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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	-Sight singing -Ear training -Dictation -Solfége -Exercises focused on pentatonic, diatonic, modal, and chromatic music	50-70
Conducting	-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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