance with vernacular music making. Although I would say all of the students embraced at least one philosophical notion, pedagogical practice, or musical aspect of vernacular music making, some struggled. During the pilot study one student did not seem to take interest in any of the aspects introduced in CPCE or PM; he seemed completely set in his ways and content with the idea he would do things in the traditional fashion. However, when he discovered the iPad, it suddenly seemed like everything the courses intended to teach came to life for him. His interest and understanding in the courses surged.

Other students discarded everything except for a teaching technique learned in the course: “I don’t think I could ever teach a guitar class, but I will definitely bring songwriting into some of the classes I teach.” After the courses were over I often saw many of the former students around the School of Music, consumed in their traditional worlds. While some would eagerly greet me and merrily bring up nostalgic moments in CPCE and PM, others seemed to have returned to their traditional focus (or never

opened their minds to begin with). After the courses had ended, one of the students mentioned to me outside of the building: “Some people in that class sucked…they never gave it a chance.”

There were also outliers that completely accepted vernacular music making. One student contacted me on Facebook and shared a professional studio recording she had done outside of school with me, another student emailed me mentioning that she loved incorporating songwriting and improvisation into the K-12 music classes she taught. A group of three students (one from the pilot study and two from this study) contacted me and we had several rehearsals and music making sessions in various locations; these were purely vernacular.

Some of the outliers rejected vernacular music culture and its offerings; other outliers embraced it. Creativity and socialization were not things that could be “forced,” and traditional music education often neglected these aspects of music making. Some learners were naturally adept at songwriting and continued to do so beyond the course requirements, while some struggled and complained about it; some students came to the classroom with a feel for improvisation, others struggled when music was not written on a page in front of them; some vernacular techniques worked very well in an institutional setting, others failed in the classroom. The outliers showed how not all aspects of vernacular music making were suited for every learner, nor were all vernacular music making practices methodologically perfect.

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly (Of Vernacular Music Making)

The ugliest part of vernacular music making was reaching agreement. As we have seen in the United States with the battles over public education and health care, democracy can be ugly. When students and teacher must come to accord regarding aesthetic and pedagogical decisions, it is most important to keep an open mind and focus on the more imperative ends of music and education. Successful collaboration required open and honest communication, contentment with compromise, and appreciation of variety. In vernacular learning and music experiences the social obligations within communities of practice required awareness of other members, respect of other members, and thoughtful interaction with other members.

For the students, the bad parts of vernacular music making were time and an overabundance of possibilities. The common complaint over meeting time (which was completely out of my control) was simply based on the fact that the class met five days out of the week at the same (11AM) time every day. I think that meeting every day had its benefits and drawbacks. On the one hand, meeting every day seemed a little monotonous and often times seemed to attempt to “force” creativity, which did not always produce satisfying results. On the other hand, meeting every day helped the students adjust to vernacular music making and also increased the chance that they would have a successful day because they met more frequently.

The overabundance of possibilities seemed to catch the students like a deer in headlights. When I would prompt them to “just play” or “make something up,” several

students stood dead in their tracks and had no clue what to do. Although this improved as time went on, I was upset at the fact that traditional music education had neglected such fun and important aspects of music making. These traditional students had never been told to just jam, improvise, or create so they were boggled when they were finally given the opportunity. My vernacular background had me accustomed to just being able to sit down and jam, even if it was an instrument or song I was unfamiliar with. The students, however, seemed to want written, step-by-step directions of how to go about playing or writing music. Thus, when they were presented with all of the new and advanced musical equipment along with the freedom to do with it what they pleased, they did not know what to make of the situation.

Students mentioned the process as lacking structure and organization, but they had not realized that these things came in time with vernacular music making. The more experiences they had with vernacular music making, the more comfortable they became and the more they explored in their various areas of interest; eventually each student found his or her niche, and was able to creatively expand from there. For example, some students fell in love with the iPad and unraveled their creative ideas through digital software and recording, and one girl liked the electric bass so much she would jokingly say “I’m changing my major to bass!” Other students simply loved working with their peers and were eager to take part in anything that they were asked. It would have been inefficient for me to spend classes teaching students how to play every single instrument and how to use every piece of equipment; it was more organic to have students explore their options and test out their preferences on their own. Furthermore,

it simply took time and experience for them to understand that the structure and organization was dependent on them.

For me, the worst part was student complaints; I would have loved to have an opportunity to make music the way they did. I know there were other musicians like me who would have been immensely interested to take a course where they could be creative and *just play music.* However, many of the students seemed to take the courses for granted the first semester because they failed to see the value of bringing vernacular music making into the music education curriculum. Vernacular music making was not suggested as a replacement for traditional music education; the ultimate goal is to have a more musical society, and it was abundantly clear that traditional music education was not reaching the vast majority of society.

The good part of the vernacular music making in class was seeing so many students embrace a new way of making music. They relished the opportunity to work with new equipment, enjoyed cooperating with their peers, were eager to learn new types of music, were relieved to play music in a relaxing and fun way, and enthusiastic to create their own music. The products from both semesters' work were impressive: the performances were unforgettable, the bonds were meaningful, and the recordings were amazing. I was excited to be able to share my music making world with the students, and they were also thrilled to share their own music with others. One can only imagine how excited other potential students would be to be able to share and explore their musical worlds in ways that they could not before. Many of the students in the courses said they would never forget the vernacular music making experiences they had, and I

knew I would never forget either. Hearing students say they had never tried this, always wanted to do that, and were experiencing music in a new way was tremendous. In essence, that was what CPCE and PM were all about—conceiving of music education in a different way.

Thus, vernacular music making allowed higher education students to do things that they had never been given the chance to do despite being involved with school music for years. Seeing eyes open up, hearing joyful laughter and excited learners, watching grimaces turn to smiles, and listening to students' original music come to life were all priceless musical and educational experiences. Students explored parts of music as they never had before and learned in ways they had never thought possible. The good part of vernacular music making was undoubtedly watching students blossom as teachers and musicians, and knowing that these students would go out into the field and spread the knowledge and experiences they gained in CPCE and PM.

Conclusions

Going back to the purpose of this study, to examine vernacular music making in higher education, a few things can be said. Firstly, any manifestation of vernacular music making will differ along with context. Particularly because so much agency was given to the students and a bottom-up, emergent approach was taken, vernacular cultures differed from class to class and from day to day. However, the small groups and creative freedom allowed for the students to actively engage their peers and their

musical environment. The creative freedom also allowed the students to approach musical communication in a dynamic, pragmatic manner that suited each student and group best.

Second, vernacular culture differs from traditional music culture but the two are not separate, absolute entities—they can be synthesized. When compared to traditional music cultures, the CPCE and PM courses allowed more student creativity, and were more student-centered, more laid-back, and more fun. Students improved their musicianship in several areas that were neglected in traditional courses: aural competency, improvisation, composition, socialization, and digital music making. Nevertheless, all of this was done within the confines of an institution. The research conducted suggested that the vernacular/traditional divide could be overcome by allowing vernacular aspects of music making into the music education curriculum. Not only did this make the institution more vernacular, it also brought more institutional music making into vernacular communities.

Thirdly, music education would benefit from vernacular music making. Vernacular music making could engage present and future students with new knowledge and practices; it could also attract new students. Finally, vernacular music making is intrinsically good. Vernacular music making has been a topic of interest in music education literature and research, and also has been shown to be successful and beneficial in several studies including this one. Music educators should learn to appreciate and examine any and every type of music; neglecting any style or aspect of music would be a major oversight and potential loss on behalf of music education.

IMPLICATIONS

I believe that all music educators should consider the possibility of including vernacular music making as part of their curriculum. Because there is no prescribed formula for successful vernacular music making, music educators must consider the context that they are working in: some schools may be better off employing vernacular techniques in their traditional ensembles, other schools may want to start new classes featuring small groups and different instrumentation, some schools might consider using computers and technology to make music, other schools may be able to have a dual ensemble and methods sequence like the one described in this study.

Vernacular music making must also begin earlier. This does not necessarily mean that elementary music educators should allow their students to make all the musical decisions as I did, but they could easily incorporate aspects of the vernacular processes and products described during this study or similar ones. I could not help but imagine how different the two semester of CPCE and PM could have been if the students had prior experiences with vernacular music making. Music educators of all levels should make use of the tools and techniques that are offered to them. In spite of differences in contexts and situations, music teachers can undoubtedly make use of vernacular music making in some form or fashion.

This study could be considered part of what Allsup and Olson (2012) described as the “second wave” of vernacular music making research in music education (p. 18). The first wave of research was generally comprised of theoretical concepts,

identification of problems, and illustrations of how vernacular music was made in various contexts. The second wave referred to studies that had put vernacular music making into practice. Examples of the practice of vernacular music making in traditional educational contexts have been few and far between, not only because researchers have not conducted such research, but also because very few institutions have utilized vernacular music making in their curricula. I hope (and believe) that the interest in vernacular music making will resume the growth that it has recently experienced; music educators must continue to explore, discuss, research, and apply vernacular music making in the field as well as beyond the field.

Thus, this study implied that there will be more like it, and that music education will continue to examine the possibilities for including vernacular music in the curriculum. While this research was being conducted, it was almost impossible to ignore the sharp contrast between in-school music culture and out-of-school music culture, as well as the impact of technology and vernacular approaches to music education.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Music educators have seen success using ethnographic research in the past, and must continue to do so. The contextual depth, holistic nature, and reflexivity of ethnographic research are useful for examining a dynamic process like music education. Furthermore, constructivist theory should be used in music education

research as well because it allows for multiple epistemological perspectives to be taken into account.

More research needs to be conducted regarding successful applications of vernacular music making. Because there were so few when this research was conducted, music education had much to learn and as much to gain from examining vernacular cultures. As mentioned by Folkstead (2005), music education researchers must go where the students are. “The largest portion of music makers in the United States cannot be found in professional or community bands, choirs, and orchestras. Instead, they are found in basements, pubs, garages, worship teams, computer labs, dance clubs, and recording studios” (Clements, 2012, p. 5). Therefore, music educators must look where the music is, and examine places and situations that are foreign to them. Music education must remain as dynamic as society or else it risks becomes stagnant.

CODA

The students and I managed to successfully create and perform music in a vernacular fashion within the bounds of an institution of higher education. The faculty members interviewed agreed that it would take substantial time to see considerable results from the fall 2012 to spring 2013 CPCE and PM courses outside of the university. With regards to these courses, Randles et al. (2013) noted “several large research university music education programs had visited the researchers’ university in

hopes of initiating similar course offerings at their schools at the time of this publication" (pp. 21-22). Thus, even during the data collection phase of the research, there was clearly a growing interest in vernacular music making locally and in the field of music education at large. By late spring 2014, many of the students had moved on to their internships and some had even begun working; several mentioned that they used techniques and exercises that they took away from their vernacular music making experiences in CPCE and PM. I hope the research and practice of vernacular music making will continue in music education.

As music educators we have an incredibly privileged and important responsibility: to promote music making amongst our students and communities. However, we must also remember to remain open-minded and not let our own ambitions get in the way of the greater good—the advancement of music education. As human cultures change and music change along with them, it only seems appropriate that music education should change as well. As explained by one of the faculty members during an interview, "change can be scary, but change can also be an opportunity."

Acceptance and incorporation of vernacular music cultures into music education demand philosophical flexibility. A faculty member commented that the social nature of vernacular music making "requires you to construct a bigger definition of what good is." This was true. We must all remember that no matter what musical background we came from, more music is good, and more types of music education are good. Markusen (2009) stated: "As vernacular cultures evolve, they confront content and organizational challenges. These tensions deserve greater attention" (p. 198). Vernacular cultures

change and grow regardless of attention from institutions; it is up to music educators and researchers to examine and utilize the tremendously valuable information that can be attained from vernacular music cultures. Challenges can be overcome and tensions can be eased. Vernacular music making should be viewed as a major opportunity to improve music education as a field.

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