**UNC GREENSBORO**

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From the Editor

In 2013, I had the opportunity to visit the University of Exeter in Great Britain and attend the *International Research in Music Education* Conference (*RIME*). At that time, I thought *RIME* was perhaps the best conference I had ever attended! This was due both to the welcoming nature of the wonderful organizers and attendees, and also to the many qualitative research studies being presented at that conference. *RIME* 2013 was one of my first exposures to qualitative research presentations in a conference setting. It was simply amazing! What fascinated me most was the stories of human beings and their interactions and experiences with music. Although this was clearly research, the stories were so engaging because the research was so intimate, and I found it fascinating. When I came home from Exeter, I tucked those experiences away and, every now and again, would revisit those memories. As I continued to teach, write, read journals, and attend conferences, I wondered what role I might play in contributing to a deeper conversation about human beings and music-making.

Fast forward to 2015 when I was working with a doctoral student, Mark Dillon, and we began to discuss the kernel of an idea – a qualitative research journal for the music education profession. We were discussing this as part of a larger conversation about the difficulty qualitative researchers have had in getting their work published. Although we have certainly seen a distinct rise in the number of journals publishing qualitative research (this is awesome!), Mark and I both felt that a journal dedicated to qualitative research in music would illuminate this very important and often-overlooked avenue of inquiry. At one point in this ongoing discussion, Mark sent me an email containing web addresses to articles about starting an online journal. Needless to say, that email sat in my Inbox for about two years before I had the courage to act on it.

Finally, in Fall 2017, I was ready to pursue this idea with Mark's blessing (he finished his

Doctor of Philosophy degree in Music Education at the University of North Carolina at

Greensboro in Spring 2018 and I had the privilege to be his Doctoral Advisory Committee

Chair). When I look back on my notes from this time period – August 2017-December 2018 – I

can easily see keywords that illustrate my core values for *Qualitative Research in Music

Education* (*QRME*): rigorous, innovative, indicative of the human experience with music,

interesting. Thus, the mission of *QRME* is to disseminate innovative qualitative research

pertaining to music education. *QRME* publishes articles that carefully examine the human

experience in music through qualitative methodologies that embody rigor and depth.

As I began to explore what hosting an online journal entailed, I wrote these notes to

Daniel Rice (*QRME*'s extraordinary webmaster) related to my chosen image for *QRME*:
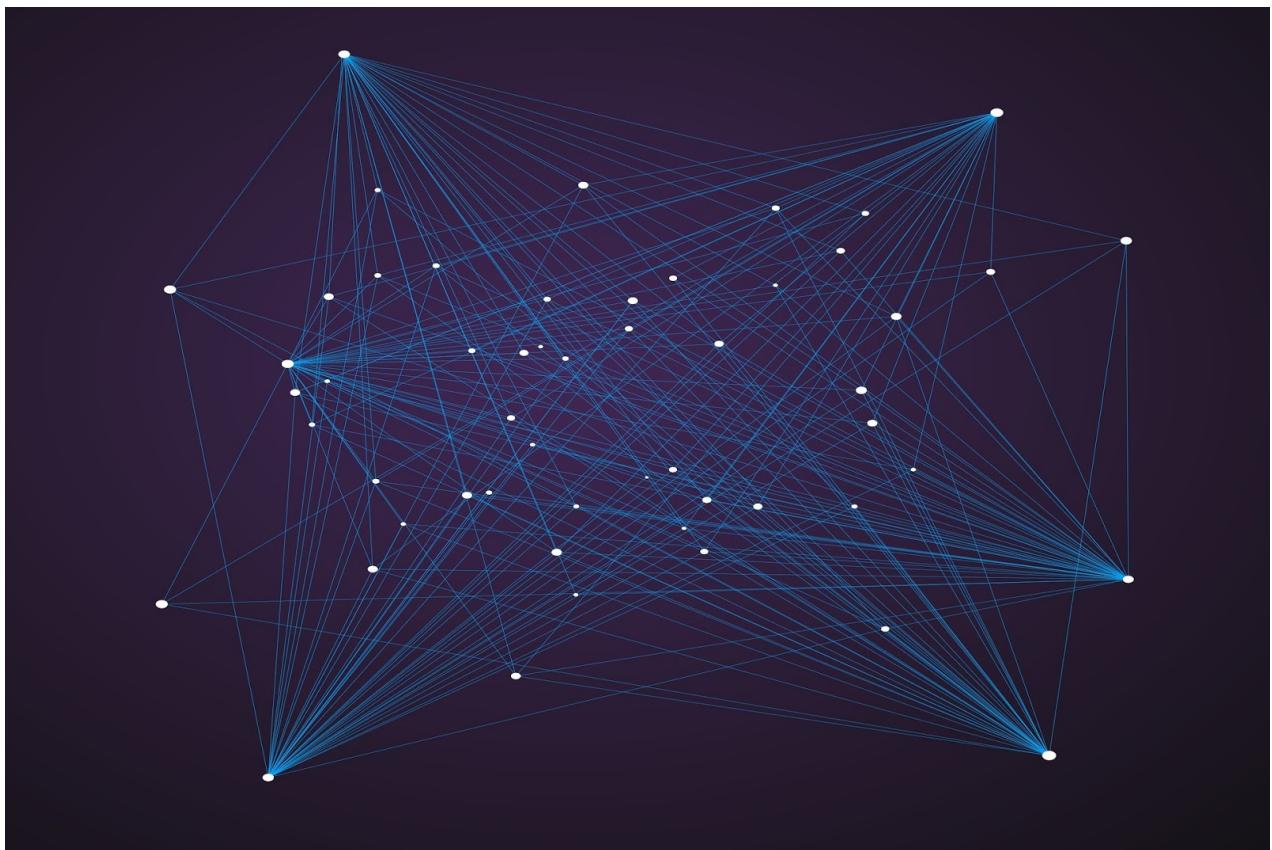
> I love this image because this is how I perceive qualitative research in the vast scheme of music education research (MER). MER is mostly quantitative in nature and only in the last decade or so has qualitative research become more common/popular. I perceive the blue lines on this image as representing quantitative research - the bigger picture that gives us more generalizable ideas about music, learning, teaching, etc. Also, the blue lines represent the connection of ideas and knowledge to other information and pathways.
>
> The white points of light represent qualitative research to me, where we are able to "drill down" into a topic with individuals and small groups and see how that topic relates to many others, sending us off in new directions (for investigation and corroboration) on the blue lines.

And in this, the debut publication of *QRME*, I feel even more strongly about this image. Qualitative research grabs your attention because it is thought-provoking and exciting, and often impossibly messy. Human beings are complex and multifaceted, and when investigating music and human beings in qualitative research, the intensity, power, and greatness of the research increases exponentially.

I pursued a career in music because music (and eventually teaching) fed my soul in ways nothing else could. To be able to contribute to the exploration of human beings and their interactions and experiences with music is one of the biggest professional accomplishments of my life. I hope you enjoy *Qualitative Research in Music Education*.

Jennifer S. Walter, Founder and Editor-in-Chief

Imagining Possible Futures/Shaping Professional Visions: A Reflective Case Study of a

Community-Centric, Ukulele-Based Participatory Musicking Project

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Abstract

The purpose of this reflective case study was to analyze preservice music educators' reflections on meanings of facilitating JMUke, a curricular, community-centric, participatory-based, community ukulele project, and interpret how these experiences may have impacted their professional visions. We—one undergraduate music education student, one graduate music education student, and two music teacher educators—analyzed data from 38 preservice music educators, including coursework and reflective dialogues among participants. Analysis revealed themes related to: (a) preparation and adaptation, (b) motivation and fun, and (c) expanding praxis. Drawing on Hammerness's (2003, 2006, 2015) conception of professional vision, we interpreted impacts of participation in JMUke on preservice music educators' professional visions and offer implications for music teacher educators.

Keywords: Music teacher education, professional vision, reflective case study, participatory musicking.

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Music teacher licensure programs help preservice music educators (PMEs) develop professional knowledge, skills, and values (e.g., Brewer, 2009; Haston & Leon-Guerrero, 2008). Researchers have used numerous lenses to inspect PMEs' development, including professional identity (e.g., Bouij, 2004; Bucura, 2013; Isbell, 2008; Roberts, 1991), self-efficacy beliefs (e.g., Barnes, 1998; Bauer, 2003), and professional concerns (e.g., Campbell & Thompson, 2007; Mikesza & Berg, 2013; Powell, 2014, 2016). Ankney (2015) and Hourigan (2006) have drawn on Hammerness's (2003) concept of professional vision, defined as "images of what teachers hope could be or might be in their classrooms, their schools, their communities, and in some cases even in society as a whole" (p. 45), to consider PME development and music teacher education. In this study, we explored PME vision(s) by examining how participation in a curricular, community-centric, participatory-based, community ukulele project influenced PMEs' professional vision(s).

Vision

PMEs' visions are deeply entwined with their values and motivations. Vision provides a useful framework for teacher educators seeking to engage PMEs in articulating values and problematizing perceptions, practices, and philosophies (Hammerness, 2015). Hammerness found that teachers often possessed visions of future practice that were "substantial, vivid, and consistent over time" (p. 3). PMEs' visions can conflict with those of others (e.g., faculty, curricula designers, administrators, community members) in teacher education programs, schools of music, and K-12 school systems in which preservice music teachers find themselves, leading to potentially shocking encounters with ambiguity. Ideally, PMEs are continually envisioning and re-envisioning their practice, developing flexibility to navigate ambiguity among conflicting visions, rather than envisioning a single, rigid future state. Hammerness noted that vision is

under-discussed in teacher education research; this trend appears to cross over to music teacher

education research.

Hammerness (2003) offered teacher educators three dimensions through which to inspect

and consider preservice educators' professional visions: focus, range, and distance. Focus is "the

distinctness or clarity of vision" regarding "the center, or areas, of interest" (p. 45). Focus of a

professional vision may be blurry (e.g., dealing primarily with generalities) or sharp (e.g.,

articulating specific sites or contexts of practice). Range is the "scope or extent of focus" (p. 45).

Range may be quite narrow (e.g., considering only teaching middle school jazz band in a suburb

of a major metropolitan area), or may be broad (e.g., considering teaching multiple populations

in contexts from general music to band to music production to instrument and controller design).

Finally, distance refers to the proximity of one's vision to their current practices. This framework

can be used to inspect not only individual teachers' professional visions, but also to evaluate

vision(s) within teacher education programs, providing a mechanism for curricular reflection and

change (Hammerness, 2015). Used in this way, distance between program vision and personal

vision of PMEs may emerge; this distance may shape the perceived relevance of visions

progressive music teacher educators share with PMEs.

In music teacher education research, Ankney (2015) has drawn on Hammerness's work

to examine characteristics, influential factors, and meaningfulness of preservice music teachers'

professional visions. Ankney analyzed nine PMEs' vision statements describing their envisioned

future teaching environments and roles at play (e.g., teacher, student, subject, and community).

Ankney also conducted follow-up interviews with four participants. Ankney found that vision

statements possessed three different orientations: subject-centric, community-centric, and

student-centric. Through articulating their visions, PMEs felt empowered to trace and inspect

their values while also mapping trajectories to shorten the distance between visions and practice. Ankney suggested that taking vision seriously in music teacher education may assist music teacher educators with mentoring PMEs in a manner that validates preservice educators' values and hopes.

A Case for Broadening Vision

Presumably, music teacher educators might draw on PMEs' visions in a way that facilitates critical reflection and purposefully broadens visions, while hopefully decreasing distance. Allsup and Westerlund (2012) suggested a music educator's ability to envision and adapt practice to the constantly changing flow of time may be a key ethical orientation required for music teachers in contemporary music education. Perhaps this ability to envision and adapt requires a broadened scope of professional vision. Engaging PMEs in experiences that encourage an expansion of range may facilitate their development of pedagogic creativity (Abramo & Reynolds, 2015). Being pedagogically creative allows persons to be flexible and responsive to conditions in which they find themselves. This eases an individual's ability to work with ambiguity, empowers them to think and act in visionary ways related to their practice, and helps them acknowledge "fluid and flexible identities" (p. 38).

We draw on Hammerness's (2003, 2006, 2015) scholarship on professional vision as we investigate how a community-centric, participatory-based, community ukulele project, may have impacted PMEs' professional vision. We feel, as Hammerness (2006) stated, that empowering students to articulate and share their visions, if indirectly, "enabl[es] us to validate their commitments, challenge and deepen their beliefs . . . and imagine the steps they need . . . to move closer to their ideals" (p. 88). We also suggest, as Hammerness (2015) implied, that contemporary educational situations require teachers who can envision, even re-envision, and be

visionaries with their practice.

The purpose of this study was to analyze PMEs' reflections on the meanings of facilitating a participatory-based, community ukulele project, and interpret how these experiences may have shaped their professional visions. Two research questions guided our inquiry: (1) What meanings do participants ascribe to their experiences in this project? and (2) How might participation in this project impact one's professional vision?

Context: JMUke

In this study, we investigated personal and professional impact of participation in a community-centric, participatory-based, ukulele project in which preservice and collegiate music educators facilitated participatory ukulele experiences with various populations. In this grant-funded project, JMUke, 38 second- and third-year undergraduate PMEs, enrolled in a secondary general music methods course and/or a foundations of music education course, collaborated in groups of six to eight students with a faculty co-designer to create four experiences, each comprising 30-minute introductory sessions and 90-minute jam sessions. In each introductory session, PMEs engaged participants in learning between two and six chords, individually (i.e., direct instruction) and in small groups (i.e., facilitated learning), using visual aids. In each jam session, PMEs took turns leading participants in playing and singing folk songs and popular songs using prepared song slides with color-coded chord diagrams. These songs were selected by each group to be appropriate for the context and participants; course instructors provided feedback on these selections. Other PMEs played along, providing participants with vocal and ukulele models and other scaffolding (e.g., verbally reinforcing chord diagrams, encouraging participants to play two chords in a progression if playing three was too challenging) as needed when not leading. The experiences took place in one of four community venues (among four

populations): a university library (students, faculty, and staff); a children's museum (young children and their parents); a brewery (adults); and a Dominican restaurant (community members of all ages).

Through their coursework and community engagement, PMEs explored participatory-based music learning and discussed how they might facilitate such experiences. The project's overall participatory and community-based ethic was reflected through emphasizing participatory musicking (e.g., Turino, 2008) and participatory culture (e.g., Jenkins et al., 2009) by focusing on building music experiences with low barriers to participation, informal and non-formal means of learning, and creating space to connect with others through making music. These objectives were consistent with the two course instructors' curricular designs for the secondary general music methods and foundations of music education courses. Faculty modeled participatory-based and non-formal teaching while introducing ukulele skills and exploring pedagogy and curricular development. Preparatory coursework and experience design occurred in the first three quarters of the fifteen-week semester and ukulele community engagement experiences occurred in the final quarter.

Though interaction with participatory culture and practices may have been cursory, we suggest, as Waldron, Mantie, Partti, and Tobias (2017) do, that engagement with participatory practices might hold the promises of fostering increased access to artistic engagement and enlivening music education in light of contemporary cultural practices. Additionally, through this project, faculty hoped that engagement with participatory cultural practices, even to a minor extent as in JMUke, may have helped broaden PMEs' professional visions and potential practices, encouraging them "to think expansively about what constitutes participation, the aims and goals of students, educators, and music programmes, and possibilities for music teaching and

learning" (p. 2).

Method

We situated this inquiry as a reflective case study drawing on Maclellan's (2008) adaptation of Stake's (2003) instrumental case study design, making more direct use of theoretical framework-informed research reflections as additional tools for making meaning from generated data. Participants included PMEs who were serving as designers/facilitators for JMUke and enrolled in a secondary general music methods course and/or a foundations of music education course. Additionally, as per our approach to inquiry (Maclellan, 2008), we included ourselves—one undergraduate, one master student, and two professors—as participants for the purpose of reflection on research findings.

Our investigation was multi-staged, inspired by Maclellan (2008). First, we approached 38 PMEs' pertinent course documents (e.g., experience designs, reflections on JMUke, end-of-semester reflections) as a primary data pool through which to identify broad themes related to participants' perceived meaningfulness of their experience with JMUke (RQ1). Second, we used Hammerness's (2003) three dimensions of vision—focus, range, and distance—as a theoretical framework through which to analyze themes in relation to participants' professional visions. We added context, more specifically discussed in Hammerness's later work (2006, 2015), to investigate how specific contexts (e.g., relationships, materials, settings, curricula) may have nurtured or hindered participants in developing or enacting their professional vision (RQ2). This theoretical tool provided a useful lens through which to consider PMEs' envisioned praxis as articulated through course documents. Third, we made use of themes, theoretical analysis, and researcher dialogue to reflect upon how participation in JMUke and this research study impacted authors' professional visions. Finally, we reflected upon meanings of findings and theoretical

analysis in relation to our positionalities and personal visions. All study procedures were

approved by our university's Institutional Review Board.

Findings and Analysis

Consistent with our study's design, we present three broad themes we developed through

an investigation of these data: (a) preparation and adaptation, (b) motivation and fun, and (c)

expanding praxis. Below, we discuss findings and provide vision analysis informed by

Hammerness's (2003) three dimensions of vision—focus, range, and distance—as well as

Hammerness's subsequent discussions (2006, 2015) of context. Each theme begins with a quote

from a PME's analyzed coursework.

Preparation and Adaptation

[O]ver-prepare. Much like collecting wood for a campfire, I found that I ended up

needing about triple the amount of material I expected.

As you plan out how you want your event to look and how you would like to teach in this

event, understand that most of this plan will be thrown out the door once the kids and

families come to the event… and that is a good thing!

PMEs who participated in JMUke came to believe that one central aspect of successful

teaching is the importance of both preparation and flexibility. Most PMEs involved in the project

expressed wishing they had spent more time creating detailed plans for their events. They

advised future JMUke facilitators to start earlier, connect with the community more deeply,

divide duties more evenly, and plan each aspect of the event as carefully as possible. PMEs in

this study also recognized the unpredictability of free public events, where even the most

detailed plans may not end up being relevant to the population or environment. Teacher

adaptability and flexibility emerged from student reflections as a strong theme among almost all of the PMEs. They stressed needing to be ready to "think on your feet" and "throw it all to the wind" while reacting in real time to the population of learners, quickly adapting plans to create the most meaningful experience for all involved. Part of "throwing it all to the wind," PMEs noted, was being prepared to adapt to community members' needs and the eccentricities of the settings:

> *Even with this preparedness, future students should expect things to not go as planned and be willing to be flexible at any moment's time . . . One should definitely plan to the highest extent, but also be able to manipulate and change things almost immediately.*

PMEs had already planned curricula and built skills that would contribute to their event's success; however, even with this preparation, almost every PME mentioned that there were some skills learned only through their lived experiences designing and facilitating JMUke. Adapting was one of the most common terms used among PMEs in this study in reference to their experience at the event. PMEs learned through their hands-on experiences—and only through such experiences, according to data—that changing or *adapting* their curricula spontaneously to fit their participants' needs was far more important than they had previously expected.

There were varied results, however, in PME preparation. Some consulted readings from previous coursework as well as classroom exercises, while others mentioned a feeling of unpreparedness that was seemingly incurable—in spite of their preparation—up until the event. Regardless of how qualified PMEs felt for the event, every PME had something positive to say regarding skills they developed and change they saw in themselves.

Vision analysis. Each JMUke event was organized to provide PMEs opportunities to work in settings and with populations they may not typically encounter in an undergraduate

music education program. These experiences broadened their range of spaces in which, and persons with whom, they could envision facilitating music making and learning. PMEs may have never planned a lesson to take place with preschoolers in a children's museum and at a brewery in the evening with adults attempting to relax. As such, their expectations appear to have been informed by what they anticipated a particular event, with a specific population and in a specific place, might be like. Yet, upon reflection, they reported a need to be willing and able to abandon their clear vision and quickly adapt a different focus, or perhaps foci, by making pragmatic adaptations based on specifics that emerged at a particular event. For example, some PMEs designed rigid teacher-centered, direct-instruction-based introductory ukulele lessons, only to find that such a structure—which resembled some of their large ensemble rehearsal experiences—did not work well with adult patrons of a brewery on a Friday night. To adapt, PMEs moved from standing in front and speaking instruction to participants to embedding themselves within groupings of participants and providing tailored instruction based on participants' experience levels. In another example, PMEs facilitating a jam session at a discovery museum found that their visuals (i.e., lyrics and chord diagrams on projected slides) were not intelligible or useful to largely pre-literate children participating. These PMEs adapted by adding colored stickers on frets to help participants play chords, using movements and verbal instructions to help with chord changes, and repeating songs numerous times to encourage participation.

Consistent with our theoretical framework, challenges relating to expanding range and reconciling multiple foci decreased distance between what PMEs are currently able to do and what they envision doing as music teachers. In contrast, many PMEs expressed that populations, settings, instruments, and music styles—specifically those associated with "popular"

musicking—they engaged with during this project were neither part of their own experiences as musicians nor types of experiences they envisioned facilitating. Prior to JMUke, many students felt comfortable articulating visions to teach in a known, structured, teaching context (e.g., middle school string orchestra). While there appeared to be minimal distance between this vision and knowledge/ability required in this setting, broadening their range and navigating multiple and changing foci through designing experiences for JMUke may have increased their distance with regard to planning.

Motivation and Fun

> *This experience was also one of the first times in a long time that I was enjoying making music. As a music student that sounds crazy because I spend the better part of every day creating music, but in this environment I wasn't analyzing or having to be super technical. I was able to let loose and enjoy myself.*

When reflecting on their experience in JMUke, PMEs used words like "enjoyable," "fulfilling," "magical," "rewarding," and "liberating" to describe their feelings as they facilitated these community events. While there were some PMEs who expressed feelings of skepticism at the beginning of the project, even those PMEs seemed to agree that getting out into the community and making music in a different way than they were used to was a valuable and fun experience. Several spoke strongly that they felt this project could potentially change lives, and that they were able to reconnect with why they wanted to be music educators in the first place through their work with JMUke.

Vision analysis. JMUke appears to have been a useful context in which participants had experiences that could help them to shape their visions of music education. PMEs specifically referenced the fun and the liberating grounding of the project, potentially indicating a feeling of

being engaged in participation as a learner and as a facilitator (e.g., Waldron et al., 2017) as they actively made music, developed and fostered informal mentorships in class and at events, and playfully engaged with course concepts and with persons in their world. It is important to note, based on early feelings of reluctance, that PMEs encountered what they may initially have considered as high barriers to participation—informality may be a barrier when one is thoroughly enmeshed in hyper-formality. Yet, the context of the real world project that engaged their musicianship, their experience design, their leadership, and their ability to connect with others in/around/through music seemed to comfort them rather quickly. This seemed to help PMEs begin grappling with issues of focus they had not considered prior, such as the possibility of balancing skill development with meaningfulness and enjoyment on the part of learners.

Expanding Practice

> *For me, this experience has opened my eyes to the vast world outside of traditional classroom music. I would have never thought to incorporate ukuleles into a project such as this and it has opened my eyes to a whole other realm of musical experiences. This experience has also taught me a lot about management of both my time and my responsibilities as a member of a team.*

A prominent theme in the findings was that of PMEs becoming conscious of new possibilities and practices that may manifest in their professional lives. First, participants noted that their experiences in JMUke seemed to help them consider more varied career options as they reevaluated their personal philosophies regarding what music education was, is, and could be. Second, participants mentioned that they had found or developed new tools and pedagogical practices that might be transferable to multiple learning and teaching settings. We individually address two sub-themes related to expanding JMUke participants' praxis below.

Career options and philosophical perspectives

I expanded my horizons and learned that music is not a binary concept. Music is a rippling ring of water on the surface of a pond, always expanding.

PMEs spoke about their view of the field of music education widening through this project, allowing them to realize that their career options within the field were greater and more varied than of which they were formerly aware. The PMEs in the foundations course in particular reflected on their shifting perspectives regarding their career trajectories. About half of PMEs spoke specifically about beginning the foundations course with the intent of being a "traditional" large ensemble director and believing that was more or less the most likely option for them as a music educator. Through their experience with JMUke and other class activities, PMEs demonstrated a realization that music education could include not only large ensembles, but also general music at any level, community music, music technology, or maker-based music practices, among many other contexts. PMEs spoke of taking music outside of the traditional classroom and into other settings, such as the community establishments chosen for JMUke events, and, as one PME suggested, opening their eyes to a "whole other realm of musical experiences." One PME wrote that their "conception of what it means to be a music educator has almost taken a 180 degree turn since the beginning of the year." This didn't mean that PMEs abandoned their original career goals, but rather expanded them to include a wider range of settings as they grew as PMEs throughout their experiences. Their philosophies shifted to include the idea that, as one PME wrote, "music education can and should take place anywhere that music exists."

New tools, methods, and approaches

We revisit a quote used earlier in the first subtheme: *I expanded my horizons and learned*

that music is not a binary concept. Music is a rippling ring of water on the surface of a pond,

always expanding.

The foundations and secondary general methods courses in which JMUke was an integral

part included discussion on experience design. In contrast to lesson planning as many teachers

may understand it (e.g., learning instrument techniques, outlining specific pedagogical goals),

experience design emphasizes constructing meaningful interactions, reflections, and skills

building to facilitate music in both classroom and non-classroom environments (Southcott,

2004). The venues in which PMEs were teaching were different from environments where PMEs

had certainly learned music (e.g., band rooms, general music classrooms). Nearly every PME in

this study noted that they had not had experiences like these prior to JMUke. One PME wrote, "I

always associated . . . music education with music literacy and exploring new types of music,

within a traditional box, but now there is so much more music making that can be explored."

This music making outside of the "traditional box" has resulted in positive experiences

by JMUke participants as well as PMEs that facilitated the event. Many PMEs in the foundations

class noted the importance of learning about experience design as a way of considering the

learners and their experiences first and foremost. Through creating and evaluating experience

designs, PMEs began identifying numerous qualities of responsive teachers, saying in their end-

of-the-semester reflections: "The teacher must create opportunities for all students to engage",

"[The teacher must be] creative; allowing yourself to be creative as an educator fosters creativity

in your students. There is always another way to communicate a concept…" and "I am

committed to fostering creativity."

Several PMEs noted the impact that JMUke community participants had on them. One

stated, "Her enthusiasm made me feel like I was changing someone's life by helping them

learn." This was motivating to the PMEs as they received often glowing responses from many community members who may not have had other chances to make music socially. PMEs also identified the participatory and informal structure of the project as key to fostering the kinds of meaningful facilitator-learner relationships that allowed such positive experiences to grow.

Vision analysis. Perhaps more pronounced than in other themes, the expansion of participant praxis, or potential praxis, may suggest that participation in JMUke altered—if marginally—PMEs' professional visions. In analyzed coursework, PMEs admitted to possessing narrow range in their primary and somewhat under-reflected-upon visions of their practice. As they posed pedagogical principles and reflected on their growth at the end of the semester, PMEs alluded to or explicitly stated that their experiences with JMUke and related assignments had helped them to broaden what they considered possible in music education. Tools, techniques, settings, and populations with which they might interact as in-service music educators seemed to coincide with PMEs contemplating multiple potential foci for their visions.

Additionally, PMEs describe both minimizing and potentially expanding distances between experiences in JMUke and their envisioned practices. PMEs noted feelings of actually "doing" music teaching and enacting class concepts, thus experiencing minimized distance between what they can do and visions in which they are interacting (e.g., their own visions or professors' visions). Yet, one can wonder about the increase in distance PMEs may experience as they contemplate new roles, tools, settings, and options. We wondered about the possible motivational ramifications of the distancing that may occur when a PME begins to consider new visions and comes to learn what they do not know. Conceivably, the decentering *context* of JMUke, specifically its informal and participatory ethic, may initially be empowering as PMEs re-envision their practice while later yielding something along the lines of pre-praxis shock.

Discussion and Implications for Music Teacher Educators

As participants in, and researchers of, JMUke, this context provided a ground to explore new focus and foci, broadened range, and altered practical distance of professional visions, for ourselves and for other participants. Below, we discuss meanings of participating in JMUke as facilitators or teacher educators, and as researchers for this project. This discussion is culled from a collaborative reflection process, in which we sought to make sense of what we lived and what we learned, and to offer implications music teacher educators may wish to consider.

Music Teacher Educators' Perspectives

As music teacher educators, we hope to help students with whom we work develop understandings and skills that might help them facilitate deep and meaningful music learning among various populations in numerous settings. We meet regularly with students who are passionate about music teaching, but appear beholden to some sort of monolithic vision of the field that is built upon the primacy of fixed, teacher-centered traditions. Through engaging as co-designers with students in our work related to JMUke, we found students and ourselves openly discussing and playing with each of our visions of and for music education. These visions, once exposed, allowed us as a class to discuss and design forms of music making and music learning that were exciting and engaging for us as facilitators, as well as for community members. After enacting these visions, PMEs had opportunities to reflect on experiences, iterate designs, and facilitate conversations. In these conversations, they troubled what it might mean to enact monolithic visions for music education, often with limited regard for persons, places, or communities. These conversations were often challenging, as much of these PMEs' previous music education had aligned with a more "traditional," teacher-centric vision—a vision that some stakeholders at our institution espouse. In fact, some PMEs were quite happy with their

focused and fixed view of music education.

As Hammerness (2015) noted, teacher visions are "substantial, vivid, and consistent over time" (p. 3), so this was no particular surprise. Yet, even those students content with a more fixed conception of music education appeared to have at least a broader vision of what music education *could* be. Experiences such as JMUke may provide them tools to facilitate activities currently lying in the periphery of their vision that they may encounter in their future. Maybe, then, helping PMEs broaden their visions may be as crucial a feature of music teacher education as knowledge, skill, and value development. Perhaps one may develop one's knowledge, skills, and values *through* experiences that broaden one's vision.

An Undergraduate Student's Perspective

The entire JMUke project brought some discomfort and uncertainty to my peers and complicated our discussions of music education. Most, if not all, of us have grown as musicians within a structure of Western classical-driven wind, percussion, string, and vocal techniques as the only forms of music making and learning within our public school music programs. Throughout our undergraduate curriculum, we have been studying how to access new or different skills and techniques to re-work the structures that exist in our public school music programs. Part of our foundations of music education course revolved around this project, where we expressed fear and uncertainty about our professional field of interest. Our fears, however, sparked curiosities and desires for a more informed professional vision.

Asking questions is an essential part of solidifying our ambitions in music education. What vision do we have as teachers? What resources do we need to support our visions? What visions are at play in a specific teaching setting (e.g., a high school, community setting, or other) and to what extent do these visions, and associated educational structures, match with the desires

and needs of learners? What skills do we need and how do we access them? Not every PME's vision and envisioned possible future has been altered, but many of my peers now have a larger appetite for being fair and equitable music educators as displayed in our in-class and out-of-class discussions. While witnessing this positive change, I have also interrogated the ethical realm of this framework. Whose interests are represented in this study? What about our professors? Whose interests do they serve when discussing vision with us? Whose interests should be served while developing my own vision? What role can professional vision development have in music education curricula?

As a researcher in this study, I was able to analyze the perceptions of others who are experiencing the same curriculum as I am. I feel that it would be equally beneficial for them to discuss the implications of this study in class. Additionally, vision can add a dimension to music education and music teacher education curricula. The development of our vision as PMEs can focus what we plan to gain from our undergraduate study and allow us to engage with more informed praxial thinking. In music teacher education, the study of vision can help refocus what needs to be in curricula in an ever-changing world of music. Vision will help define what needs to be learned so that others can learn with us.

A Graduate Student's Perspective

I came into this JMUke experience with a different perspective than my fellow classmates. I had several years of professional experience helping facilitate musical experiences for the community, which is a large part of what this project was asking of us. It was the kind of work I was comfortable with and truly enjoyed. JMUke represented the kind of music education I am passionate about, and I was excited to get started when classes began.

　　　　What I realized, especially through looking back at student reflections through this research, was that not everyone shared my enthusiasm at first. Many students expressed a certain amount of anxiety at being thrown into a "nontraditional" teaching environment without much experience. Almost everyone underestimated the great deal of behind-the-scenes work it would take to properly advertise, create high quality slideshows, and plan logistically for events in various public spaces, perhaps because their other "community music experiences" were largely concerts for which others planned these sorts of details. I may have been in the minority in that I did not share these concerns. I think my prior experience and desire to serve the community through music made me believe that this project would be very meaningful in the end.

　　　　After reading PME reflections, it appeared that most found the experience meaningful in some way or another. Second year students in the foundations of music education course were just beginning their work in music education and spoke about being inspired to consider a wider range of opportunities for their career in the field. Third years in the secondary general music methods course, at the height of the toughest year in their undergraduate program, expressed a renewed sense of fun in music education, reminding them why they chose this career path in the first place. For me, the experience was everything I hoped it would be, and this research just confirmed how unique it was. These musical experiences that take music education out of the traditional classroom and into the community are some of the most special to me. Entering my graduate program at James Madison University, my past professional experiences afforded me a broader sense of both range and focus as compared to many of the career goals that my sophomore and junior classmates had. What JMUke did for me, personally, was narrow the gap in distance between my future goals in music education and what I'm learning in the present. I believe facilitating these types of events to create meaningful musical experiences for many

types of learners in my community would contribute to a rewarding career, and I'm grateful for

the opportunity to begin doing so now while still a student. In my own reflection at the end of the

semester, I wrote:

> *There is something so magical about being out in the community in a different space, and*
>
> *getting to make music with people of all ages and backgrounds, with different skill levels,*
>
> *and letting music be the thing that bonds you together for that one evening.*

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"Nothing without Joy": A High School Chorus Teacher's Use of Aphorisms to Create Identity, Told in Sonata Form

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Abstract

In this narrative, Joe, a teacher educator, and Doug, a musician and choral teacher, tell a story of Doug's teaching in a sonata-inspired form. Doug transformed a choral program with dwindling numbers and student apathy into a thriving program. To accomplish this, he uses aphorisms—both spoken and written on the walls of his classroom—to construct identities for himself and his students. These aphorisms become signifiers of important experiences in his life and serve as a way to construct the semblance of his identity and project his ideals for students. Using analytical philosophies of language, and poststructuralist theories of performativity, Joe and Doug note how Doug employs *locution*, *illocution*, and *perlocution* in these aphorisms to construct his identity and create a safe space for students. Uses of these aphorisms, then, become performative acts, which might describe the construction of music teacher identity and the education process. In the "coda" we further develop these themes by exploring implications for

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music teaching.

Introduction

In this narrative, Joe, a teacher educator, and Doug, a musician and choral teacher, tell a story of Doug's teaching. Doug, who after a career in musical theater, began teaching chorus in the public schools in his forties, transformed a choral program with dwindling numbers and student apathy into a thriving program. In telling this story, we craft a story of the emotional work, vulnerability, and rewards of teaching framed by the following philosophical questions: How do teachers engage in the everyday emotional identity work in preparation of entering the classroom? How does what educators do, perform, and say—including aphorisms and sayings they tell themselves and students—in the classroom urge students to act on their own? What benefit to teaching and inspiring do teachers receive? Our collective story of Doug's teaching presents one narrative that engages these questions that defy conclusive answers.

We tell this story of Doug's teaching in sonata-inspired form. After this introduction outlining the theoretical framework and methodology, we present an exposition by discussing a sign above the entrance of Doug's classroom that says, "Nothing without Joy." This exposition is divided into two themes: first how the aphorism influences Doug's life and teaching and, second, how the aphorism influences his students and colleagues. This aphorism, and others are signs he puts around his classroom to reorient himself and project truths or axioms that he holds to be true or wants to instill in himself and others. Next, we develop these themes by viewing this aphorism through Austin's *speech acts* theory. We then move to a recapitulation, which serves as a discussion section, where we look to blur the lines between the themes of teacher self and student other. Finally, we end with a coda and terminal development, where we further develop these themes by exploring implications for music teaching.

Theoretical Framework: Poststructural Theories of Identity

In telling Doug's story, we are attuned to the conditional and limited nature of narrative, and yet, despite those limits, understand that people positively use narrative to construct identity. Narrative has become an important method of investigation in education and music education. However, informed by poststructuralist theories of identity, Miller (1998) questions if researchers can totally tell an educator's story.

> I think there is something missing in the invitation to teachers to "just tell your story." One difficulty arises when autobiographies, or narratives, or stories in and about education are told or written as unitary and transparent, "so that the fabric of the narrative appears seamless, spun of whole cloth. The effect is magical—the self appears organic, the present the sum total of the past, the past appears as an accurate predictor of the future." (Miller, 1998, p. 150)

This is a challenge to the traditional epistemological, ontological, and methodological assumptions of narrative inquiry, where language becomes a transparent conveyor of a teacher's total, consistent identity. Instead, Miller highlights that narratives are constructions that do not fully capture the messy and contradictory nature of identity. She also suggests that people understand and make sense of narratives through theories, whether or not they acknowledge those theories.

While identity is fractured, people form their ostensibly unified subjectness through the narratives they tell themselves and others. Signifying, abstracting from, and making sense of experiences through narratives are unavoidable; narrative becomes the glue that binds one's fractured, moment-to-moment self together. In other words, despite the constructed nature of narrative telling, it is the process by which one assembles an identity. This narrative telling, though, is not merely a conscious, individual, and purely creative construction of self, but is,

instead, driven by the discourses of society and borrows and cites past gestures and narratives. This process is what Butler (1993, 1999) calls performativity. Because performativity is driven by discourses, Butler (1993) argues that it "must be understood not as a singular or deliberate 'act,' but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names" (p. 2). In other words, people create identities by repeating behaviors and gestures that they observe and borrow from other places, making them their own. Not done in a conscious way, this is driven by social structures. "Masculine" identity, for example, is created by "acting" the social role of being male, rather than stemming from a priori, biological, or essential traits. Men *cite* masculine behaviors and gestures urged by social roles. This does not make identity any less "real" or "authentic," but highlights the contingent, context-based, and malleable aspects of identity.

These narratives that constitute performativity are enacted through the repetition of what Austin (1975) calls "speech acts." For Butler, "the notion of performativity [is]. . . understood as those speech acts that bring into being that which they name" (Butler, 1996, p. 112). Through repeated performative utterances or speech acts, a subject forms the semblance of an identity that is the process of performativity. They are linguistic performatives that describe phenomena, urge into being social constructions of reality, and construct identity. Narrative, performativity, and the speech acts that constitute them are the tools or processes a person uses to assemble a fractured identity into the semblance of a fixed identity. According to Butler (1996), Austin took for granted that the speaking subject had free will when producing speech acts. Butler nuances Austin's speech acts through performativity so that it can be viewed not as a process of mere creation of free will, but driven by social rules and the limits of the social conventions of language. In this way, this paper (as perhaps all narratives) is a *narrative of narratives*, a

collection of smaller, conscious and unconscious stories influenced by discourses that we gather

up to make sense of ourselves and others (Miller, 1998).

What follows, then, is a narrative of the narratives Doug—together with Joe—tells

himself and his students. It can never sit as a complete or, in some sense, "accurate"

representation of Doug's narrative and his identity. As Geertz (1974) notes, all sociological

writings are "fictions in the sense that they are 'something made,' 'something fashioned'—the

original meaning of *fictio*" (p. 15). This story, then, stands as a representation—perhaps even as

Geertz suggests, a fiction—that gathers up Doug's narratives to bring meaning to his experiences

and how he forms a teacher identity and affects his students (Barone, 2007).

Methodology

Using narrative methodology, we tell Doug's story in a sonata-inspired form. In using

this methodology and form, we aim to render the performativity and constructedness of identity

through narrative.

Narrative research and musical form.

Our use of sonata form to tell this story is informed by music theorists' exploration of

narrative in music. Sonata form is a formal structure used in Western art music, primarily within

the common practice period of roughly 1700-1900. This form usually follows a structure of

exposition, development, and recapitulation. In the exposition, first a theme is stated in the tonic

or "home" key. A second, contrasting key is then stated in a secondary or "away" key. Next, in

the development section, where thematic material is developed through compositional

techniques. Through this process, the music moves through several keys, sometimes remote from

the tonic key. Finally, the themes are restated in the recapitulation. In this restatement both

themes are stated in the tonic key. This requires that the second theme is thus stated in a different key than as it appeared in the exposition.

Some theorists argue that music, including sonata form and other "absolute music," can be understood as the unfolding of a narrative. Maus (1991), for example, suggested that

Musical events can be regarded as characters, or as gestures, assertions, responses, resolutions, goal-oriented motions, references, and so on. Once they are so regarded, it is easy to regard successions of musical events as forming something like a story, in which these characters and actions go together to form something like a plot. (p. 6)

McClary (1991) attributes this narrative quality to the interactions of keys within musical form. "[The] narrative schema" she writes, "is played out. . . . [in] the formal conventions of 'absolute' music. . . . [T]he course of a movement traces the trajectory from a home base (tonic), to the conquest of two or three other keys, and a return to tonic for closure" (p. 14). The protagonist or "self"—represented by the tonic—traverses alterities to create tension, finally returning home to resolve these tensions. In sonata form, this journey is enacted through a tension created in the opposition of self and other in the two or more keys of the exposition and then the conflict or violence of the rapidly modulating development section. Finally, the tension of the binaries of the "self" and "other" are resolved in the recapitulation, where the secondary theme is stated in the tonic key.

In evoking this metaphor, we exploit these thematic and tonal aspects of sonata form. We recapitulate thematic material in a truncated form in a way to understand this material in new ways. As the themes of "teacher self" and "student and colleague others" are presented as opposing themes in the exposition, we blur this binary in the recapitulation.

Narrative construction and interpretation.

Joe and Doug met each other when they previously taught music in a public high school together, a high school that is different than where both are currently employed. Doug continues to teach with Joe's wife, and Joe frequently visits the school. To create a narrative, we met monthly at Doug's school over an academic year, resulting in nine meetings. The meetings lasted between 45 minutes and two hours and were generally informal in nature, although Joe did craft semi-structured protocols to address questions he had after reviewing data from previous meetings. Joe audio recorded these meetings and took notes. We used Riessman's (2001) "performative" approach to narrative which suggests that, "[w]hen we tell stories about our lives we perform our (preferred) identities" (p. 701), because it aligns the methodology with the theoretical framework. The performative view of narrative enabled us to interpret the interviews as stories Doug tells to enact or perform his identity. For coding, Joe followed procedures outlined by Saldaña (2015); he openly coded the interviews by color-coding the transcriptions and collecting them into themes and then returning to the interviews for verification and generation of new themes in an iterative process. The theoretical framework of performativity and speech acts guided Joe's creation of these themes. This coding and interpretation set the agenda for the next meetings. The codes and themes developed in the coding and interpretation helped Joe decide which areas to explore further and allowed him to approach Doug with his initial thoughts in a kind of participant check.

Based on these initial discussions, Joe wrote a first draft of a manuscript, showed it to Doug, and asked him to comment, make amendments, and challenge material. Some of the changes included Doug's elaboration of themes. There were times when, after reviewing the material, Doug wanted to add further thoughts, and that led to an audio-recorded discussion. We then added selected quotes from these discussions into the document. Doug also raised questions

about the amount of specificity to include in the document. Joe initially did not include certain

contextualizing information or material for his quotes that Joe thought Doug might not want to

reveal. However, after reading the document, he questioned their omission, and after a

discussion, we returned the material to the document. This back-and-forth process led to a

revised final document.

<div align="center">**Exposition: "Nothing without Joy"**</div>

Theme 1: "Nothing without Joy" as a Trigger of a Teacher Self

Doug teaches in, what he describes as, a pleasant school in a suburb of [a large

metropolis in the northeast of the United States]. As Doug notes, "Yeah, I've taught at another

school and it's not the same; this so much better. The teachers are great and it's a great place to

work and the administration support the arts. There's a group of kids who are dedicated to

music." As students, teachers, and others walk down a long hallway in this school, they see a

hand-painted message above the door of Doug's classroom with two-foot-tall, dark blue letters

that spell out, "Nothing without Joy." The sign is conspicuous and distinctive, and because of

that, Joe became curious about its intent and function in Doug's teaching and asked about its

significance:

> The quote is from the educator Loris Malaguzzi. And the speaker I saw who quoted him,
>
> Steven Seidel, said that it should be hung over the door of every classroom. There's no
>
> reason for there not to be any joy in all classrooms. . . . When I was performing
>
> [professionally], I swore that I would stop doing it if it wasn't fun anymore. I think the
>
> same is true for me with teaching. If it's not fun anymore, I don't want to do it. But who's
>
> in charge of that? I am. *Me.* That's *my* choice.

"Nothing without Joy" is an aphorism, borrowed from a professional development session, intended to be a message to students. We will explore this effect on students shortly in Theme 2, however, it is important to note how the aphorism facilitates Doug's process of transitioning into a teacher self:

> For some reason this "Joy" thing rang true, and there was a morning this week—
> whatever happened the day before, I was tired. I woke up and I thought, the last thing I
> want to do is go to school. I don't want to work, I don't want to do this today and I had
> the option. I can walk out the door and be shitty in the car, and be a bastard all the way in,
> or I could be "ok." You make the choice.

Doug enjoys teaching. However, like any other job, it is demanding and there are days that he does not want to go, preferring to stay home. "Nothing without Joy" is a signification of the teacher self he wants or needs to be during these times when he would rather not perform the rigors of teaching. It serves as a signifier of the type of teacher he wants to embody in the classroom. As a result, as Doug says, "'Joy' is a trigger for me. Flat out, in no-uncertain-terms."

Doug placed the sign outside his door because it had a special resonance and he wanted it to be the first thing he (and others) saw when entering the classroom.

> Of all the aphorisms I posted, this one was most important to me. I guess my insistence
> was ill-placed. I put it over my door so I could see it upon entering and leaving the room,
> but I did want my students to see it daily as well. The ones on the wall in my room
> become non-existent because I see them all day every day. Nothing Without Joy is
> important because I see it every time I enter the room. It hasn't blended into the room
> because it is outside the room – sort of the antithesis of "Abandon hope, all ye who enter
> here."

He uses the quote to remind himself how he is supposed to be in the classroom and what is important.

Theme 2: Spreading "Nothing without Joy" to Others

If "Nothing without Joy" serves as a trigger or signifier of what is important in Doug's teaching, it also serves as a signal that spreads to others.

> I have to have it first before they can see it. It has to be part of me. Believe it or not, I'm getting a little bit emotional. It has to be part of me! And there are times when it's not. I had to make a point of it this morning; "It's going to be ok."

An idea that has guided his life is that he cannot expect others in his life to be joyous if he himself is not. Doug, then, needs to secure this aspect of his life and then it can spread to others. This spreading includes his colleagues.

> What I've found—and the sign has been hanging there two or three years now—I found that it's creeping into vocabulary of other people. I said to [my colleague] Melinda the other day, "I don't know if you realize this or not, but I notice that you use the word. Not with the kids, but when we're talking about the department, whatever." She uses the word. I noticed [my principal] using the word. Ok, this is going to be a little bit cocky, but I think I'm a little responsible for that (laughing).

For Doug, this effect on his colleagues was not deliberate. "That was a kind of an unintentional perk, a byproduct. That was never intended. I'm glad it happened, but I was never like (in a sarcastically authoritative voice:) 'I'm going to turn this school climate around' or anything like that." Instead, by embodying "Nothing without Joy" for himself, he also has the added benefit of affecting others' attitudes and actions. As he said, "I want it to be part of me so it comes out and they're affected by that."

Development

"Nothing without Joy" as Speech Act

To develop these themes, we turn from Doug's voice and emic description, towards the etic descriptions of theory. How is it possible "Nothing without Joy" possesses these meanings and functions in an educational setting? Doug's use of "Nothing without Joy" to trigger his teacher self and to affect others might be understood as, what Austin (1975) referred to as, a *speech act.* According to Austin, any linguistic utterance from a person can have simultaneously differing intentions and uses. "[I]t makes a great difference whether we are advising, or merely suggesting, or actually ordering, whether we were strictly promising or only announcing a vague intention" (p. 99). For Austin, these varying intentions and uses are three different functions of language: *locution, illocution*, and *perlocution.*

Locution is the statement of a fact. Examples of locutionary acts include "asking or answering a question; giving some information or an assurance or a warning;. . . [and] making an identification or giving a description" (Austin, 1975, p. 98). It is the sort of "surface value" meaning of any utterance. *Illocution* is the "performance of an act *in* saying something as opposed to performance of an act *of* saying something" (p. 99, italics in original). An illocutionary act is an offer, promise, or command. It is an acknowledgement that a seeker has an *intended* effect in the future upon others. Finally, *perlocution* is the result upon the one who speaks and his or her intended audience. "Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons" (p. 101). Perlocution acknowledges that the intent of an utterance differs from the effect it has upon those who listen to that utterance. In sum, *locution* is what was said, *illocution* is what was meant, and *perlocution* is what happened as a result. "We

can similarly distinguish the locutionary act 'he said that…' from the illocutionary act 'he argued that…' and the perlocutionary act 'he convinced me that…'" (p. 102, ellipses in original).

These three types of speech acts provide a way of framing the differing functions of "Nothing without Joy" within Doug's life and in his professional space. The sign has words that are implied depending on *who* is viewing the sign and *in what context* he or she views it. The sign can be read as:

locution: (There is, or should be,) "Nothing without Joy"

illocution: (I urge you and myself to act in accordance with) "Nothing without Joy."

perlocution: (Through our actions in the classroom, I, my students, and my colleagues enact) "Nothing without Joy."

"Nothing without Joy" is locutional; it is a statement of "fact" or a willing of that fact into being. Doug wishes to state that everything *is* or *should be* joyful. "Nothing without Joy" is also illocution; it is an aphorism that serves as a promise to himself of how he should be and an urging of how his students are to conduct themselves. Finally, it is perlocutionary because it has (intended) consequences upon himself and others. The phrase sets the stage for himself, his students, and his colleagues to act in accordance with "Nothing without Joy," resulting in, hopefully, a happier classroom and work environment.

Doug described the sign as illocutionary, albeit with different words:

I think initially it went up there for me, for the students, for them to know, for lack of a better term, "a place of joy." And it does serve me as a reminder because I can forget that sometimes, easily. The middle of the musical season, opening night when a kid can't show up because he's sick—I have to remind myself why I'm here.

Doug's use of "Nothing without Joy" as a simultaneously locutional, illocutional, and perlocutional speech act might provide new insights into the differing ways educators communicate. Music teachers perform speech acts every day. They provide information in utterances such as, "A major triad consists of a major third and a minor third." They maintain an environment conducive to learning through classroom management utterances such as, "We raise our hand before we talk." They ask questions that spark reflection and growth such as, "How can you make your composition more expressive?" They even communicate nonverbally, like when they model how to perform a phrase from *Nessun Dorma*.

While each of these utterances may seem straightforward, easily categorizable speech acts, they too have the potential to function simultaneously as locution, illocution, and perlocution, just like "Nothing without Joy." Offering information like the first example we provided above where the teacher explains the intervallic composition of a major triad is, *prima facie*, a locutionary statement or "fact." However, it is also illocutionary; it is stated to urge students to begin to see patterns and to construct triads according to the stated rules.

Similarly, statements of classroom management, as we provided in the second example, might also be understood as registering on several levels. When students are directed to raise their hands, it is illocution by urging or decreeing that this is a rule that students must follow in the classroom. However, there is hope that it has perlocutionary effects on students' behavior; a teacher hopes it results in students "behaving." Importantly, however, this classroom management phrase it is stated as a locutionary "fact." When a teacher states this in a classroom, it is a promise of future action; its utterance suggests that students should shape their actions around what the educator believes constitutes good behavior for all citizens.

Likewise, questions that spark reflection, like our third example, *urge* future illocutionary action and *enact* that change in perlocutionary action. However, they also contain in them locutionary statements. In other words, within a question is also a statement of what the teacher finds to be important.

Finally, as in our last example, musical modeling perlocutionarily urges students to act in a manner similar to the teacher; the teacher sings so that the student can copy. However, musical modeling can also serve as an illocutionary statement from the teacher to herself and her students about how musicians should always or usually perform the music. When a teacher says, "it should go like this…" and sings, she is also potentially starting a locutionary fact or belief— music might or should sound like this. Teacher modeling, then, is a demonstration for the students, but can also serve as an illocutionary statement that urges or reminds the teacher to perform music in a certain way.

From Speech Acts to Felicitous Utterances

It is one thing for a teacher to utter mere speech acts, but another thing to enact change in students and to teach. In the classroom, teacher illocution does not guarantee perlocutionary effects upon students. In other words, as any teacher might attest, just because a teacher directs students to do something does not mean that students will do it. This leading of locution and illocution to perlocution is what Austin (1975) calls a "felicitous performative utterance" (p. 22), where listeners willingly agree to a speaker's illocution. How do educators turn their mere words into speech acts that enact perlocution, student action, and growth?

For Doug, a felicitous utterance, as the aphorism suggests, is enacted through joy. However, perhaps paradoxically, that joy is achieved by acknowledging his and his students' vulnerabilities.

> A teacher must show a certain vulnerability to establish a relationship—from both sides. It's easy to see the vulnerability in kids. I know what they're vulnerable about. There are certain things that teenagers go through. I went through them, it was a little while ago, but I went through them (laugh). . . . I've never been able to hide my emotions. The kids know. The kids worry. That vulnerability also opens up more of a relationship. I think if I stood up here and played the notes [and just said,] "do this," it would be different. But, that's not how I want to run class. I don't know how I do it. I don't do it consciously.

For Doug, this vulnerability is an essential aspect of both singing and his pedagogy.

> As musicians, we always ask, "how can I express?" You can't express something unless you're vulnerable. If you do, it's not an honest expression. That's the difference between singing a song perfectly and expressing. There's a vulnerability involved; you have to connect to it somehow. That's what I want my kids to understand.

The difference between technique and expression is connecting to one's vulnerability and to the vulnerability expressed through the music and the words of a song. That expression also links to verbal, prosaic expression when Doug invites his students to reflect and dialogue about the direction of rehearsals.

> Every two weeks instead of rehearsing, we sit in a circle and talk. [I ask them,] "What have you learned? How does that inform where we go next? What did you pick up that you probably didn't know you picked up?" When you put kids in a circle like that, it puts everyone in the same vulnerable position. There's nothing in front of you; you're sitting in a chair in a circle. For some kids, that's a really vulnerable spot.

Students face their classmates with nothing physical, such as a chair or music stand, to hide behind and express their views. This expression leaves them open to critique and vulnerability.

As Doug noted earlier, "I think if I stood up here and played the notes [and just said,] 'do this,' it would be different. But, that's not how I want to run class." Encouraging dialogue, rather than running a teacher-led rehearsal, also invites vulnerability. However, Doug believes this vulnerability leads students to acknowledge and accept that vulnerability and the joy of not taking themselves so seriously:

> One of my students once said, "Mr. Coates taught us a lot, but the most important thing that he taught me was how to laugh at myself." . . . Because I laugh at myself, you know. Sometimes it's a defense; I do it before someone else can do it (laugh). But, not take yourself so seriously. You're going to make mistakes. Be vulnerable, it's alright. That was many years ago, but it has always stuck with me that that was the most important thing she got out of this.

In this quote, Doug sums up the relationship of vulnerability, joy, and performativity. By allowing his students to be vulnerable, they cannot take themselves so seriously and begin to laugh and find joy. This is reiterative, because in not taking oneself so seriously, students are more apt to take additional chances and be more vulnerable. He does this by modeling or performatively constituting this identity of joy through his teacher identity. However, again, perhaps paradoxically, this joy is enacted, in part, through his own vulnerability. His joy is sometimes born from a "defense" and his vulnerability of others laughing at him.

Acknowledging those vulnerabilities and turning it into joy creates a welcoming environment for his students.

> My high school kids will tell you—they won't say "safe space," but that's what they mean. At the end of the year, they say, "we're like a family in here," and I don't know

how that happens. I don't consciously do it. It's just who I am, or who I've become with

these kids. The "Joy" word brought it home, tied it together.

While it creates a safe space for students, he notes that there is benefit for him as well.

This is a safe space for me, too, because the kids trust me. There's a relationship. . . .

When my parents passed, it was hard for me to come back to work. I had a rough time.

And I had one of my sixth graders come up to me and say, "Mr. Coates, I'm really sorry.

I'm really sorry for your loss." I choked up. I can't imagine a kid saying that to every

teacher. There has to be some sort of relationship where she felt safe enough to come say

it to me. And again, I don't do it consciously.

A felicitous utterance in Doug's teaching—that link between his "saying" and students'

"doing"—is through vulnerability and ultimately joy. Acknowledging vulnerabilities in the act of

expressing, whether it is through song or dialogue, allows his students not to take themselves so

seriously and create a space where they can "take a chance" and find joy. However, importantly,

this is not merely an act for his students. It has benefit for him as well. It creates a safe space for

him, where students acknowledge his vulnerabilities, like the passing of his parents, and he too

can also find joy. Finally, as he says, twice, it is not completely intentional, he "doesn't do it

consciously."

Recapitulation

Theme 1: "Nothing without Joy" as a Trigger of a Teacher Self

I woke up and I thought the last thing I want to do is go to school. . .

. I can walk out the door and be shitty in the car, and be a bastard all

the way in, or I could be "ok."

This development of Doug's language through speech acts theory and vulnerability embedded within language and expression leads back to "Nothing without Joy" and points to how educators construct a teacher self. The sign above the door to his classroom might seem like a small, perhaps insignificant gesture; teachers regularly place posters and other aphorisms around their classrooms. However, Doug's hand-painted "Nothing without Joy" serves as a signifier of the necessary identity construction teachers engage in to enter the classroom. He created and hung the sign to remind him that identities are situated and contingent and that an educator's teacher self is not identical to her non-teacher self. As Doug notes, this shift to a teacher self is not easy, but is gained through effort:

> I think there's a physicality that if you—as uncomfortable as it is—if you force yourself to smile, and you know it isn't real, your body responds. Whatever it takes. That's how I know I get through it. There are days when I don't want to. I'm here, walking through the door just miserable. . . . My morning greeting to almost everyone now is "morning sunshine!" (laugh). But, I can't say that without them smiling and without me smiling. . . . Joy forces you to find the positive in it.

Doug speaks of the performativity of teaching. There is a sort of fake it until you make quality to this positive teacher self. Teachers transform themselves, sometimes uncomfortably, into their teacher identities to serve as models for students (Alsup, 2006; Britzman, 2003). As Doug embodies "Joy" through citational bodily acts of "forced" smiles and the speech acts of peppy greetings, his teacher identity *becomes* at school. Performativity suggests that identity is not the expression of essential, unchanging biological or psychological qualities, but is instead a series of gestures that fulfill the conception of an identity (Butler, 1999). In this sense, Doug is

becoming a teacher by purposefully and performatively enacting a teaching role and teaching gestures through these citational bodily and speech acts.

This performativity is captured in two other aphorisms Doug painted on the walls of his classroom: "I don't sing because I'm happy; I'm happy because I sing—W James" and "He who sings frightens away his ills. Cervantes." Like these aphorisms, Doug does not bring a happy self to the classroom to sing. In the space of the classroom, he must create that happy teacher self. In doing so, he "frightens his ills away," and benefits his overall mood and self. Similarly, as these aphorisms might suggest, he wants his students to become their full selves in the classroom through singing. Through music and dialogue, he hopes his students can similarly find a "safe space" to express themselves, be vulnerable, and ultimately find joy.

Doug's deliberate creation of a happy self through bodily acts and speech acts is similar to, but also contrasts, Joe's unconscious creation of a teacher self. As Doug shared his experiences of conjuring up a teacher self, it prompted Joe to tell his own story of how a teaching persona can be natural yet contrary to the self outside the context of teaching. Unlike Doug, Joe stressed how this process became automatic:

> You know that kind of reminds me of this time that Melinda [Joe's wife and Doug's colleague] and I took a graduate course together. We had an assignment in class where we had to lead an ensemble. When it came to be my turn, I got up and taught. I ran a rehearsal; I gave directions, asked some questions—you know I just taught. I did my thing, I didn't think much about it. When I was done, I sat down and Melinda said, "who the hell was that!?" (laughing). I was like, "what do you mean?" She was like, "I've never seen you like that. You were so animated." And we had been married for several years at that point. She teased me about it for some time after that. But, you know, that

was the first time I realized that we shift into a teacher self that is quite different than our

everyday selves and we don't even realize it.

Doug's uses of "Nothing without Joy" and the forcing of himself to be happy at work and

Joe's anecdote suggest that teaching is performative or that a teacher's identity *becomes* in the

classroom. Doug takes great pains to transform from "being shitty in the car" to being "ok." For

Joe, this process became automatic and hidden at some point. In creating a presentation of self

for the context of a classroom, Doug tells himself a narrative—perhaps even a fiction—about

himself represented or triggered by the aphorism and speech act of "Nothing without Joy." This

aphorism can never be a complete description of Doug's identity, but aids in conjuring up a facet

of his identity that he brings to the surface for the classroom. What makes Doug's process of

conjuring up a teacher self different than Joe and perhaps many other teachers is how delineated

the process is for him. Performativity, as Butler describes it and as Joe's anecdote suggests, is

largely an unconscious process where subjects do not freely create themselves but are

constrained by discourses. For Doug the process is more conscious and deliberate. As Joe

described it in one of the conversations, "there's a sign. There's literally a physical sign above

the door of your classroom that says something that we as all teachers do," namely to remind

ourselves, consciously or not, of the identity we need to gather up before we enter our

classrooms.

Theme 2: "Nothing without Joy" Spreads

I have to have it first before they can see it. It has to be part of me. Believe

it or not, I'm getting a little bit emotional. It has to be part of me!

If the performativity of transitioning into a teacher self is difficult for Doug, then why

does he continue to do it? Doug, of course, strives to be a joyful teacher for his students and this

also has residual, unintended, but positive effects on his colleagues. However, performatively

constituting a joyful teacher is not merely a service for his students and colleagues; he also gains

benefit from it as well.

> Doug: When I first put the sign up, there were people laughing at me. But that's ok, I
>
> didn't care because I wanted to see it spread. But, whether it did or not, *I needed it for*
>
> *me.* Before this quote came into my life, this (gesturing around his classroom) wasn't a
>
> fun room, a joyous room. It could be. It had the opportunity to be. And there were days
>
> where it was. But, it wasn't everyday. . . .
>
> Joe: Were you upset by the laughing?
>
> Doug: I think the laughter was not necessarily cruel; it was meant to be good-natured
>
> ribbing, but it was coming from a jaded, cynical place in some mid-career teachers who
>
> have been in the district for most, if not all of their careers. Teachers can easily become
>
> stagnant and complacent in what they do, especially in a high-performing building. [They
>
> think,] "Nothing needs to change, and the school community doesn't need to be bettered.
>
> Things are fine just the way they are and have always been." . . . It also points out the
>
> silos that the teachers live in inside the building. Most of those teachers have rarely or
>
> never been inside my classroom. They've never seen me teach. They only reference
>
> they have is their own experiences in middle/high school chorus classes.

Doug is "making it spread" but, as he says, he also "needs it for me." There is a mutually

beneficial aspect for him and others; teaching is a symbiotic relationship. Doug summarized this

relationship by relating it to his experiences as a performer in professional theater:

> When I interviewed here [at my current school], I got the question, how do you see
>
> yourself going from a performer to a teacher? It's the same thing, you know. There's a

certain entertainer aspect that we have to have. As a performer you give to the audience

so that they can give back to you, so you can give back to them. Teaching is the same

thing. I'm giving to the students so they can give back to me. The more you give them

more you get back and I know that sounds trite and cliché, but it's so true. . . . That's

what you get out of it. It's not applause, it's a give-and-take.

To speak, express, and be joyful and vulnerable for the benefit of students is also beneficial for

the teacher. To utter speech acts that have intended perlocutionary effects on others is also an

opportunity to state locutionary beliefs, make illocutionary promises to oneself on how to act,

and create perlocutionary changes in oneself. In short, teachers' speech acts are intended to enact

learning in students, but they also help teachers form their identities, and grow and learn

themselves. By enacting a joyful teacher, Doug strives to improve himself to become a better

person. This is not easy; it requires effort to conjure up a teacher self, to performatively

constitute all that one hopes to be and for his or her students to be. This takes teachers' deep

commitment; it requires teachers' speech acts not to be simple commands, but to be embodied

and become performative. Doug—and perhaps other teachers—does not do this for "applause"

and accolades, but for the "give and take," that mutually beneficial but vulnerable relationship he

builds with students. When Doug makes himself vulnerable, enacting this teacher self and

inviting his students to also be vulnerable, he creates a joyful "safe space" for both his students

and himself. In short, to take on a teacher identity through speech acts is for the benefit of his

students *and* for him.

The act of teaching, then, is to dialectically care for others *and* oneself. When a teacher

truly becomes a subject in the classroom, he enters into a relationship of vulnerability and joy

with his students rather than an all-knowing model that hides his vulnerabilities. We have tried to

reflect these dialectical relationships in the structure of this paper. Sonata form's recapitulation reconciles the opposites of self and other, tonic and dominant, and home and away. Similarly, in this paper, we have presented teaching as an act that dialectically merges the seeming opposites of care for oneself with care for others and vulnerability with joy. The speech acts and performativity an educator employs to perform a teacher identity for students is also work for and upon oneself.

Coda: Terminal Development Upon Narrative Research

We now turn one final section, looking to develop further the themes of this paper towards implications and applications to music teaching. The description of teaching as simultaneously a care for oneself and others that concluded the recapitulation section might reconceptualize music teacher's speech acts in the classroom. There are several areas of literature within music education that deal with speech acts, although this terminology is not specifically used. Whether on the nature and quantity of feedback given to students (Duke, 2009, Duke & Henninger, 2002; Goolsby, 1997), the types of questions used (Bernard & Abramo, 2019; Haston, 2013), or even the aim towards inclusive language (Abramo, 2012; Bradley, 2007; Lamb, 1994), these bodies of research focus on perlocution. In other words, this research looks at the effects speech acts have on students and the educational environment. The simultaneous nature of speech acts might explore further how these speech acts work on the identity of the teacher. For example, how does repeatedly performing these types of speech acts—say continually striving towards clear feedback, asking questions that promote critical thinking, or addressing race, gender, or class in the classroom—change the conceptions teachers have of themselves? Further, the framework of performativity and Doug's narrative suggest a contextual sense of self, one that is specific to the classroom. How, if at all, then, does this situational sense

of self through speech acts interact with a "personal," non-teacher sense of self (Meijer, Korthagen, & Vasalos, 2009)? Researchers might pay particular attention to how vulnerability within the teacher and the students creates and is created by these speech acts. Performativity and speech acts as frameworks, then, might provide an opportunity for researchers to combine and intersect further the areas of research in music teacher identity and language in the classroom.

The narrative we wove might also have practical applications. Some research documents the difficulty for preservice teachers to create, inhabit, and transition into teacher identities (Britzman, 2003; Chong & Low, 2009; Meijer, et al., 2009; Walkington, 2005). If, as Joe said, "Nothing without Joy" is "literally a physical sign above the door of [Doug's] classroom that says something that we as all teachers do," to transition into a teaching self, then similar aphorisms might serve as a pedagogical tool for preservice teachers. A created or borrowed phrase, image, or even musical passage that signals to preservice teachers to transition into the type of teacher they want to be might help in this notoriously difficult task. Similar processes might be useful for in-service teachers as well. Akin to the ways Doug uses aphorisms, veteran teachers might use similar triggers to reorient their actions during stressful times or times of doubt. To capture teachers' dynamic, ever-evolving conceptions of teaching and identity as suggested by performativity, they might also periodically reevaluate, rewrite, or replace these triggers.

Such processes might help new and experienced teachers articulate and hold what is for Doug, and perhaps other teachers, the vulnerable but rewarding, joyful, emotional, and sometimes overwhelming experience of teaching. "It has to be part of me," as Doug says, "Believe it or not, I'm getting a little bit emotional. *It has to be part of me.*" Making teaching "a part" of oneself through what one does and says in the classroom, more than mere delivery of

content is an avenue of exploration that education researchers and practitioners might continue to

explore.

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Unity Through Transformation: Community Building with At-Risk Students Through

Participation in a Ghanaian Music Ensemble

Dorothy Hause[6]

There have been many conversations surrounding the term *at-risk* in educational settings

and how to address the growing concern over these students (Cuban, 1989; Wan, 2008; Ward-

Steinman, 2006). The term *at-risk* was originally intended to describe poor and minority youth

who were "at risk of emerging from school underprepared for further education or the kinds of

jobs available" (Barr & Parrett, 2001, p. 14). However, due to recent economic and social

changes this targeted group has been expanded from *at-risk* to *deprived*, and later *disadvantaged*,

which describes students "as the *disengaged* or *disconnected* youth of the United States" (Barr &

Parrett, 2001, p. 2). Other similar labels have included *marginalized*, *low-achievers*, *culturally*

deprived or *impoverished* (Baptiste, 1992), and *inferior* (Dance, 2002). Any label has its

limitations, and may be accused of stigmatizing students (Benedict, 2006; Cuban, 1989;

Emmanuel, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Waxman, 1992).

Evidence exists that arts programs were beneficial to at-risk learners, but, according to

Taylor et al. (1997), "At this time the majority of intervention programs for at-risk students have

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been conducted in other disciplines" (p. 13). The authors also advocate that further research be done in this area in effort to prove these benefits. The lack of literature specific to African-American learners' needs may be due to the failure to recognize them as a distinct cultural group, not simply a different race (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Music educators have designed experiences for students considered to be at-risk and have recorded success with their participants (Andreassen, 2013; Byrt, 2011; Neill, 2004; Schmid, 1998; Serba, 2010; Taylor, J., Barry, N., & Walls, K., 1997). However, these case studies mainly focused on individuals who were older students, and experiences were often conveyed from a teacher's perspective. Results reported quantitative data without any qualitative analysis to support their findings. Other research into the effects of music on the self-esteem of disadvantaged students includes the work of Darrow (1991, 2005); Hietolahti & Kalliopuska (1990); Kennedy (1998); Kivlan (1986); Legette (1993); and Schuler (1991, 1992). My learner-centered approach in the current study honors learners' perspectives and prior experience, for I firmly believe this approach engages learners to their maximum potential. Through a qualitative lens, this study attempts to illuminate the need for music educators to take an active role in advocating for youth, deemed at-risk of educational failure.

My Approach as Music Educator

The role music plays in my life has shaped and molded the curricular choices I make in my general music classroom. As a professional music teacher I use my personal musical experiences to guide lessons and am reminded of my students' human need to express themselves through body, mind, and feelings as each of these elements work "together to create meanings" (Reimer, 2003, p. 238) as only music can accomplish. I am mindful of the way I teach and how my students perceive my curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

My students relate to music on an emotional level fairly easily, but they need to experience music for themselves. In other words, they become the doers, or what Dillon (2007) calls *student as maker*. Campbell (1998) suggests, "Children learn by doing music as much as by thinking it, by entering the musical arena as active players rather than sitters in silence at the periphery" (p. 187). Music requires an act of doing, whether a person is listening to, performing, or creating the music. When children *do* music, they remember it because of the mind-body connection (p. 187). According to musicologist Small (1998), one must take part in some capacity in the actual musical performance or engaged listening experience in order to *do* music.

As a music teacher in a school district that served underserved, economically challenged students, I decided to invite some of my students who were experiencing the most difficulty in school to join a lunchtime drumming ensemble in hopes that the experience might help them find more success in school. I decided to engage in a qualitative study of the nature of these children's experiences in hopes of learning more about them as learners.

I selected and invited thirteen fifth graders to participate in a hand drum ensemble, focusing on music styles from northern and southern Ghana, in hopes of improving their school attendance, academic grades, and behavioral conduct. The study produced insight into the development and influences of community-building (Rogoff, 2003; Wenger, 2002) on the attitudes and behaviors of these at-risk elementary school students. Additionally, because the music we learned and performed in this ensemble was authentic Ghanaian music, a secondary focus of the study was the nature of the children's learning of this particular music in the context of an American elementary school setting.

My story began with a desire to get to know these "difficult" (misbehaved and negative attention-seeking) students in a more intimate setting in hopes of gaining rapport and mutual

respect that would lead to a calmer time in our general music classroom. The bonds we created throughout this process exceeded my expectations.

Theoretical Frame

I wanted to understand more about the learning needs of my own students who were considered to be "at-risk" in hopes of becoming a more effective teacher in reaching this particular population of learners. As an elementary school general music teacher working in an impoverished community, I not only met with every student in the school on a weekly basis, but I witnessed firsthand the effects of poverty on my students' learning. My school district was relatively small, with all students considered to live at or below the state poverty level.

The study was informed by literature on social constructivist learning theory and practice. This approach hinges on recent brain research about how the human brain works and how people learn best through constructing their own understanding, or taking new information and connecting it to what they already know, their prior knowledge (Kincheloe, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; van Manen, 1991; Wiggins, 2015). I combined the information found in these resources with my personal experiences in the classroom and encounters learning music in Ghana.

I also familiarized myself with literature related to teaching African-American learners and populations affected by poverty. Parrett & Budge (2012) reported that childhood poverty rates were on the rise, with African-American children three times more likely than Caucasians to be in poverty. As populations have increased, more African-American students were making their way through our nation's public school system (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Peltier, 1998; Waxman, 1992). In order to address this growing concern, we must better identify the needs of the African-American learners in our classrooms (Dawson, 1968) even though schools have

traditionally ignored them (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Robert Stephens (2002) suggested that there was strong evidence:

> . . . that many African-American students feel that their school environment is alien and hostile toward them or does not affirm and value who they are. As a consequence, they are not motivated to concentrate or attend to academic tasks with any dedication. (p. 98)

To counteract the negative effects of poverty, teachers have tried to empower their students (Gnezda, 2005; Kafele, 2009, 2013) by offering guidance through opportunities for choice and responsibility. To accomplish these tasks, educators have allowed students to take control of their learning and taught them how to be self-directed (Gnezda, 2005; Michie, 2009). As students develop these skills, their sense of agency has increased. Greene (2005) also testified to the need for at-risk youth to develop personal agency in order to be successful, suggesting participation in the arts provides "a model not only for engaged experience but for constructivism as a mode of liberation and expansion" (p. 129).

I created my theoretical framework by examining existing literature addressing the impacts of poverty, African-American learners, and development of musical agency to develop a curriculum aimed at enriching the lives of my students through interaction in a drumming ensemble. Guided by my previous knowledge, I set out to challenge my pre-assumptions about at-risk learners in hopes of collecting new data to further the research on the positive effects of musical involvement.

Methodology

Thirteen students were selected for participation in the drumming ensemble, all of whom, according to their teachers, had varying aspects of their lives that made them more at-risk than

their classmates. The thirteen students were chosen by sending an email to the fifth grade

teachers asking them to list any student they felt might benefit from inclusion in this group. The

teachers understood what my objective was, but I left the criteria for choosing up to them. Every

student listed was invited to join. All, except one, continued participation through to the end.

While each student presented themselves with his or her own unique strengths and

weaknesses, I found it difficult to view them all under the same at-risk umbrella. The realization

that the term at-risk did not necessarily define these students provided my launching point for

this study. I wanted to get to know them as individuals and how participation in this ensemble

and my commitment to them might make a difference (or not) for each of them as individuals.

As Kafele (2013) suggested, "it is still incumbent upon you to take the initiative to learn about

your students' lives outside school, as it has direct implications for what they do inside school"

(p. 61).

The ensemble met for a total of 27 regular rehearsals not including auditorium practices,

group interview sessions, and performances. Our meeting time took place during the students'

half hour lunch period on Fridays throughout the school year. Students would bring their lunch to

the music room, eat and socialize quickly and then begin practice. My method for transmitting

the material during these 27 meetings was based largely on how I was taught the material in

Ghana, but incorporating some simplifications as needed. For example, I began our sessions with

instructing proper drumming technique and an overview of the significance of drumming in

Ghanaian culture. I often introduced and practiced patterns using American terms like Tone or

Bass sung in higher and lower pitch imitating the sounds of the drum hoping to reinforce hand

placement patterns, both physically (where the tone and bass are played) and melodically (how

the pitches sound in relationship to each other). The ensemble concluded after a final concert

performance and school assembly where they performed alongside world percussionist and educator, Mark Stone.

Using qualitative research methodology (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), I entered the setting as a teacher-researcher (Kincheloe, 2003) and collected data through participant observation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Patton, 1987). Audio and video recorders captured students' participation and interactions during our weekly class meetings. I also kept a teaching journal and had access to students' academic records. Recordings were used to establish persistent observation. Informal conversational interviews (Patton, 1987) with teaching staff, administration, and student participants were documented throughout the process, allowing for more in-depth, and individualized questioning. I transcribed the audio recordings verbatim following each session, with additional memos to aid in remembering thoughts and nuances that were observed. I analyzed the transcripts and recordings, coding the data for themes as they emerged (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), and interpreted the themes for their interrelationships (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

When the ensemble meetings ended, I set the data aside for three years, except for an occasional update on students' lives as our paths crossed. Analyzing and interpreting the data three years after they were collected enabled me to view the students and myself in a distinctly less-biased light. I felt most of my emotion and attachment to the study give way to critical views of myself as teacher and my students as learners.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

During the coding process I chose to code the transcripts two ways. Utilizing highlighters of various colors I began looking for emergent themes. The first set of transcripts highlighted a total of sixteen emergent thematic codes. Upon studying these themes for continuity and

developing storylines, I realized that embedded within the transcripts were the individual stories of my students as they lived their experience in the ensemble. The discovery led me to highlight a second set of transcripts giving each student's voice its own color code. The coding allowed for an easier way to follow the progression of each student through the course of the study.

All video was analyzed for additional non-verbal, non-musical elements present in student interactions with each other, with myself, and with their instruments. Teacher reflection has been an important pedagogical practice (van Manen, 1991) and was documented following each session as well, specifically recording my feelings, observations, thoughts, lesson analyses, possible themes or connections, and ideas for future sessions. The audio and video files were saved for repeated observations of the data contained therein, providing a "benchmark against which later data analyses and interpretations (the critiques) could be tested for adequacy" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 313). Recordings became my main source for data collection and "therefore, the quality of what is recorded becomes the measure of usable observational data (because it can be monitored and replicated) rather than the quality of the observation itself" (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000, p. 676).

Results

The main themes that emerged from this study reflected my initial hopes that building a rapport would increase achievement and attitude in my music classes. For the students in this study, participating in the drumming ensemble fostered increased personal and musical agency, which resulted in their making progress in school attendance, academic grades, and their capacity for cooperative, positive classroom participation and social interactions within the school community.

Increased Student Achievement

All thirteen students in the ensemble showed growth in their academic achievement and social skills over the course of that school year, evident in their report card grades and teachers' evaluations. What follows are examples of classroom situations where it is evident that the children's participation in drum ensemble had been a positive influence on their willingness to attend school and keep up with their classwork, followed by my reflections as taken from my journal.

> **Scenario 1.** While reviewing our ensemble rules I mentioned that some members had almost missed rehearsal because their teacher wanted to keep them in for lunch detention to make up missing classwork. She had allowed them to come to rehearsal with the understanding they would have to make up the time with her on another day.

> Kevin: I got off of indoor recess (detention) so, I turned in all my work today so I could come.

> Teacher: So, you turned in everything you were supposed to do? Good, that is exactly what you need to do. Good job, Kevin. We are glad you are here.

> **Reflections.** I finally hit a milestone with Kevin today. He turned in all of his homework and was beaming with pride when he told me why he did it. I hope he will continue his efforts.

> **Scenario 2.** I had spoken with Ms. S. regarding Tori this morning and she said that as long as she turned in last night's homework she was all caught up and could come today. When I saw Tori in the hallway she was all smiles and said she had her work ready to turn in and would see me at practice.

Reflections. Academically, Tori is capable of producing quality grade level work, but has a history of poor attendance. Her biggest challenge is not turning in her homework. Her teacher recommended her for inclusion in my program to aid in building her self-esteem, promote turning in homework and class assignments, and curbing her distracting behaviors. She is now regularly turning in her homework which has raised her grades significantly.

Scenario 3. Yesterday in music class Aaliyah was very conscientious about her behavior and participation. Several times throughout class she asked me how she was doing and had a big smile on her face every time I looked her way. Today at drum ensemble practice she hugged me and asked if she could stay with me for the rest of the afternoon.

Reflections. Aaliyah has come a long way from the child who, at the beginning of the year, sat in music class refusing to do anything, bothering others, laughing uncontrollably, teasing relentlessly, and giving me a BIG attitude! Last week she was not allowed to participate in the ensemble to serve a detention I had issued for refusing to participate in music class. Using the drums as incentive to participate and follow directions in music class was one of the reasons I formed this group. These results were even more than I was hoping for.

Increased Student Agency

During the time between the forming the group in the fall of 2010 to its conclusion in June, 2011, I witnessed numerous examples of student growth, in particular the emergence of leadership and musicianship in my students, stemming from a boosted level of personal agency. Themes emerging in this category included how the students began viewing themselves as

musicians and leaders. I also expected to find examples of heightened cultural identity, especially in our students of African-American heritage, and was surprised to find no themes relating to this concept. What I found instead were students suddenly able to express pride in themselves as in the following examples:

Scenario 1. Drum ensemble practice was well under way on a snowy lunch period in January when DeAngelo is heard above the tapping of drum rhythms and clanging of the bell as he shouts out "I'm the King around here! I'm the Big Daddy! I am the Grand Poobah!"

Reflections. Normally this type of interruption to our group's practice would result in a disapproving look and verbal admonishment, but this was not the case today. I neither stopped the group nor addressed his outbursts. Instead I simply smiled at him and kept on drumming with the group. My smile came from the deep sense of pride I developed after watching this young man become the best musician in the fifth grade class that year. DeAngelo was recommended for this group due to his at-risk status in math, reading, behavior, and low self-esteem as identified by his classroom teacher and principal since Kindergarten.

My intent for this ensemble was to help my students develop a sense of musical agency. At the outset of this project, with the exception of Atina, the participants would not have described themselves as musicians. Providing opportunities for them to showcase their talents and encouraging them in any way I could became my goal at each rehearsal. The following "snapshot" taken from a rehearsal transcript shows musical identity and agency in the making.

Scenario 2. In the middle of a frustrating rehearsal of *Adowa* where we had to stop and restart multiple times, Joey became resigned. Joey usually struggled with the rhythms

in the ensemble. He was last to figure out a pattern and continued to have difficulty

coordinating his hands and knowing how his part fit with the whole. He was passed over

for independent parts like the bell or lead drumming even though he often wanted to play

those parts. He recognized his difficulties and usually accepted that he was not as

proficient as others in the group, especially DeAngelo. While reviewing the recording of

a particular rehearsal, I discovered Joey's comment: "Man, I'm in this drumming mood

and we just keep stopping and stopping. I'm going to do my own solo and make you

proud."

Reflections. In this example Joey was clearly expressing his frustration at having to

keep stopping during the rehearsal, but the second statement reveals something much

deeper than I had ever given him credit for. In the six years I had taught Joey he never

once indicated a desire to make anyone proud of him. He wore his lack of personal

agency on his sleeve and used it to his advantage to get out of higher-level thinking in the

classroom. I wish I heard his comment during the rehearsal so I could have offered him

that opportunity.

Developing Leadership

One of the goals I had for the ensemble was to provide them with opportunities to take

ownership of the class and of the music (Hall, 2008; O'Neill, 2012; Wiggins, 2015). I wanted to

see them establish their own functional learning community in this setting and be able to transfer

those skills to the general music classroom and beyond. From as early as our second rehearsal

the students rose to the challenge, taking on the roles of community leaders and teachers. They

established their own rules of conduct and took turns enforcing those rules. That several

participants developed leadership skills was an added benefit to their development as musicians.

Leaders rose in various situations where students acted as peer coaches, teachers, and group

motivators, as illustrated in the following scenarios:

Scenario 1. In this scenario, which occurred early on in our rehearsals, I had divided

the group in half and sent each half to a separate part of the classroom to practice an

assigned rhythm. I intentionally had not assigned leaders. I was curious to observe their

group dynamics as they worked together to solve the problem. I did not interact with the

group during this time, leaving them to work on their own.

> DeAngelo: Wait, shhhh, wait, I've got an idea. Okay, one of us, or we'll all start with
>
> > Bass Tone Bass Bass Tone [speaking the words as he plays it on his drum].
>
> Another student: No, it's Tone Tone Tone Tone Bass Tone Tone Tone Bass [correctly
>
> > articulating the pattern I had asked them to practice].
>
> DeAngelo: I know, but then I'll…

He stopped to ask Bobby to stop drumming so he could talk then provided

indistinguishable instructions to the group. They all begin drumming the second pattern

while DeAngelo said the pattern aloud. When someone yelled out "Freestyle!" and began

adding beat boxing, DeAngelo returned their focus to the assignment. "Okay, stop. Let's

try it one at a time. We'll start here and go this way. Imani will go first." He continued

asking everyone to take a turn and corrected them as needed. "Come on, let's do it all

together. She'll start. 1, 2, ready, go."

Reflections. Only a few rehearsals into the project and DeAngelo stepped up and took

control of the practice. I was impressed by his ability to take charge of making sure

everyone could play the rhythm, but his patience and compassion toward everyone was

something I had not witnessed in him before. Instead of arguing or shouting out in

frustration, DeAngelo handled his classmates with all the care of a teaching professional. No one made attempts to suppress his authority and the students showed him great respect. They listened and followed his lead, a welcomed trend that would continue through the rest of our rehearsals.

Scenario 2. DeAngelo had proven to be the leader of our ensemble community. He secured his role when he became the *atumpan* soloist for *Adowa*. During rehearsals for the piece he not only led the group as a solo musician, but also as a conductor. Following the performance we no longer had a need to practice *his* piece and some students teased him about not being the leader anymore. He took great offense to this proclamation and looked for every opportunity after that to place himself back at the center of attention.

DeAngelo: Why does she [Tori] get to sit there [at the *gyil*]? I want to sit there!

Tori: 'Cause I'm on the xylophone [part].

DeAngelo: Well, I should be. I'm more important than anyone!

Reflections. Everyone ignored DeAngelo's whining comment so he went right back to playing his drum. The group had learned to ignore DeAngelo's outbursts by this point. They had become accustomed to his desire to be the musician in the spotlight and most of them just laughed it off. DeAngelo's comment, although earnest, was not said in a harsh or confrontational tone and he just smiled as he put his best efforts back into his drumming.

Scenario 3. Here DeAngelo and Kevin had been paired up to practice combining the two *Kpanlogo* rhythms. Once again DeAngelo took control of the situation and Kevin and he were the first pair to begin practicing.

DeAngelo: Wait, who's going to go first? You wanna do Bass Tone while I do [plays

second rhythm]?

Kevin: You pick.

DeAngelo assigned Kevin the first rhythm, which was the simpler of the two, and

they played both patterns together successfully.

DeAngelo: Switch! [more drumming is heard without a break]

DeAngelo (when stopped, laughing): Oh, you're messing me up now.

Kevin: Yeah, you're like…

DeAngelo: Okay, let's stop for a minute. I'm gonna do [played the second pattern

faster]…

Kevin: You're going too fast.

DeAngelo: Wait, look [played second rhythm slower].

Kevin: I know.

The boys continued to drum together for a while, switching back and forth between parts.

At this point DeAngelo approached me and said they both "had it perfect" and asked,

could they do the same parts together? I mentioned that this might be a good time to work

on the third rhythm I had showed him last time and figure out how it fits with the first

rhythm. He leapt back to his seat and explained this idea to Kevin. I could see that he was

struggling to remember the rhythm so I offered to come and help them. They both

watched and attempted the third rhythm, and then I asked Kevin to play the first while

DeAngelo and I played the third to show how it fit into the first pattern. By the time we

finished, they had a few moments to practice alone together and then it was time to move

back to the large group. Upon returning DeAngelo followed Kevin to his seat and was

still helping him with the third rhythm while the other students were setting up. DeAngelo affirmed Kevin's playing before returning to his own seat.

Reflections. In this example DeAngelo took over the leadership role by dictating the proceedings of the practice session, dictating who played which part and when they would switch. He also assumed the role of teacher as he adjusted his tempo to accommodate his partner's ability and took it upon himself to teach the new rhythm to Kevin and follow through with him until Kevin could play it accurately.

As time went on more students became empowered enough to take on the role of teacher during our rehearsals. Often I would pair them up and give them time to work together on new rhythmic patterns. As I reviewed the audio recorder nearest Atina and Michael I was pleasantly surprised at the new leadership role Atina instantly stepped into:

"Try it, go. [playing] Nope, too fast. Bass, tone, bass, bass, tone [she says while Michael plays on the drum]. Michael! Eyes on your drum. Okay, you go [she plays the second rhythm pattern for him and then they play together as she sings the rhythm on da]. Here, I got an idea. Look, you'll start me off. Watch my hand, okay? And when I go back like this [bass] you put yours up front [tone]. So, try it [playing again]. Here, I'll drum it for you, okay? I'll do it with you, okay? [playing and saying the words]. No, you're going too fast. Watch my hand. When I go like this you do tone and bass, okay?"

When the group reconvened Atina told me that Michael did not really know how to play the first rhythm. As I monitored the whole group practice I noticed that Michael was playing the part perfectly. Perhaps Atina's attempts were confusing to Michael at first, but in the end, thanks to Atina's unrelenting attention, Michael was able to learn the rhythm and performed it accurately during every rehearsal thereafter.

Findings and Implications

The study participants were provided with a holistic and unique experience of coming together as an ensemble community. Students had opportunities for large and small group instruction, peer scaffolding, introduction to a new historical context with connections to their prior experience, multiple performances, a workshop with a cultural expert, and a creative composition component.

I engaged the ensemble in community-building techniques designed to foster a strong sense of personal agency in the community members. I sought to empower students, who many had already given up on, through the use of Ghanaian music. Through this empowerment I witnessed improvements in my students' academic, behavioral, and attendance records and documented their success at gaining self-confidence and self-worth, as both musicians and as valued individuals.

Are Teachers Standing in the Way?

Throughout this process, I came to understand that teachers have more to do with student agency and achievement than they probably realize. These students had been labeled from an early age as potential dropouts based on their academic abilities, behavior concerns, or family challenges. I found that these students continued to fall short of their teachers' expectations. I witnessed firsthand the disappointment of rejection and failure on their young faces as teachers and other staff refused to see the good in these individuals.

For example, I had known Kevin since Kindergarten. His older brothers and sisters were equally as notorious for constant classroom disruptions and misbehaviors over the years. Kevin was the youngest of the family and my colleagues were eager to see him graduate at the end of the year. Kevin's behaviors in music class bordered on appalling: laughing, taunting, refusing to

cooperate, disrespectful to teachers and students, unrelenting silliness, and stubbornness in all

classroom situations. If trouble was brewing somewhere, Kevin was likely in the middle of it.

Kevin was one of the first names brought to my attention for inclusion in the ensemble,

with hopes that the opportunity would provide an outlet for him to express himself and offer

incentive for him to complete classwork and stay out of trouble. Needless to say, I was skeptical.

Since Kindergarten, Kevin and I had not seen eye to eye on most issues. If this ensemble could

enhance our relationship even to the point of being able to tolerate each other during music

classes for the remainder of the year, then it was worth a try. The following quotes were taken

from an email sent by Kevin's classroom teacher in early October.

> "The classroom 'bad boy.'" "At the BOTTOM of the behavior line." "Whenever there's a
>
> problem, Kevin is in the middle of it." "He's ALWAYS turned around and making faces
>
> and laughing about something, and draws even the best kids into it!" "I don't think much
>
> of anything will help fix Kevin. He loves the bad boy image, and thrives from the
>
> attention he gets from it. He shows NO desire to change and come to the good side.
>
> Typically, he'll shrug his shoulders in apathy, when given 'the speech' about being good,
>
> getting good grades, etc. I don't bother anymore."

Even though I understood his teacher's perspective, I could not help feeling heartbroken

when I read her last line. One month into the school year and his teacher had already given up.

After reading this I decided then and there that if his regular classroom teacher was not up for the

challenge, then it would have to be up to me to reach this child.

Teacher Becomes Advocate

I never thought I would find myself advocating for these children—not the students I had

previously sent to the office, for whom I had written a myriad of discipline referrals, and whom I

had occasionally refused to allow into my classroom over the years. My attitude had been slowly

changing over the course of our time together, although I did not recognize this epiphany until

the following situation occurred. My biggest "Aha!" moment came only minutes before a lunch

rehearsal in late May when Ms. S, one of the fifth grade teachers, popped her head into my room

and informed me that her class had been running in the hallway to get their lunches so they could

get to my room and she was going to "let them have it" after lunch. This upset several of my

students, especially Atina who came in crying. I learned the whole class would be serving lunch

detention the next day, but we had scheduled our big rehearsal for our concert during that time.

As a class we discussed the incident briefly and the students begged me for help. I promised to

do what I could, but indicated that they were still responsible for the consequences of their

behavior.

Feeling a bit panicked over potentially losing half my ensemble for our last practice, I

made the decision to bypass discussing this with Ms. S and went straight to the office to speak

with the principal. She had always been supportive of our rehearsing needs and I knew she did

not always agree with Ms. S's unbending detention policies. I explained the situation and asked

her what I could do. She said she had already spoken with Ms. S and my students would have to

make up the lunch detention on Monday. I thanked her for her preemptive help and turned to

walk out of the office when our secretary poked her head into the conversation and said, "That's

the problem with your group. The kids know no one can touch your rehearsals and they can get

out of trouble. I thought your group was supposed to help with the behavior problems, but all

these kids are still bad kids."

At this point my principal interjected and reminded her of the purpose of my study, why

the students needed to be there, and that they always had to make up their punishments; they

were not getting away with anything. I was very thankful that she had jumped to my defense, as I was a bit speechless at the attack. "Well I got news for you," the secretary responded, "Your project failed. It didn't work." At this point I waved my hands at her in disgust and walked away fearing I would say something I would later regret. I fumed all the way back to my classroom, but it wasn't until later that afternoon that I had my epiphany. *Why had I felt the way I felt when she attacked my kids?*

Initially I attempted to dismiss what the secretary had said and move on. I rationalized that she only saw these children in the office when they were in trouble. A year ago I would have agreed with her about how truly horrible and unreachable they were. As I reflected further I realized how her statements fueled a fire in me. My project had not failed; it had passed with flying colors. Our learning community was everything I had hoped for and more. These youth were misunderstood and demoralized by many of our staff. I knew they were not perfect and most likely would never be exemplary students, but I had watched them grow. I witnessed and felt their kindness, listened to their emotions, enjoyed getting to know who they were—their hopes, their dreams, their fears, their anxieties. I loved those kids.

From my data analysis, it became clear that all the study participants did in fact meet the goals I had set. School records indicated increased daily attendance, higher academic grades, greater consistency in completing and turning in class assignments, and higher scores in behavioral conduct across their educational experiences. Analysis of classroom transcripts and interviews with students and staff revealed an increased sense of personal agency, teamwork skills, and leadership capabilities in all participants. These findings gave further credence to the idea that the experiences of music educators have value in the broader teaching profession and

our voices should be recognized and brought into conversations regarding music in urban schools (Frierson-Campbell, 2006).

The study illuminated the benefits of musical participation and community-building opportunities in the lives of students labeled *at-risk*, including heightened sense of student responsibility, increased musical and personal agency, and growing leadership skills. The students built and regulated their own learning community, which enabled them to expand and share their knowledge and boosted their overall self-worth as musicians and lifelong learners.

Throughout our work together the students engaged in a community composition project aimed at creating their own piece for a drum and xylophone ensemble. The students worked hard and were very proud when they debuted their piece for the entire school. When asked to title their work these fifth graders openly discussed several ideas, eventually settling on "Unity Through Transformation," because they had become united as an ensemble and each of them had transformed in some way that year. A fitting title to say the least.

Three years after concluding this study I was given the opportunity to reconnect with the study participants. As they were about to complete middle school, I kept trying to imagine how they might look three years older, but in my mind they would always be my baby-faced fifth graders. Of our thirteen original fifth grade ensemble members, only six remained in our school district. I was able to visit with five of them over lunch. We informally chatted about their middle school experiences, activities, hobbies, behavior, and grades. We reminisced about our time together in the drumming ensemble, bringing moments of laughter and thoughtful reflection from the students. DeAngelo enthusiastically spoke of his involvement in the middle school band as a percussionist and how much he was looking forward to joining the high school marching band drum line. DeAngelo, on my recommendation to our middle school band director, joined

sixth grade band as a percussionist because he wanted to continue drumming after his experience in my ensemble. I basked in the glow emanating from his excitement as he spoke of his success and enjoyment in the band program and his plans to continue playing in drum line through college. The other students were enjoying various activities as well, including sports, guitar, piano, writing, and dance.

As we wrapped up our time together I asked if I could take a photo.

DeAngelo: Sure!

Bobby: Yeah!

I said: It's not going to go in the dissertation, it would just be for me.

Bobby: You have to put it at least in the back of the book… "Here are my children now."

"Here are my children now." No truer words were spoken during our half hour reunion. I was warmed that he referred to all of them as MY children, because that was exactly how I felt. They will always be my kids. There was a deep-rooted love toward these individuals that must have compared, in some degree, to a mother's love. Since I do not have children of my own, it is difficult for me to say if this comparison is accurate, but looking at them that day, sitting there talking with them again, admiring how much they had grown and matured, I can only explain the feeling as one of a proud mom. I fought back the tears as we parted and still felt them stinging the corners of my eyes as I reflected on this time together. I was proud of them—proud as can be. I wanted the best for these kids.

After the photo was taken they went out the door looking for a place to throw away their lunch trays and head back to class, reminiscent of the many lunch hours we had spent together three years ago. I let out a big sigh and turned back to pack up my things. Moments later

DeAngelo returned for a hug. Some things never change…thank goodness. Imani returned next for a hug, followed by Kenneth and Bobby. I thanked them all and told them once again how proud I was of each of them, and what handsome and beautiful young men and women they were becoming. I hope I will get a chance to see them again.

Upon arriving back at school I was downright giddy—an extra spring in my step, a refreshed level of energy to take on my afternoon classes. Spending a moment with those kids made me remember what it means to be a teacher and how blessed I am to make a difference in children's lives. My school year had been a rough one, but this single event was just what I needed to renew the joy in my heart and remind myself of the importance of giving my all to my students. I can make a difference. I did make a difference. I will continue to make a difference.

Today, music educators are faced with numerous challenges affecting the way we teach and interact with our students. From budget cuts and course eliminations to state mandates and emphasis on test scores, we recognize the need to rise above and promote our programs now more than ever. With so many students now qualifying as *at-risk* in one way or another, more has to be done to involve these particular students in our musical communities. A constructivist perspective on learning can help ameliorate the damaging influence of poverty and change our attitudes about what students are capable of producing.

As educators we must seek out all students, despite our pre-conceptions, and provide access to musical ensembles for all students. As less and less people attend orchestral concerts and theatre productions, the future of live music-making is in peril (Aucoin, 2012; Cohan, 2013). We must find new ways to keep these valuable traditions alive for our future generations. My thirteen students' lives were impacted by their participation in our ensemble. Follow up research

and interviews in 2018 found that all of these students graduated from high school, with several

having found ways to continue their creativity and leadership in service to their community.

DeAngelo was accepted into a creative arts college. He revealed to me that because of his

drum ensemble experience he had joined his high school marching band. Leading the drumline

his senior year gave him the desire to seek a career in music. His story has empowered me. He is

one reason I wake up every day and face the challenging students I see in my general music

classroom because now I can see the value and potential on each of their faces. Since this study I

have made a personal commitment to engage all of my students in community-building musical

activities in hopes of fostering similar desires to be lifelong musicians.

The purest essence of communal drumming lies in its ability to bring communities

together through shared expression of lived experience. In Ghana, entire societies are

characterized by their social behavior. Most social situations revolve around drum and dance as a

way of preserving their culture and forming a strong group identity. Drums are "the blood and

bone of sub-Saharan African cultural heritage and identity. Without it, the collective, the

emotional, and the cognitive life of the community will be incomplete" (Bokor, 2014, p. 192).

For our ensemble, the drums became the blood that united us. Through our experience together

we each evolved as individuals, but equally as important, we became a community with lasting

bonds that have continued to shape our identities as we have forged ahead on our individual

paths. As a result of our time together we grew as musicians, leaders, teachers, and truly became

transformed.

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