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From the Editor**Jennifer S. Walter**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, qualitative researchers missed out on opportunities to recruit potential participants. Researchers did not have access to pools of participants in the same ways as before the pandemic. Also, the typical issues of recruiting participants seemed to be magnified. For example, participants may have been concerned about the time investment, cost(s) of participation, and possible bias surrounding qualitative research participation. Perhaps these concerns were made even worse because of the stress induced by a global pandemic. Qualitative research has also not been broadly generalizable. So potential participants may be asking themselves, “Why is my participation important?”

In addition, perhaps the massive cultural and political shifts in America over the past three years have also made participation in qualitative studies that much more difficult. Will sensitive topics be covered? How will participants be protected? Can you guarantee that participants’ responses will not be linked back to specific individuals in any way? These questions became of even greater concern to those wishing to remain protected from the harsh criticism that members of society often inflict on others.

As time continues, perhaps researchers can consider that recruitment is both contextual and dynamic. For instance, connection matters. Making connections with potential participants can be crucial to the success of the study. Considering the specific context of the research being conducted and how that context relates to the participants’ lives could also be important. And finally, recruitment continues to be an ongoing process throughout the study, which will be revisited over and over. Managing a pool of participants, regardless of size, takes careful planning and continued reflection.

MTE Mothers: Finding Balance During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Rachel Grimsby² and Ashley Allen³

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine how MTE mothers adapted instructional practices to ensure the health and safety of their students, while caring for their families and personal wellbeing. To better understand these issues the following research questions were posed:

1. How are MTEs adapting curriculum to meet regulations associated with COVID-19?
2. What are the emotional implications of teaching during a pandemic, both for the teacher and their perceived implications for students?
3. What do MTEs need in order to feel successful, supported, or adequate with teaching in a pandemic?

A basic qualitative design was used for this study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Participants were purposively sampled to include five female music teacher educators from separate institutions across the United States. They represented choral, general, instrumental, and string disciplines. Participants met with the researchers four times between February and April 2021 using Zoom. We provided guiding questions based on initial interviews and meeting transcriptions to initiate deeper conversations.

The following themes emerged: Stressors, Changes, and Positives from Covid; Finding Balance: Teaching While Parenting, Parenting While Teaching, and Needing Spousal Support;

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Blurred Lines: Losing, Reforming, and Creating Boundaries; Impact on Students and Instruction; and Benefits of Participation: Considering Work Demands, Mental Health, and Gratitude. Mental health, maintaining work/home life balance, and concerns for students' wellbeing were among the most prominent findings. Implications for change to institutions of higher learning to better support MTE mothers are explored.

Keywords: MTE mothers, COVID-19, pandemic, higher education, music education

Introduction

COVID-19 has significantly impacted teaching and learning in every discipline. Music teacher educators (MTEs) have had to navigate new instructional practices and technologies, rethink curriculum, and ensure mandated safety protocols within classroom spaces since the pandemic began (deBruin, 2021; Krishnamoorthy & Keating, 2021; Mylnczak, 2021; Shaw, 2021). In addition, MTEs who are parents have had to learn how to be a stay-at-home parent and pseudo-homeschool teachers while maintaining their professorial obligations (Alon et al., 2020; Arnett, 2021; Augustus, 2021; Fitzpatrick-Harnish & Sweet, 2021; Yildirim & Eslen-Ziya, 2020).

Issues related to faculty stress have been well researched prior to COVID-19. Researchers have indicated the most common sources of stress were workload demands, service to the university and community, work/life balance, and tenure and promotion expectations (Alves et al., 2019; Gruber et. al., 2020; Heinemann & Heinemann, 2017; Meng & Wang, 2018). In addition, Delello et al., (2014) added internal and external politics, online teaching and technology issues, economic pressure, and managing students as factors that contribute to faculty stress. As more researchers examine the effects of the pandemic on stress and academia, they have found increased burnout to be common among faculty as they adapt instruction and attempt to meet the emotional needs of their students (Alves et al., 2019; Course Hero, 2020; Flaherty, 2020; Gruber et. al., 2020; Milstein, 2021).

The pandemic has affected women differently than men (Yildirim & Eslen- Ziya, 2021). Women who are mothers coped with increased job/role stress (Kossek et al., 2012; Michailidis, 2008; Milstein, 2021) and work/life balance (Arnett, 2021; Fitzpatrick-Harnish & Sweet, 2021; Milstein, 2021) prior to COVID-19; however, these occurrences have been exacerbated because

of the pandemic (Arnett, 2021; Augustus, 2021; Fitzpatrick-Harnish & Sweet, 2021; Milstein, 2021). Fitzpatrick-Harnish and Sweet (2021) noted the work/life balance demands as if women were “living within two worlds. The worlds don’t collide but affect each other. Each world has its own expectations, timelines, mental load, demands, challenges” (February 26, 2021, 2:00 P.M.). The researchers found MTEs survived academia by packing their work into every small block of time during the day so they could be home with their families in the off-work hours; this left MTEs feeling exhausted and unable to adapt if schedules changed (Fitzpatrick-Harnish & Sweet, 2021).

Researchers examining COVID-19 speculated that the demands of parenting while working from home would have the greatest impact on working women with children (Arnett, 2021; Augustus, 2021; Brown, 2010; Fitzpatrick-Harnish & Sweet, 2021). The closure of schools, move to remote learning, and lack of childcare forced parents to work from home while simultaneously providing remote school and childcare (Alon et al., 2020; Augustus, 2021; Yildirim & Eslen-Ziya, 2020). The pandemic highlighted the existing inequities due to the exaggerated disparities related to home responsibilities held by working parents related to gender (Anderson et al., 2020; Augustus, 2021; Guatimosim, 2020; Inno et al., 2020; Minello, 2020; Myers et al., 2020; Viglione, 2020). A few researchers found the burden of childcare and remote learning to be greater for those who have children with special needs (Arnett, 2021; Milstein, 2021).

The pandemic also has exacerbated gender equity issues in terms of job tasks and promotion and tenure expectations (Augustus, 2021). Prior to the pandemic, women with young children were less likely than their male counterparts to achieve tenure and more likely to experience discrimination based on family status (Mason & Gould, 2002, 2004; Mason et al.,

2006; Wolfinger et al., 2008). Submissions to journals by women declined during the pandemic while submissions by male authors increased. The largest decline were submissions by female parents of multiple children, especially whose children were young (Anderson, Nielsen, & Simone, 2020; Inno, Rotundi, & Piccialli, 2020; Myers et al, 2020; Viglione, 2020). Researchers have shown a lack of time for research among female academics and significantly more time taken for service and teaching during the pandemic (Arnett, 2021; Fitzpatrick-Harnish & Sweet, 2021; Milstein, 2021). Milstein (2021) noted that faculty took on the role of therapist to their students during the pandemic, adding to both their time and mental/emotional load. In addition, women with children were more likely to pivot their careers to take care of ill family members or were still required to teach and perform service during leave or times of family emergency (Blau & DeVaro, 2007; Fitzpatrick-Harnish & Sweet, 2021).

Due to the impact Covid-19 has had on our profession, we wanted to consider how MTEs, specifically those who are mothers, have navigated teaching and parenting. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine how MTE mothers have adapted instructional practices to ensure the health and safety of their students, while also caring for their families and personal wellbeing. To better understand these issues the following research questions were posed: 1. How are MTEs adapting their curriculum to meet requirements and regulations associated with COVID-19? 2. What are the emotional implications of teaching during a pandemic, both for the teacher and their perceived implications for students? 3. What do MTEs gain by participating in a learning community during a pandemic?

Design

We chose a basic qualitative study design for this study. According to Merriam and Tisdale (2016) this design is suited for researchers who wish to understand “how people interpret

their experiences [the pandemic] . . .construct their worlds [a new normal], and meaning they attribute to their experiences [shifts in praxis]” (p. 23). As MTE mothers ourselves, we were interested in how other MTE mothers made “sense of their lives and their worlds” through COVID-19 (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.25). After obtaining Institutional Review Board approval from both researcher universities, participants were purposively sampled to include five female music teacher educators, each on faculty at separate institutions from a variety of regions in the United States. We first recruited interest on a social media page specifically for MTE mothers. We then emailed several of the group page members individually. Participants in this study represent choral, general, instrumental, and string disciplines, with one participant working as the only music education faculty member at her institution. We also served as participant-researchers and intended the group to serve not only as a site for research, but as a learning community to support one another during the pandemic.

Data Collection, Trustworthiness, and Analysis

Data we collected were initial interviews, transcriptions of group Zoom meetings, Discord® discussions, exit interviews, and researcher memos. Initial and exit interviews were semi-structured with six open-ended questions that allowed participants to guide the conversation. A total of four group Zoom meetings followed a similar structure. Trustworthiness of the data was ensured through multiple points of data collection, member checks, and peer review. We invited participants to check transcriptions, codes, and the study write up to ensure their voices were accurately represented. Only one participant suggested minor changes to transcriptions. We coded interview and meeting transcriptions separately using Process and In Vivo coding (Saldaña, 2016), and then compared code lists for triangulation. Additionally, to remain aware of our own experiences and assumptions we employed reflexivity to ensure themes

emerged from the group rather than our own biases (Patton, 2015). We then used code mapping to organize codes into categories, and pattern coding for our second cycle of coding to bring categories into more “meaningful and parsimonious units of analysis” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 236), from there themes emerged.

Researcher’s Lens

Author One:

My first experiences as a mother in higher education were in graduate school. I did not have the necessary support needed to balance motherhood, coursework, and assistantship responsibilities. I completed my doctorate and began my career as a music teacher educator during the height of the pandemic. These experiences shape the biases I have as a music teacher educator and researcher.

Author Two:

I became a mother during the dissertation and job interviewing phase of my doctoral program and began my first tenure-track position ABD and as a new mother. After moving to a new university, the pandemic began during the second semester of my first year at a Research One institution. Experiences as a mother, wife, and tenure-track professor prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic have shaped my biases as a music teacher educator and scholar.

Participants and Setting

Learning communities are multi-faceted (Dufor, 2004; Dufour & Eaker, 1998). Some are formally structured and center on data analysis, consider student outcomes, and plan for student achievement. Others are informal, providing participants a space to discuss issues important to them (Bell-Robertson, 2014, 2015; Pellegrino, et al., 2018). For this study, the learning

community was a virtual, informal space where MTEs shared their lived experience of teaching and parenting during the trauma of a pandemic.

Five individuals participated in our informal community, Eva, Sam, Janet, Poppy, and Jane. Eva works at a public university in the southern United States, is tenured, and became a mother during the pandemic. Sam works at a public university, in the Midwest, is tenured, and is the mother of two children aged 9 and 12. Janet works at a public university in the southern United States, finished her first year as a professor in Spring 2021, and is a mother of two a newborn and a three-year-old. Poppy teaches at a public university in the southwest, she also finished her first year as a professor in Spring 2021 and has one child aged three years. Jane works at a public university in the Midwest, is tenured, and has two children aged three and six. All participants were married and white and were provided consent for participation before initial interviews. Ages of participants' children reflect their age at the time of data collection.

Participants met with the participant-researchers four times between February and April through Zoom. At meetings, we employed guiding questions based on initial interviews and previous meeting transcriptions to initiate deeper conversations. Discord® was used between meetings, to allow participants to support each other and continue group discussions. Discord® is a voice over internet protocol (VoIP) platform that provides a space to message, share documents, and video chat. Due to the nature of being a mother and MTE, we never had full attendance at each meeting except our first. Jane did not participate in the final meeting or exit interview which is indicative of the themes that emerged from our data.

Findings

Through our data analysis, five themes emerged: Stressors, Changes, and Positives from COVID; Finding Balance: Teaching While Parenting, Parenting While Teaching, and Needing

Spousal Support; Blurred Lines: Losing, Reforming, and Creating Boundaries, Impact on Students and Instruction; and Benefits of Participation: Considering Work Demands, Mental Health, and Gratitude. We expected to see themes that centered on stress, family, and students. Themes that emerged regarding school and work boundaries and the mental health benefits of participation in the informal learning community were unexpected. We extracted quotes from participants that best support each theme.

Stressors, Changes and Positives from COVID

During initial interviews participants were asked to share their experiences after the initial shutdown.

It was really a scramble when we realized that we no longer would have preschool or daycare. So we said, ‘Okay, you get mornings [with the kids], I get afternoons, and we both work nights. . .it was so frantic, and we [her and her partner] didn’t see each other. We were not planning on having to teach and raise two small children in a 1000 sq. foot apartment. (Jane, initial interview)

Online learning and a return to school in Fall 2020 also were areas of concern for participants.

My daughter only has one kidney. . .and we don’t know the long-term effects [of COVID]. I also didn’t want to sit my kids on the computer all day long every day. I was really torn, so I enrolled her online and then decided to homeschool. (Sam, meeting one)

Most participants expressed feeling overwhelmed with preparing for the Fall 2020 semester. “I really felt like I needed to do professional development over the summer to prepare for fall. . .and I’m not sure any of it was particularly helpful. . .we’ve never been Zoom teachers before!!” (Jane, initial interview). Janet shared that she spent most of her summer in meetings with other large ensemble directors trying to plan and prepare instruction as new information on

aerosols was released. “There was no point planning for a concert, there was no point in doing anything because I just didn’t see us being able to do it” (Janet, initial interview). Janet also shared that she had to change curriculum because she couldn’t lead her ensemble. “I can’t make them sing at home. I changed the choir to vocal development techniques. I’ve never taught anything like that over Zoom” (initial interview). Eva’s university divided a typical 15-week semester into two eight-week semesters to allow for fewer students on campus. “We didn’t have a choice, of putting it [the semester] in eight weeks. How am I gonna fit everything into eight weeks???” (initial interview). Sam, the only participant who prepared for an in person semester still expressed concerns. “We were in person out of the gate. The difference for preparation was, how do I create an ensemble experience in conducting, in a safe way? So, we were outside, until the first test and then it began raining [she chuckles]” (Sam, initial interview). Author two felt they could do no preparation due to COVID policies changing weekly at their university. “Every time I thought I had it [Fall] figured out, I would get another call with a change. That was my entire summer. And then the week before school started, ‘nope, you’re not going face to face” (Author two, meeting one).

Participants also expressed stress and frustration over little things that would not have bothered them pre-COVID. “All of my tears have come from stupid things like, the baby monitor. I cannot get it to pair [with my phone] and I should have quit trying three weeks ago but I’m still emailing customer service” (Eva, meeting one). “I would sit on the couch with my husband, watching Netflix and just cry, and I was like, ‘what is happening?’ I’m not a crier” (author two, meeting one).

Poppy and Janet shared having health issues due to the stress of the pandemic. “I was diagnosed with _____. I’ve had to change my whole diet. I think Covid has contributed to this”

(Poppy, meeting four). For Janet, it was a combination of physical and mental. “I feel more anxious and overwhelmed than normal” (meeting, three). Eva shared that she too had health issues. “I have an appointment for a _____ on Monday. If it were a normal semester, I would be pushing myself to be on campus and would not have this time to go to the doctor” (exit interview). ~~Participant feelings of parent role and work-related stressors are consistent with the literature pre/post pandemic (Anderson, Nielsen, & Simone, 2020; Brown, 2010; Kossek et al., 2012; Michailidis, 2008; Milstein, 2021).~~

A few participants did highlight positive changes due to the pandemic. Janet said the pandemic helped her finish her dissertation. “[It] helped me to get it done on time. That saved me time, money, and stress. That was one benefit” (initial interview). Sam, who admitted to being “chronically overscheduled” shared that it was “really nice to just be forced to not have a million things to do all of the time” (initial interview). Jane appreciated the added time with her children. “I never expected this time. We wouldn’t be doing half of what we are doing; reading the books that we are reading and teaching the kids to read. I’m just trying to take the good things from [COVID]” (Jane, initial interview).

Finding Balance: Teaching While Parenting, Parenting While Teaching, and Needing Spousal Support

As MTEs and mothers, participants had to navigate the education and supervision of their children in addition to those they teach, and for some while they taught. Having to work at home and constantly share space with spouses and children impacted participants’ roles as MTEs. Eva struggled to compartmentalize.

I was advising a collegiate NAFME meeting and my four-month-old was on the bed screaming. While I’m on zoom I try to bounce to get them to calm down, but at some

point you just have to sit them down on the bed and let them scream while I try to do my job. At the same time I'm trying to communicate with someone to get a quote on landscaping, and then my husband comes in and saves the day. How am I supposed to be doing three things at once? (meeting one)

Eva shared that she was jealous of her husband being able to leave the house for his job. Janet and Sam felt similarly to Eva.

Janet: He's always here when I am in a meeting or teaching. He runs in and wants to say high. Or He'll know that he is not supposed to be in [the room] so he will stand on the other side of the computer just throwing shit everywhere!

Sam: My husband and I have this thing, like a ventriloquist. You're trying to look like a normal person, like you're not screaming across the room at your children to stop what they are doing [Sam models what she means and we all laugh].

Poppy shared that daycare was a lifesaver. "I feel fortunate to have a daycare that is small, and we feel safe sending our daughter too. I wouldn't be able to teach otherwise" (meeting one). For Jane, daycare and kindergarten were not options due to her health. "We have immunocompromised people in our home and we both have to work. Trying to teach brass [her partner] and viola in a 1000 sq foot apartment with two little kids is bananas" (meeting one). Jane, like Sam, decided to homeschool her children which compounded her stress.

Some participants felt the impact the pandemic had on their children caused them the most stress. "I'm not stressed because of the pandemic, I'm stressed because of what the pandemic is doing to my kids" (Author one, meeting two). For Sam's son, schoolwork was a constant battle.

I either do my workday and get it done or [do it] at night and go home and fight the fight with my son. It was miserable. He got his work done, he is ready for his test tomorrow, but it was miserable. (meeting two)

Participants with younger children expressed similar feelings. “It was rough. He was sad. He’ll say things like ‘I want [child’s name] to come over and play,’ and he is not able to. In his world that’s stress” (Janet, meeting two). Sam shared that a lowered level of allowed social interaction and a return to school has been difficult for her children. “To have a certain amount of social interaction [outside only] has honestly saved my daughter because she has felt the stress of that [lack of social interaction]. The reason we started school for our daughter was [for her] mental health (Sam, meeting two).

A point of frustration for some participants was a lack of spousal support. “My husband could not engage in the schooling. He struggled to dig deep and find the patience necessary to work with the kids” (Sam, meeting one). During our third meeting, Sam and Janet had an exchange over their absent-minded spouses.

Sam: I’m sorry but you’ve got to do some shit that these men don’t need to do because I’m working! [sharing an exchange between she and her husband]

Janet: You are totally right. My husband is awesome, but it is just the number of times that I have to bring something to his attention. He knows what I’m doing, but this man doesn’t know what I’m going through or what I need. I don’t think he realizes how much time I’m not actually working because I’m doing stuff with my boobs!

Sam: I hear you, my husband is a good man, but we got into this big fight because I came home [from school] and my daughter had not showered. I was like, you live in this house.

Also, she's not going to eat that because she's never eaten that, why are you giving. . .I'm not endowed with special knowledge!!

Janet: Oh my gosh. We are in the same marriage! [laughter from all of us]

Despite teaching while parenting and a lack of spousal support, a few participants mentioned positive family outcomes. "A silver lining was that I learned many things about my son and was able to support him in learning" (Sam, meeting one). For Janet, she appreciated the extra time with her newborn. "I'm not enjoying yellow necessarily [covid alert], but I'm perfectly happy to just snuggle the baby and watch Netflix" (meeting two). Jane found that she loved homeschooling. "I like figuring out how they learn and how to motivate them. My kids are happy. [My son] is thriving and his best friend is his little sister. I can see why people do it [home school]" (meeting three).

Blurred Lines: Losing, Reforming, and Creating New Boundaries

Most participants stated the pandemic shifted their work/home life balance. For some, COVID improved their work/home balance.

I had complications [with pregnancy] and it [the pandemic] gave me a chance to slow down and really focus on myself. I'm not grateful that the pandemic happened, but I'm grateful I had that time away from school. [Pre-Covid] I know I would have pushed my body past where healthy is. (Eva, initial interview)

Poppy shared that she "always struggled with work life balance, and work has always won" (meeting three). When asked if that had changed, she stated, "being at home all the time has made me care a lot more about my life at home. . .I find myself less willing to give up that time as things start entering the calendar again" (Poppy, meeting three).

Sam, pre-pandemic, felt beholden to a certain number of work hours during the day.

I think COVID has actually emboldened me to be like, I gotta do family. I didn't feel guilty about coming home in the middle of the day to help my son, and I don't think I ever would have given myself permission like this if COVID hadn't happened. (meeting two)

For Janet, the pandemic did not help her work/home balance. "I was always good at balancing. I did work at work and home at home, and that was that. Now those lines are so blurred, it's really hard to know the difference. I have a lot of mom guilt" (Janet, meeting three).

A few participants expressed discomfort with how boundaries between home and school became blurred due to teaching over Zoom.

We [her and her husband] are still concerned about when our kids come into the zoom class. I'm so embarrassed and it is so unprofessional. Or you know, if I have to let my dog out during the middle of class. My breast pump is on the counter, and oh there's my liquor over there. I just feel like I'm always trying to make sure that whatever is in the background is appropriate for whomever is in the room. (Janet, meeting three)

While Sam felt uncomfortable dividing her home space into workspace, it was necessary. "It feels weird to Zoom from my bedroom. . . but it's the quietest place in my home. I still feel weird about it, but by God, I'm a grown ass person and this is where I am right now" (Sam, meeting four). Eva agreed with Sam.

I have lost my give a shit factor. I have attended so many zoom meetings without a bra. It's 8:00 pm, I wouldn't normally go to a meeting at 8:00 pm. Why am I putting on a bra [for this]?!?!?" (Eva, meeting four).

Author two shared she felt she had lost the balance between work and home. “The demands on my time from work have exponentially increased. I work on weekends, late at night. I feel the need to meet my students where they are and that means I work all the time” (meeting four).

As Sam stated, “the boundaries between work and home have just been so blurred that I do fear a little bit that we might get to the point where we feel like we have to be available all the time” (exit interview).

The blurred lines between work and home also allow people to witness exchanges that, pre-covid, would not have been public. During our third meeting Sam shared a conversation she had with a colleague that left her feeling vulnerable.

A colleague was guest lecturing for a friend of mine and her class heard the guest lecturers’ child have a pretty intense outburst. This child is a year younger than my son and is neurodiverse. This friend shared that she had not had this experience in her home and was shocked that a child would speak that way to a parent. Knowing that my role in that circumstance was supposed to also be aghast, but I was like, that sounds like every morning in my house. Every time I wake up my son, I have a particular set of behaviors that I can expect. I was just so struck by the fact that my friend would never have experienced that without zoom. It suddenly made me see how maybe some people view me and my experience as a parent and my children in a way that I had not considered. That separation between personal and professional that some people have really valued was torn away without consent on some level (meeting three).

Zoom is a window into our personal spaces, allowing colleagues and students to see us “behind closed doors.” As author one shared, “some people get it, because they live it, and other people

do not, and their response can be hurtful. Our safe spaces may no longer be safe” (meeting three).

Impact on Students and Instruction

Participants frequently discussed how the pandemic impacted those they taught and their instruction. Expectations of multiple modalities of teaching as well as designing new or condensed syllabi was overwhelming for participants. “We didn’t have a choice of putting it into eight weeks [the semester]. I absolutely had to cut something. It was teaching episodes. I hate not having the kids have as many opportunities to teach” (Eva, initial interview). Janet felt compelled to design a new class rather than try to lead an ensemble online.

It’s the beginner choir. It’s a lot of people who aren’t primarily singers or do not consider themselves singers. It is a difficult choir to plan for normally. I wasn’t going to make them sing at home in front of their families and whoever else might be around. I thought they’re not going to want to do it. It is already hard *in person* to get them to come out of their shell. So, I made it a group voice class over Zoom. We did warm ups and vocal development. That took a lot of planning because I have never taught anything like that before, I had to create it from scratch. (initial interview)

Sam shared that, “teaching hybrid is the hardest because you’re trying to engage people through the computer and engage people in class. How do you have [difficult] conversations when you’re masked or can’t all be in the room at the same time?” (meeting one). Sam also expressed frustration over not being able to read students’ faces due to the masks. “You can’t see anything. You don’t know if the students understand, are engaged, are enjoying it, do they hate you? I’m trying to create a community and it’s impossible. I [feel like] just performed into a tempurpedic

mattress” (Sam, meeting one) Poppy struggled with burnout. “I have this general decline in energy, and so it makes everything harder” (Poppy, exit interview).

Some participants were keenly aware of the mental health of those they teach. “We have this responsibility for our students. Seeing all that they are going through during this time, each one of their individual difficult situations has been really hard for me” (Janet, meeting four). Author one shared that most meetings with students were not for issues with assignments but coping with the pandemic. “I have students I can tell they’re struggling. They’ll ask, ‘Can I just meet with you for a few minutes, I just need your opinion on something,’ and it’s usually about managing stress” (Author one, meeting two). Sam was concerned about the health and safety of students on a more global level. “Domestic violence and abuse in general is up” (meeting three).

A few participants felt the pandemic provided them with new teaching strategies. For Janet, incorporating technology into teaching was new for her.

I’ve never been one for the technology aspect of the classroom. Not that I don’t think it is worthy of my time, I’m just not great with it. Now I’m seeing these really great uses of technology that really save time and energy. It’s like the most incredible stuff that I wish I had learned about sooner. (exit interview)

Poppy shared that she completely changed the way she graded. She knew students were struggling with online learning but still wanted to hold them accountable. “I want my students to develop a sense of agency and I saw grading as an impediment to that because I was not giving them any autonomy. So, I designed a complex grading system that provided it” (exit interview). For Sam, it was less complex. “As an educator I have just gotten a shot in the arm and it’s pretty ironic that it’s not some fancy new technology that I learned as a result of COVID, it’s freaking PowerPoint [we all laugh]” (meeting three).

Hybrid teaching, which for some participants began Spring 2021 caused a few participants cognitive dissonance. “My brain does not work the way it did pre-covid. I cannot focus the way I did when I’m teaching in the moment. I think it’s from COVID, from being at home. When I needed to stop [at home], I could stop” (Eva, exit interview). Eva explained how the return to the classroom impacted her. “Now when I’m teaching [in person] there is no stopping. There is this big push to record live teaching. I don’t feel I can be fully present in any of those spaces all at once. (exit interview) Sam also shared frustration with hybrid teaching.

My energy teaching is not what it used to be. I’m worried about so many things I hadn’t had to worry about before. Is somebody messaging in the chat? Did someone raise their hand at home? Can you hear me okay? Can you hear the comments someone [in class] said? Oh, and we have to actually read what we’re responding to in the chat because if someone watches it [the video] later they’re not going to see the chat. (exit interview)

Benefits of Participation: Considering Work Demands, Mental Health, and Gratitude

Participants were balanced between those with and without tenure. Eva, a tenured MTE, shared the following: “One thing I noticed was the difference between the women who had tenure and the women who didn’t. I have the power to make the decision of what I want to let go instead of someone else. They don’t” (exit interview). Non-tenured MTEs in the group shared they had a difficult time with work demands and taking time for themselves; however, as meetings progressed that changed. Poppy shared that, “I like to work. I like my job. I haven’t wanted to slow down, and now, I don’t think I’m going back to what I was doing before.” Janet shared she felt she “had to say yes” (meeting two). Having a newborn and the support of the group helped her resist that pressure. “I don’t have the time now that I have a baby!” (Janet, exit interview). Sam, who has tenure, suggested that the age of the children at home factors into that

need to say yes or no. “I think it makes a difference about the age of your child on the kinds of pulls on your time. It [pulls] against your work responsibilities. Not in a bigger way, but in a different way” (meeting four). Sam provided validation for the younger participants. “I’m really glad you said that. It’s really good to hear that further down the road when we are mothering older kids that it can come back around [time]” (Poppy, meeting four).

Most participants expressed gratitude for the informal space and the benefits of participation on their mental health and life perspective. “I just want to say I’ve enjoyed this. Every time you send the reminder, I’m like oh!, that’s right now and then I always enjoy when we are here talking” (Sam, meeting four). Eva felt her participation helped her to be more aware of her own needs and stressed the importance of modeling that for those we teach. “I really needed someone to say, and this study helped me a lot with that, to voice out loud, I need time to take care of my health. . .I think we need to model that behavior for our students too” (exit interview). Sam benefited from being able to connect and share experiences as MTEs.

Being able to speak about what it’s like to be a mom in academia. . .being a working mom is a huge challenge. It was beneficial to hear what people were struggling with. It helped me grow my empathy and understanding the full range of challenges working moms navigate. (exit interview)

Janet expressed that she “loved” participating in the study and found it “kind of therapeutic” (exit interview).

Nobody really knows what you’re going through except the person going through it. So, it was really nice to have a group of people who I felt could understand things I was going through. It was so good to hear other people’s experiences and feel normal because

other people also do similar things as you. The [meetings] gave me a place to speak on those things that I wasn't necessarily comfortable sharing anywhere else. (exit interview)

Discussion and Implications

MTE mothers balance those they teach, their families, and their research and service on a daily basis often without regard to their own physical, mental, or professional needs (Fitzpatrick & Sweet, 2021). Participants willingly gave of their time and demonstrated vulnerability as they shared their experiences parenting and teaching during the pandemic. Each MTE mother in this study is a passionate music educator, dedicated to their craft, partner, and children. However, each indicated that the pandemic impacted their work home balance, their physical and mental stress, and at times the quality of their work and parenting. While studies on the impact of the pandemic on individual stress and work performance are limited, due to the newness of COVID, it would seem our findings are consistent with what is found in previous literature (Arnett, 2021; Brown, 2010; Kossek et al., 2018; Michailidis, 2008). Participants struggled to manage the instruction of both their kids and their students (Arnett, 2021; Fitzpatrick & Sweet, 2021). For many participants, the inability to separate home and workspaces due to quarantine increased stress as well as negatively impacted their course content, design, and instruction. (Arnett, 2021; Milstein, 2021). Additional stressors included what Fitzpatrick and Sweet (2021) call “invisible and visible parenting” (February 26, 2021).

Although findings from this study cannot be generalizable to every MTE who is a mother, our findings can provide suggestions that may influence policy or practice changes (Patton, 2015). While this study centered the impact of the pandemic on MTE mothers, there are implications for change to institutions of higher learning to better support MTE mothers. It

should be noted that COVID-19 has not gone away. MTE mothers are still working to accommodate their work expectations while ensuring the safety and care of their children.

The MTEs who participated in this study had teaching loads that ranged from 2x2 (two classes each semester) to 4x5. Institutions of higher learning could reconsider course loads to better assist MTE mothers with their work life balance. A consideration of tenure requirements also may alleviate MTE stress (Arnett, 2021; Kitzpatrick & Sweet, 2021; Mason & Gould, 2002; Mason & Gould, 2004; Mason, Gould, & Wolfinger, 2006; Milstein, 2021; Wolfinger, Mason, & Gould, 2008). Current tenure requirements for MTEs typically include teaching, research and creative activity, and service. While percentages of each category vary between institutions, many institutions give more weight to research and creativity than to teaching toward tenure. These requirements do not accommodate the modern MTE mother. To better accommodate MTE mothers, institutions of higher education should give more weight to teaching over research and creativity, and service for tenure-track MTEs. Institutions of higher education also could provide assistance with child-care, especially those institutions with lab schools. University lab schools that prioritize children of faculty members before enrolling children of non-faculty members, would provide a great service to MTE mothers, child-care, while also alleviating some stress of attaining child-care (cost, location, covid-safety, proximity). Additionally, institutions of higher learning may wish to consider new policies which provide MTEs flexibility in their mode of instruction. COVID has shown us that we can employ online instruction successfully. For MTE mothers and fathers to be allowed the flexibility to teach from home when they or their child is sick would alleviate the stress of finding child-care in order to maintain university obligations.

Participants in this study expressed gratitude for our informal learning community. This informal learning community provided a safe space to share concerns, stressors, seek advice, and

connect as MTE mothers. Researchers have established the benefit of learning communities in previous research (Author, 2020; Pellegrino et al., 2014; 2018). Institutions of higher learning could provide opportunities for on campus learning communities specific to mothers. While there is currently a Facebook group for MTE mothers, which is a great resource, it was not meant to provide the weekly check-ins or more intimate space that the informal learning community provided participants in this study. A benefit from participating in this informal learning community was not only did participants feel seen and supported, ideas of how to alleviate stress of teaching and parenting were discussed. Assignments, grading, course design, and how to support students' mental health also were discussed by each MTE during meetings. These conversations helped participants shift typical norms in teaching and learning, to provide less stress for them and those they teach.

While our findings are consistent with current literature, we were surprised by the engagement and selflessness of participants. Prior to the pandemic, participants were already busy balancing work and home. Despite the pandemic, the ever-changing covid regulations at their institutions, and the additional workloads to recreate courses and alternative assignments within weeks if not days, these women gave of themselves to the benefit of the group. The capacity that mothers have to give, to extend compassion and grace to others while often forgetting to do the same for themselves seems absent from the literature. While researchers have examined tenure expectations, extensive workloads, and the balancing of roles between mother and professor, these participants provided a new perspective to the literature, vulnerability and resilience. In addition, Participants left each meeting encouraged to take steps to meet their expressed needs. We believe that the informal learning community allowed participants to process and grieve their unique pandemic experience and acknowledge specific

needs. This group of MTE mothers provided one another space for increased vulnerability and unfiltered emotion. Meetings evolved organically to include parenting and teaching advice that, while not pandemic specific, offered each participant the opportunity to mentor or be mentored.

There are implications for future research. It would be beneficial to consider the perceived stress and work life balance between MTE mothers and MTE fathers. An examination of tenure expectations and successful application of tenure between institutions too would be beneficial. As we work toward a post-Covid world more information is needed regarding the recovery process and longer-lasting effects of COVID on MTE mothers, their students, families, and institutions. While studies on women in the academy have been conducted for some time, more information is necessary to better understand the demands on, and the needs of, MTE mothers in a post-pandemic world. These studies may provide further insight into the professional expectations of MTE mothers and perhaps provide the impetus for change.

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Kodály-based Folk Song Collecting: A Multiple Case Study

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Abstract

Three music educators engaged in a multiple case study bounded by the experience of completing a folk song collection as part of Kodály certification requirements at an American university-based teacher training program. The purpose of this study was to explore these teachers' perceptions of their experiences collecting and analyzing their folk song collections, and to reflect on the (1) criteria they used to select songs to include in their collection; (2) challenges they experienced during the process and ways they addressed them; (3) resources they found most valuable in crafting their collection; (4) ways the participants utilized their collection in their teaching; and, (5) suggestions for enhancing the project as a whole. Implications include ways Kodály teacher training programs can design folk song collection projects to best meet teachers' needs.

Keywords: Kodály certification, folk song collection, repertoire selection

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Introduction

School music educators interested in gaining expertise in Kodály-based pedagogy often choose to participate in intensive summer training leading to Kodály certification. This professional development is offered in 38 locations in the United States (<https://www.oake.org/education-programs/>) and includes at least three summers of coursework that are usually offered in two- or three-week sessions during each of the three summers. Certification requirements for endorsed programs are determined by the Organization of American Kodály Educators (OAKE) and emphasize the organization's mission to "support music education of the highest quality, promote universal music literacy and lifelong music making, preserve the musical heritage of the people of the United States of America through education, artistic performance, advocacy and research" (oake.org). These programs require minimum class time in the following areas (summarized from oake.org):

Topic:	Content:	Hours
Musicianship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sight singing -Ear training -Dictation -Solfège -Exercises focused on pentatonic, diatonic, modal, and chromatic music 	50-70
Conducting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Choral conducting -Vocal techniques -Analyzing vocal scores - Choosing appropriate repertoire -Integration of Kodály-based principles in the choral and classroom rehearsal 	30-45

Choral Ensemble	-Performance of music appropriate for choral ensembles -Solmization for music reading -Rehearsal techniques -Demonstration of choral skills	30-45
Music Literature	-Performance and analysis of diverse musical genres -Collection and analysis of personal music collection for instructional use	30-60
Pedagogy/Teaching Process and Skills	-History, philosophy, score, and sequence for spiral curricula -Instructional planning - Development of methodological and teaching skills	50-70

In addition to the required coursework, completion of Kodály Certification includes the assembly of a personal collection of music literature representative of genres including traditional children's songs and games, folk music of predominant culture groups in the United States and other countries in the world, and quality art music for teaching (oake.org). As part of this folk song collection, teachers must also complete a detailed pedagogical and musical analysis of the collected material and a detailed index for pedagogical purposes. Individual programs have the autonomy to determine specific criteria for the song collection component, and so the criteria often vary from program to program.

Literature Review

Although research literature exists that is related to Kodály-based pedagogy and methodology, research related to music teachers' perceptions and experiences creating and

analyzing their personal folk song collections and studies related to the value of these collections for future pedagogical purposes is virtually nonexistent. In terms of repertoire selection in a broader sense, literature exists describing how teachers should consider ways repertoire selection represents or misrepresents groups of persons (e.g., Hess, 2018; Shaw, 2018, 2019), and ways repertoire can be selected for practicality, bias, and high “cultural validity” (Abril, 2006). Kelly-McHale (2018) emphasized that the origins and background of a song must be acknowledged and included, and that delving into complex histories of songs is important in order to accurately represent the song. Beyond studies related to literature selection, no study current exists that explores this process of repertoire selection within the context of Kodály certification. Since the creation of these collections is an integral component of Kodály certification, an exploration of teachers’ experiences and perceptions of the process and how they utilize their collection potentially contributes to the literature related to the value of folk song collection projects as components of professional development programs for experienced music educators.

Although participants in Kodály certification programs likely benefit from all components of the certification process, the focus of this study is on the folk song collection process specifically. This decision to narrow the study focus was based on a desire to delve more deeply into one important component of the process, rather than provide broad perspectives on the experience as a whole. According to Hess (2017), repertoire selection conveys teachers’ values to their students, and a teacher’s own cultural and musical background impacts the repertoire they choose as well as the ways in which they choose to teach it (Kindall-Smith, McKoy, & Mills, 2011). Although pedagogical strategies and other components of teaching music are also important, a closer examination of ways teachers chose repertoire provides insights into ways repertoire choices inform teachers’ learning goals for their students.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore three music teachers' perceptions of their experiences collecting and analyzing their folk song collection as part of a Kodály-based teacher education program. The following questions guided this study: (1) What criteria do participants use to determine which songs to include in their collection? (2) What challenges did participants experience during the process of folk song collecting and how did they address these challenges? (3) What resources did the participants find most valuable in crafting their folk song collection? (4) How did the participants utilize their collection in their teaching? (5) What types of repertoire did participants include in their folk song collections? (6) What suggestions do participants have to improve the value of the project?

Method

Participants

Potential participants were invited from a cohort that completed their Kodály Certification together at a large American university. The next section introduces the three participants individually, and briefly highlights their teaching backgrounds and motivations to pursue Kodály certification.

John. John had over 10 years prior experience in educational publishing and as a private instrumental teacher. When he was hired to teach music at a private school, he completed state-level music teacher certification through a graduate program. He was motivated to pursue Kodály certification because a relative had given him Kodály and Orff-Schulwerk teaching materials. He initially used these materials to teach himself about these approaches, and found he gravitated towards the Kodály materials because the sequencing of musical concepts and lesson plan flow matched his teaching style. After a colleague introduced him to a local chapter of OAKE and encouraged him to pursue certification, he began the Kodály certification program.

Mary. Mary had five years of teaching experience, and pursued Kodály certification because she was interested in a well-defined, well-rounded philosophy and pedagogical approach for teaching music. She described how her background as a singer resonated with the strong singing emphasis within the Kodály approach. Her first teaching experiences included teaching children piano and voice, and subsequently teaching a music theatre class further developed her love of teaching children music. Initially she was performing part time and teaching part time, and then decided to “commit her musical self” to being a teacher. She accepted a job at a new private school teaching preschool through Grade Eight when she had little experience teaching classroom music and described how her teaching grew along with the school. After eight years, she transitioned to another private school that had a strong arts focus, and added percussion class, recorder, and ukulele to her teaching skills. She described how the Kodály certification program played a big role in her transition from one school to the next, and how her new school encouraged her to pursue this training.

Sam. Sam had 16 years of teaching experience that included general music, chorus and directing musicals, as well as teaching general classroom preschool, first grade, and second grade. She had completed level one of Orff-Schulwerk after returning to music teaching following general classroom teaching, and at the time of this study had begun a doctoral degree in music education. Orff-Schulwerk was very popular in her state, and she found it to be useful, but she sought an approach with a strong emphasis on singing because of her own background as a singer. She decided to try Kodály Level One, and it resonated with her, so she completed the full certification.

Study Design

Multiple case studies represent an intentionally open and flexible approach to inquiry, and draw on varied data sources (Barrett, 2014). The focus is on examining “particularity and complexity” of an activity “within important circumstances” (Stake, 1995, 2000). This multiple case study was bounded (Ragin, 1992) by the experience of completing a folk song collection as part of Kodály certification within one specific cohort of music teachers. This case study aimed to “understand a specific issue, problem, or concern” and the cases were selected to “best understand the problem” (Creswell, 2013, p. 98). Each individual case represented an individual teacher’s experiences, and the multiple case explored the similarities between the three participants’ experiences (Creswell, 2013). The three participants established and maintained regular professional contact with each other during and after completion of their certification levels. They had a strong professional and personal connection which potentially promoted a strong sense of group understanding as part of the multiple case (Ragin, 1992). Two years between certification completion and the first study interviews provided ample opportunity for participants to utilize their completed folk song collection in their teaching if they chose to do so.

Data for this study included individual participant interviews with the researcher and a focus group interview with all three participants via Zoom (Zoom Video Communications, Inc., 2016) written reflections provided via Google Forms, and digital copies of the participants’ folk song collections and indices. Data was coded using NVivo software (QSR, 2020). Individual data generated codes based on prominence and emergent themes. Using cross-case analysis (Stake, 2006), the multiple case generated themes based on the guiding research questions.

Sample discussion prompts for the interviews included: (1) Describe your experiences completing the folk song project; (2) How has the folk song project impacted your teaching and your students’ learning? (3) What criteria did you use in selecting songs to include? (4) Give an

example of a time you used a song from your collection in your teaching; (5) What challenges did you experience related to completing the project? (6) Are there any changes you would make to the process or requirements of the project?

Data Analysis

Trustworthiness was ensured through member-checking and triangulation of data sources, with participants given the opportunity to modify information as needed. Information from the video-recorded interviews was triangulated with the written reflections and other data sources, including the folk song collection and indices. The participants' folk song collections were reviewed to support statements from the interviews, such as choices of particular repertoire, or examples of song analysis or criteria. Prior to submission, all participants reviewed this article and were offered the opportunity to make any changes. An external reviewer was not utilized prior to article submission, since the participants' own perspectives on trustworthiness were prioritized over external opinions. This is potentially a limitation of the study but was a conscious choice to provide participants maximum autonomy in making decisions about what should be shared in an article about their experiences.

Following the requirements of their specific university-based program, the participants' folk song collections contained a minimum of 150 songs, each with accompanying musical and pedagogical analysis using a set of criteria provided by the program via an analysis sheet. The primary criteria included the tone set, rhythmic content, scale name, origin and source information, possible pedagogical uses, accompanying games, and form of the song.

Several common themes emerged from individual cases, as well as the multiple case with all three participants. These themes can be synthesized as: (1) choosing songs for their collections; (2) song analysis form; (3) use of the song collection after completion; (4)

inadequacy of transcribed Western Standard Music Notation (WSMN) and prescribed analysis criteria; and (5) suggested changes to improve the project.

Choosing Songs for Their Collections

The participants described several common criteria they used in selecting songs for their collection, including: (1) choosing songs they were already using in their classes; (2) finding new songs they felt would work well for particular concepts they wanted to teach; and (3) including songs that they were given by certification program instructors. They also attempted to include songs of varied genres and styles, such as hip hop and country music. They readily recognized that songs in existing American collections or those given to them by course instructors did not always work well with their students, but they consistently included them in their collection out of a desire to complete the required 150 songs. Therefore, some songs in their finished collections were more pedagogically meaningful than others.

When she first began the project, Sam included every song that she used in her classroom that she felt worked for teaching particular concepts and those songs that she and her students enjoyed. She described how printing the songs and putting them in a stack was her first phase of collection. Then, for what she described as phase two, she compiled all the songs she had analyzed in certification classes, and those that she was given by instructors: “Even though there were songs that I knew I wouldn’t use, I had done the work, so I was absolutely going to put them in there.” She then sought out music that was not already part of her repertoire and bought some additional books such as *Step it Down* (Jones & Hawes, 1987) and *Brown Girl in the Ring* (Lomax, Elder & Hawes, 1997). She described how she continued to prefer to use these books as her resource for the songs rather than her own collection, because often the books had additional

information beyond what was included on the song analysis sheet, such as more detailed information about the history of the song, and multiple versions.

Mary described how she focused on finding songs to address important music theory concepts such as specific rhythmic or melodic concepts, and songs that she thought would be enjoyable for her students: “I thought about which songs would be fun for my students and which games they would like, and which songs would prepare one concept while making another concept conscious. I also considered diversity and cultural connections.” She described how she mostly included “multicultural” folk songs (but did not specify from which cultures), because she felt that was the expectation for the project. But she did also include some pop songs that were familiar to students in her school. She viewed the folk song collection as a learning experience and found the process valuable because it enhanced her understanding of how she could use certain repertoire and create a scope and sequence for introducing foundational musical concepts. However, she also found the binder of 150 songs to be an “antiquated resource” and acknowledged that in her teaching it was not the first place she looked to find repertoire. More often, she utilized existing song books and online resources such as the Holy Names University American Folk Song Collection. But despite viewing her binder as antiquated, she still felt that completing the project made her a better musician and teacher:

Taking the time to analyze every song did give me a strong sense of which songs best teach specific concepts and how to build on previously learned material. I just need to do this process again with different repertoire and in an electronic format which includes recordings and videos. I would like to say that the process itself of collecting 150 songs was valuable to me, but I wish I had collected different songs and I wish I had my

collection in an electronic format. My revised collection will include a section of protest songs, hip hop and music of the Black Lives Matter movement, among others.

John also began his collection with songs he was already using: “The place where I started my songbook was what I was actually using every day in my classes. So, there are tons of songs in here that I use all the time.” John also had previously created a curricular map himself for use in his school, and he was intending to integrate the songs into this document. In addition, he identified personal interests that informed his choices as well. Because he loved hip hop and taught it to his seventh-grade students, he had transcribed pieces from that genre. He described how he felt that there was a lot he could do with these pieces in terms of rhythmic literacy and the background parts. He also taught in a religious school, which permitted him to use hymns and spirituals in ways public school teachers could not. He found these genres often included useful examples of melody and noted that these songs were often sung by his students in their own churches, so they were part of his students’ musical traditions. He also noted that in a previous school where he taught, the preschool classes would study cultural units based on children’s family backgrounds. This prompted him to conduct his own research in a library with an extensive music collection and include songs that would fit with his students’ family traditions, such as Greek and Japanese songs. He emphasized that by far the most important consideration was how a song would integrate into his curriculum. He crafted a curriculum map with a sequence of music literacy concepts, along with cultural foci and cultural themes for various grade levels. He filled in his map with songs for each grade level based on these criteria and viewed this as a working document for continual revision. He tries to balance what he loves with what his students need and works to ensure he makes authentic connections to each song’s background and context. He found that compiling the collection was not difficult, but the

challenge lay in collecting unique material. He described how copying songs from *Sail Away* (Locke, 2004) “felt like cheating,” and noted that he would have preferred to collect more material from people, not books. He attempted to collect songs firsthand, but found this challenging:

Where am I going to find songs that are authentic to cultures that are relevant to my school? Well, I don't know. I would ask parents, and they would just be like, aw, shucks. Or some would be like, my mom knows a million but I don't.

In addition to highlighting their processes for choosing songs to include, the participants also described how they felt the song analysis form they were provided with worked well, or in some cases, did *not* work well for specific songs.

Song Analysis Form

The participants described how they wished there was more flexibility in terms of choosing what they wanted to analyze about each individual song, rather than using the same form for every song. Mary described how she thought that analyzing the scale was important, as well as including the games and intended pedagogical applications, but stated, “I don’t know how useful it was to count the syllables of every line of text. That’s not really something I’m going to be looking at with my students, although I do talk about syllables in terms of like, two sounds on one beat so they get the idea of a ti-ti.” She described how analyzing the form of the song was also useful, and that she had discovered over several years that students can understand musical form at a much younger age than she previously thought, since patterns are very interesting and exciting for children to discover. She described how she wished she could have looked at each individual song and decided what was meaningful to analyze based on what she would intend to use it for, rather than completing the same type of analysis for every song.

Sam described how she found some of the analysis to be redundant, and that some parts of the analysis have not been important to her in her teaching: “Some parts of the analysis have never really mattered, like knowing if it’s a tetratonic or a bitonic. I could tell if there were only three notes in a song, you know.” John described how he had read an article about Zoltan Kodály’s own process of song collecting (Szalay, 1999), and felt it would have been useful to read about Kodály’s process in the beginning of his own collecting process and see actual examples of Kodály’s song collection sheets. He noted how similar Kodály’s analysis sheets were to those he himself used and thought it would be inspiring for students to see at the beginning of their collection process.

Use of the Song Collection After Completion

At the start of this study, participants had almost two years after completing certification to utilize their collection in their teaching—that is, if they found it valuable enough to use. They all described how integrating songs directly into a curriculum was more useful than referring to the actual song collection itself. Mary used her collection heavily during the first year after certification and had a goal to design a three-year curriculum rotation for first, second and third grade. Then the COVID-19 pandemic altered these plans, and she did not look at her song collection due to the drastic changes in her teaching, including a prohibition against singing activities in her classes. After finishing her collection, Sam also had the intention of using it and continuing to add additional songs to teach specific musical concepts, but found she turned to other resources instead:

It was easier to not use my song collection, since there are other compiled lists that had different songs that I didn’t have in my collection. And I didn’t want to add them to my

collection, because I didn't have time, and it was already done. I kind of felt burnt out about it after finishing it, so I really haven't used it a lot.

John also described how he also rarely uses the actual collection, but for different reasons than Sam. He created a curriculum map and now refers to this rather than his folk song collection:

I don't use the collection much since I started working on a curriculum map. This map, which I started after I finished Level Three, contains the songs from my collection that I actually use and the songs I've added to my repertoire since turning in the collection. Maybe it is my collection 2.0. The impact to my students' learning has been profound since I am much more deliberate in my song selection. The fact that I know why I've grouped certain songs together in each class helps them make connections between them. My teaching has more clarity in the conceptual sequencing because of this project. If I created something meaningful, it happened in an inspired frenzy of curriculum reassessment in the school year after completing level three. That's when my songbook changed from being an academic exercise to a practical teaching tool.

He also immediately started looking for additional songs after he completed his collection:

Certain key songs that I know I can be clear in terms of teaching the specific skills, those I'm going to use again because that level of rehearsal in my delivery is really important for students' success. But the stuff that revolves around the exposure and the extra practice, I really like to change as often as possible.

All three participants described how they rarely consult their actual physical song collection but have referred to it when creating curriculum or other resources. And, despite valuing the project as a whole, participants described how they only used their collections in a limited way after completion. Mary said that because of her growing concerns over social justice, that she

estimated about 50 percent of her song collection she would no longer choose to use. Sam agreed that she had many songs in her collection that she would also no longer use. John also rarely looked at his collection, primarily because he had created a new curriculum document:

I don't look through my collection very much anymore because I'm working from another curriculum document and I'm always looking for new stuff. But there's definitely a few I let go that were kind of iffy for me. I don't think I included anything to begin with that I didn't feel that I could use. But Paw Paw Patch is out for the time being, and John Kanaka. I never used that one very much anyway. I'm certainly staying away from the Dinah songs. I'll find something else since there's lots of sixteenth note songs out there.

John also described another important issue--that often the folk songs were not doing what they were intended to do for his students in terms of moving from known musical material to the unknown:

The reason for using folk songs is to go from the known to the unknown, and almost nobody knows any of these songs or knows where they're from. So they're not serving that purpose. My collection has become more weighted down with hip hop tunes, pop songs, and hymns we sing in church. I'm also including commercials and YouTube songs, because I get more mileage out of these as known songs than anything else. What's that one that the kids are all singing? It's like, 'chicken wing, chicken wing, hot dog macaroni, hot dog and baloney, chillin' with my homies.' All my kids know this. It's pentatonic and they're singing it, playing it on the ukulele and recorder.

Participants all agreed that it's very important to consider what constitutes "known" and "unknown" musical material for their students. They found that pulling songs from other collections didn't necessarily work for their students, and that it was more beneficial to select

from the music they were already doing in their classes. They described how they often mistook their own enjoyable experience of singing a song or playing a game in a certification class as an indicator that they should choose the song to use with their students, rather than acknowledging that the song was not really in their students' "mother tongue," and would not be a good "known" starting place. Also, what they themselves sang as children were often unfamiliar to their own students, and they had to carefully consider what was known and unknown within their specific teaching contexts:

I think I grew to realize that traditional songs don't have to be these songs from 100 or 200 years ago. It's a continuously evolving thing, and I think that, at least for me, I had to go through that process with these songs that were already kind of chosen for us, and understand and teach through that, and be able to get to the point where I realized that traditional songs don't have to be an old song. It is going from the known, what the kids know right now. And I think that was a growth for me, to be able to be comfortable enough to say I can use this contemporary stuff. We don't have to sing Twinkle Twinkle Little Star every day. Kids grow tired of that, and I just needed to be confident enough to embrace a more 21st-century approach. (Sam)

The participants also described how, at times, the song analysis form they were given and the criteria they were expected to use did not necessarily fit well with how they would have individually chosen to analyze specific songs.

Inadequacy of Transcribed Western Notation and Prescribed Analysis Criteria

Providing the participants with a song analysis form implied to them that they needed to completely fill in the form for each song to successfully complete the collection. Participants described how they felt a sense of obligation to "put it on the page," even when they

acknowledged that in some cases this seemed like an inadequate or inauthentic representation. They described how they were often challenged by the approximation of Western Standard Music Notation (WSMN), and how some songs appeared reduced by fitting them into this particular box. Indirectly, in their own words, the participants touched on Bennett's (1983) recognition that "notation systems are sound-noticing systems, cultural creations that emphasize attention to some aspects of sound while suppressing others" (p. 217).

Although there was no specific prohibition against including recordings or other types of representations of the song, this was also not really highlighted as an option, and the participants described how they envisioned that the project would work better as a portfolio, where different types of artifacts such as recordings and videos could be compiled to gain a clearer representation of the songs. All three participants recommended a more flexible package, with multiple options for collection and analysis. Sam described her perspective:

I guess I was really sold on the Western tradition of notation of these songs, but now that I've studied song collecting, I feel kind of funny about applying Western traditional notation. I just feel like I'm trying to make it conform to fit me, versus just accepting it where it is, and in the format it would traditionally be shared. It seemed like there was a big part missing of songs in the aural tradition when you transcribed them on the staff.

John described how even if he felt he could transcribe the notes correctly, he encountered instances when he had no translation or transliteration, so he was not able to accurately capture the song. He sought to represent the song as accurately as possible, and aligned with Bennett (1983), in acknowledging that the notation isn't the music:

One of the most fun things about the last couple of years for me is that I finally got over the fact that the notation is not the song. There's a lot of room, and so songs are taking

on new life in my classrooms and it turns out that I sing them differently maybe than some other people. But knowing that's the fact when you're transcribing is really frustrating because you want to make a document that's going to be meaningful equally to everyone.

Without directly connecting to specific research (e.g, Kivijärvi & Väkevä, 2020) related to WSMN, all participants intuitively noticed, based on their teaching experience, that WSMN is an inherently limited system of representation that does not capture the richness and nuances of some non-Western musical cultures. Although the participants recognized this, they felt compelled, based on the examples provided and the expectation to complete the song analysis form, to fit their songs into the WSMN box. Although they valued musical literacy in the WSMN tradition, they recognized that this type of analysis simply didn't work for all global musical examples and felt that there should be flexibility and multiple options for analysis. For example, rather than fitting a non-Western musical example into WSMN, they recommended that in some cases it might be best to simply include a recording (rather than attempting to notate the song on the page at all) for songs in a purely aural tradition. They recognized that some styles of music do not work well in WSMN and perhaps are not even meant to be written down (e. g. Westerlund 1999), and that transcribing music from non-Western cultures into WSMN often does not adequately represent the musical content or the ways in which it should be contextualized and taught (Goetze, 2000). Although the participants described the project as being valuable, they also described several changes they would recommend to improve the process and final product of their folk song collections.

Suggested Changes to the Folk Song Collection Project

The participants' recommended changes to the folk song collection project can be combined into three main themes: (1) integrating the project over the three years of certification, with instructors providing feedback along the way; (2) encouraging digital portfolios with varied options for analysis to best fit individual songs; (3) prioritizing diversity of repertoire, with a deeper examination of the cultural and historical backgrounds of each chosen song (even if this means including fewer songs in total) and, (4) ensuring that the repertoire is directly connected to a living curriculum that best meets the needs of their specific students.

Integrating the Project Over Three Years of Certification

In addressing this question of Mary's, Sam and John described how they would change the project, including integrating it more deeply into the coursework over the three years of certification, rather than focusing on it as a project to be completed at the end in order to meet certification requirements during Level Three. Mary, Sam, and John all described how they would have benefitted from breaking the project into segments, with faculty providing clear feedback each year as a new segment was submitted. John described how he would structure the project differently:

I would actually structure it over all three years so that students really had the time to understand how to integrate it into their curriculum. I would definitely start earlier with more emphasis on the collection, not because the collection is more important than anything else, I actually don't think so, but because the collection drives the other things. I would have benefitted so much from having yearly expectations for lesson plans and entries in the folk song collection.

Along with recommending that portions of the collection are submitted each year rather than near the end of the program, the participants emphasized the importance of instructor feedback

along the way. As practicing educators, they all recognized the importance of formative feedback for meaningful learning. Specifically, all participants recommended that the collection be submitted in increments of perhaps 25 to 50 songs, followed by the instructors providing specific and clear feedback on the analysis of these songs, with students then continuing to submit additional groups of songs across the three years of the certification program. Sam expressed the opinion that she felt like she still had some lingering questions about the analysis of some songs, even though she had already received her certification, and thought that additional feedback throughout the process would have been beneficial. Mary recommended that rather than waiting to finish the project during the final summer while students are engaging in intensive classes, students should submit their collection *prior* to starting level three coursework. This would prevent last minute scrambling and allow students to fully experience their last summer of coursework. John concurred:

Completing my collection involved one and a half years of worry and six months of disciplined effort. I learned so much from this process. But I wish it had been more focused from the start. I didn't need the two and a half years of worry. This was reinforced by the level three classes before me who always seemed stressed about the collection. In brief, I regret that I didn't start sooner and use more firsthand, unique sources. I am very proud of my choices and the way I used the collection to define my curriculum in terms of both literacy concepts and cultural content, though.

The participants highlighted the importance of clear and detailed feedback throughout the process and would have preferred submitting their projects across the three years of certification rather than at the end. They also recommended that the song collection be digitized and multiple, flexible options for song analysis be used.

Digital Portfolio with Analysis Tailored to Individual Songs

The participants also strongly agreed that the song analysis should be more open-ended and tailored to fit individual songs. The participants also all agreed that they would prefer a digital rather than paper-based collection. Mary described how it was challenging to complete the 150 by hand, and to find songs outside of the repertoire that are commonly included in folk song books:

At times it felt like copying and citing sources, like busy work. But after studying some of these commonly used songs, such as some from the Sail Away collection, for example, it seemed like they needed to be included. But why include them in the collection if we could just look in Sail Away and get the same information? It seems that the 150 collection was meant to be unique, but how could the project be designed differently and result in an end product that would be the first resource a teacher would turn to when planning curriculum?

Mary reflected: “There’s something really valuable about writing things out by hand, but there’s also something really antiquated about it, so I think it needs to be digitized. If you had a field recording, you could actually include it in your collection.” Sam also would have preferred a digital format, even though she liked to write music by hand. She would have preferred a digital analysis form that she could complete and not necessarily rewrite the music on the staff:

Had I not had to do all of the hand rewriting, I think I would have dedicated more time to actually researching the history of the pieces. There are several songs in my collection that I haven’t had time to research, and I’m not sure that the research is going to lead to a place where I’m going to want to use that piece. I feel like it would have been better to

have spent more time in the analysis and the research part, rather than just the notation copying.

She preferred that it be organized as a digital portfolio, so that she could add videos and not necessarily have to copy each song, particularly when notation already exists in resources such as the Holy Names University American Folk Song Collection (<https://kodaly.hnu.edu/collection.cfm>). Rewriting notation on a specific paper analysis sheet was viewed as busywork and time that could have been spent in a deeper analysis of the song. Even though initially the songs she included had an important place in her curriculum, she described how, near the end of the project, her motivation to copy the song notation waned, and she felt she was putting in some songs as fillers just to reach the required 150. John also agreed that a flexible, digital template would be useful. In addition to changing the format and analysis of the songs, participants described how respecting the context of each song, and ensuring that they included diverse repertoire and presented it in an appropriate inclusive manner was very important.

Prioritizing Diversity and Inclusion

All three participants described how they would prioritize in-depth analysis of the historical and cultural contexts of every song in their collection. Rather than focusing primarily on the musical content, they expressed a desire to delve more deeply into the authenticity and background of each song, even if this meant including fewer songs. They expressed a desire to carefully consider whose music was included, and why certain repertoire should be chosen above other repertoire by examining ideas of power and dominant cultures in music education (Allsup, 2010). They clearly recognized that so-called “canonical” repertoire was not always the best

choice if it stood apart from their students (Allsup, 2010). Mary described how she wished her collection included more diverse repertoire:

Looking back, I wish that my collection had included more diversity. It takes a lot more research and preparation than just being able to open your Kodály collection and say, oh, here's this song from Ghana, I think I'll use this today. It needs more, in my opinion. My collection was American folk song heavy, and a lot of them are rooted in some significant racism. I feel I need to go back and research those songs again and really figure out what context I can use them in, and which ones I would say I can't use anymore. Given everything that's happened with our world and our country, politically and socially, my thinking has really shifted. I think moving forward Kodály students should be thinking about it. And with my collection, I won't just pull a song from it and use it without knowing exactly what I'm using.

Mary perceived that she had become critical of the 150 collection because of her heightened awareness of social justice and cultural appropriation related to repertoire choice and representation of musical material. She recognized, as others have (e.g., Green, 2001; Kindall-Smith, McKoy, & Mills, 2011; Kwami; Small, 1999; Spruce, 2001), that a Western European body of repertoire dominates much of music education. Much of her collection that she considered “kind of standard Kodály repertoire” she felt she would not continue to use because of her concerns related to authentic representation of the repertoire:

I would say 50 percent of my collection at this point I wouldn't use anymore in a classroom. I feel like this past year the Kodály world has started addressing this and really looking at the repertoire and trying to make changes, but I feel like it's just now happening, and I don't feel like it was really happening when we were doing our

training. Shortly after completing my 150 I began to look at the repertoire through a social justice lens and found that many of the songs I had included needed to be removed and that what was left needs to be more carefully researched. I think a set group of songs and games that a teacher can use to introduce concepts and build upon is valuable but my 150 will have to be considerably revised to be more diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

Sam also expressed a desire to diversify her repertoire choices, and how she actively looked for resources she wasn't previously familiar with:

I sought out songs that were from outside of my white world. Songs that I wouldn't have normally known because I wasn't familiar with them. I wanted to have more diversity rather than just like Lucy Locket and Bee Bee Bumblebee. You know, like things that I felt it would make it more interesting and create more of a global classroom.

In addition to diversity of repertoire, John described how he would have liked to include greater diversity of *sources* as well.

Connecting to a Living Curriculum

Although it was presented as an option to collect songs firsthand from primary sources within their school communities, this was challenging for all participants. They described how they would have liked to have collected songs from people first-hand rather than published books, but found this challenging:

That's a regret I have, that the experience of collecting was like a librarian's job. I could have sought out other humans who could be first-hand sources and experience collecting that way. It's diversity of source material as well and getting that firsthand tradition passing on. (John)

Sam also agreed that she would have liked to have collected songs from actual people, but struggled to do so:

I remember being excited at the beginning about the thought of collecting songs from someone. But then it almost always fell very flat when I would talk to someone. I found that while I was referring to traditional music that you would sing on the playground or that you would hear growing up, a lot of people would share with me pop songs that they really liked. It just wasn't the same experience. And then I found that I just didn't have time to find the songs that existed that hadn't been transcribed yet. I just wasn't even sure where to go to get those kinds of things and when to even do that.

They described how it would be ideal to ensure that more songs that they chose had come directly from their school communities. In addition to rewriting and analyzing the songs themselves, the participants were required to create a detailed index that cross-referenced various musical concepts for pedagogical purposes.

Indexing the Song Collections

Participants indexed their collections in ways that helped easily locate songs for use in their own curriculum. There were no required criteria for indexing, beyond an alphabetical index, but it was recommended that they follow indices similar to those in collections such as *Sail Away*. Mary described her indexing process:

*I went crazy with my index. I definitely organized by scale, rhythmic concept, genre, type of game, country, and language. I had my alphabetical list, and then all of these other categories and I just placed each song in whichever categories were relevant. If I wanted to look up songs that were in do pentatonic, for example, I could search by category. I followed the index format of *Sail Away*.*

Sam also described how she indexed alphabetically, by tone set, and by musical skill:

I indicated if a song is a good one for quarter notes, dotted quarter notes, or whatever the skill is that I'm working on. I made a Google sheet, and as I would do the analysis by these musical skills, I would just list all the different songs underneath that I thought would work well to teach those musical skills. The best thing that I got from this process was identifying a tone set, and really understanding where the tonic is in a piece. It changed how I viewed pieces that I used with my choral groups. The analysis part helped me understand better how to look at a piece of music and how to really analyze the form and the tone set.

John also indexed using similar categories and followed an indexing system similar to *Sail Away* because he was familiar with this organization in terms of the tone set, and this type of index fit with how he thinks more melodically rather than rhythmically in his teaching. However, he also described how he no longer used the index since he knew what songs were in his collection. He wished he had also indexed by rhythmic focus, but he included this in the curriculum map he created.

Value of the Project Compared to Other Certification Components

The participants described the folk song collection project as valuable, but noted that other components of certification, such as teaching demonstrations and in-person musical interactions were possibly more important than the collection itself. Mary explained:

The teaching demonstrations and the actual in-person learning was most valuable to me. Actually getting the courage to get up and make ti-ti conscious in a way that I have never done before. But the process of collecting and analyzing songs was very useful because I had never done anything like that before. The fact that we did it for 150 songs I think is

significant because now I can look at a folk song and I can quickly sum up what it is from a musical analysis standpoint. And in terms of teaching specific musical concepts, I think it was most useful for that, especially up through fifth grade, where you're making conscious all of the most basic things.

John also described how the song collection is important, and should be highlighted, but the experience of reflecting upon and improving their teaching practices alongside other professionals was the most valuable component overall:

I think the songbook is important and should be given a little bit more pride of place, but I do think the focus is the experience of the teacher and the student. I mean what it feels like to be in a classroom where everything's moving fluidly from one song to another and one concept to another over a single class and over the course of a year. But the songbook is an important part of it. I mean, if there's one thing about this collection that I think is super important that is not stressed enough, it's that the collection is worthless to me if not as an expression of the curriculum that I'm planning to teach.

John felt he learned an enormous amount completing the collection, and that he was personalizing it for his needs at his school. He emphasized the importance of the collection being directly connecting to his and his students' musical experiences. Sam described how the overall experience was very positive and she would do it again, but that this time she would be more assertive and vocalize what she thought could be modified about the song collecting process.

Discussion

Although these three teachers' experiences creating their folk song collection are not generalizable, possible transferrable implications for this study include considerations for certification programs in designing flexible folk song collection guidelines, such as: (1) offering

multiple flexible options for song analysis; (2) digitizing the collection into an electronic portfolio; (3) encouraging connections to an individual teacher's curriculum specific to their own students and prioritizing these connections over the inclusion of a large number of songs; (4) emphasizing the importance of regular feedback throughout the process (5) including additional background information on songs with a lens towards inclusion and diversity, even if this means including fewer songs. Folk song collection projects should ideally be designed with flexibility in terms of the number of songs and the types of analysis completed. In addition, teachers should be encouraged to connect their collected songs directly to their teaching via curricular mapping and be encouraged to emphasize depth and meaningfulness of a particular song rather than a larger number of songs. Multiple options for housing the collection should be offered, including multimedia folders with digital video and audio examples.

Conclusion

The participants emphasized that all songs included in a music teacher's personal folk song collection should be analyzed in depth, connect to their living curriculum, and be relevant and meaningful to their students. They recognized that their repertoire choices convey their musical and cultural values to their students, and that teachers should carefully consider how repertoire selection represents or misrepresents groups of persons (e.g., Hess, 2018; Shaw, 2019). They acknowledged that repertoire selection should connect to students lived musical experiences both in and out of school. They also noted ways musical practices were represented via repertoire selection, and whose music was missing (Hess, 2017). Without using the exact terms, they described wanting to choose pieces based on practicality, bias, and high "cultural validity" (Abril, 2006). Participants recognized that the origins and background of a song must be acknowledged and included, and that delving into potentially complex histories of songs is

important to accurately represent the song (Kelly-McHale, 2018). They described what Kelly-McHale (2018) called a “music classroom canon” (p. 61) and how repertoire choices may or may not reflect their students’ musical traditions. These three participants clearly viewed their repertoire selection as an important component of teaching music as a holistic endeavor, and valued repertoire that meshes with their own teaching style and philosophy, and which best acknowledges the musical “selves” of their students. They prioritized a flexible, adaptable approach to crafting a personal folk song collection, with options for varied and flexible analysis. Kodály-based folk song collection projects may be most valuable to teachers when they are presented as flexible, context-specific projects that directly connect to the lived musical experiences of their students.

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