

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF
UNDERGRADUATE INSTRUMENTALISTS
TEACHING ELEMENTARY GENERAL
MUSIC EDUCATION

Maggie Corfield-Adams, Doctor of Philosophy,
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The central purpose of this multiple-case study was to describe the professional identities of six general music teachers who identified as instrumentalists as undergraduates. The study builds upon research addressing why students choose music education (Bergee, et al., 2001; Bright, 2006; Gillespie & Hamann, 1999; Lee, 2003; Madsen & Kelly, 2002) and the reasons some instrumentally “tracked” students may choose general music (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Robinson, 2010). This study investigated tensions between the participants’ instrumental backgrounds and the professional demands of general music teaching, and the role of those tensions in shaping professional identities.

The conceptual framework is grounded in the work of Gee (2000) who suggests that the existence of identities requires *interpretive systems* through which individuals and institutions interact. The study describes tensions between institutional identities and core identities as important to the process of participants’ professional identity development.

Participants were general music teachers, 24 – 51 years of age, from different undergraduate institutions and who teach in different regions of the country. Semi-structured interviews, participant essays, transcripts, notebooks, and institutional websites were used for data collection. Participants' stories represent both narrative inquiry and case study approaches to qualitative research. Data analysis included a process of recontextualization (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) to facilitate the production of narratives and coding techniques in individual and cross-case analysis.

Cross-case analysis revealed seven emergent themes: (1) concerns about “perceived limitations” (Robinson, 2010, p. 41) of ensemble teaching as an important factor in the choice to teach general music, (2) the structure and requirements of directing a band as a factor in a turn toward working with younger students, (3) the unique structure of general music classes as a source of initial challenge, (4) a given curriculum or scope and sequence as something of value, (5) vocal teaching as a unique challenge for some instrumentally-trained general music teachers, (6) changes in self-identification as linked to agreements between institutional identities and core identities, and (7) professional positionality in relation to students, not colleagues. The concluding section offers suggestions for future research and implications for undergraduate music programs and school systems.

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF UNDERGRADUATE INSTRUMENTALISTS
TEACHING ELEMENTARY GENERAL MUSIC EDUCATION

By

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For My Family

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Music educators are often specialists—highly trained professionals who have practiced for many hours, sometimes since early childhood, in pursuit of musical excellence. In accordance with National Association of Schools of Music standards, degree programs require music education methods classes across music sub-specialties, but music education majors are often sub-specialists in instrumental or choral education based upon their principal instrument or voice (Hamann, 2009). Student teaching experiences may further solidify students' chosen sub-specialties and preferences for the elementary or secondary level.

Despite the specialization of music majors within their degree programs, according to one report, 33 states offer licensure or certification in the arts with a K-12 designation (Cavell, Blank, Toye & Williams, 2004). According to another (Henry, 2005), forty-three states offer “all level” (p. 50) certification in music and 36 consider music to be a single subject area or offer the opportunity to obtain a composite certification that covers all areas of music education. If licensure represents qualification, then teacher candidates who complete an undergraduate degree in music education and pass the requisite exams are recognized by the state as qualified to teach a wide variety of music classes at any level in the educational system. The diversity of music teaching situations within the K-12 system can in some cases be mismatched with the highly specialized training of music undergraduates, who may choose or accept K-12 music teaching positions outside of their undergraduate specialty areas (Cutietta, 2007).

This research addresses how music education graduates with instrumental training adjust to elementary-level general music teaching positions and the ways these adjustments have shaped their professional identities. In this chapter, I offer the justification for and purpose of the study, outline my personal background, propose research questions, offer a conceptual framework, discuss the methodology applied in the study, and define terms. Chapter 2 summarizes and critiques related literature inside and outside of music education. Chapter 3 discusses how the techniques of narrative inquiry and the framework of a multiple-case study were used to explore the research questions, including interpretations from a pilot investigation. Chapter 4 presents the participant narratives. Chapter 5 contains individual and cross-case analysis. Chapter 6 offers a recapitulation of research questions, implications for teacher education and school systems, discussion, and suggestions for further research.

Need for the Study

Before the renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which set requirements for highly qualified teachers (Paige, 2002/2008), there was debate in the education literature about the effect of out-of-field teaching on the quality of education for students (Darling-Hammond, Berry & Thorenson, 2001; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Ingersoll, 2001). These authors expressed specific concerns about the quality of science teachers who hold degrees and certification in a specific science specialty but teach outside of their area of expertise, such as biology majors who teach physics. Data are available on these teachers because science certification is often divided by specialty area. Music parallels science in that it contains a variety of sub-specialties (Cutietta, 2007) but unlike science, music is most often a K-12 certification and therefore no data

are available as to how many music teachers are teaching outside their undergraduate areas of specialty.

Students study specific areas of music and music education, and some research suggests that undergraduate students define their identities by their performance abilities on their given instrument rather than their abilities as an educator (Roberts, 2000). The tracking of students within music education programs and the similarity in training among performance and education majors in the early years of a music education degree may leave gaps in knowledge incongruent with a broad K-12 music certification. For example, vocal technique and proper tone production, important content knowledge for choral teachers, may be foreign to many instrumental majors. Conversely, vocalists who do not play a wind, string, or percussion instrument may be unaware of their intricacies. Both instrumental and vocal majors may have limited piano skills. Jazz, with its specialized set of theoretical knowledge and execution may be foreign to many music majors unless they supplement the common core of their undergraduate program (Cutietta, 2007).

Additionally, there is indirect evidence in the literature that broad certification practices seem to conflict with highly-specialized musical training. Some instrumental music educators feel under-prepared to teach general music (Anderson-Nickel, 1997) or are surprised that they enjoy teaching elementary general music (Schonauer, 2002). Neither of these studies specifically examined out-of-area teaching among general music teachers, but in each case the point was salient enough among participants to warrant inclusion in discussion. An in-depth investigation specifically focusing on the identities

of instrumentally-trained general music teachers and the ways their initial challenges shape those identities is appropriate.

Based upon my examination of the literature, only one study (Robinson, 2010) has directly investigated this issue. The researcher, an instrumental music professor at a major Midwestern university, noticed that many of his “most accomplished and talented instrumental music education students were choosing to teach elementary general music rather than instrumental music upon entering the profession” (p. 34). Robinson’s research is limited to the factors influencing these educators when they chose general music. I have found no research that addresses what happens to these teachers after this choice is made and they enter the field. Additionally, Robinson’s research was conducted from within the context of instrumental music, and, although he does suggest that teacher educators have a responsibility to help students “‘figure out’ what kind of music teachers they want to be when they enter the profession” (p. 45), his interpretation of the data reflects a desire to reshape instrumental education in a way that favors a more student-centered approach—one that prevents excellent teachers from leaving instrumental music. As a practicing general music educator, I bring an alternate perspective. I conducted my research from within a general music context by gathering the stories of six instrumentally-trained general music teachers at various stages in their careers.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to document the personal stories of instrumentally-trained general music teachers. The research addresses questions about how these teachers developed their professional identities and created meaning based upon various

factors in their backgrounds and education (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). This research extends a small body of existing literature that indirectly (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Schonauer, 2002) and directly (Robinson, 2010) addresses the experiences of instrumentally-trained music educators who teach in general music positions. The collective experiences of the six participants in this study reveal some common challenges when entering the field and common factors that have served to shape their professional identities. The data and analysis from this study can serve to inform curricular practices in undergraduate music education programs, assist teacher educators in helping students to determine which specialties within the profession best suit them, and aid school systems in developing appropriate supports for instrumentally-trained general music teachers.

My Personal Background

After entering college with the intention to being a wind band conductor, which included taking two semesters of advanced wind conducting, I became enamored with general music during the required general music methods course at the university I attended. This attraction was reinforced by my introduction to Dalcroze Eurhythmics and I requested to include both high school band and general music in my student teaching placement. Additionally, my experience as a marching band assistant steered me away from secondary instrumental education because I found the demanding after-school schedule unappealing and incompatible with my desire to pursue graduate-level education. For these reasons, the stories of the participants in Robinson's (2010) study were relatable for me and I felt compelled to provide an avenue through which more voices might be added to the discussion of instrumentalists in general music.

Currently, I am a practicing general music educator, which may have granted me an “insider” status among the participants. Each of them was open to and even excited about sharing his or her experiences. We shared a common language during our interviews so that words and phrases such as Kodaly, Orff ensemble, and even *Recorder Karate* (Philipak, 2002), required no further clarification. My status as a practicing teacher may also have led some of them to hide some aspects of their challenges, lest I believe them to be an inferior educator. I did not see evidence of this in the study, but I cannot be sure it did not happen.

My background is similar to some of the participants in that I entered my undergraduate university with the intention of teaching secondary instrumental ensembles. I am dissimilar from some of my participants because I was a “dual-track” major, taking both choral and instrumental training, and piano was my major instrument, which was rare among music education majors at my undergraduate institution.

My background affects the way I have chosen to frame this topic, the questions I asked, my relationship with the participants, and the choices I made in (re)storying the research texts and performing the cross-case analysis. I viewed my role as a co-creator of meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) as these teachers narrativized (Gee, 2000) their experiences. While I gave my best effort to keep their voices paramount, I cannot ignore the ways my background affected the meanings we constructed. I have used the words *they* and *their* throughout this document but have attempted to remain as transparent as possible about my own positions and assumptions. Ultimately, my goal has been to share the stories of these participants in a way that is salient, relatable, and compelling.

Research Questions

In collecting and interpreting the stories of elementary general music teachers who trained instrumentally, the following questions guided my research.

1. What challenges do instrumentally-trained general music teachers describe when discussing their initial experiences in general music classrooms?
2. If instrumentally-trained music teachers now self-identify as general music teachers how did that change occur?
3. How do teachers self-identifying as instrumentally-trained general music teachers construct individual/group positionality in the music education profession?

Developing Questions from the Literature

The first research question focused on the challenges, tensions, and choices that accompanied these instrumentally-trained music educators' initial experiences in the general music classroom. The second question investigated important moments of tension and decision in these professionals' lives and explored the ways the decisions informed any shifts in professional identity among the participants. The third question explored how these challenges, decisions, and tensions have shaped the ways these instrumentally-trained general music teachers position themselves within the profession.

There is limited research that specifically examines (Robinson, 2010) or mentions (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Peddell, 2005; Schonauer, 2002) the experiences of instrumentalists in general music. The research questions for this study are supported by disparate areas of the literature that, when used in conjunction, helped to form a unifying conceptual framework. I first present literature on why undergraduate students choose music education and why some choose general music. I have then organized the section

by research question. The questions are used as headings under which the literature pertaining to that aspect of the study is organized. Following this presentation of literature by question, I present a unifying conceptual framework.

Factors Influencing the Initial Decision to Teach General Music

Why students choose music education. A large body of research consisting of surveys, questionnaires, and interviews with high school students and undergraduate music education majors has shown that school band, orchestra, and choir directors are influential in students' decisions to enter music education (Bergee, Coffman, Demorest, Humphreys, & Thornton, 2001; Bright, 2006; Gillespie & Hamann, 1999; Lee, 2003; Madsen & Kelly, 2002). In these ensembles, students develop a love of music through aesthetic fulfillment and a devotion to music that influences their choice to enter music education (Bergee et al., 2001; Gillespie & Hamann, 1999). "It seems that the 'power of music,' when combined with a genuine respect and appreciation of a music teacher, culminates in the decision to emulate that teacher" (Madsen & Kelly, 2002, p. 330). In general, undergraduate music education majors are highly committed to the profession, showing disregard for salary concerns or the "low" status of education as a profession among the public (Bright, 2006).

Despite the depth of literature in this area, I found little data on the specific influence of elementary general music teachers in students' decisions to pursue music education. The data that are available suggest that ensemble directors are much more influential than elementary general music teachers in music education majors' decisions to enter the field. In the Bergee et al. (2001) national survey, only 7 of the 431 respondents listed a general music teacher as *most* influential in their decision to become

a music educator. In comparison, 175 students listed ensemble directors (band, orchestral, and choral) as most influential.

Taken as a whole, this body of research establishes that the majority of music educators, regardless of their current placement within the profession, chose music education because of powerful individual aesthetic experiences. While the influence of general music teachers is not absent from the literature, most evidence indicates that they have less influence than their secondary, ensemble-conducting peers. Given the amount of research in this area and considering the large number of general music educators in the United States, it seems a safe assumption that general music teachers, on the whole, entered the profession for similar reasons as their ensemble-directing colleagues and that a significant proportion of music educators who teach general music did not enter their undergraduate educations with the intention of doing so. Next, I address what the literature currently says about why some students change course from instrumental to general music.

The “choice” of general music. Three qualitative or mixed-method studies (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Schonauer, 2002; Robinson, 2010) address a possible disconnection between students’ intentions when they enter undergraduate music education programs and the realities they find within these programs and upon graduation. Anderson-Nickel (1997) speaks directly to a disconnection between undergraduate intentions and job market realities. Using a continuum developed by Berliner (1986) as her conceptual framework, she investigated general music teacher expertise using a multiple-case study approach. She compared twelve practicing general music teachers—six more-experienced teachers and six-less experienced teachers. Her

approach revealed that patterns in the development of expertise among general music educators are similar to educators in other subject areas and that expertise is context dependent. This work remains important because it is one of few studies that examine general music teachers' expertise (Duling, 1992; Eshelman, 1995). The finding most salient to my research revealed that some of her six less-experienced participants perceived a mismatch between their training and their teaching positions. Among the less-experienced teachers, one held a degree in instrumental music and had no general music training during his undergraduate years. He expressed disappointment that his undergraduate program did not require some general music methods in order to prepare him for a restricted job market where many of the available jobs involved teaching general music all or part of the time. All of her less-experienced participants agreed that what they needed most "was the foundation of elementary general music teaching methods and the support of experienced colleagues" (p. 218). In her discussion, Anderson-Nickel calls upon music teacher education programs to be responsive to the job markets of their regions. She writes, "Although it is true that the instrumental music teachers in the present study chose to accept teaching positions which included elementary general music classes, current trends in the job market offered teachers, administrators, and district personnel few, if any, alternatives" (p. 233).

A small-scale, mixed-methods survey of role development among Oklahoma general music teachers (Schonauer, 2002) further supports Anderson-Nickel's claim of a mismatch between undergraduate music education and the current job market. When asked to freely comment on whether their careers in music education had been what they expected, 57% of 69 teachers indicated "their career had taken a different path than they

expected. Of these 57%, the comment most often given for this difference between reality and expectation was the fact that they were teaching elementary music and enjoyed it much more than they expected” (p. 46).

Recent case study research by Robinson (2010) also supports the contention that instrumental music students enter college with the intention of directing ensembles because that is their most recent experience and the one that most likely influenced their choice to major in music education. One of the seven participants in his study wrote:

I think it’s possible that I started down the ‘band director track’ simply because it was the form of music education with which I was most familiar, and once I discovered elementary general music and how different of a beast that would be, I really found a place where I ‘fit.’ (p. 37)

Teacher educators and curricular offerings can make a difference in the career trajectories of music education undergraduates. Several of the participants in this study “discovered” general music either through an elementary general methods class or during student teaching.

Robinson’s (2010) research is important because it specifically presents the experiences of instrumentally-trained general music teachers as the main focus of the research. The scope of the study is limited to the factors influencing these educators when they chose general music, leaving room for further investigation of what happens to these teachers when they enter the field. The study was transparently conducted from within the context of instrumental music, and Robinson’s interpretation reflects a desire to reshape instrumental education. In conclusion, he encourages a re-examination of the

hyper-competitive nature of high school ensembles and a move toward a more student-centered environment, one in which creative individuals, such as his participants, might feel more comfortable and welcomed.

Taken together, these studies suggest that young teachers, most of whom enter their undergraduate programs highly influenced by their ensemble experiences (Bergee, Coffman, Demorest, Humphreys, & Thornton, 2001; Bright, 2006; Gillespie & Hamann, 1999; Lee, 2003; Madsen & Kelly, 2002), sometimes perceive general music as a choice (Robinson, 2010) and sometimes do not (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Schonauer, 2002). Additionally, pre-service and in-service teachers may be surprised to find that they enjoy general music teaching (Robinson, 2010; Schonauer, 2002). Finally, the current music education job market, including the requirements of available jobs (Anderson-Nickel, 1992; Robinson, 2010) and the political environment surrounding those jobs (Robinson, 2010), influences the career decisions of these teachers.

Why this disconnect is important. Music education students may not be prepared to teach outside of their sub-specialty areas. Hamann (2009) surveyed music education students enrolled in undergraduate methods courses. While most students were satisfied that the courses they were enrolled in would provide an appropriate background in a given area, the students expressed reticence that they would be capable of teaching at an expert level outside their preferred sub-specialties.

Additionally, a small body of research suggests that once they enter the field of general music, educators with different training will choose different activities and emphasize different parts of the curriculum. By following 169 undergraduate music students through their four-year undergraduate careers, Bouij (1998) found that

undergraduates who identified with general or well-rounded musicianship held pupil-centered beliefs while those undergraduates who identified as performers held content-centered pedagogical approaches. Gohlke (1994) found that previous performance-related experiences and an instrumental or vocal background heavily influenced the curricular decisions of pre-service teachers in an elementary general music methods course. Peddell (1995) also observed this phenomenon. In her survey of the curricular choices of elementary general music teachers in Pennsylvania, she found that teachers who ranked the aural identification of instrumental timbres as important to the general music curricula had an instrumental background or were also the instrumental teacher. According to the teachers, the identification of instrumental timbre was helpful in recruitment to their instrumental programs. Peddell suggests that teachers' personal preferences, which would be influenced by their performance background, influence their curricular choices. While Peddell's work is limited to Pennsylvania and the teaching situations present within that state, when complemented with similar results from Gohlke and Bouij, her argument that personal preference influences curricular choice becomes stronger.

What challenges do instrumentally-trained general music teachers describe when discussing their initial experiences in general music classrooms?

General music as unique from ensemble direction. In this section, I will discuss and critique pertinent literature that presents a unique set of context dependent skills and expertise among music educators in different sub-specialties. According to my searches of the RILM database, most research on expertise in music education focuses upon one music sub-specialty (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Dolloff, 1994; Duling, 1992;

Eshelman, 1995). There is little comparing expertise across music education sub-specialties (Standley & Madsen, 1991). Three of these studies constitute a small body of research on teacher expertise among general music educators (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Duling, 1992; Eshelman, 1995).

Expertise among general music educators. Anderson-Nickel (1997), Duling (1992), and Eshelman (1995), conducted qualitative analyses of expertise among general music teachers. Each of these studies is well-grounded in the literature, calling upon Berliner (1986), Shulman (1986), and Elliot (1991) for their respective theoretical frameworks. Taken together, these studies indicate that exemplary general music teachers are organized in their lesson planning (Duling, 1992; Anderson-Nickel, 1997), are able to apply their knowledge of students and student learning to develop appropriate content and anticipate problems (Duling, 1992; Anderson-Nickel, 1997), and interactively combine personal characteristics and pedagogical skills with musical and curricular knowledge (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Eshelman, 1995) to deliver instruction. The common factor among the expert teachers in all of the studies is experience gained from hundreds of hours in the general music classroom.

Differences between specializations. Brand (1984), Christensen (2000), and Ayres (2004) have all noted differences in the musical and pedagogical skills required of music teachers in different specialties. Brand (1984) reviewed a survey study by Baker and called attention to the different responses offered by music teachers when asked to rank their most important competencies. Choral directors felt that the ability to diagnose and correct performance errors was important. Instrumental teachers listed classroom management and a working knowledge of the varied instruments of the ensemble.

General music teachers listed the ability to create well-paced lessons containing a variety of activities and the ability to present the lessons with enthusiasm as their most important skills. The differences in responses indicate that these teachers see themselves as specialists, with specific skills that make them competent in their jobs. The different competencies required by different positions could be problematic if these teachers were asked to teach an additional music class or accepted a different position requiring different competencies.

Christensen (2000) compared the ways elementary music teachers, band directors, choral directors, and orchestral directors view of the importance of piano skills for their teaching. The respondents ($n=1017$) in this comprehensive survey came from all 50 states and were asked to rate the frequency (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, or never) of their use of 20 specific functional piano skills. As in Brand (1984), teachers from different music specialties listed different skills. General music teachers stressed skills in accompanying, including playing chord progressions, improvising, and harmonizing melodies. Ensemble directors stressed score reading, reading transposing parts, and playing modulations. Christensen suggests that keyboard proficiency exams for music education students should not focus on playing piano solos, but rather on the functional skills required for teaching.

Two smaller regional studies also call attention to differences among music educators in different sub-specialties of the profession. Ayers (2004) found that instrumentally-trained general music teachers were lacking in their knowledge of vocal hygiene. Her survey among general music teachers in Virginia and North Carolina revealed that vocal care instruction was not covered in methods courses but instead in

private lessons among vocal majors. Respondents with an instrumental major indicated little or no instruction in vocal hygiene. In the second study, Schonauer (2002) suggests that elementary general music teachers see their jobs as unique and inherently different than ensemble direction. Her respondents indicated a disengagement from their secondary ensemble colleagues. On the survey of 69 Oklahoma general music teachers, respondents indicated a strong preference for interacting with other general music teachers over their colleagues in other music sub-specializations. Additionally, a majority indicated that they did not feel that their middle school and high school instrumental colleagues understand general music. This data could be interpreted to mean that these teachers view general music work as a unique and sometimes misunderstood part of music education. Further research to determine if the results of these studies are generalizable in other regions of the country or on a national scale is warranted.

Section summary. The above literature suggests that general music teachers possess a unique set of context-dependent skills as determined through case study (Duling, 1992; Eshelman, 1995; Anderson-Nickel, 1997) and in the view of the teachers themselves (Brand 1984; Christensen, 2000; Schonauer, 2002). There is evidence that undergraduate programs do not adequately develop some of the skills required for general music teaching (Christensen, 2000; Ayers, 2004) and that some graduates of instrumental programs feel under-prepared to teach general music (Anderson-Nickel, 1997). The development of expertise in general music, as in other educational situations, is context-dependent and requires hundreds or thousands of hours of classroom experience (Duling, 1992; Eshelman, 1995; Anderson-Nickel, 1997).

**If instrumentally-trained music teachers now self-identify as general music teachers
how did that change occur?**

The purpose of this question was to investigate how, in addressing their professional challenges, these teachers resolved tensions and made decisions that affected the ways they professionally identify themselves. If these instrumentally-trained general music teachers faced specific challenges due to a mismatch between their training and the requirements of their jobs then the concept of tension is important to this study. The factors individuals attribute to causing that tension and the way they chose to resolve that tension may have played a role in the choice to teach general music and professional contentment following that decision (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Robinson, 2012; Samuel & Stephens, 2000).

Research and theory on teachers' professional identities is vast. In an effort to focus this research and choose the literature most salient to this investigation, I have chosen literature that focuses on the role of tension in identity development (Bernard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004; Gee, 2000; Rodgers and Scott, 2008). In adopting this position, I do not intend to imply that this is the only or even the best way of examining the professional identities of these individuals. Instead, I have chosen the concept of tension as one possible analytic lens that can be useful in an examination such as the one I have undertaken here. In a different time, place, or circumstances I may have chosen a different lens (Clandinin & Connelly, 2008) and certainly other individuals would have other, equally useful lenses and cite different literature than I have chosen to cite. My choice to focus on tensions and contested places has led me to "look more closely at certain issues and less closely at others" (Gee, 2000, p. 100).

While researchers have adopted different lenses in approaching the study of identity, many focus on identity as the intersection between context and personal structures of feeling or philosophy (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Coldron & Smith, 1999; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Samuel & Stephens, 2000; Zembylas, 2002). The constant interplay between individuals' environments, self-concepts, their views of their professional roles, and the ways they balance their personal expectations and philosophies with the broader expectations of the teaching profession, affect their development of professional identities (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). I present the literature related to this research question under the headings *Tension and Contested Places* and *Examining Professional Identities*.

Tension and contested places. One way of thinking of the tensions that arise from a mismatch in training and job requirements is as a contested space that the individual must navigate in order to resolve the tensions. Rodgers & Scott (2008) write of these contested spaces and their relationship to contemporary identity research.

Contemporary conceptions of identity share four basic assumptions: (1) that identity is dependent upon and formed within multiple *contexts* which bring social, cultural, political and historical forces to bear upon that formation; (2) that identity is formed in *relationship* with others and involves *emotions*; (3) that identity is *shifting, unstable, and multiple*; and, (4) that identity involves the construction and reconstruction of meaning through *stories* over time....Contexts and relationships describe the *external* aspects of identity formation; and the stories and emotions, the *internal*, meaning making aspects. Awareness and voice represent the

“contested” place where the normative demands of the external encounter the internal meaning making and desires of the teacher. (emphasis in original, p. 733)

This study focuses on the contested places where instrumentally-trained music educators become aware of socio-cultural, political, and historical forces within music education and balance these external forces with their internal conceptions of music education philosophy and their personal desires and understandings. In this study, these contested places are significant because the research focuses on individuals who pivot from one specialization within the profession to another. While transitioning to general music, these individuals re-conceptualize, at least in part, their musical and professional identities, create new professional affiliations, and develop a view of their place within music education as a whole.

The external context (Rodgers & Scott, 2008) within which teachers make personal and professional choices can be a source of professional tension. Some teachers may find that they are asked to perform professional duties with which they disagree or to teach classes with content that is less familiar to them. “Such a conflict can lead to friction in teachers’ professional identity in cases in which the ‘personal’ and the ‘professional’ are too far removed from each other” (Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop, 2004, p. 109).

Examining professional identities. Samuel and Stephens (2000) describe tension among two pre-service teachers of English in post-apartheid South Africa. The two participants in their case study were asked to mediate in situations where older teachers did not feel equipped to assist the new African pupils. The participants had to

reconcile their personal philosophies with the demands placed upon them by their students and colleagues. Following their professional internships, they placed greater value on work environment than compensation and each chose to teach in a school they felt aligned with their personal philosophies. In choosing a location to teach, they attempted to ensure that their personal goals and the contexts of their teaching were not “too far removed from each other” (Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop, 2004, p. 109). They resolved tension by choosing working conditions they felt best suited their ideals.

In Robinson’s (2010) examination of instrumentally-trained general music teachers, this same phenomenon was present. The participants cited incongruity between their personal educational philosophies and the competition-based philosophy of secondary instrumental music as a reason for choosing elementary general teaching. In both studies, participants resolved tension by choosing teaching positions that aligned with their personal philosophies. They placed this comfort above the monetary compensation or prestige that may have accompanied different choices.

When research participants engage in an examination of personal tensions, decisions, and the “contested place[s]” (Rodgers & Scott, 2008, p. 733) where decisions are made, the results can be an important source of professional development and personal discovery for educators (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002). Elbaz-Luwisch applied the techniques of narrative inquiry to help her students in a graduate-level writing workshop gain greater understandings of their professional identities. She suggests that the powerful realizations that result from engaging in an academic, autobiographic writing process can generate deeper personal understanding and develop greater appreciation for the diversity of others. In contrast to the participants in Samuel and Stephens (2000) or

Robinson (2010), who chose teaching situations that would allow them to avoid personal philosophical conflict, the participants' narrative process encouraged reflexive examination and engagement of conflicts within their professional lives. Rodgers & Scott suggest that it is implicit in identity research to help teachers "(re)claim the authority of their own voice" (p. 733). Elbaz-Luwisch does not claim to have "empowered" these teachers to find their voices. Nonetheless, empowerment seemed a goal of and was sometimes a result of the project. The writing workshop "provided an experience of learning 'against the grain' that may have encouraged students to question their knowledge" (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002, p. 423).

Summary. In this section I have related Rodgers and Scott's (2008) description of contested places to the concept of tension that is used in this study. I have provided two examples of studies that hold tension as a central theme of the work (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002; Samuel & Stevens, 2000) and indicated an observance of such tension in the music education literature (Robinson, 2010). I now turn to the third research question, and expand upon the concept of tension and its importance to this study by presenting the work of Gee (2000).

How do teachers self-identifying as instrumentally-trained general music teachers construct individual/group positionality in the music education profession?

Gee (2000) stresses the importance of *interpretive systems* in the development of identity. Our identities are only our identities because some system is in place through which we can interpret our position in society and which allows others to develop their own interpretations of who we are. Gee (2000) defines the term "identity" as "being recognized as a certain 'kind of person' in a given context" (p. 99). He separates the

terms “identity” and “core identity.” The former are the multiple ways others identify us and can be ways we seek to have others identify us. The latter is the way we identify ourselves. Both forms of identity are interrelated. A full summary of Gee’s work can be found in Chapter 2. For the purposes of this introductory chapter, I focus specifically on the portions of Gee’s work that informed my concept of “positionality” as it is used in this research question.

In his work, Gee (2000) outlines four types of identities—Nature identities (N-identities), Institutional identities (I-identities), Discourse identities (D-identities), and Affinity identities (A-identities). Although Gee stresses that the four identity types cannot be entirely separated from one another and are interrelated, he suggests that “different historical periods have tended to foreground one or the other” of these four identities (p.101). Here, I focus on I-identities and D-identities because they are the most relevant to the concept of positionality as it is used in this investigation.

I-identities (Gee, 2000) are *institutional* identities and are directly related to the idea of *position* in that they require institutions of power to authorize individuals to hold those positions. I am a general music teacher because Youngstown State University, Educational Testing Service, the state of Maryland, and the school system that hired me have the authority to bestow that institutional position upon me. “General music teacher” is an I-identity because it is not an identity I can achieve on my own. In return for the authorization given me by these authorities, I am expected to be able to fulfill the duties these institutions associate with the label “general music teacher.”

D-identities, or *discourse* identities, are different from I-identities in that they rely on dialogue between individuals rather than between an individual and an institution.

Gee (2000) offers the example of a friend who is considered by others to be a charismatic “kind of person.”

The source of this trait—the “power” that determines it or to which my friend is “subject”—is the discourse or dialogue of other people. It is only because other people treat, talk about, and interact with my friend as a charismatic person that she is one. (p. 103).

In line with this example, Gee writes that D-identities can be “an *ascription* or an *achievement*.” In other words, when others identify a person as charismatic, that person may accept the ascription without actively seeking it. Conversely, a person could make behavior choices designed to court such a description from others. In this sense, D-identities are tied directly to the recognition of others. In any given time and place, certain combinations of traits will result in an individual being recognized as one sort of person or another.

Modern, capitalist societies tend to foreground D-identities. This is not to say that modern societies are devoid of institutionalized identities. Indeed there are powerful institutional forces at work in modern societies. Rather, D-identities are those to which modern societies ascribe the most value. Personal and financial success is defined in such societies in part by the positions we occupy. Gee suggests “recognition becomes a particular problem for ‘modern’ people” (p. 112) He continues:

The modern need for recognition, since it is an attempt to create achieved D-identities, places particular importance on discourse and dialogue. I work out my identity, in the modern sense, by making sense of, or interpreting, what it means to be a man or woman of a certain sort, a

worker or professional of a certain sort, an Anglo-American or African American of a certain sort, or moral, witty, intelligent, or fit for leadership in certain ways and not others. (p. 112)

We must navigate the positions we achieve and that are ascribed to us. The ways we navigate these positions and the labels others place upon us informs our “core identity.”

In his article, Gee (2000) defines “core identity” in the following way:

Each person has had a unique trajectory through “Discourse space.” That is, he or she has, through time, in a certain order, had specific experiences within specific Discourses (i.e. been recognized, at a time and place, one way and not another), some recurring and others not. This trajectory and the person’s own narrativization (Mishler, 2000) of it are what constitute his or her (never fully formed or always potentially changing) “core identity.” The Discourses are social and historical, but the person’s trajectory and narrativization are individual (though an individuality that is fully socially formed and informed). (p. 111)

The positions ascribed to us may not be the ones we desire, or we may feel challenged to meet the requirements of the positions ascribed to us. The concept of positionality, defined here as the ways an individual positions him or herself in relation to other individuals and institutions, is an important aspect of professional identity development.

Section Summary

In this section I have outlined the literature that has informed the research questions in this investigation. I have pulled from disparate areas of literature including why students choose music education (Bergee, et al., 2001; Bright, 2006; Gillespie &

Hamann, 1999; Lee, 2003; Madsen & Kelly, 2002), why individuals choose general music (Robinson, 2010), the unique qualities of sub-specialties in music education (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Ayres, 2004; Brand, 1984; Christensen, 2000; Duling, 1992; Eshelman, 1995; Schonauer, 2002), theoretical and applied research on teacher identities that focuses on the creation and resolution of tension in teaching identities (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002; Samuel and Stephens, 2000; Rodgers and Scott, 2008) and the importance of interpretive systems to the development of identity (Gee, 2000). In assembling this literature, I have attempted to foreground the concept of tension and its possible role in the professional identity development of instrumentally-trained general music teachers by: (1) outlining tensions that may exist between the skills these individuals develop as undergraduates and the skills required by their jobs, (2) discussing literature that highlights tension as part of a contested space that individuals navigate when forming professional identities, and (3) discussing the roles of institutions and discourse in identity development. I turn now to teacher identity research in the field of Music Education and describe the ways it informed my concept of tension as it is used in this study.

Teacher Identity Research in Music Education

Music education researchers have used the concept of tension as informing professional identity development. Some have specifically examined the tension between the musician-self and teacher-self as an important factor in professional identity formation. Undergraduate music education majors primarily identify themselves as musicians before teachers (Roberts, 2000). After entering the field, the interaction between these two identities becomes more nuanced. Those individuals holding positive

views of their musical performance abilities are more likely to identify themselves as ‘musicians who teach’ rather than ‘music teachers’ or ‘teachers who teach music’ (Bladh, 2004). Abramo (2009) suggests the preponderance of literature discussing the tension between musician-self and teacher-self limits our understanding of the many factors that shape teacher’s identities and that more expansive research is needed to deepen our understanding of music teacher identities.

Abramo (2009) used a “poststructural, narrative, multiple-case study” (p. 58) approach when examining the professional identities of three instrumental music teachers. She focused her research on the individuals’ use of alternative pedagogies and the discourses that the individuals navigate when trying to implement such practices in the public school setting. Her resulting narratives and descriptions are highly individualized but reveal teaching as a “personal process of identity construction, where the personal and practical are intertwined” (p. 250). This is research with an agenda.

If we are to begin to transform as a field, as Jorgensen (2003) has proposed, we have to begin to uncover and understand the discourses that are shaping our teachers and our profession. It is only then that we can begin to call them into question, and create change. (p. 57)

To her credit, Abramo does not hide the intentions of her research.

The three studies I have quoted most often as a jumping off point for this research are Anderson-Nickel (1997), Robinson (2010), and Schonauer (2002). None of these authors specifically approached his or her research from the standpoint of examining teachers’ identities, although Schonauer’s study of role development could be seen as a

form of identity research. However, in each case questions of the role of tension in professional identity development arose in my mind as I read the studies.

In her study of general music teacher expertise, Anderson-Nickel wrote of one of her participants:

Of the four novice teachers, Christine appeared to be the most frustrated. She was in a teaching position for which she had not been prepared even though she had some student teaching experience in elementary general music. Nearly every system, including discipline, classroom management, and planning were weak and inefficient. She did have seating charts which gave a sense of order at the beginning of class. She largely relied on texts and manuals to provide the information she needed. She followed directions exactly as she read them. During her interviews, she referred to these sources to validate her answers and teaching behaviors. (p. 206)

The contested place where this participant is forming her professional identity includes tension between her undergraduate education and the job she obtained, between inefficient management strategies and the need to deliver content, between inexperience and expectations, and between her frustrations and desires for her teaching. The way Christine chooses to resolve these professional tensions could play a key role in her professional identity development.

As I noted earlier, Robinson (2010) had four emergent themes in his study of instrumentalists who choose to teach general music. The themes were:

(a) a clear preference for working with young children; (b) a concern that the demands of a band teaching position would not allow for the sort of

work/life balance they wished to have in their own lives; (c) a strong aversion to the “culture of competition” they perceived to be prevalent in the band world; and (d) a concern regarding the perceived limitations of instrumental music teaching and learning as it exists in the schools.

(abstract)

There is a “contested place” (Rodgers & Scott, 2008) or tension in each of these emergent themes. In each case, participants navigated the contested place and resolved the tensions that existed there by choosing to work in general, rather than instrumental music.

In Schonauer’s (2002) survey of Oklahoma general music teachers, 57% of respondents said that “their career had taken a different path than they expected. Of these 57%, the comment most often given for this difference between reality and expectation was the fact that they were teaching elementary music and enjoyed it much more than they expected” (p. 46). Such a response indicates that at some point in their careers, these teachers were experiencing tension between what they expected for their careers and the reality of how their careers unfolded. The respondents who replied that they enjoyed teaching general music had, in some way, managed to resolve the tension in a way that they felt produced a positive outcome.

The ways the participants in this investigation resolve tensions between external forces and their internal desires, feelings, or beliefs may offer insight into how they have shaped their professional identities as instrumentally-trained general music teachers. In the following section, I describe a conceptual framework that focuses on moments of personal choice during which individuals strive to resolve tensions between external contexts and internal desires.

Conceptual Framework: The Importance of the Transitional Experience

The conceptual framework for this study focuses on moments of decision in the lives of instrumentally trained general music teachers. The framework is unidirectional based upon the suggestion of Gee (2000) that individuals follow a trajectory through Discourse space when developing their core identities. Within this unidirectional framework common external factors, such as education at a NASM accredited institution and the National Standards for Music Education, inform the professional identities of instrumentally-trained general music teachers. These external factors constitute part of the Discourses with which these teachers engage when they make professional decisions. Professional decisions constitute everything from large decisions, such as whether or not to seek or accept a general music position, to smaller everyday decisions such as which songs to include in lessons for that week. These decisions take place along a trajectory that each teacher is traveling and along the way, he or she is forming a professional identity.

Maxwell (2005) emphasizes that conceptual frameworks are “*constructed*, not found [emphasis in original]” (p. 35). He continues, “It incorporates pieces that are borrowed from elsewhere, but the structure, the overall coherence, is something that *you* build, not something that exists ready-made.” In line with this definition, I have based the conceptual framework for this study on three areas of literature. I have outlined these areas in this chapter and provide a detailed review in Chapter 2. I review them in summary below.

In the first area of literature, researchers examined external and internal factors that contribute to educators’ initial decisions to enter music education degree programs

and their decisions to work within a given specialty area upon entering the field. This literature establishes that students largely cite similar reasons for entering music education. Among the influences mentioned, ensemble directors and positive aesthetic experiences are especially powerful (Bergee, et al, 2001; Bright, 2006; Gillespie & Hamann, 1999; Lee, 2003; Madsen & Kelly, 2002.) Additionally, some professionals that actively seek general music positions demonstrate a preference for working with young children, an aversion to competition, and a desire for home/work balance (Robinson, 2010).

The second body of literature establishes important patterns of context-dependent expertise among music educators in specialty areas. Survey respondents from different specialties value different competencies in their jobs (Ayers, 2004; Brand, 1984; Christensen, 2000). These survey results could indicate that when they enter the profession, instrumentally-trained general music teachers have less training in some skills for teaching general music because their education focused upon developing expertise in ensemble direction and group instrumental instruction. This could be a source of tension as they develop their professional identities.

According to the third area of literature, which encompasses research questions two and three, teachers form a professional identity by filtering and combining external contexts with internal meanings in an ever-changing fashion (Rodgers and Scott, 2008). Teachers must reconcile their education, skills-sets, philosophies, and personal desires with the challenges of their jobs (Samuel and Stephens, 2000). Throughout this constant process of becoming, they may be aware of all or only some of the external forces acting upon them (Gee, 2000). The trajectory along which they travel is part of a “discourse

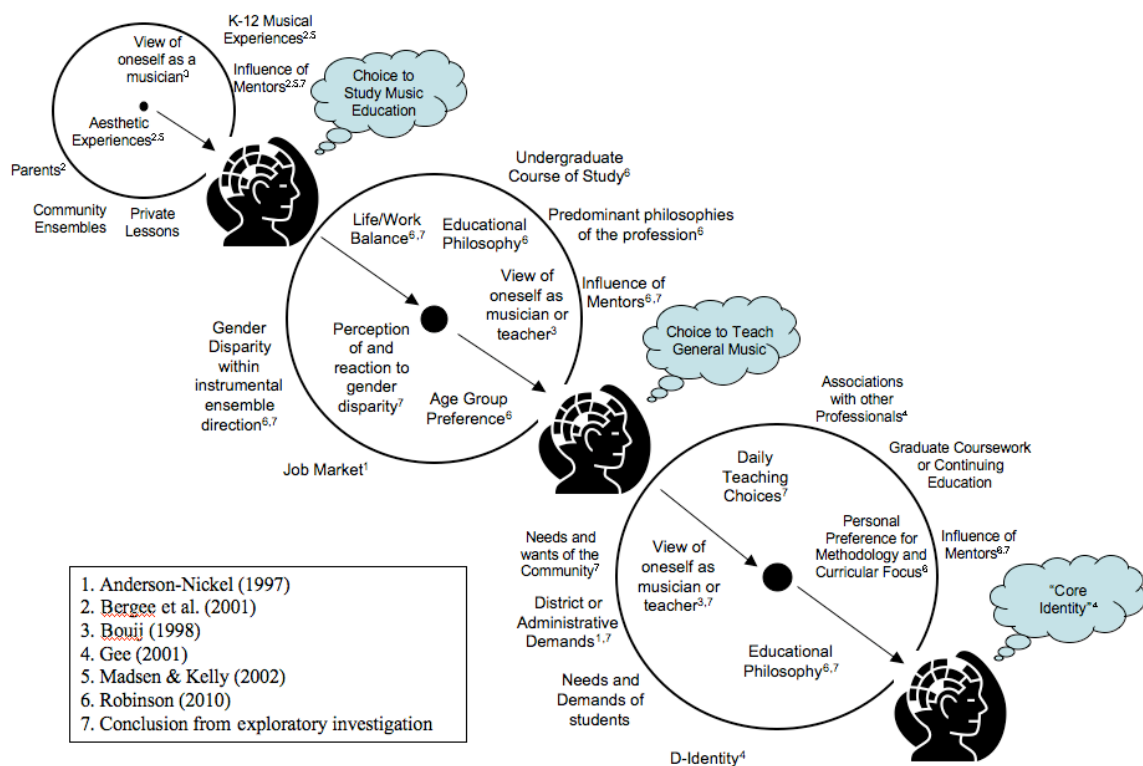
space” (Gee, 2000, p. 111), and a person’s narrativization of that trajectory constitutes his or her “core identity.” The ways a teacher positions him- or herself within the larger context of the profession is one aspect of professional identity and can be effectively examined through narrative or story (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002).

Figure 1 is a visual representation of the conceptual framework. It suggests three key times during which instrumentalists in general music make important connections about their identities—when they made the decision to enter undergraduate studies as a music education major, when they entered the field as general music teachers, and when they began to professionally identify themselves as general music teachers. During each of these times in their professional lives, they reconciled external influences with their personal visions for themselves in order to make important decisions. These major decisions, along with smaller, daily decision making processes, constitute their professional trajectories and have shaped their professional identities.

This model is not meant to suggest that all instrumentally-trained general music teachers have a common identity. In the visual model, common external experiences appear outside each circle while internal representations, unique to each individual, appear inside the circles. The lines forming the edges of the circles represent the “contested place” (Rodgers & Scott, 2008), where the external and internal meet. In this way, the model can accommodate both the common external factors in these teachers’ lived experiences as well as the individualized, internal meanings they create.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework for a Study of Instrumentally-Trained General Music Teachers



The clouds of thought above each face represent the constant processing of ideas. When navigating the discourse space surrounding them (Gee, 2000), individuals seek to balance the influences acting upon them with their own desires for themselves (Rodgers & Scott, 2008).

By combining these three areas of literature, I developed a conceptual framework that outlines a process through which instrumentally-trained general music teachers may combine external and internal influences when developing their professional selves. As their personal trajectories pass through common external influences and they reconcile

those influences with their own internal processes, they develop identities that eventually lead them first to general music and then toward a core identity within the profession. Rodgers and Scott (2008) suggest that a person's awareness of his or her identity exists in a "'contested' place where the normative demands of the external encounter the internal meaning making and desires of the teacher" (p. 733). I used the described conceptual framework to learn about the tensions that exist in this "contested" place for instrumentally-trained general music teachers.

Methodology

In this section, I describe how I used and adapted my conceptual framework to interpret the stories told to me by the participants. I describe the epistemology that underlies my decision to adopt the features of narrative analysis and the format of a multiple-case study. I then explain the case selection procedures I used to approximate maximum variation (Flyvbjerg, 2006) and describe my data collection and analysis process.

Epistemological Awareness and Methodological Choice

Epistemological awareness in qualitative research is the "informed positionings taken with regard to knowledge, truth(s), epistemic conditions, and justifications within particular research projects and the instantiation of methods that signifies the ways in which researchers provide instances or 'evidence' in support of theories, claims, and method choices" (Koro-Ljungberg, Yendol-Hoppey, Smith & Hayes, 2009, p. 687). In this work, I have adopted a constructivist position that values individuals' experiences and meaning-making processes. Specifically, I have adopted a position that accepts story as truth in the given time, place, and circumstances of this study (Connelly & Clandinin,

2008). In line with this epistemological choice, I have applied the tools of narrative analysis to individual cases. In this research, I have adopted a conceptual framework largely based upon Gee (2000). The framework is based upon acceptance of the idea that a person's trajectory and "the person's own narrativization of it are what constitute his or her... 'core identity'" (p. 111). Narrative analysis aligns with the theoretical basis of this study and with my goal of describing the participants' experiences in a relatable way that can help to inform the music education profession.

Connelly and Clandinin (2008) write that narrative inquiries do not take a specific form. Instead, narrative inquiries have specific features. Among the important features Connelly and Clandinin list is an attention to the three "commonplaces" of narrative inquiry—temporality, sociality, and place. Temporality is described as an inquirer's acceptance of and description of events as "in temporal transition" (p. 479).

Narrative inquirers do not describe an event, person, or object as such, but rather describe them with a past, a present, and a future. Narrative inquirers would not say "a person is such and such a way," they would, rather, say that a particular person had a certain kind of history, associated with particular present behaviors or actions that might seem to be projecting in particular ways into the future. (p. 479)

This acceptance of temporality is particularly fitting to this investigation because participants are sharing their personal histories and discussing how the choices they have made have challenged them, affected the positions they have adopted for themselves, and influenced their daily decisions as music educators.

Sociality is the context of an individual's story. Connelly and Clandinin (2008) include within this the external context of social factors, people, and existential conditions of the environment and a person's internal thoughts and feelings. Narrative inquirers attend to both aspects of the sociality commonplace. In this investigation, context included the participants' undergraduate educations, the conditions under which they accepted work as a general music specialist, and the working conditions of their past and present positions. As the participants shared their personal histories, they were sharing their internal thoughts and feelings and the relationships of those thoughts and feelings to the contexts surrounding their decisions.

Narrative inquirers value the specificity of place and strive to make the stories relatable by careful attention to the impact of place on the individuals being studied. For example, in this study, there are regional differences in job markets that have affected the individual participants. Narrative Inquirers also examine the impact of the places where events unfold as well as attending to the impact of place on the inquiry. Where an inquiry takes place—be it in an inquirer's office, a teacher's classroom, or via video-conferencing—is an important consideration.

For this report, I adopted the linear-analytic structure (Yin, 2009) of a multiple-case study while attending to the features of temporality, sociality, and place (Connelly & Clandinin, 2008). I present individual narratives in Chapter 4, followed by individual analysis and cross-case analysis in Chapter 5, and implications and discussion in chapter 6. In my conceptual framework, I did not describe instrumentally-trained general music teachers as “being such and such a way” (p. 479). Rather, the framework stresses that these individuals have certain histories that are associated with the ways they identify

themselves in the present. Throughout those histories they have engaged their internal processes within external contexts that have some common factors of sociality or place such as an instrumental performance background, education at a NASM accredited institution, and the acceptance of a general music position.

Gee (2000) suggests that teachers project an image to other individuals through their professional choices. The image projected becomes part of an individual's *story* as he or she tells it to the world. My participants projected an image to me as they shared their professional stories with me. Together, we (re)storied their professional journeys (Clandinin & Connelly, 2008) and co-constructed meanings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) in light of the given conceptual framework.

Stories can be both personal and collective (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002). In my research questions I am not only addressing the individual stories of these teachers but also seeking to understand any common positions they hold for themselves within the profession. My third research question states, "How do teachers self-identifying as instrumentally-trained general music teachers construct individual/group positionality in the music education profession?" Answering the question of positionality required cross-case analysis. To that end, I have applied the tools of narrative analysis within individual cases while simultaneously engaging in a more traditional cross-case analysis. The result is a collection of six individual stories containing the features outlined by Connelly and Clandinin (2008) and an overall analysis that reveals common patterns of complexity (Yin, 2009).

Case Selection

The outcomes of these individuals' lives are not the focus of this study. Rather, the process of becoming is the focus of the research (Merriam, 1997). The study used purposeful sampling and participants were chosen specifically because they teach elementary general music but performed primarily as instrumentalists during their undergraduate educations. For some this meant studying in an instrumental track while for others it only meant that he or she took private lessons and studio class as an instrumentalist.

I made two decisions during the case selection process to try to provide sufficient opportunity for commonalities or discrepancies to emerge during cross-case analysis (Yin 1994). First, I chose to examine the stories of six participants. I felt this number was sufficient for comparison without sacrificing depth due to an overly burdensome number of cases (Yin, 2009). Second, I chose to use "maximum variation" case selection (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 230) or what Weiss (1994) describes as "samples that attempt to maximize range" (1994, Chapter 2, Panels and Samples, Samples that Attempt to Maximize Range, para. 2). This technique serves the purpose of obtaining "information about the significance of various circumstances for case process and outcome" (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 230).

Yin (2009) points out that sampling in multiple-case designs is not sampling at all but rather the use of replication logic to strengthen an argument.

The ability to conduct 6 or 10 case studies, arranged effectively within a multiple-case design, is analogous to the ability to conduct 6 to 10 experiments on related topics; a few cases (2 or 3) would be literal

replications, whereas a few other cases (4 to 6) might be designed to pursue two different patterns of theoretical replications. If all cases turn out as predicted, these 6 to 10 cases, in the aggregate, would have provided compelling support for the initial set of propositions. If the cases are in some way contradictory, the initial propositions must be revised and retested with another set of cases. (What are the Potential Multiple-Case Designs, types 3 and 4?, para. 5)

By using a “maximum variation” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 230) process for case selection, I attempted to achieve heterogeneity among participants while still focusing on a common phenomenon of interest, namely the phenomenon of instrumentalists who teach general music. This technique adds strength to the conclusions of cross-case analysis because commonalities have occurred despite certain contrasting circumstances.

The six participants’ backgrounds include variety in university attended by geography, size, and type (large public institution, mid-sized public institution, conservatory, small liberal arts college). There is also variety in gender. Two of the six participants are male, and these males are from different regions of the country. One moved for his job, the other teaches in his home state. The teachers are also at different points in their careers from first year to more than twenty years. The geography of the participants is spread as far south as the Gulf Coast, as far north as the Upper Midwest, and as far east as the Mid-Atlantic. I made several attempts, through key informants, to connect with individuals in the western part of the United States but was unable to obtain participation from those individuals. The participants also have different family

situations. Two are unmarried but in significant relationships, two are married without children, and two are married with children.

There is less variety among the participants in their major instruments. Four individuals, Annie, Rachel, Lynn, and Maurice are clarinetists. Alex is a trumpet player. Carina plays the French horn. There were no string players or pianists among the participants.

Data Collection and Analysis

Throughout this inquiry, I worked with participants in an interview and writing process meant to spur reflection. As Connelly and Clandinin (2008) suggest, I began by examining my “own narrative beginnings in relation to the topic” (p. 483). I asked participants to share the stories of how they became the teachers they are today with special attention to the tensions and transitional decisions on which my conceptual framework focuses. Throughout the analysis process, I returned to the participants for clarifications.

Initially, I used a questionnaire to help me get to know the participants. The questionnaires focused upon their undergraduate educations. Gathering information in this form left more challenging questions and discussions for our biographical interviews. During those interviews, the participants narrativized their trajectories for me (Gee, 2000) and I created field texts based upon their experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 2008). I coded for themes and categories I believed could prove to be salient in cross-case analysis (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1994). Some categories were pre-existing—coming from the existing literature or the conceptual framework—while others emerged from the research process and were based upon participant experiences or

my observations (Merriam, 1998). When coding, I gave special attention to narrative tools of analysis. In particular, I examined both the content of my participants' responses and the ways they reconstructed that content. I studied "experience as story" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2008, p. 477), returning multiple times to each participant for further elaboration orally or in the form of written responses. Copies of transcripts and syllabi from undergraduate coursework, participant notebooks from undergraduate work, and resources from their undergraduate institutions such as suggested scope and sequence of coursework were used as artifacts in the study.

I have strived to provide a well-written research text that presents the voices of these teachers as well as a framework for understanding their experiences. I have done my best as a writer to create a text that is relatable to the larger music education community and brings to light important considerations for music teacher education, employment practices, and further research.

Validity and Trustworthiness

The quality of narrative research and case study should not be judged using positivistic definitions of validity. Rather, epistemological, methodological, and intellectual rigor are the important hallmarks of quality (Diniz-Pereira, 2008). In this inquiry, I am seeking to reveal "truths" rather than "the Truth." These stories do not "reveal the past 'as it actually was,' aspiring to a standard of objectivity. They give us instead the truths of our experiences" (Personal Narratives Group, 1989, p. 261). Butt, Raymond, McCue and Yamagishi (2003) note that the "effect of any aberration, in the way that teachers see their own knowledge, is less important if one recalls that teachers think and behave *as if it were true* [emphasis in original]" (p. 94). The individuals who

participated in this inquiry have made decisions in their lives not based upon any particular Truth, but rather based upon the truth of the situation as they interpreted it in the moment.

This document is a collaborative interpretation of these teachers' lives (Butt, Raymond, McCue, & Yamagishi, 2003). As a narrative inquiry it focuses on the *individual* stories of the participants. Each narrative in Chapter 4 is designed to share the unique story of the individual that is its main character. There are, however, "collective themes that run across many teachers' lives which reflect the social structure in which individual lives are embedded" (p. 52). These collective themes are the focus of the cross-case analysis found in Chapter 6.

I call this study a multiple-case study design with narrative inquiry. I have included the term multiple-case study because I have adopted several hallmarks such as maximum variation sampling (Flyvbjerg, 2006) and the linear-analytic structure (Yin, 2009) of the final document. I have also used historical documents in case analyses including undergraduate transcripts, notebooks from coursework, and student advisement or "tracking" documents from undergraduate institutions. These historical documents were used in support of the main sources of data, which were participant interviews, questionnaires, essays, and researcher notes. Support for the conclusions of the cross-case analysis of this study occurs in the appearance of specific codes within the analysis of multiple stories.

Definitions

D-Identity – One of four identities as outlined by Gee (2000). D-identity is short for *Discourse identity*. "Human beings must see each other in certain ways and not others if

there are to be identities of any sort. If an attribute is not recognized as defining someone as a particular ‘kind of person,’ then, of course, it cannot serve as an identity of any sort” (p. 109). Any combination of attributes, such as walking, speaking, dressing, or acting in a certain way, “that can get one recognized as a certain ‘kind of person’” (p. 110) is a Discourse. D-identities are particularly important to a modernist view of the world because an individual’s success is seen as dependant upon recognition as a certain “kind of person,” such as forthright, charismatic, sly, honest, punctual, etc. D-identities require the presence of some type of interpretive system—a common language or set of understandings through which an individual’s attributes and behaviors can be interpreted through discourse with others.

General Music Classrooms – General music is the term used to describe classes available to the entire population of a school. For the purposes of this study, the terms *general music* and *general music classrooms* specifically refer to compulsory weekly classes at the elementary level.

Identity – a teacher’s concept of his- or herself that develops through a process of attempting to reconcile internal desires and external factors. Internal factors include the teacher’s emotions, narrativization of experiences, and internal meaning-making processes (Gee, 2000; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). External factors are those that constitute the professional context where a teacher works and include normative forces within education (Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Coldron & Smith, 1999; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). These external factors create a “Discourse space” through which each person travels on a unique trajectory (Gee, 2000). Gee distinguishes “core identity” from the

identities that are projected to and interpreted by others. In this document the terms professional identity and core identity are used interchangeably.

Individual/Group Positionality – When people act within a given context and community, the other actors (including institutions and individuals) in that community come to view that person as a “certain kind of person” (Gee, 2000, p. 99). Those to whom the label is being assigned must negotiate these identities. As a person negotiates the labels assigned to him or her, he or she adopts an individual position within that community. People who have received a common label from other professionals or who have chosen to adopt a common label for themselves may experience a sense of group positionality within the professional community.

Instrumentally-trained General Music Teacher – a currently practicing general music educator who was considered an instrumental education major during his or her undergraduate education because his or her major performance instrument was winds, brass, strings, or percussion.

Interpretive System – Identities require interpretive systems.

The interpretive system may be people's historically and culturally different views of nature; it may be the norms, traditions, and rules of institutions; it may be the discourse and dialogue of others; or it may be the workings of affinity groups. What is important about identity is that almost any identity trait can be understood in terms of any of these different interpretive systems. People can actively construe the same identity trait in different ways, and they can negotiate and contest how their traits are to be seen (by themselves and others) in terms of the

different perspectives on identity. (Gee, 2000, pp. 107-108)

For the purposes of this study, Music Education is an interpretive system with norms, traditions, rules, and discourses through which general music teachers develop a professional identity.

Music Education Profession – for the purposes of this study, the phrase music education profession includes all individuals licensed to offer K-12 music instruction and currently teaching in any music sub-specialty, and those teacher educators at the university level who prepare music teachers.

Self-Identify – to associate oneself with a certain group and to project that identity to others (Gee, 2000).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined the literature that informed the research questions that guided this investigation. Additionally, I have presented a conceptual framework based in literature from both music and general education. Within this framework, I proposed that common external factors in the backgrounds of instrumentally-trained elementary general music teachers combine with internal meaning making processes to affect the ways they construct their professional identities. The purpose of this research was to share and examine the stories of six teachers in order to highlight some of the contested places they have navigated as general music teachers. I used a linear-analytic multiple-case study structure and applied the tools of narrative analysis within individual cases. Individual narratives, individual analysis, and cross-narrative analysis are offered in chapters 4 and 5, following the review of related literature and methodology.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In my searches using the RILM, ERIC, and EBSCO Education Complete databases, I found only one piece of empirical research that investigated specifically the issue of instrumentalists teaching general music (Robinson, 2010). However, there is a body of literature from which we might develop a generic portrait of who these teachers might be—why they entered music education, why they teach general music, the specific requirements of their jobs, and the ways they make meaning from these factors when forming a professional identity. After a brief discussion of how I approached the process of first widening and then narrowing the literature I included in this review, I present the literature in three main sections. I first discuss studies on the influences students cite in choosing music education as a career and in the choice to teach general music. Then, I discuss several studies that describe the specific requirements of general music teaching, in the view of researchers and of survey respondents. This literature includes expertise as interpreted by researchers and as defined by survey respondents. Finally, I will discuss pertinent portions of a vast professional identity literature, focusing on studies that deal with the reconciliation of personal tensions in shaping identity, the function of discourse in the outward projection of identity, and the importance of “interpretive systems” (Gee, 2000) in facilitating identity development.

Broadening then Narrowing the Literature

My investigation of instrumentalists in general music began as an interest in the phenomenon of “out-of-field” teaching during a doctoral seminar in autumn, 2009. Out-of-field teaching can be measured in numerous ways depending upon the way it is

defined (Ingersoll, 2001). In some cases, it can be defined away by broad certification standards. I wondered if this was the case in music. Does a K-12 certification hide problems that may exist when instrumental specialists are asked to teach choir or choral specialists are asked to teach instrumental ensembles? Given my background as a general music teacher, I turned toward the idea of instrumentalists in general music rather quickly and began searching for literature using the RILM database. I found several articles discussing the issue of broad versus specific certification in music education (Boswell, 1991; McCloud & Harbinson, 1991; Colwell, 2007; Cutietta, 2007), and one outlining current certification practices (Henry, 2005), but no studies specifically examining the possible effects of broad or specific certification in music on teachers, students, or curriculum content.

The small amount of literature prompted me to broaden my search. I examined the underlying suppositions of an argument that out-of-specialization teaching in music is a problem. Such an argument implies an acceptance that teaching in different specializations of music education is fundamentally different in some way. I searched for articles related to music teacher expertise and the skills required for teaching music in different specializations. How are they different? Who says they are different—teachers, administrators, professors, NASM? Does anyone say they are the same or in some way negate an argument of difference? My searches in these related areas resulted in the articles in the first two sections of this literature review: *Choosing General Music as a Career* and *The Specific Expertise of General Music Teachers*.

The literature in these first two sections was largely assembled as a prelude to developing research questions for this investigation. After composing the questions, I

investigated the literature on teacher identity in order to develop a conceptual framework for the study.

My searches of the teacher identity literature in the ERIC and EBSCO Education Complete databases posed the opposite problem to my earlier searches; the literature was vast and required narrowing in order to be useful in helping me to develop a framework. I turned to reviews of research (Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop, 2004; Rodgers & Scott, 2008) for assistance in understanding the quantity and quality of the literature in this area. In both of these articles, the authors cite the need for clear definitions of identity in research. I therefore set out to find a definition of professional identity for use in this study.

In some of the literature I examined in music education (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Robinson, 2010; Schonauer, 2002), I noticed an underlying theme of tension between internal desires and external forces. This appeared as tension between undergraduate training and job-market reality (Anderson-Nickel, 1997), personal philosophy and teaching as it exists in secondary ensembles (Robinson, 2010), and expected career path and actual career path (Schonauer, 2002). The teachers described in these studies had given voice to these tensions. Rodgers and Scott's definition of voice as existing in a "contested" place where the normative demands of the external encounter the internal meaning making and desires of the teacher" (p. 733) seemed to fit well with this existing research. I therefore decided to focus my search of the identity literature on studies addressing the role of tension and its resolution in teacher identity development. These studies appear in the third section of this review: *Context, Positionality and Story*. Teacher identity investigations in music education are a small but growing category of

research and those studies are included in the fourth section, *Teacher Identity in Music Education*.

Choosing General Music as a Career

Choosing Music Education

A large body of research has shown consistent reasons why students enter music education. In general, the decision to enter music education is made earlier than other career decisions (Madsen & Kelly, 2002), often during high school (Burgee, Coffman, Demorest, Humphreys, & Thornton, 2001). Secondary band, orchestra, and choir directors are influential in students' decisions to enter music education (Bright, 2006). When naming an influential person, wind and percussion students tend to indicate their band directors, vocalists their choir directors, and string players their orchestra directors (Bergee et al., 2001). A study by Lee (2003) corroborates this. "Student testimonies have stated that their decision to become a music educator in strings was based on positive experiences with their high school orchestra teachers" (p.49). Additionally, students who participate in leadership positions, such as section leaders, student conductors, etc., are more likely to choose music education as a career (Bergee et al., 2001; Madsen & Kelly, 2002). Participation in high school and honors ensembles, aesthetic fulfillment, genuine respect for a music teacher, and the view of teaching as a rewarding profession despite its low salary and status were all important factors in students' choice of music education (Bergee et al., 2001; Bright, 2006; Gillespie & Hamann, 1999; Madsen & Kelley, 2002).

There is only a small amount of data in this literature on the specific influence of elementary general music teachers in students' decisions to pursue music education. In the Bergee et al. (2001) survey, 81 of the 431 respondents listed a general music teacher

as an influential person (in an equal proportion of vocal and instrumental specialists) when asked to check “all that apply” from a list of possibilities. However, the researchers also set out to determine the *most* influential person by asking students “to place a 1, 2, and 3 next to the individuals who were most, second most, and third most influential respectively” (Outcomes section, para. 4). Seven students indicated an elementary general music teacher as most influential, 18 as second most influential, and 13 as third most influential. These numbers are small in comparison to ensemble directors (band, orchestral, and choral) who were listed by 175, 123, and 80 respondents as first, second, and third most influential, respectively. Possible reasons for this disparity could be that the aesthetically pleasing experiences these students found through ensemble participation did not occur in general music, that general music experiences are further in their past memories, or that they did not receive general music instruction.

Madsen and Kelly (2002) offer a qualitative description by a student whose positive influences did include elementary general music.

In elementary school 4th grade, we were practicing in the after-school recorder choir. There were about 15 of us; I knew all of the others, because most of us were in the same class. We were preparing to do a concert at the local mall, and I was so excited and happy and proud at how amazing we sounded on our really hard recorder pieces with three, four and five different parts. I've been an admirer of the music teacher Mrs. G ever since. And I was thinking that music was the greatest thing ever and that she must like her job better than anything and I wanted to be just like her. (p. 329)

The study does not indicate whether or not this particular individual went on to teach general music. Positive aesthetic experiences are a powerful influence in choosing music education (Bergee et al., 2001; Gillespie & Hamann, 1999; Madsen & Kelly, 2002) and it is notable that this aesthetic experience, from such an early age, influenced this student in such a powerful way.

Choosing General Music

Informants in a study by Gohlke (1994) inferred a lower status upon elementary general music. Her four informants were sophomore members of a 14-week elementary general methods class. Two were instrumentalists and two were vocalists. The informants held conducting secondary ensembles in high regard and elementary music was seen as a “rite of passage” or stepping-stone in a conducting career. The informants saw the teaching of basic musical concepts to young children as fundamentally different than conducting secondary ensembles. However, by the end of the course, the informants held a more positive outlook toward teaching elementary music. This information may be heartening for general music methods instructors who strive not only to develop students’ pedagogical content knowledge, but also to shape their attitudes toward elementary music and prepare them for a job market where they may be asked to teach general music in some form.

Music teacher educators are faced with the dilemma of training teachers to enter a profession where not all teaching positions are as clear-cut as the specialized training students undertake in during their university years (Hamann, 2009; Shumaker, 2005; Wilcox, 2000). Anderson-Nickel (1997) speaks to this problem. In her examination of general music teacher expertise, she compared twelve practicing general music

teachers—six more-experienced teachers and six-less experienced teachers. Among the less-experienced teachers, one held a degree in instrumental music and had no general music training during his undergraduate years. He expressed disappointment that his undergraduate program did not require some general music methods in order to prepare him for a job market where available teaching positions required teaching more than one music sub-specialty. A second less-experienced teacher taught both elementary band and general music, but indicated a strong preference for moving to the high school or college level. Two of the less experienced teachers in this study were instrumental music majors who had not taken an undergraduate general music methods course, but requested that part of their student teaching placement involve general music, knowing that some elementary band jobs would require them to teach in both areas. All of her less-experienced participants agreed that what they needed most “was the foundation of elementary general music teaching methods and the support of experienced colleagues” (p. 218). In her discussion, Anderson-Nickel calls upon music teacher education programs to be more aware of current trends in the job markets of their regions and to be more responsive to the skills required in available positions.

Schonauer used a mixed-methods approach to examine role development among 69 Oklahoma general music teachers. Her work further supports the contention that a minority of students enters music school envisioning themselves as general music teachers. In the free response section of the survey, 57% of respondents said “their career had taken a different path than they expected. Of these 57%, the comment most often given for this difference between reality and expectation was the fact that they were teaching elementary music and enjoyed it much more than they expected” (p. 46). The

limited number of participants and small geographic-scale of this study limit its generalizability to states outside Oklahoma or other states with similar music educator preparation and employment patterns; but, among these teachers, surprise at teaching and liking elementary general music was salient enough to warrant inclusion in the “free-response” section of the survey.

Using a multiple-case study approach, Robinson (2010) examined the reasons seven instrumental music majors chose to teach general music upon graduation. Constant comparative analysis revealed five broad themes in responses—

1. A clear preference for working with young children; (p.33)
2. A concern that the demands of a band teaching position would not allow for the sort of work/life balance they wished to have in their own lives; (p. 33)
3. A strong aversion to the “culture of competition” they perceived to be prevalent in the band world; (p. 33)
4. A concern regarding the perceived limitations of instrumental music teaching and learning as it exists in the schools; (p. 33)
5. And, an aversion to the politics of the male-dominated “band-world” (p. 40).

Several of the participants in this study “discovered” general music either through an elementary general methods class or during student teaching. One young woman wrote:

I was considering quitting the school of music altogether when a friend told me I should take (professor’s name) elementary general music methods class. The class came so highly recommended and I’d always

loved working with small children (tutoring, babysitting) that I figured I'd give it a try. That class is the reason I chose to teach elementary music!!!!

(p. 37)

A second young general music teacher chose her career path during student teaching.

I also discovered that I just had more fun with the little ones. In the very short time that I was in a band placement during my student teaching, I hated it. I didn't like rehearsals. I wasn't good at relating to high school aged kids. It just was not fun. (p. 38)

This teacher also indicated that she felt she could build a solid foundation for instrumental music in the later years through excellent general music instruction. She saw her work as complementary to the instrumental music program, helping the students have “more understanding of what they were doing musically” (p. 37). The experiences of these participants suggest a need for music teacher educators to be aware that tight schedules and solid tracking in music teacher education programs may quell the freedoms of personal discovery as students seek their places within our profession.

All of the participants in Robinson's (2010) study were female. He notes that while none of the participants specifically mentioned gender in their initial responses, upon member checking two participants noted an aversion to the male-dominated culture of high school band. One participant relayed the story of a friend who felt she could not maintain her own personality and still compete in the band world. Another participant noted the difficulty for female teachers to break into the “old boys club” (p. 40), and

noted that “the politics involved in breaking into the band world was part of what turned me off of wanting to be a band director” (p. 40).

Robinson (2010) concludes that music teacher educators have a responsibility to help pre-service music educators “find their place” within music education. This can be achieved through the use of diagnostic tools (such as personality assessments) upon entry to music education programs, and through purposeful discussion with and about music teacher candidates. He also suggests that the hyper-competitive nature of high school ensembles discourages some creative individuals who instead choose to teach general music, where they feel they have the ability to teach in a way that aligns with their personal educational philosophies.

Taken together, these studies indicate that among pre-service music educators, general music does not always hold equal status with ensemble direction (Gohlke, 1994). Teaching general music may be a decision an individual feels forced to make by the choice of available jobs (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Schonauer, 2002). However, personal preferences and educational philosophies can lead some instrumentalists to choose general music teaching (Robinson, 2010). The sense of personal and professional fulfillment general music provides is sometimes a surprise for pre-service and in-service teachers (Robinson, 2010; Schonauer, 2002). Finally, the multi-subspecialty requirements of some positions (Anderson-Nickel, 1992; Hamann, 2009), significant time commitments for ensemble direction, and the political environment surrounding some jobs (Robinson, 2010), influence the career decisions of instrumentally-trained general music teachers.

Teacher Influence on General Music Curricula

Elementary general music educators tend to focus on those parts of the curriculum with which they are most comfortable (Gohlke, 1994; Peddell, 1995). A teacher's background as an instrumental performer affects his or her pedagogical decisions. Additionally, fewer performance requirements in some programs at the elementary level may leave greater freedom for general music teachers to shape their curricula according to their personal preferences and philosophies.

Gohlke (1994) found that previous performance-related experiences and an instrumental or vocal background heavily influenced the philosophies and curricular decisions of her informants in an elementary general music methods course. Midway through the course, the two instrumental informants expressed opinions that general music teachers should present the "fundamentals of music," which Gohlke interpreted to mean a focus on music literacy and interpreting written symbols. This philosophy was evident in their lesson plans. When given several songs to teach, the vocalists chose to focus on the text of each piece along with its historical and cultural context, choosing appropriate literacy concepts, such as syncopation, as a secondary focus. The instrumentalists focused upon pitches and rhythm values. The philosophy of these two informants is similar to the participant in Robinson's (2010) study whose statement about giving students "more understanding of what they were doing musically" (p. 37) also indicates a music literacy focus for instruction.

Peddell (1995) also observed this phenomenon. In her survey of the curricular choices of elementary general music teachers in Pennsylvania, she found that teachers who ranked the aural identification of instrumental timbres as important to the general

music curriculum had an instrumental background or were also the instrumental teacher. According to the teachers, the identification of instrumental timbre was helpful in recruitment to their instrumental programs. Peddell suggests that teacher's personal preferences, which would be affected by their performance background, heavily influence their curricular choices.

The Specific Expertise of General Music Teachers

Teaching general music requires specific skills and knowledge, as does teaching any subject or any level (Berliner, 1986; Shulman, 1986). In this section, I first describe several prominent definitions of teacher expertise from outside and inside music education. I chose these particular studies from those I found in my database searches because they are the basis of the conceptual framework for three studies on general music teacher expertise (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Duling, 1992; Eshelman, 1995). Following my presentation of Shulman (1986), Berliner (1986), and Elliott (1992), I discuss the literature on expertise within general music education.

Definitions of Teacher Expertise

Shulman (1986) describes teachers as having three important forms of knowledge. First, teachers must possess *content knowledge*. This is knowledge of the facts and concepts of a domain, as well as the syntax and structures around which the facts and concepts are organized. Second, Shulman uses the term *pedagogical content knowledge* to describe the intersection and interaction of teacher content knowledge with the pedagogical techniques that result in expert teaching. Pedagogical content knowledge includes a teacher's ability to create useful representations of important topics in her discipline and to make those topics "comprehensible to others" (p. 9). It also includes a

teacher's knowledge of the aspects of her discipline that are most difficult—knowledge she uses to anticipate possible misconceptions among her students. Third, Shulman writes that teachers must possess *curricular knowledge*. Expert teachers can develop materials appropriate for teaching the content of their domains at different levels. They are able to create supplementary or alternate activities that deepen understanding among learners and are able to relate their content to the content of other disciplines. Expert teachers must possess a depth of understanding in all three of these areas.

Berliner (1986) also paints a picture of the expert pedagogue. His work has roots in literature that examines expertise among mathematics problem solvers, chess players, bridge players, and radiologists. Berliner and his colleagues examined similar characteristics in expert teachers to those among other professionals. They found that expert teachers are able to make inferences in classroom situations. Expert teachers apply their domain-specific knowledge to make sense of the activity in a classroom. These teachers also apply their domain-specific expertise to categorize problems. They categorize problems and recognize patterns more quickly than novices, allowing them to efficiently choose appropriate strategies for helping students. Additionally, experts do all of the above with an amount of automaticity, which lightens their cognitive processing load and frees them to think creatively and flexibly in the moment. In general, experience greater than five years is required to develop expertise in teaching. Lengthy experience does not guarantee expertise, but expertise is rare without lengthy experience.

Within music education, Elliott (1992), suggests that expert music teachers have two important forms of knowledge: musicianship and educatorship. Musicianship is the knowledge and skills involved in thinking and knowing as a musician. Educatorship is

defined as “the ability to think-in-action, know-in-action and reflect-in-action in relation to the fluid situations of teaching and learning” (p. 12). Educatorship, therefore, is a context-dependent phenomena determined by the interaction of the teacher’s knowledge with the teaching and learning situation.

Teacher Expertise in Music Education

There is a small body of research focusing on the many facets of teacher expertise in general music education. This literature reveals, as Berliner (1986) and Elliott (1992) suggest, that music teaching involves a complex series of context-specific decisions. Music educators, during their careers, may be asked to teach in a variety of differing contexts. In this section, I will examine literature that addresses expertise among general music educators, review research that suggests differences in the skills required for expertise among music educators working in different contexts, and discuss the unique role general music teachers see for themselves according to surveys.

This comparison is in no way meant to be demeaning toward instrumental ensemble instruction. This study focuses specifically on the skills of general music teachers and how the requirements for those skills affect individuals as they develop professional identities. Therefore, I have chosen to focus on literature examining expertise among general music educators as well as literature that presents the opinions of survey respondents about skills and qualities that are important to good general music teaching. The music education profession, on the whole, treats teaching skills as context-dependent and distinguishes between general music teaching, vocal ensemble directing, and instrumental ensemble directing on a regular basis. Because this is the interpretive system (Gee, 2000) within which this study exists, some comparison is inevitable.

Expertise among general music educators. Duling (1992) identified two exemplary general music teachers' sources of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986). These exemplary teachers were identified through chain sampling. The female participant, in her twenty-first year of teaching, was an instrumental specialist who taught fourth and fifth grade strings, sixth grade orchestra, and middle school general music. Her continuing education included Kodály training. The male participant, in his twelfth year of teaching, had been a vocal major and taught middle school general music and chorus. Duling's qualitative analysis revealed that these teachers used various sources in building their pedagogical content knowledge, including, (1) their own teaching experiences, (2) informal knowledge gained from interaction with colleagues, (3) formal knowledge gained from mentors such as a private teacher or undergraduate professor, (4) an awareness of their teaching context, and (5) knowledge of the characteristics of middle-school students. While both teachers in this study named aspects (usually individuals) from their formal undergraduate education as sources of content knowledge, most of their pedagogical content knowledge was developed through experience, interaction with colleagues and students, and reflective practice.

The educators in Duling's (1992) study were highly-organized, motivated individuals who used their pedagogical content knowledge in (1) deciding what resources and materials to use in developing lessons, (2) transforming those materials for their curricula, and (3) presenting the content to students. Certification requirements in music are broad and "preservice teachers are unlikely to spend their whole careers as strictly band, orchestra, or choir directors" (p. 231). If organization and motivation are hallmarks of excellent general music teachers, then Duling suggests that personal characteristics

should be considered when students are admitted to teacher education programs. He proposes that teacher educators should consider undergraduate programs that lead to a specialization in secondary general music, and that middle school general music methods courses should “equip the pre-service teacher with simple sources of content knowledge and materials, and concurrent knowledge of how to transform the material based on knowledge of students, particular contexts, and the teacher’s own personal characteristics” (p. 232).

Anderson-Nickel (1997) examined expertise among elementary general music educators along a continuum developed by Berliner. She found that expertise among elementary general music educators paralleled expertise found among educators in other content areas. The more-experienced teachers in Anderson-Nickel’s study were better able to manage behavior and routines in their classrooms, and more readily refocused the lesson following a disruption. The more-experienced teachers were better able to plan and execute lessons that were paced appropriately, and engaged all students in a class. Among the less-experienced teachers, those with better planning routines were more successful in pacing their lessons. Additionally, the reflective practice of more-experienced teachers involved a clarification of pedagogical choices not present in the less-experienced teachers. Less-experienced teachers “spoke more often of how they would teach the observed lesson differently if given another opportunity” (p. 173), whereas more-experienced teachers “were able to predict students’ errors and diagnose potential problems and prescribe solutions” (p. iv). The musical content of the lessons among all twelve teachers was similar, but the depth of understanding required of

students in the different areas of curriculum was affected by teacher experience and attitude, and the socio-economic status of the school.

Eshelman (1995) used both qualitative and quantitative analysis to identify and describe the instructional commonalities of four exemplary elementary general music teachers. She defines exemplary teachers as those who have been “identified by colleagues, supervisors, university professors, and professional music organization officers due to his or her reputation of instructional effectiveness with children in the general music classroom” (p. 9). Using Elliott’s (1992) context-dependent model of the professional music educator, Eshelman identified important interactive relationships between general music teachers’ “knowledge of: (1) music fundamentals, (2) technical musical skills, (3) musical sensitivity, (4) musical literature, (5) curriculum, and (6) a philosophy of music education” (p. 193). She notes that these skills are not used in isolation by the teachers in the study, but rather “are drawn upon and utilized in action in an inseparable and typically spontaneous manner during classroom instruction” (p. 197).

Although the literature in this area of music education research is limited in quantity, it is of excellent quality. Each of the three studies (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Duling, 1992; Eshelman, 1995) is well-grounded in a broadly accepted theoretical framework. Still, all three authors faced a similar dilemma—identifying expert teachers to act as participants in research is challenging. An expert chess player will have many tournament wins as justification of his or her expertise. An athlete’s expertise may be evinced by performance statistics. Teaching has historically been an individual activity. Educators are observed only a few times a year by a supervisor and otherwise deliver instruction largely in isolation. How then, does a researcher identify expert teachers as

participants? Supervisors' suggestions, based upon limited observation, may or may not be accurate. Suggestions of participants from music colleagues may also be based upon limited knowledge such as the quality of performances at festivals. General music teachers may or may not have performing groups in the community. The researchers in each of the three cited studies (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Duling, 1992; Eshelman, 1995) offered transparent explanations for how they determined that participants qualified as experts. Each used a process that equated expertise with experience in some manner. While experience is an important requirement for expertise (Berliner, 1986), it does not necessarily equate with expertise. Recruiting truly expert educators for case study is a challenge and limitation in this area of research.

One possible way to enhance our knowledge in this area is to ask larger groups of practicing teachers about the skills they value in their teaching. In suggesting further research, Eshelman (1995) asks, "Do some or all of the themes of instructional knowledge identified in this study apply to music teachers of other grade levels, or are they exclusive to the elementary setting?" (p. 203). My research is partly based on an assumption that some instructional knowledge is exclusive to the context of general music and that teachers' applications of expertise and their reflections upon the success of their pedagogical choices help to shape their professional identities. In the next section, I address what existing research indicates about skills general music teachers value.

Unique skills in different music education contexts. In reviewing Baker (as cited in Brand, 1984), Brand (1984) noted differences in the musical and pedagogical skills music teachers in different musical specialties seemed to value. General music

teachers felt it was important to demonstrate enthusiasm while presenting creative, well-paced lessons that included a variety of activities. This opinion contrasts their secondary choral and instrumental colleagues. Choral directors ranked musicianship and “skill in diagnosing and correcting problems during rehearsal as the most important competencies” (p. 9). Instrumental educators stressed a working knowledge of varied instruments and classroom management skills as the core of their teaching competencies. These differences in responses could indicate that music educators view themselves as specialists and see the requirements of their specializations as unique. This view could create problems for these educators if they take a job outside their specialty or are requested by their school system to teach in an area of music that challenges their pedagogical knowledge.

Different areas of music teaching also require different functional piano skills. Christensen (2000) compared the ways elementary music teachers, band directors, choral directors, and orchestral directors view the importance of piano skills for their teaching. The respondents ($n=1017$), from all 50 states, were asked to rate the frequency (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, or never) of their use of 20 specific functional piano skills. They were also asked to indicate which skills would be used more often if they had greater proficiency. Elementary general music educators indicated wide use of functional piano skills with the exception of transposing parts to concert pitch, reading alto or tenor clef, composing new pieces, memorizing piano solos, devising modulations, and playing chord progressions in traditional four-part voicing. General music teachers proficient in harmonizing melodies (with and without chord symbols), transposing simple melodies, playing familiar songs by ear, sight reading, playing simple chords and accompaniments,

and improvising accompaniments, reported doing so on a daily or weekly basis. These teachers also suggested that undergraduates should receive substantial training in several of these areas, including accompanying a group, playing chord progressions, improvising an accompaniment, harmonizing melodies, and sight reading. Overall, 75% of elementary music teachers ($n=84$ for those teaching general or multiple areas) rated piano proficiency as important or very important to their job. This rating was similar to their secondary choral and band peers. Eighty percent of choral teachers rated piano proficiency as very important, as did 74% of multi-level band teachers. Only orchestral teachers rated piano proficiency as less important, with 56% of high school orchestra directors considering piano proficiency as important or very important to their job. Some of the skills ranked as important among these ensemble directors were different than general music, including score reading, transposing, and playing modulations. Christensen suggests that piano courses in music education undergraduate programs should not be based upon the proficiency of performing piano solos, but rather upon proficiency of in the skills required for teaching. She suggests that even piano majors, accustomed to memorizing and performing the great piano literature, need courses in functional piano skills.

Ayers (2004) found that instrumentally-trained general music teachers lack training in vocal care. She surveyed general music teachers in Virginia and North Carolina. Vocal care instruction among vocal majors was covered almost exclusively in private lessons rather than methods courses. Survey respondents who were instrumental majors indicated little or no instruction in voice preservation, protection, or hygiene.

The unique role of general music teachers. A study by Schonauer (2002) suggests that elementary general music teachers see their jobs as unique and inherently different than ensemble instruction. Her respondents indicated a disengagement from their secondary ensemble colleagues. When asked to rank their preferences for interacting with different social groups, 61 of 69 respondents indicated other elementary general music teachers as their first, second, or third choice. Fifty-three indicated elementary classroom teachers as their first, second, or third choice. These numbers vastly outweighed a preference for interaction with music colleagues at other instructional levels. The next highest was middle school vocal directors, principals, and other administrators, indicated respectively by 22, 22, and 21 respondents.

The disengagement between elementary general music teachers and their other music education colleagues was further supported by the respondents' assessment of others' ability to understand their work (Schonauer, 2002). Sixty-seven of the 69 respondents indicated that other elementary music teachers understand their work. Forty-eight indicated that university music education faculty understood their work. Forty-six indicated that they felt elementary classroom teachers understood their work. Only 30 and 25 respondents indicated that middle school and high school (respectively) instrumental directors understood their work. Middle and high school ensemble conductors received no first place rankings. This study's small sample and unique geographic location mean that these findings are not generalizable nationally, but these results indicate that this group of teachers sees the requirements of their jobs as unique. As Schonauer's study focused on role development, she did not survey her participants on what specifically makes general music unique and, in their view, misunderstood.

A Contradictory Opinion

Writing the introductory article in a special issue of *Music Educators Journal* focusing on music teacher education, Boardman (1987) suggested an “implicit agreement” among the authors of the issue that “effective teaching requires similar kinds of knowledge and skill no matter when or where the teaching takes place within the public school environment” (p. 24). She went on to build an argument for changes to music teacher education that would break the “vicious circle” (p.25) of teachers teaching as they were taught. In the preceding section, I have presented an outline of literature that contradicts Boardman’s claim, but the timing of her article should be considered in any critique. In 1987, literature on context-dependent expertise was just emerging in the education literature (Berliner, 1986; Shulman, 1986). *A Nation at Risk* had set the education research world ablaze with claims of inadequate teaching in schools. Perhaps what is more important is to take note that 25 years after Boardman’s article, the music education community continues to discuss the best ways to break the “vicious circle.”

Section Summary

Case studies have revealed the importance of context in the development of general music teacher expertise (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Duling, 1992; Eshelman, 1995). Music educators in different specialties have indicated through survey that they value unique skills depending upon the context(s) in which they teach (Ayres, 2004; Brand, 1984; Christensen, 2000). Additionally, elementary general music educators may feel that their music education colleagues in different specialties misunderstand general music teaching (Schonauer, 2002). While all music educators share some common musical knowledge, different teaching contexts require the foregrounding of different skills. In

the next section, I discuss how context-dependent skills and professional practice can play important roles in the formation of professional identity.

Identity: Context, Positionality, and Story

The concept of identity has been an important focus in the social sciences in recent decades (Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop, 2004; Diniz-Pereira, 2008). In reviewing literature on identity between the years 1988 and 2000, Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop suggest that the concepts of identity and professional identity are used in various ways throughout the teacher and teacher education literature. The concept of identity appears in various studies as (1) concepts or images of self, (2) teachers' roles, and (3) the relationship between the broad expectations of the profession and what teachers value in their work and in their lives. In reality, identity most likely includes all of these things. No matter the definition a given researcher applies, the concept of identity as malleable, formed as part of an ongoing, context-dependent process, is a common factor among research in this area (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Rodgers and Scott, 2008).

One specific approach to identity as a constant process of becoming (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004) is to present it as existing at the intersection of external forces and internal meaning-making processes. Rodgers and Scott (2008) write:

Contexts and relationships describe the *external* aspects of identity formation and stories and emotions the *internal*, meaning-making aspects. Awareness and voice represent the 'contested' place where the normative demands of the external encounter the internal meaning making and desires of the teacher. (p. 733).

For an instrumentally-trained general music teacher, an example of such a contested place is the process one uses to reconcile the demands of teaching elementary choir with little or no training in children's vocal development. The current study specifically focused on these contested places. In line with the conceptual framework, the ways instrumentally-trained general music teachers resolve the tensions that exist in contested places plays an important role in professional identity development.

In this section, I discuss theories and research which have informed my interpretation of the ways the participants (1) approach and are shaped by challenges upon entering the field, (2) create positionality within the general music profession and music education as a whole, and (3) develop their professional identities. I present this research in three categories—context, positionality, and our storied selves.

Context

The process of developing a professional identity is not isolated to the undergraduate years or the early years of teaching. Instead, this process extends throughout a teacher's career and results from the complex interactions between a teacher and his/her environment (Coldron & Smith, 1999). Pedagogical approach, classroom management style, repertoire, advocacy positions, and music education philosophy are among the many choices a music teacher makes. "By choosing some and rejecting other possibilities in various professional fields of choice, a teacher affirms affiliations and makes distinctions that constitute an important part of his or her professional identity" (Coldron & Smith, 1999, p. 713).

Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) reviewed twelve years (1988-2000) of research on teacher's professional identities. They placed the research contained in the review into three broad categories

1. Studies with a focus on teachers' professional identity formation,
2. studies with a focus on the identification of characteristics of teachers' professional identities, and
3. studies that investigate professional identity as (re)presented in teachers stories. (p. 107)

In addition to these categories, the researchers examined the definition of "identity" used in the studies included in the review. Some studies included no specific definition of "professional identity." Others were very specific. In the first category of studies, "Most of the researchers saw professional identity as an ongoing process of integration of the 'personal' and the 'professional' sides of becoming and being a teacher," (p. 113) regardless of the presence of an explicit definition or which aspects of professional identity were highlighted in the study.

What is found relevant to the profession, especially in light of the many educational changes currently taking place, may conflict with what teachers personally desire and experience as good. Such a conflict can lead to friction in teachers' professional identities in cases in which the 'personal' and the 'professional' are too far removed from each other. (p. 109)

In all three areas of study, context played an important role in professional identity development, though different emphasis is placed on the role of that context in shaping identities.

The authors extracted four important features for identity research from literature in all three areas. First, identity is an “*ongoing process* of interpretation and re-interpretation of experiences” (p. 122). Second, both context and an individual’s interaction with that context are important to understanding professional identity. Third, individuals can have sub-identities linked to different contexts, teaching situations, or stages of career. Fourth, “agency is an important element of professional identity” and “there are various ways in which teachers can exercise agency, depending on the goals they pursue and the sources available for reaching their goals” (p. 122-123).

After this systematic review, Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) offer four problems they feel need to be addressed in future professional identity research. First, researchers should be clear about differences between “identity” and “self.” Specifically, the authors suggest that researchers should explicitly identify whether they are applying modern or postmodern ideas of “self” to their work. Second, studies should examine the “role of educational theory” in the contexts that surround professional identity development. “Educational theories that are part of teachers’ landscape...play a role in professional identity formation” (p. 125). Third, researchers should be explicit as to what counts as “professional” within an identity. As suggestions, the authors offer “ways in which teachers relate to other people...the responsibilities, attitudes, and behaviors they adopt as well as the knowledge they use” (p. 125). Finally, the authors write, “The cognitive and the biographical perspectives on professional identity formation are both

characterized by a narrative research approach” (p. 125). The sociological perspectives that form the context surrounding the cognitive and biographical perspectives might better be studied through observation, case study, or historical research. In the authors’ opinion, all of these types of research are necessary to create more clarity in this area of research.

Samuel and Stephens (2000) offer a practical examination of the relationship between a teacher and teaching context. They examined the student teaching experiences of two student teachers of English in Durban, South Africa. Their case study revealed the central importance of a conflict between the participants’ personal biographies and the pressures placed upon them by both the newly desegregated South African education system and their pupils. The participants’ attempts at resolving the conflicts arising from this context resulted in their adopting a “reconstructivist role” within the school (p. 487). They were “called upon by the school to mediate in situations in which the resident teachers felt unable to interpret the problems that African pupils were having in this new school” (p. 487). As they navigated this new role, they had to reconcile it with their pupils’ conceptions of the role and purpose of a teacher and the pupils’ purposes for learning English, the language of power. Both teachers expressed concern for “sustaining a professional identity that is consistent with the values and beliefs that make them who they are” (p. 488). Ultimately, these teachers placed as much value on work environment as they did economics in choosing where to teach upon completion of their student teaching process. Finding a location where they could develop their careers in a way consistent with their personal philosophies was paramount for these participants.

A similar type of conflict was salient for the women in Robinson's (2010) music education study. Several of his participants cited differences between the competition-based philosophy they saw as prevalent in secondary ensembles and their personal professional philosophies as their reason for choosing elementary general music. Like the South African teachers, these music teachers resolved internal tensions by choosing to work in positions and locations that aligned with their personal philosophies.

Teaching out-of-area can be part of the context in which individual teachers form their professional identities. Through rich qualitative interviews, Hobbs (2012) identified factors that shaped the identities of 18 Australian mathematics and science teachers teaching out of their fields of specialization. The teachers were of varied levels of experience. Other than content knowledge, she found three factors—context, support, and personal factors—that influence whether or not teachers consider themselves to be teaching out-of-field. Hobbs suggests that the ways teachers respond to these factors should be a major point of consideration when deciding whether or not an out-of-field placement is appropriate. She offers an “adaptability scale” (p. 27) on which teachers can be situated to “reflect their level of commitment and their identity in relation to the subject” (p. 27). At one end of the scale are teachers who are “just filling in” and at the other end are teachers who are “pursuing an interest.” In the middle are teachers who are “making the most of it” (p. 27).

Teachers who are ‘just filling in’ have limited or no identity in relation to the subject, possibly because of a history of failure or negative experiences, they can’t relate to it, they lack interest, or lack knowledge of how to teach it. Teachers who are ‘pursuing an interest’ have expanded

their identity to being a teacher of that subject due to a personal interest and high level of self-efficacy arising from positive historical interactions with the subject. Teachers who are ‘making the most of it’ tend to be committed to endeavoring to engage students through interesting, contextualised [*sic*] learning experiences. (p. 27)

Based upon this analysis, Hobbs suggests teachers’ placements on the adaptability scale influence how they engage in professional development in their new fields and how they do or do not come to professionally identify themselves as teachers of a new subject. The large number of cases in this study and the well-supported argument grounded in literature make Hobbs’ findings compelling.

Positionality

We each hold certain positions in society. For example, I am a general music teacher, a wife, a daughter, a mother, a gardener, and a graduate student. These are labels I ascribe to myself but are also labels that others might ascribe to me.

One way we identify ourselves as professionals is through the labels other individuals ascribe to us (Gee, 2000). The identities that we hold for ourselves and the identities others ascribe to us may not be the same. Similarly, the identities we project to others may not be the same as the identities we hold for ourselves. Additionally, the concept of identity is not possible without the presence of some type of *interpretive system* through which a person can recognize herself and be recognized by others as “a certain kind of person” (p.107). In line with this thinking, Gee proposes four identities – N-identities, I-identities, D-identities, and A-identities – and separates them from the concept of “core identity” (p. 111). The difference between the identities is the source of

power that ascribes the identity to an individual. Each of the four identities, in different historical times and in different places, has been foregrounded, but all are interrelated and simultaneously exist. According to Gee, those who are unable to navigate the restraints placed upon them by the labels others assign to them can become the victims of diminished expectations. He suggests that this notion of identity “can be used as an analytic tool for studying important issues of theory and practice in education” (p. 100).

N-identity, or natural identity, is a trait over which an individual has no control, such as being born an identical twin or having a disability, as Gee maintains, “being an identical twin is a *state* that I am in, not anything that I have done or accomplished” (Gee, 2000, p. 101). N-identities hold prevalence in societies with caste systems where the status into which a person is born causes others to see that individual as a “certain kind of person.” They are also identities used to justify atrocities, support discrimination, or assign people to fixed levels in society, such as Plato did in the *Republic*. Those ascribing n-identities to an individual may see nature as the source of the power for their assertions, but “natural identities can only become identities because they are *recognized*” (p. 102) by institutions, through discourse, or through affinity groups. Thus, N-identities are interrelated with the other three forms of identity.

I-identities, or institutional identities, are those where the power of recognition comes from institutions, such as companies, governments, or universities. Gee (2000) uses the *position* of professor as an example of an institutional identity. The position of professor

¹ *Italics* used in this portion of the literature review are Gee’s own.

is not something that nature gave me or anything I could accomplish by myself. The source of my position as a professor—the “power” that determines it or to which I am “subject”—is a set of *authorities* (in this case, the Board of Trustees, the administration of the university, and the senior faculty in my department). In turn, the source of this power is not nature, but an institution. ...The process through which this power works is *authorization*; that is, laws, rules, traditions, or principles of various sorts allow the authorities to “author” the position of professor of education and to “author” its occupant in terms of holding the rights and responsibilities that go with that position. (p. 102)

Gee further clarifies that I-identities can be either a “*calling* or an *imposition*” (p. 103).

The position of professor, for example, is a profession. The person in such a position most often tries to fulfill the duties assigned by the institution to the best of his or her ability. In contrast, the I-identity of “prisoner” may be an imposed I-identity from the prisoner’s point of view. In another example, a physician might see her job as a calling. A nurse who feels she understands her patient’s situation better than the attending physician may feel her lower institutional status as an imposition. Additionally, different people may see the same I-identity as falling on different places in the spectrum. For example, one person may see the I-identity of “juror” as a calling or civic duty while another may see it as an inconvenient imposition of the state.

Among the four “identities,” Gee (2000) suggests that D-identity (discourse identity) is the predominant modernist perspective on identity. D-identities are based upon individual traits recognized by others through interaction and discourse. In Gee’s example, a charismatic person is only charismatic because other people recognize her as

such. In a modern, capitalist society, a person is expected to “work out” (p. 112) his or her identity.

I work out my identity, in the modern sense, by making sense of, or interpreting, what it means to be a man or a woman of a certain sort, a worker or professional of a certain sort, an Anglo-American or African American of a certain sort, or moral, witty, intelligent, or fit for leadership in certain ways and not others. But I cannot make sense of anything or interpret anything without a language or other sort of representational system within which to do so. (p. 112)

In this case, the representational system is discourse and dialogue with other people. D-identities are part of “one’s *individuality*” (p. 103). They are not traits that can be attributed to a natural occurrence or traits bestowed by an institution. “The source of this trait—the ‘power’ that determines it or to which [a charismatic person] is ‘subject’—is the *discourse* or *dialogue* of other people” (p. 103). Just as I-identities can be a “*calling* or *imposition*,” (p. 103), D-identities can be an “*ascription* or an *achievement*” (p. 104). A charismatic person may have such an identity ascribed to her by others, but may or may not seek to achieve that ascription.

D-identities are interrelated with I-identities in that sometimes getting people with institutional power to recognize us as a person with a certain quality can affect our professional trajectories. In other words, actively seeking the label of a given D-identity, such as *creative*, can help one to achieve a desired I-identity. I am seeking the institutional identity of “Doctor of Philosophy” by engaging in dialogue with individuals with the institutional power to grant me that identity.

The fourth identity type is A-identities, or affinity identities. Gee (2000) argues that A-identities are increasingly important in a postmodern world where the tools of communication allow individuals with similar desires, allegiances, or practices to interact. The power in this case comes from “*participation or sharing*” (p. 105). Fans of particular television shows, video games, or authors are examples of affinity groups.

For members of an affinity group, their allegiance is *primarily* to a set of common endeavors or practices and *secondarily* to other people in terms of shared culture or traits. Of course, they need these other people (as well as discourse and dialogue of certain sorts) for these practices to exist, but it is these practices and the experiences they gain from them that create and sustain their allegiance to these other people. A focus on A-Identities is a focus on distinctive social practices that create and sustain group affiliations, rather than on institutions or discourse/dialogue directly. (p. 105)

The general music teacher respondents in Schonauer (2002) might be said to be members of an affinity group. They share common practices in their classrooms, identify professionally with others that carry the same A-identity as them, and indicated that those without that A-identity do not necessarily understand their work.

Finally, Gee distinguishes the concept of “core identity” from the four perspectives on identity he describes.

Each person has had a unique trajectory through "Discourse space." That is, he or she has, through time, in a certain order, had specific experiences within specific Discourses (i.e., been recognized, at a time and place, one

way and not another), some recurring and others not. This trajectory and the person's own narrativization (Mishler, 2000) of it are what constitute his or her (never fully formed or always potentially changing) "core identity." The Discourses are social and historical, but the person's trajectory and narrativization are individual (though an individuality that is fully socially formed and informed). (p. 111)

Gee (2000) is arguing that in the case of each identity we are being assigned or are attempting to achieve a certain position within the discourse space we are navigating. The way we reflect upon our navigation of that space is the story we create for ourselves, and constitutes our "core identity."

Story

Narrative inquiry is a powerful tool for examining teacher identities. "The practice of teaching, on the narrative view, is seen as constructed by teachers as they tell and live stories in their classrooms" (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002, p. 405). The stories of teachers are both individual—reflecting personal values, feelings, and philosophy—and collective, reflecting the larger context where personal stories are constructed.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) are seminal authors in this area (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). They suggest that narrative inquiry is appropriate in educational research because "education is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories; teachers and learners are storytellers and characters in their own and other's stories" (p.2). Because Clandinin and Connelly view story as the way participants make sense of the world and their place in it, they suggest that listening to,

collecting, and interpreting the stories of those in education is essential to understanding “what it means to educate and be educated” (p. 12).

Elbaz-Luwisch (2002) applied the techniques of narrative inquiry in a graduate-level writing class for teachers. As the instructor of the course, she found that by asking teachers to engage with their own stories they “reached new understandings of their personal and professional lives” (p. 424). She suggests that honoring the uniqueness of each teacher through narrative may help to prevent socialization into school culture as it exists and instead help to inspire teachers to honor the diversity of voices within their classes and schools. In this way, the power of narrative comes from its ability to inspire agency.

Narrative research has its roots in feminism and activist research, but it can take many forms and is used in many social science disciplines (Casey, 1995). “What links together all of these lines of inquiry is an interest in the ways that human beings make meaning through language” (p. 212). As time continues to unfold and social conditions change, Casey suggests that “people’s interpretations are continually in flux” and thus the possibilities for narrative research are “practically limitless” (p. 240).

McCarthy (2007) suggests that narrative inquiry is an important “way of knowing” (p. 3) in music education. She specifically outlines six perspectives within music education that can be better understood through narrative inquiry. Among the six perspectives she includes “weaving identities” (p. 5) and “life stories of music teachers” (p. 7). McCarthy uses the metaphor of weaving on a loom to describe the complexity of human interaction with music.

Applying the metaphor of weaving and spinning to engagement with music, it is evident that music and music experience play out on a loom that holds the threads of multiple identities in tension and on which the weaving of life stories takes place. (p. 6).

For music teachers these multiple identities can include an artist identity and a teacher identity and they can exist in harmony or tension. In this way, stories can serve as models for pre-service teachers who may be negotiating similar harmonies or tensions within themselves.

McCarthy (2007) continues by suggesting the narratives of both novice and retired or nearly retired teachers could prove especially valuable for the profession. Such stories could help novice teachers to better understand the world they have entered and to support them in parts of the profession they “have not previously negotiated” (p. 8). Additionally, the narratives of teachers from different “sub-cultures” within music education can help us to better understand the contexts of our profession. “As a subset of general education, music educators have a unique pattern in their genealogy, a set of sub-cultural worlds, each woven around different structures and sets of values. They are the worlds of band, orchestra, chorus, and general music” (p. 8). Narrative inquiry provides an interpretive framework for understanding the variation and richness in music education.

Teacher Identity in Music Education

Identity research in music education has been largely focused on the undergraduate years. Like the general education research cited previously, this research adopts a sociological framework stressing the importance of biography and context in the

development of professional identity. Undergraduate students' biographies influence their professional identity construction and past teachers serve as important models in this process (L'Roy, 1983; Dollof, 1999; Prescesky, 1997). Roberts (2000) examined the conflict between the musician-self and teacher-self among undergraduate music education majors, finding that undergraduate music education majors identify themselves as performers before identifying themselves as teachers. This primary identification as a musician can be disconcerting and confusing for undergraduates as they enter the field (Mark, 1998), where they may find that their education in the Western classical tradition is out-of-line with the demands of public school teaching (Hargreaves, Purves, Welch & Marshall, 2007).

Ballantyne (2005) interviewed 15 practicing music teachers with 1-4 years of experience. She found that an individual's perception of his/her musical performance ability influences how that person identifies him- or herself. Ballantyne identified three professional identities—musician who happens to be teaching, music teacher, and teacher who teaches music. Those students with positive impressions of their musical performance abilities were more likely to place themselves in the first category.

Several recent studies have continued this line of inquiry, examining the tensions of performer and teacher in the professional identities of pre-service music educators. Conway, Eros, Pellegrino and West (2010) used a case study design to investigate the topic among instrumentalists. They organized their findings into three emergent themes. First, the participants in the study perceived "themselves to be 'different' from other music students" (p. 265). In particular, participants perceived the music education degree program to be significantly more work than other degree programs within the school of

music and felt they had to sacrifice time for performing and socialization due to the demands of their degree program. Additionally, participants expressed a belief that their hard work, because it happens mostly off site in the public schools, goes largely unnoticed and unrecognized by the university community. In the second theme of the study, participants “perceived music education as ‘different’ within the music school” (p. 268). This perception included a feeling of stigmatization within their performance studios. The third emergent theme of the study indicated that the relationship between the students’ musician identities and teacher identities “changed throughout the degree program” (p. 270). In particular, an identity shift away from “performer” and toward “teacher” occurred as a result of field experiences. In general, excitement about teaching grew among the participants as they progressed through their program. Additionally, the most important tensions these participants described were not due to “the idea of being a professional performer versus a music teacher” (p. 271). Instead the tensions arose from practical concerns of balancing the amount of work in the music education program with the demands of studio performances. In their most significant finding, Conway and colleagues suggest that the feelings of marginalization these students experience could turn into feelings of isolation, which previous research has shown is a difficulty for in-service music teachers. Isolation can affect teacher retention and may begin earlier than the profession has previously noted.

Haston & Russell (2012) also used case study techniques to study the occupational identity development of five instrumental undergraduate music students over the course of a year-long “critical apprenticeship of observation” (p. 369). They coined this term based upon Lortie’s (1975, as cited in Haston & Russell, 2012)

“apprenticeship of observation”—the personalized concept of teaching that students develop from their years of K-12 schooling. Other researchers (L’Roy, 1983, Roberts, 2000) use the term primary socialization to describe this early period in a future teacher’s life.

In the first of four emergent themes, the students noted “the development of general pedagogical knowledge” (Haston & Russell, p. 375) including increased ability to meet student needs, plan appropriate lessons and assignments, and adapt “on the fly” during lesson delivery. In the second theme, the students demonstrated increased “knowledge of self” (p. 375). The participants became more aware of the “challenges and complexity of teaching” (p. 379). For some this led to increased confidence while others reported increased stress. Haston and Russell’s third emergent theme contradicts some earlier research about tension between musician identity and teacher identity. The participants in this study reported that the skills they learned during their year-long program affected their cognitive processes during individual practice, performance, and chamber rehearsals. Finally, the participants in the study gained new professional perspectives including “an increased willingness to teach within other specializations in music education, elevated career commitment, and greater empathy for other music educators, including their previous teachers” (p. 382). The authors argue this new paradigm, critical apprenticeship of observation, is an important extension of the extant theory, because it offers teacher educators a mechanism with which to take advantage of the primary socialization of their students often thought to be an inhibitor to identity development. (p. 387)

This conclusion, well-grounded in existing theory and supported by the evidence in the study, is a valuable contribution to the education literature and further supports the importance of extended, critical field experiences for pre-service teachers.

Isbell (2008) and Russell (2012) completed quantitative surveys of pre-service and in-service secondary music teachers. Isbell examined the process of occupational identity development in undergraduates using a pilot-tested survey instrument based in previous research. Russell used a similar instrument for in-service teachers. Both studies applied the theory of symbolic interaction—the process of deriving symbolic meanings by interpreting the actions of others and accepting or rejecting those actions for oneself. Russell rightly applied this same working definition in the later study in order “to provide a consistent framework...to build and expand upon extant research...[and] allow a logical comparison of the perceived occupational identity of undergraduate music majors (all majors), undergraduate music education majors, and in-service music educators” (p. 148).

The surveys (Isbell, 2008; Russell, 2012) were designed to identify interactions between teacher and musician identities, but also to examine perceptions of self and perceptions of others within each of those identities. The undergraduate students Isbell surveyed indicated integrated musician identities—agreement between self-perceptions and how they feel others see them. They had less integrated teacher identities. Isbell suggests that this gap between how they perceive themselves as a teacher and the way they perceive others see them can have significant implications for interactions with university supervisors and cooperating teachers. He suggests that video can be an important tool in assisting students with seeing themselves as others see them. In

contrast to the undergraduates, the in-service teachers Russell surveyed indicated more integrated teacher identities than musician identities. This change is an important area for further study. This may be a logical transition but could also contribute to job dissatisfaction if teachers feel musically isolated or unable to continue their personal musical development.

In a longitudinal study, Bladh (2004) and Bouij (1998) followed 169 music students from their initial admission to music education programs for ten years. The researchers asked the same survey question to the respondents in the years 1988 (upon initial entry into music teacher education), 1992, 1995, and 1998:

There can be many different reasons for choosing a particular education.

Try to find a reason below that fits you reasonably well.

A) I'm convinced that a music teacher is what I want to be.

B) I only want to work part-time as a music teacher. I want to devote the rest of my time to my own music-making or other activities.

C) I want the music teacher training for a possible source of income, but primarily, I want to devote myself to my own music-making or other activities.

D) I want the music teacher training because I'm very interested in music. But I probably won't work as a music teacher, as I don't believe I would make a suitable teacher.

E) I'm applying for the music teacher training program because friends of mine who took it told me the program's really good and enjoyable.

(pp. 3-4)

Throughout their undergraduate educations, individuals received feedback from professors and peers as to their musical abilities. Those whose abilities turn out to be less than they anticipated upon entry to the program tended to move from response B or C toward response A in later surveys. Additionally, those who received support for their potential as professional musicians tended to move away from response A and toward B or C on the second survey. The interaction between the musician and teacher roles in shaping identity became more nuanced as a person's career progressed. Some individuals received a "reality check" several years into the teaching profession. For some, that reality meant that teaching became more appealing when compared to the difficulty of making a living as a practicing musician. For others, the "harsh" (p.6) reality was that teaching was more difficult and laborious than they expected. In conducting this longitudinal work, Bladh and Bouij filled an important need within the identity literature.

Bladh's (2004) interpretation of the results focuses upon the effects of teacher training and the realities of the profession, such as low pay, less than acceptable working conditions, and the sometimes itinerant nature of the work. Personal desires and characteristics play little role in his interpretation. Abramo (2009) argues that "limiting discussion of music teacher identity construction to tensions between the musician and teacher identities does not adequately describe the many competing factors that shape teacher's work in the classroom" (p. 244). Rather, teacher identity construction is a very personal process that is complicated by everyday personal and practical demands.

Abramo (2009) studied three instrumental music teachers as they negotiated their personal identities and professional practice. She focused largely on tensions between

traditional conducting/replication practices in instrumental music and her participants' personal preferences for alternative pedagogies. Tensions present in the study included (1) reconciliation of student-centered learning with large class sizes, (2) acceptance of the content of alternative pedagogies given different levels of personal readiness, and (3) the importance of personal problem-solving skills in one's development as pedagogue. Abramo concludes that although all three of her participants faced similar dilemmas as they attempted to adopt alternative pedagogies, each also faced challenges unique to his or her personal background and teaching situation. Therefore, there is no "one picture of the instrumental music teacher, for each teacher will experience various factors, some unpredictable, in their work in the classroom" (p. 244). She suggests that further study among instrumental music teachers applying traditional models as well as study of other types of music teachers is important to deepen understanding of music teacher identity construction.

Conclusion

In summarizing the above literature, a generic portrait of instrumentally-trained general music teachers emerges. First, general music educators who educated as instrumentalists enter music education programs for many of the same reasons as their ensemble-conducting peers, often including some combination of aesthetically pleasing ensemble experiences and an influential musical role model (Madsen & Kelly, 2002; Bergee et al., 2001; Gillespie & Hamann, 1999; Robinson, 2010). Second, there are various reasons why these teachers are in their current positions. Some of these educators make the choice to teach general music for personal, philosophical, or political reasons. Others choose because of a unique experience during their undergraduate

training (Robinson, 2010). Some have no choice but to teach general music because they were unable to obtain an ensemble position or because their job involves teaching both instrumental and general music (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Duling, 1992). Third, general music teachers possess a unique set of skills as determined by researchers (Duling, 1992; Eshelman, 1995) and in the view of the teachers themselves (Brand, 1984; Christensen, 2000; Schonauer, 2002). There is evidence to suggest that undergraduate programs do not adequately develop a general music skills set (Ayers, 2004; Christensen, 2000) and that some graduates of instrumental programs may feel unprepared to teach general music (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Hamann, 2009). Fourth, the development of expertise in general music, like in other educational situations, is context-dependent and requires hundreds or thousands of hours of classroom experience (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Duling, 1992; Eshelman, 1995). Finally, all of these factors create a context for instrumentally-trained general music teachers to make personal choices and resolve moments of conflict. The choices they make project a professional image to others (Gee, 2000). The context and relationships are external factors that must be reconciled with internal feelings and philosophies to create meaning (Rodgers & Scott, 2008). Reflecting upon those meanings through a narrative process can be a source of agency and change in education (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002).

The goal of the current research is to help “color” this portrait with the specific, in-depth personal experiences of six instrumentally-trained general music teachers. In the next chapter, I present a methodology for doing so.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study focused on instrumentalists' perceptions of the challenges they faced when beginning their careers in general music and the ways they have formed their professional identities as general music teachers. Therefore, I adopted a qualitative, case study approach using semi-structured interviews, artifacts, and researcher notes as the major sources of data. I have also employed narrative techniques to the study in an effort to keep the voices of the participants in the forefront of the discussion.

Creswell (2007) describes case study as a qualitative approach with a case or cases situated within a single setting or context and explored “through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* [emphasis in original]” (p. 73). In this study, I have interpreted participants' stories and represented them within the context of a common instrumental background and the general music classroom. I have adopted the format of a multiple-case study. I first present each participant's story. I then present individual analysis and cross-case analysis with emergent themes.

This study also contains important features of narrative research. The theoretical framework and interpretive lens for the study are largely based upon Gee (2000), who suggests that an individual's “core identity” (p. 111) develops through a process of narrativization within a Discourse space. My adoption of Gee's work as an interpretive framework makes the tools of narrative inquiry a logical choice for data interpretation.

The participants in the study have shared personal stories with me—stories of how they became the professionals that they are. In coding their stories, I specifically examined moments of tension and choice in their lives—moments when they made

decisions that impacted their professional trajectories. This study is based upon a unidirectional conceptual framework and the stories the participants shared followed a “chronology of events” (Creswell, 2005, p. 474), a hallmark of narrative design. A second hallmark of a narrative design is to examine not only in the original moments of decision but also in how participants incorporate those moments into their stories when reflecting upon them. In addition to being important features of narrative research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2008), reflection and (re)storying play a role in identity formation (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002). The nature of my questions and the “everyday, normal form of data” (Creswell, 2005, p. 474) I am collecting are well-matched with the tools of narrative analysis.

In this chapter, I first review the conceptual framework and research questions introduced in Chapter 1. I then discuss epistemology and the rationale for my use of a narrative inquiry embedded within the typical framework of a multiple-case study. In the third section, I describe the methodology I used in the study including (a) purposeful maximum variation case selection, (b) consent procedures and confidentiality, (c) researcher positionality and site access, (d) reciprocity, and (e) data collection and interpretation.

Conceptual Framework and Research Questions

In Chapter 1, I outlined a conceptual framework for this study. The framework is based upon literature that stresses the importance of tension and its resolution in shaping identity (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Coldron & Smith, 1999; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Samuel & Stephens, 2000). Throughout their careers, teachers must reconcile external forces with internal desires and meanings (Rodgers & Scott, 2008). This

constant process of becoming is marked by important tensions and moments of decision in the personal histories of these instrumentally-trained general music educators that act as milestones in professional identity development. Examples of these moments include: the choice to major in instrumental music education, the choice to seek and/or accept a professional placement in general music, and situations when these teachers identify themselves to others as general music teachers.

I developed the following questions to guide this investigation.

1. What challenges do instrumentally-trained general music teachers describe when discussing their initial experiences in general music classrooms?
2. How do teachers self-identifying as instrumentally-trained music teachers construct individual/group positionality in the music education profession?
3. If instrumentally-trained music teachers now self-identify as general music teachers how did that change occur?

Epistemology, Narrative Inquiry, and Theoretical Perspectives

A transparent research process is one key to increasing the trustworthiness in all educational research (Koro-Ljungberg, Yendol-Hoppey, Smith, & Hayes, 2009). A good research design is explicit in epistemology and theoretical perspectives, contains well-defined methodology, and aligns appropriately with the questions that drive the investigation (Koro-Ljungberg, et al., 2009; Yin, 2009). Having defined my cases as instrumentally-trained general music teachers in Chapter 1, I move on in this section to outline my epistemology as related to my use of a multiple-case study framework, discuss

my application of narrative techniques within cases, and clarify the theoretical perspective of ‘self’ (Beijaard et al., 2004) that is used in this study.

Epistemology and Methodological Choice

Narrative as an avenue of insight. Narrative inquirers adopt an epistemological perspective that accepts story as the way individuals make sense of experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2008).

Arguments for the development and use of narrative inquiry come out of a view of human experience in which humans, individually and socially, lead storied lives. People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories.

Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which his or her experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. (p. 477)

According to this tradition, identity cannot be separated from story. The development of one’s identity, professional or otherwise, comes through the dual and concurrent processes of living one’s life as it unfolds and reflecting upon that unfolding. Upon reflection and (re)storying, we place value and discover meaning.

This epistemological stance is also reflected within the literature on professional identities. Some identity researchers approach their entire process narratively (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002), using writing samples as well as interviews as important research texts. Others choose a case study process and adopt a post-modern view of identity as context-dependent, focusing on teachers’ interaction with other actors and the social circumstances of their environment (Samuel & Stevens, 2000). A third

approach is to use the framework of multiple-case study and apply narrative tools analysis within cases (Abramo, 2009; Carter, 2008). This third technique is based upon the principle that participants in the case study are storying their lives and making meaning as they engage with the researcher. How they tell their stories is as important a unit of analysis as the content of what they say. As Gee (2000) suggests, teachers project an image to other individuals. The image projected becomes part of an individual's story as he or she tells it to the world, which includes the inquirer.

For this study, I chose the third, blended approach. Narrative inquiries resist a set methodology and can take multiple forms (Casey, 1995; Creswell, 2005). Rather than sharing a specific methodology, narrative inquiries share specific features (Clandinin & Connelly, 2008). Inquirers pay particular attention to the commonplaces of temporality, sociality, and place. They create rigor by planning for and attending to these commonplaces throughout the research process. They accept that there is no finality or limiting truth and that in a different time, under different social circumstances, in a different place, or for alternate purposes, a different text would have resulted from their work. When composing a research text, narrative researchers balance writing for participants, writing for self, and writing for audience. They make explicit connections about the significance of the work within the existing body of literature (Clandinin & Connelly, 2008).

A multiple-case study design with narrative inquiry. Case study design is most appropriately used when the researcher is interested in discovering the context surrounding a situation or people and when the process leading to an outcome, rather than the outcome itself, is the focus of the research (Merriam, 1997). The participants for this

research were chosen specifically because of the present state of their careers—they became general music teachers after initial intentions of teaching instrumental music. Their process of becoming was the focus of the research.

A multiple-case study was particularly well-matched with my second research question where I was seeking to understand the way(s) these teachers position themselves within the music education community. The cross-case analysis typical of a multiple-case study was an effective structure for answering this question.

Within the individual cases, the lines between case study and narrative paradigms intersected in important ways. This research was designed to examine in-depth the present circumstance of a group of individuals by garnering explanations from personal accounts (Yin, 2009) with the support of artifacts such as transcripts, curriculum documents from universities, and personal notebooks. However, past decisions and actions have helped to shape present circumstance. Biography was the primary source of qualitative data for the study and the relationship between these individuals' instrumental training and their chosen career path is a fundamental aspect of the questions driving the investigation. Because of this, I felt it important to try to keep the voices of the participants paramount within the study. I have done this by presenting their stories in their voices, in the narrative tradition, before engaging in individual and cross-case analysis.

Clarity of Theoretical Perspectives

One criticism Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) offer regarding professional identity research is its lack of clarity when defining differences between 'identity' and self.' They call on researchers to specifically identify whether they are adopting a

modernist or post-modern perspective on identity. This study adopts a post-modern concept of ‘self,’ which Beijaard et al. define as “strongly related to how people organize their experiences in stories, which may differ in time and depend on context” (p. 124). The participants in this study have shared of themselves through stories. The way they shared those stories was influenced by their past experiences and the contexts in which those experiences occurred. The modernist view is not absent from the study, however. Gee (2000) suggests that in different times and within different contexts, different perspectives on identity are foregrounded. He also writes that *discursive* or D-Identities are especially prevalent when navigating an employment system where individual traits are so highly valued. So, while this study adopts a post-modern perspective of ‘self’ as related to story, it also examines the interrelationship between the post-modern self and an external context that sometimes foregrounds a modernist perspective.

Pilot Research

In preparation for this larger study, I conducted pilot research with two general music teachers, one who primarily had an instrumental focus in her undergraduate education and one who had broader training in both instrumental and vocal methods. “Grace” was an oboist. “Joanie” was a pianist with a choral background. At the time, Grace and Joanie were employed in the same county-wide school system as I was and volunteered to participate in response to an email I sent to my colleagues. I specifically chose Grace and Joanie because they were at different points in their careers and in developing my conceptual framework, I wanted to investigate whether some of the same ideas emerged from participants of different ages. Additionally, I was considering whether to conduct this case study only among instrumentally-trained general music

teachers or to include both instrumentally and chorally-trained teachers in the larger study.

Similar to findings in the literature, Grace and Joanie both chose music education mostly due to the influence of a high school mentor. Each exited her undergraduate degree seeking a job at the secondary level. Due to their ages and the context surrounding their entry to the job market, their reasons for choosing elementary music differed. Grace felt the effect of a “glass ceiling.” As she tells her story,

At that point in 1977 in the state of [southern state omitted], there were no women in high school bands and middle school was just beginning to evolve and middle school positions were few and far between and they were hiring women for those, but the women that they were hiring were older and better qualified. (interview, October 22, 2009)

In another case, she applied for a position after the band director to whom she was an assistant retired. “The band boosters actually went to the board on my behalf and the superintendent told the band boosters that as long as he was superintendent, there would not be a female high school band director” (interview, October 22, 2009). I added external and internal influences of gender to the second circle of the conceptual framework as a result of my interactions with Grace.

In contrast, Joanie accepted a general music position because she feared if she did not accept the position, she would not get another one.

When I was looking for a job, they offered me three or four interviews within one week. It was like...nothing...nothing...nothing, and I’m panicking, and then it’s July and all of a sudden I get four, and this was the

first interview I had. They called me back the next day and said, “Do you want the job?” I was like, I want a job so I’m going to say yes because you never know what’s going to happen. (interview, November², 2009)

Though the women’s’ reasons for accepting general music positions were different, they shared the common factor of economics. As Grace put it when asked why she accepted a general music position, “That’s easy, I wanted to eat.” (interview, October 22, 2009) This theme in Grace and Joanie’s stories is similar to some of the participants in Anderson-Nickel’s (1997) study who felt they had no choice but to accept a full-time or part-time general music position.

Additional ideas from Grace’s and Joanie’s experiences were (a) a belief in professional development as an internal process occurring mostly by gathering ideas from printed resources or colleagues and making them work for an individual classroom or an individual teacher’s style and (b) a connection between the teacher’s background and the choices she makes regarding which topics to cover and at what depth. The role of professional development and the connection between a teacher’s background and curricular choices are both topics for a study in their own right and leave me with a lifetime of possibilities for research. I decided to focus, at this time, on the transitional experience from would-be-conductor to general music teacher and to focus only on instrumentally-trained general music teachers.

² Due to a failure in the metadata of my digital recorder, I am unable to pinpoint the date of this interview beyond the first week of November, 2009.

Learning from Pilot Research

Joanie and Grace each described very personal ways they found a niche in general music. Joanie discussed helping children to develop a lifelong connection with music through notational literacy. Grace talked about passing a legacy. “Do not mourn for me,” she said, “I am in the songs children sing on the playground” (interview, October 22, 2009). I went into the pilot research intending to investigate why they chose general music but realized during the process of our interviews that the process of becoming only *began* with choosing general music and that they were transforming as individuals after making that choice. My experiences with Joanie and Grace inspired me to investigate the teacher identity literature and to frame my research questions based upon that literature. Beyond helping me to develop a conceptual framework for the current study, the pilot interviews also allowed me to hone my interviewing skills and to practice data coding and interpretation processes.

Case Selection

This multiple-case study requires purposeful sampling (Yin, 1994). My participants are individuals whose backgrounds and current teaching positions illustrate the central issue (Creswell, 2007) of instrumentally-trained music educators who teach general music. All were chosen because they teach elementary general music and have an instrumental education background that may contribute valuable insights into the phenomenon being studied (Yin, 1994). Rachel and Carina were colleagues of mine and responded to an approved mass email calling for participants which I sent using the district email system. I met Maurice, Lynn, and Annie through key informants—professors at mid-sized to large public universities. I met Alex by chance. Late one

evening, I was sitting at home working on my dissertation with the television on in the background. Alex appeared on a television show on which the announcer mentioned that he was an elementary music teacher and mentioned the name of his school district. The show also contained a clip of him playing the trumpet. I looked up his name on his school system's website and composed an email introducing myself and describing my research project (Appendix A). He agreed to participate.

Data were collected from six participants because this number provided the opportunity to observe replicated phenomena as well as sufficient numbers for contrasting conditions to emerge (Yin, 1994). In an effort to increase the likelihood of contrasting conditions, I applied "maximum variation" case selection, which Flyvbjerg (2006) suggests should be used "to obtain information about the significance of various circumstances for case process and outcome" (p. 230). Weiss calls this type of sampling an "attempt to maximize range" (1994/2008, Chapter 2, Panels and Samples, Samples that Attempt to Maximize Range, para. 2, Kindle location 514).

I personally knew Carina and Rachel before this study, but I did not know that they were instrumentally-trained general music teachers until they responded to a mass-email that I sent requesting participation in the study. Both of these individuals are female, work in the Mid-Atlantic, and are from the Mid-Atlantic. They differ in that they attended different types of universities (Carina a mid-sized public university and Rachel to a small liberal arts college) and are at different points in their careers (Carina is 31 and has 9 years of teaching experience and Rachel is 38 with 15 years experience). Carina plays the French horn. Rachel plays the clarinet.

In an effort to find participants with differing personal circumstances, I contacted several key informants who were instrumental in helping me to recruit additional participants. Maurice is a clarinetist and attended a large public university. He is male and a first year teacher 24 years of age. He has remained close to his home during his schooling and teaching. Lynn is a 51-year-old female and received her undergraduate education and masters in clarinet performance from a conservatory. She made a mid-career change to general music after 12 years of instrumental instruction. Her studio grew from 6 to 170 students and she eventually sold it to pursue her PhD. Like Lynn, Alex made a transition to general music in part because of experiences teaching early childhood music. He is a male in his mid-twenties, a trumpet player, and from the upper-Midwest, but moved for family reasons to the east coast where he is a fourth-year teacher. Annie is a 27-year-old, third-year teacher in a Gulf state. She was a clarinet player at a mid-sized public university in the Midwest and moved after many attempts to gain employment across the United States.

Consent Procedures and Confidentiality

Each participant was given a consent form in accordance with the University of Maryland's Institutional Review Board requirements (Appendix B). I explained the framework for the study to each participant and discussed that the types of data I might collect could include (a) artifacts such as lesson plans, syllabi, or transcripts, (b) interviews, or (c) personal essays. We also discussed the time commitments involved in the study. I requested permission for audio recording and we discussed the discomfort that can sometimes surface when telling personal stories. Participants were made aware of how the data would be used and I assured them that I would maintain the

confidentiality of their identities and the identities of people and places in their stories through the use of pseudonyms. Each participant was made aware that he or she could leave the study at any time without consequence.

Researcher Positionality and Site Access

I was in an instrumental “track” in my undergraduate education, but elected to take some choral training, including choral conducting. Both instrumental and vocal majors were required to take elementary general methods at my undergraduate institution. This makes me dissimilar from Annie and similar to Alex, Lynn, and Rachel. Maurice and Carina both received training at undergraduate institutions that did not “track” students as instrumental or vocal education majors. Maurice and Carina were categorized as instrumentalists for the purposes of this study because their performing instruments during their undergraduate years were clarinet and French horn, respectively. The breadth of their undergraduate educations makes them dissimilar from me and from the other participants. Like all of my participants, however, I intended to teach high school instrumental music. Similar to Maurice, Carina, and Alex, I made the transition to general music during my general music methods class.

My background has affected the way I have framed the central phenomena in the study, the research questions I have chosen, my relationship with the participants, and the ways I have interpreted the emergent themes in this study (Creswell, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). In addition to an educational background that has some similarities with my participants, I am a general music teacher. Some of the participants in the study were my teaching colleagues. This relationship afforded me access to the interview sites and may give me “insider” status with Rachel and Carina. This status could have had any

number of effects. Rachel and Carina may have been more candid with their answers than some of the other participants because we had a personal relationship, although the depth of data given by other participants does not support this conclusion. Additionally, Rachel and Carina may have been trying to give me answers they believed would be helpful to me, contributing to the success of a colleague.

Among the participants whom I did not know personally before this study, knowing that I have had similar experiences and that I am truly interested in capturing their voices as instrumentally-trained general music teachers may have afforded a high level of trust and candid responses. On the other hand, they replied affirmatively to my email, while some others did not reply at all. They wanted to share their stories and to contribute to the project. This desire to contribute could have focused their attention on what they perceived to be the negative or challenging aspects of their stories rather than the positive. The desire to contribute may also have led them to answer questions in a way they thought they were “supposed” to. In cases where I believed a participant may have been doing so, I have noted as such.

As the researcher, I am choosing to adopt a narrative approach to the data, keeping the teachers’ voices paramount within the text and positioning myself within the analysis as transparently as possible. The story of each participant begins with background information. Within that background information, I make my best effort to be transparent about the relationship I developed with each participant and my thoughts about our research experience.

Reciprocity

I began case selection for this study by sending a mass-email to the general music teachers in the county school system where I was employed. The teachers who replied, including the two in the pilot study, demonstrated a genuine excitement for sharing their stories. One pilot participant, Grace, insisted on buying me a drink after our interview, despite my protests that she was doing me a favor and I should be paying. During our time at the bar, she spoke about the experience of our interview, stating that it had her “waxing nostalgic” and put her in a mood of reflecting on her career and her practice. Her sentiment aligns with recent trends in teacher identity research where participants report enhanced self-knowing as a benefit of participation in the inquiry (Casey, 1995; Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002). While reconstructing their stories for me, the participants made new connections about the places, circumstances, and people that have shaped their careers. The growth that can come from this process is an intrinsic form of reciprocity for the participants.

The literature that supports my conceptual framework for the study suggests that instrumentally-trained teachers may feel a deficiency in some skills they view as important for general music teaching (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Christensen, 2000). As I got to know these teachers, I listened for times when they expressed a need or desire for better resources. As an extrinsic form of reciprocity, I purchased a music education resource text for each of them, based upon what they identified as an area of interest or struggle. The purchased texts are listed in Appendix C.

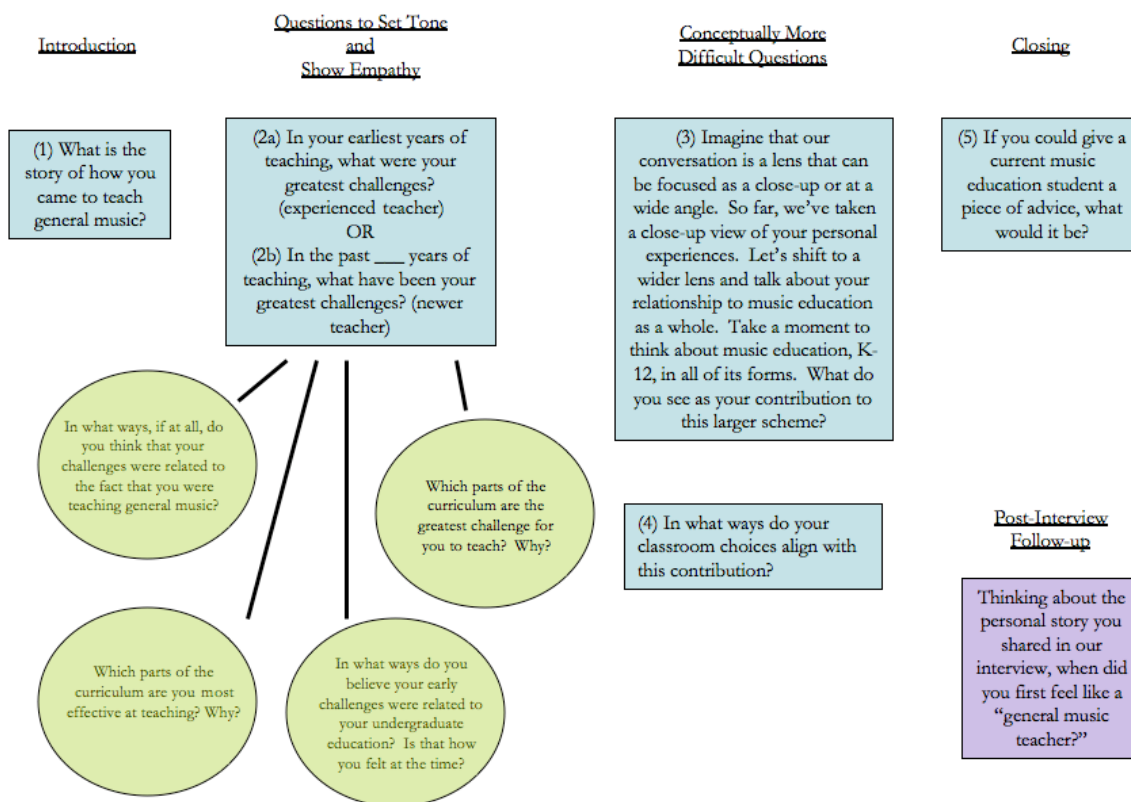
Data Collection

Initial data collection took the form of a questionnaire designed to gather basic background information from each participant (Appendix D). I coded these questionnaires to further refine questions for biographical interviews, which were the primary data collection technique. The questionnaires focused on basic information such as where participants received their undergraduate degrees, whether or not they had a required general music methods class, and the length of their teaching careers. Getting this information ahead of our personal meeting enabled me to get to know each of them better and allowed us to make the best use of our interview time with more in-depth questions. Additional sources of data included undergraduate transcripts, coursework advisement outlines from undergraduate institutions, participant follow-up essays, institutional websites, and researcher memos.

I conducted personal interviews using a semi-structured process outlined by Rubin and Rubin (2012). They suggest four stages for a “responsive interview” (p. 107). These include an introduction, questions to set the tone of the interview and show empathy, conceptually more difficult questions, and closing questions. Figure 2 shows a flowchart of the responsive interview process I developed. The use of these stages is designed to facilitate comfort and candor among participants. The process is designed to assist the researcher in obtaining “material that has depth and detail and is nuanced and rich with vivid thematic material” (p. 101).

Figure 2

Flowchart of Responsive Interview Process (Rubin & Rubin, 2012)



Limitations

Epistemological, methodological, and intellectual rigor are important hallmarks of high-quality qualitative research (Diniz-Pereira, 2008). In the tradition of narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 2008), these stories are not intended to be generalizable and do not aspire to an objective standard of revealing a Truth from the past (Barbre, 1989). Butt, Raymond, McCue and Yamagishi (2003) note that the "effect of any aberration, in the way that teachers see their own knowledge, is less important if one recalls that teachers think and behave *as if it were true* (emphasis in original)" (p. 94). The individuals who participated in this inquiry have made decisions in their lives not

based upon any particular Truth, but rather based upon the truth of the situation as they interpreted it in the moment. In this document I have worked with the participants to (re)present the truth from their points of view.

By adopting a narrative perspective for this investigation, I have limited the ways data are collected and analyzed. Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) suggest “the cognitive and the biographical perspectives on professional identity formation are both characterized by a narrative research approach” (p. 125). This leaves absent a sociological perspective that could be better investigated through observational case studies or historical research. Although this study adopts a case study format and artifacts such as notebooks, coursework advisement sheets, school system websites, and transcripts were used in case analysis, the primary data source was the semi-structured interviews. The teachers’ interactions with the contexts around them are presented only from the participants’ point of view. By choosing a biographical rather than sociological lens, I have limited the possible outcomes of the study.

Trustworthiness

The main sources of data triangulation for this study were participant interviews and written recollections. I was also able to triangulate by examining school district websites to obtain demographic information. In the cases of recent college graduates, I examined the websites of undergraduate institutions for coursework sequence and program structure information. Some participants were able to provide syllabi or notebooks from undergraduate methods coursework or transcripts that I used for corroboration (Creswell, 2005). Other participants no longer had their undergraduate materials or did not have a general methods class and therefore did not have a notebook.

A limitation of the study is that not all participants were able to provide the same types of documentation.

I used member checking procedures throughout the study to help ensure that the interpretations are “fair and representative” (Creswell, 2005, p. 252). In the initial interviews I used on-the-spot member checking by letting the participants know what I heard and allowing them to clarify. After coding initial transcripts, I conducted follow-up interviews and engaged with participants in written correspondence to clarify questions or interpretations of the data. Finally, each participant had the opportunity to review his or her narrative and case interpretation and make revisions.

Data Interpretation

I coded the interviews following a process outlined by Coffey and Atkinson (1996). I first read the transcripts to re-familiarize myself with what each participant communicated over the course of the six months. Along the way, I made corrections to the transcriptions, which were completed by a service that specializes in transcribing meetings and interviews. I then re-read the transcripts and added “simple, broad analytic categories or codes that can be used to reduce the data to manageable proportions” (p. 28). I used the comment feature of Microsoft Word to insert the codes along the right margin of the transcriptions. In some cases the words of the codes came directly from what the participants said. Other codes came from the conceptual framework and were based upon existing literature. Such codes were most often attached to examples from the participants of external factors or internal processes present in the conceptual framework. Still others came from the research questions that guided the investigation.

After this initial round of coding, I transformed the data by decontextualizing and recontextualizing it. I separated sections of text from their original contexts while maintaining large enough chunks to retain meaning (Tesch, 1990; Merriam, 1998). Using the copy and paste feature of Microsoft Word, I recontextualized these chunks by placing each quotation into a “pool of meaning” (Tesch, 1990, p. 118) to which it belonged. I say “a pool of meaning” rather than “the pool of meaning” because chunks of text can be placed in different pools of meaning depending upon how the text is being [re]contextualized. In some cases I placed chunks of text into two pools or chose one pool over another. For example, Rachel talked about the investment she has made in professional development for teaching general music. This investment helps her to provide a quality experience for children (one pool of meaning) and also acts as a reason for her to remain in general music rather than returning to instrumental instruction (a second pool of meaning).

As a third step, I assembled the quotations, now grouped in pools, into narratives. The pools of quotations facilitated narrative construction because ideas expressed in different parts of the interviews but on similar topics or about similar circumstances in an individual’s life were co-located in my workflow. I ordered the pools of meaning into largely chronological stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In some cases, I allowed for deviation from a strictly chronological telling based upon the particular details of a participant’s story. This occurred most often when a participant related an anecdote directly to a particular aspect in the past. In these cases, the anecdote and the past context are presented in the same part of the narrative because there is meaning in the anecdote, in the past context, and in the connection between the two. Severing the connection

would not allow the anecdote or the past event to retain its full meaning (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

In this study, I have turned to narrative techniques because they are so closely linked with “core identity” (Gee, 2000). In line with this, I have chosen to present the individual narratives in the first person. I felt this was important to illuminate the intricacies and nuances of each individual’s trajectory. The use of this narrative process also helped to illuminate features of the data that I might otherwise have missed. I asked them to *story* their lives for me and to take me on a journey with them as they re-examined their professional paths. Together, we examined events in their pasts as well as the ways they made meaning of those events during our research process. I coded not only for themes in *what* they said but also *how* and *why* they said it. Engaging in this narrative process encouraged a richer coding process with attention to issues of time, sociality, and place. These are key aspects of identity formation (Rodgers & Scott, 2008), features of good narrative research (Connelly & Clandinin, 2008), and helped me to build a strong foundation for case study analysis.

Following data collection and interpretation, I returned to the participants for member checking and clarification. I sent each his or her narrative. In some cases, I asked a participant to write an essay about a particular event or detail about which I hoped to gain more insight. In other cases, I conducted a second interview. I incorporated this second round of data into my (re)storying process and returned the final research texts and case analysis to the participants for review and feedback.

Finally, I performed cross-case analysis in order to address factors that appeared as common elements in identity formation among multiple participants. It is, of course,

disingenuous to say that I only performed cross-case analysis following the previous processes I have outlined, as such a linear process is not germane to qualitative analysis (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Instead, it was a process of constant comparison (Merriam, 1998) during which I noted commonalities, themes, and ideas in researcher memos as I constructed narratives and individual analysis. I returned to those memos during cross-case analysis. I also maintained a spreadsheet of codes and themes from individual analysis as a means of tracking those themes that appeared multiple times across participant narratives.

Chapter IV

PARTICIPANTS' STORIES

Narrative research is an appropriate qualitative research tool when the investigation focuses on the intricacies of individual lives. I have chosen to present these teachers lives in narrative form in order to keep their voices paramount in this study. For these individuals, teaching their professional identity but it is also an integral part of their personal identities. The decisions they have made have had ramifications in their lives beyond the professional setting. By presenting their stories individually, in their voices, I offer rich descriptions designed to be relatable to the readers of this work.

Each participant's narrative has been restoried (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) "into a chronological presentation" (Creswell, Hanson, Clark & Morales, 2007). The stories were assembled based upon "pools of meaning" (Tesch, 1990). For example, if a participant talked about a particular challenge and then related that challenge to a certain aspect in his or her past, I have placed the background information and the description of the challenge in the same portion of the narrative. These pools of meaning, at times, interrupt a strictly chronological flow of the narratives.

For each narrative, I first introduce the individual from my perspective. I discuss how and where we met and the impressions I gathered during our initial interview. I then present each participant's story in a first-person narrative, which each individual reviewed, approved, and in the cases of Lynn and Carina, edited.

Rachel's Story

When I met Rachel in her classroom after school, she was finishing some email from her teaching day and simultaneously fielding calls from her mother-in-law, who was

at home with her daughter and her son. She'd ensured the availability of childcare in order to share her story, which I took as evidence of her valuing the research project. Rachel showed enthusiasm even during our initial email contact, writing, "If I can help, I am happy to do so." When I arrived, she greeted me with smiles and was open from the very beginning. After our introductory dialogue about her hometown she took my first question and ran with it, speaking for a full five minutes with only three small clarifying interjections from me. Throughout our interview her answers came freely and she seemed pleased to share her experiences.

Rachel's story is one of finding happiness by balancing home and career. As she told her story, there were tinges of professional regret, but also optimism and contentment in the choices she has made. She has been teaching general music in the public schools in a Mid-Atlantic state for 13 years. She made the transition to general music after two years of teaching 4th-8th grade band in the schools of the local Catholic Diocese. Her narrative is in seven parts: entering teaching, coming to general music, challenges, coping with challenges, thoughts of returning to instrumental, reasons to stay or go, and teaching philosophy.

Entering Teaching

I was in the Catholic Schools for two years. The name of the company was the Diocesan Music Program. It contracted band teachers to the Catholic schools. I would go to a different school every day of the week—on Monday I was at Our Lady of Lourdes, on Tuesday I was at Saint Bartholomew's, and so on and so forth. Throughout the day I would teach half-hour lessons on a rotating schedule, so if I taught you at eight o'clock this week, next week I'll see you at eight thirty. After school we had seventh and eighth

grade band together. At Christmas and in the spring it was challenging because I had to do six concerts in December and six concerts in May. It was good; the company paid well, better than the Catholic schools did.

The first year I lived with my parents and when I got married we moved an hour away but I still commuted to the city. The school I worked at on Fridays was a two hour drive in the morning and, if I was lucky, two hours on Friday afternoon depending upon the traffic. After that second year is when I realized "I need to get something closer to home."

Coming to General Music

I had all intentions of waltzing into any interview and getting the job. I interviewed at a local middle school. It was the only interview that I ever had, that I didn't get the job, and I was shocked. "What do you mean I didn't get the job?" I was naive and just thought that the world was waiting at my door. Then it was July and I had planned to go back to the Diocese again that following year when I interviewed for a nearby High School position. I was offered the job but the program at the time was just a disaster. It scared me. I just didn't feel prepared to take it on. They called me from human resources and said, "We know you're looking for an instrumental position, but we have a K-5 vocal." I honestly only went to the interview for interview experience. I had no intentions of taking the job. I remember the principal at the time, she said to me, "I'm not supposed to do this, but I'm offering you the job right here on the spot. You have to wait to hear from human resources, but I really would love for you to come and work for us." I went home and thought, at least if I take the job I don't have to commute. I can do general music, right? I can figure this out.

Challenges

When I came out of school, I felt much more prepared to do instrumental. I specifically remember just one course that touched on the pedagogies -- the Dalcroze, Orff, Kodaly, Gordon pedagogies, methods, that sort of thing. I specifically remember taking recorder and autoharp, and ukulele too, all within that class. I took one semester of vocal lessons in college and I had to take a vocal assessment to pass it. I remember singing a piece from *Les Misérables*. My student teaching included a full six weeks of teaching exactly what I do now -- general vocal music, K through five.

Still, very early on, I had no idea what to do with some of the things in the general music curriculum. I had to teach myself before I could teach the kids. I had no idea how to teach movement to students because in instrumental music, we sit in chairs with instruments in our hands to play music. I spent three hours every Sunday at school, planning my lessons for the week and just sitting there scouring books, resources, and trying to figure out what to do with these kids. I relied very heavily on the teacher's manuals of the textbooks that we had. They were dinosaurs that were probably 15 to 20 years old when I was using them, but that's what I had to go by. There was no curriculum mapping at that time. So, I just looked at the curriculum and picked something and looked at the manual to figure it out. My first couple of years, I literally just pulled things out of the curriculum. It made no sense. Nothing blended into the next thing. It was like, "This week we're going to do rhythm, next week we're going to do pitch." There was no sense to it whatsoever. Those first couple of years was just a total mess now that I think back on it.

I didn't know what a bourdon was. I didn't know what Orff was, even though I know I had training on it. I remember hearing about it but it wasn't in depth at all and obviously, when I went to teach it, I didn't know what it was. I remember my mentor had given me her sequence or lesson plan and it said, "Orff," and I thought, "What does that mean? I have no idea what that is!" And then I found out that it had to do with these barred instruments. "OK, instruments, I can do this!"

I also felt like I was talking to the kids way above their levels. I had just come from college. Then, I went into instrumental music where we talked a lot about theory and scales and circle of fifths and chords and those things. When I got down to the elementary level was still talking about those things and the kids were just glazed over.

Curriculum integration was challenging for me because I wasn't prepared to teach those things. I needed songs for Japan, or Germany, or the Civil War and I had no idea what I was doing. That was actually still at the birth of the Internet, so it wasn't even easily accessible for me to research that stuff online. I still had to go to the library.

Coping with Challenges

I found myself feeling embarrassed, having to call my mentor and admit that I needed help or that I didn't know something. I felt like, "I'm certified in this, I should know what I'm doing. I can't possibly admit to another teacher that I don't know what I'm doing." Sometimes, if I'm being honest, I just wouldn't teach certain topics because I just didn't know what I was doing. It just didn't get taught. "Well, maybe next year I'll figure that out!" Those poor kids were robbed.

When I started teaching elementary vocal music, I drew a lot from my experience of instrumental music because it would frustrate me what the students didn't know. I

would spend so much time trying to teach my instrumental students, “This is a quarter note, this is worth one beat.” I was almost teaching my general music students just to prepare them for band, so that the band teacher would be able to start teaching the mechanics of the instrument and musicality as opposed to the nuts and bolts of things that they should have learned in general music. That's the way I really focused in on rhythm, reading pitch, dynamics, tempo, and those performance pieces. I really was preparing these students for band. Anything that has to do with instrumental music, I could teach.

I have continued to find ways to teach these concepts to pretty much any grade level. I love to teach conducting and reading a score to my older students. I'm very comfortable with creating instrumental ensembles using Orff and rhythm instruments, and from K to 2, movement is no problem whatsoever. Some teachers are petrified to teach instruments of the orchestra, but I can spend six weeks teaching orchestra to third graders because that's my thing. I'll bring in all of the instruments and demonstrate them and so forth. Even now, it seems I'm still preparing them for band even though I know they won't necessarily join.

It's funny, because I still don't think I'm a vocalist of any quality. I can hear good vocal technique in an audition, it but I can't teach it very well. When people compliment me on my voice now I think, "Ha ha, very funny," because I don't consider myself a vocalist at all. When I first started out, I had to have a recording to sing with when I was teaching the children, and now that's not the case. Now, I can sing on my own and get a pitch off the piano and go with it, but it wasn't always that way. I don't do a whole lot with vocal technique. In chorus, I'll teach them vocal techniques, but I don't do a lot with the in-class students. With the younger students, I'll do a lot with matching pitch, but not

a lot with enunciation and breathing. We'll talk about it, but I don't know really a lot about what I'm talking about—sit up straight and tall so you can breathe right, bring it into your stomach, into your lungs, don't breathe into your shoulders, that stuff—I'm kind of faking it, I guess, a little bit. In all honesty, between you, me, and the recorder here, I do it because I have to do it, not because I love choral music. I dislike the process of teaching vocal techniques. I just don't enjoy it at all. The one part I really enjoy is doing the concert. Those 30 minutes where I get to put those kids up on a stage and make something out of it, that's the part that I enjoy.

Thoughts of Returning to Instrumental

When I go and see a really good instrumental performance, and I watch the conductor, I miss it. I miss the excitement of being up there in front of the group and creating music, and being expressive. I get excited and I come home, and I'm just kind of really jazzed for a while after that. And that always gets me thinking, “Maybe I should be doing instrumental.” It doesn't even have to be with school, if I just see a live performance somewhere and I see a really good conductor, it really is like, gosh, I miss that, because I don't get that here. I've always done chorus, and it's not the same to me. There is definitely something about the band teachers that I hold them up on this pedestal and I think that they're so lucky that they get to do what they do. If I can just geek out for a minute, I look at them and I think, "Wow! That's so cool!"

It's funny because after 13 years, I still think of myself as an instrumental teacher. I still think I'm just hanging out here until something better comes along. It's terrible to say, but it's kind of true. I did look at the transfer list, and there were middle school and high school positions available for years and years and years, and the elementary

positions just didn't come open. I'd had the instrumental position in the Catholic schools from grades four through eight, and then I had an elementary general position. I realized that I was much more comfortable with the elementary kids than I was with the middle school-aged kids. Honestly, I don't think elementary instrumental positions started to become available again until last year. That definitely played into my decision-making. If an elementary position had become available earlier, I think that I would have probably jumped on it.

Reasons to Stay or Go

There was one instrumental position over the years that I considered. I had just had my daughter. I was full into the mommy-mode and I was part-time. I thought long and hard about it because the position was local to my home. It was the dream job, but I had just had my daughter and it was where I was in life. I remember thinking, "This is one of those decisions that you're going to look back on it and it's going to be a huge turning point for you. Either you take it and you give up a lot as a mom, but you gain a lot for your career, or you take the mommy path and you do that for a couple years, and that kind of opportunity may never come up again." So far, it hasn't.

Just this year, my supervisor put that carrot out there and asked me, "Do you want an instrumental position?" And I said, "No, I don't." I don't know, what does that mean? I'm not sure. There's a possibility that I'll do this the rest of my career and I do think there's a very good possibility that I would leave to go back to instrumental music. I just think it depends on if the right position became available. I think in some respects it's just not worth it to start all over again if it's not for a position that I'm going to be really comfortable with.

I feel like I'm committed to this now. The majority of my graduate work was in general music. It would have to be a really good opportunity for me to leave it. I love this school. I love the administration. I love my teaching partner. I love the kids. If an elementary instrumental position was close to home and with people I know I would enjoy working with, I might consider it, but unless it's that perfect storm of things then I'll probably stick with this.

Teaching Philosophy

I think one of the things that holds me back from going into instrumental music is I really like getting to know the kids. I get to see them year after year. A lot of times I say that I'm more a teacher of life than I am of music. If something happens in one of my classes and we get off topic and we can sit there and talk for a majority of the lesson, but we get a life lesson out of it, then I'm okay with that. I enjoy getting to know the kids on the individual basis. I like knowing about their families and their cultures and what their life is like, what's important to them. I love sharing stories about my own family and my own experiences with them. And that has nothing to do with music. I feel like in some respects I'm a blast from the past because I'm not all about the next assessment. I still teach in a way where we're going to have fun and experience it. If they hate music and it's not their thing, I hope that they would be able to look back and say, "That was one teacher that really actually cared about me. She really wanted to know what my dog's name was or when I had a bad day she was there to listen to me." I feel like you can't get that when you're teaching instrumental music, because it's such a quick turnover of 30 minutes, get them in, get the instrument out, teach them, and send them on their way.

I have had parents and students come back to me and say that their child never went on to play a band instrument or be a singer, but I taught them to love music. One thing I always love is they say they had fun in my class. That really means something to me, especially in today's day and age where there are so many rigors and assessments. They will learn something in my classroom; but, I see my classroom as a place where they can breathe for a little while and enjoy education. I think at the very least I've prepared those students that want to go on and be musicians in a higher way and hopefully for those who don't that they just had fun and enjoy music.

I literally took a general music position with intentions of just doing it for a year, but I don't know what really happened. I don't know why I stuck with it. I just did. I honestly look at it as I'm really fortunate because no matter what I'm doing, I'm enjoying it and I'm nurturing something in myself. There's something about whatever I'm doing that I like.

Annie's Story

I was introduced to Annie through a key informant. She was comfortable with our process right away. When we first met via Skype at 8 pm EDT she was wearing her pajamas and bathrobe, ready to retire for the evening because the elementary school teachers in her district report at 7:45am. Although at first I wondered if Annie's attire was indicative of a dismissive attitude toward our meeting, I soon realized that it was instead a sign of her personal comfort with our topic of discussion and of her professional preparedness.

Annie wanted to share her story. She was "terrified" (interview, May 1, 2012) when she took her job, feeling ill-prepared by her undergraduate education. She valued

the opportunity to tell her story in a way that may reach some others and help them avoid the pitfalls she has experienced. She also has an attitude to be “the best that I [can] be at everything” she does. She was prepared for our meeting to absorb her evening’s activities and was already dressed for bed because she wanted to be prepared for school the next day with a good night’s sleep.

Annie is one of the spunkiest and most adventurous people I have encountered. She left everything she knew in her Midwestern upbringing to take a general music job on the Gulf Coast. Over the course of our interview, she revealed her sense of adventure by telling stories about the new animals she is encountering in her new home.

There’s all kinds of weird things. The first time I saw a dolphin, I about freaked out. Look at the Dolphin! It was apparently unsurprising to everyone around me. There’s all kinds of things out there. There’s jellyfish. There are sharks! I actually got a notice from my apartment complex that we have an alligator hanging out by the side of the buildings and please don’t feed it. An alligator? Are you serious? Is it going to bite? Is it going to come out of its nest or whatever it is hiding in? Creepy.
(interview, May 1, 2012)

Annie described herself, to use her words, as “a bit of a handful” (interview, May 1, 2012). I would instead describe her as straightforward in a way that could be misinterpreted as overly-assertive. Spurred by a sense of economic need, she is facing head-on her struggles with classroom management and personal fears of inadequacy with the general music content. Her story is one of a young person who struggled to “fit-in” during her developmental years. Now, she is trying to find her “fit” in music education.

Her narrative is in six parts: choosing music education, accepting a general music position, undergraduate education, greeting challenges and finding strengths, teaching philosophy, and reflecting on where she is.

Choosing Music Education

Music was something I was good at. It was my escape, I guess, in elementary school and junior high. I went to a Catholic School. I was very overweight as a child and got made fun of all the time. I was horrible at gym. Let's not even talk about that. But when I was in band and when I was in choir, it was something that I excelled at. I picked up on it really fast and I enjoyed doing it.

My eighth grade year, my last year in that school, I ran for student government. I wanted to be the student government president. I don't know what motivated me to do that because I'm like, "The unpopular fat girl is running for president!" but, *carpe diem*. Of course, I lost, and I expected to lose, but what I didn't expect was my music teacher calling me to her room. I thought I was in trouble. I started checking things off in my mind. I had my practice records signed. I came to practice. I do what I'm supposed to do. I'm like, "Sweet Jesus, don't let me be in trouble."

She said, "Do you still want to be in student government?"

I said, "Well, yeah."

She said, "How about this? I already talked to the principal, and I would like there to be a new office."

"What office?"

"Commissioner of Music. You would be in charge of helping pick out the music we do for the church services that the whole school attends." It was like she gave me a

chance at something. She picked something that she knew I was good at and knew that I would excel in. She let me have that.

When I got into high school, just the rush of being on the marching band field and the rush of having my band director scream at me at the top of his lungs. That just kind of clenched it. That solidified it. He motivated me to just try harder and be the best I could be at everything.

Accepting a General Music Position

As soon as I graduated from college, in December 2009, I applied pretty much everywhere. I had a couple of band interviews, but didn't get anywhere with that. I went from applying to just band jobs, to choir jobs, to general music jobs, to anything that required me teaching music. I sent out 250 applications. I applied in North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, and come on now, everywhere. I thought I was going to be teaching music to some black bears or something. It was a little ridiculous, but I didn't really care at that point. I was basically motivated because I don't really have much family left. I could pretty much go anywhere. I applied for anything—public schools, private schools—because I needed a steady paycheck. It didn't really matter honestly because I needed experience before anything else.

I actually only had, probably at the most, five interviews face to face. They were all for band, one was for choir. I drove to Kansas for one. I flew to Florida for one. I really thought I had the Kansas one. The guy called me, and the only reason I came in second was because somebody had more experience than me. If I don't get the experience, I'm going to be fighting this for the next 20 years! I've got to start somewhere.

Actually, when I was on my way to Kansas, I had just crossed into Missouri or something, when I got the phone call from my current district. They got my information from another elementary school in that area that I had interviewed for. She said, "Your information was forwarded to us and we would like to talk to you. Can you come for an interview?" That is when I told them that I used all my savings going to Florida, going to Kansas, and going everywhere else. She mentioned a Skype interview and we set it up for when I got back.

I was honest with them during my interview. I told them I'm a fast learner, I'm willing to learn, I'm willing to read. I'm willing to go to workshops. I'm willing to do whatever it possibly takes. But band was my thing. Band is what I majored in. Then the next day, when I was on my way to the airport to Florida, she called me and offered me the job. She told me she'd give me the weekend to think about it.

I thought about it and thought about it because it was kind of a bit of a move, especially when you don't know anybody where you're going. I don't have any family left, really. I choose not to have a relationship with my dad and my mom passed away six years ago. At that time I had a half brother, aunt and uncle, and my grandmother. I got to the point where I needed a paycheck. So I just took it. I was like, "It's a job. It's a good paying job. We can try it!" But I was scared to death. I didn't even have a month. They hired me in the middle of July and they wanted me there the first week of August. I was terrified.

Then, as if it wasn't stressful enough coming all the way down here fourteen hundred miles and driving and everything, I was here for a total of three days and my

aunt died and I had to fly all the way back home and miss that first week of training. I thought, “Really? Really! I just got here!” But they were great about it.

Undergraduate Education

I would not want to relive the fear I felt after accepting this job, not knowing what I was getting myself into. Had I taken a band position, I had had all the coursework. I would have been able to figure the stuff out along the way. But I felt like I was going into this knowing absolutely nothing. I had no coursework in general music; yet, I was still licensed to teach it, so it freaked me out. I think it had a significant amount to do with me being as terrified of taking this job and feeling as unprepared with this job as I do. Anybody who followed my track in college was being certified in choir and general music and band, but we’re very ill-equipped as far as teaching the choir part of it and the general music part of it. We didn’t have a general music class that said, “This is what you do with Orff, this is what you do with Kodály method, this is what you do with Dalcroze.” It was instrumental or bust. I feel that the university did me a disservice by not including any type of general music class. I would have stayed in college an extra year or two to get that training. Since you’re already in college, you might as well just stay and get the full broad spectrum so you can be equipped to teach all of your certifications, not just follow a track for four years. You don’t want that feeling walking in on the first day of school and being terrified out of your mind because you have no clue what you are doing.

I didn’t even student teach at the elementary level. I did student teaching at the middle and high school levels. I did beginning band in some of my field experience prior to our student teaching—you need to tongue your notes like this, or you need to hold

your instrument like this. I had some experience with that, but the bulk of my student teaching was seven through twelve.

Greeting Challenges and Finding Strengths

So, I stuck to the textbook. I stuck to it. I did not deviate from that textbook because I was so terrified. I figured this is a textbook, it's meant for these kids. It's meant to cover the material. Man, they got bored with that real fast! I went to the Music Educators Conference last year and I started picking up different materials and I started incorporating them, and now I'm more or less kid of figuring out stuff on my own. I don't use the textbook constantly anymore.

It was scary. I knew the *do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do* business. I knew some kids songs. Rhythm instruments were fine. We're great with those. Recorders, we're fine, because I'm a woodwinds player, so we're good to go with that. And I'm rocking and rolling with the instrument families. I bring them in. I play them. The kids really like the hands-on things, when I let them hold them. I blow into the instrument and let them press the keys down.

I feel like I'm good at singing, but I don't know a whole heck of a lot about teaching vocal technique. I do have a good voice. I was a vocal major when I first started music education at a different university because I was not good enough yet on the clarinet. I only stayed there for one term. It was too far from home. I continued voice lessons at the community college for a year and a half. Even with that background, I feel as if everything that I was taught when I took voice lessons is way too advanced for these kids. If I said, "Take that soft part in the back of your throat and lift up," those kids would ask, "What are you talking about?"

It has helped with reading the shape of melodies. I don't necessarily need a piano all the time. It helps me, I guess, with breathing and diction and that kind of thing. I mean, I didn't have enough voice lessons to probably round me out like someone who had had four years of them but I know the difference between chest voice and head voice and all that. I just make sure the kids use their singing voices—not shouting or talking.

I would have to say Orff and solfège, the big standards of general music right there, those are a challenge. I'm terrified of Orff. It's probably because I didn't have the training and I don't feel comfortable personally with it, so I feel like I'm not adequately able to teach it. My first year, I didn't do any xylophones or any barred mallet instruments at all. Kids with mallets and bars, it just freaks me out.

I talked to one of the other elementary music teachers. She started the same year I did, but she was a vocal major so she followed her track and knows what she is doing. I asked her, "When do you teach what solfège?" Being the band-o and being the real smart one that I am, I started them all on *do*, and we all started *do-re-mi*. When you play in band, it often starts on the *do* of the key, or ends on the *do* of the key. That's just how it works. I assumed *do* would be the start, and then *do-re-mi* just makes sense because it's stepped and there's no big leap. It's just comfortable for the kids to just go *do-re-mi*. I had no clue what I was doing.

It's a Title I school, so I face a lot of challenges with kids. Classroom management has been hard. The kids are very defiant. You get the good ones, but you also get the ones that just will not listen no matter what you do. You can call the parents but nine times out of 10 the parents don't care. The first year, the kids ate me alive. I was terrified of calling parents, because I didn't know how they would react. After two years, calling parents is

probably still my biggest challenge. My management has gotten better in my second year. I'm a lot better as far as transitions. My first year I was like, "Oh my God, we have to go to something else. How am I going to do this?" Now I can be like, "Okay, you have five seconds to get from A to B." I'll count down and they will get there and they will be ready. It's a lot better from what it was when I started to what it is now. It's still not where I would like it to be, but it's a work in progress.

I try to incorporate a lot of hands-on stuff; for example, when I teach about composers, I don't just hand out sheets and make them read them. I turn it into a play, and I turn it into a humorous play. The kids love that kind of stuff; and I can go back to it and they remember it, because they had a chance to act it out, and they had a chance to watch it, and it was funny. It made them laugh, so it sticks with them. I guess I can't be doing everything wrong. I haven't gotten fired yet! Yeah, me! The kids are learning everything that they need to be learning, but I just feel like I'm not doing everything right.

Our Fine Arts Director said his dream is to have something compiled where a brand new first-year teacher would walk into the classroom, pick this thing up, look at it, and know immediately what to do. I told him, and the other friend of mine told him, it would have been amazing to walk into a classroom and have that resource—not necessarily have lesson plans made out, because each teacher likes to do her own thing—but at least if we had something to follow that said, "At the end of this six weeks, the children should know this." He made us work on a scope and sequence all year long. I printed out a hard copy of what my team came up with. We have the different standards that the kids need to meet, the objectives that they need to meet, and the vocabulary words that they should know by the end. We've got that pretty much broken down.

The networking has been key. Those people will get you through some of the darkest hours. There's a lot of things that you learn in the field that there isn't coursework for, like parent phone calls, but that's stuff you learn along the way. You've got to network and you'll have people to help you.

Teaching Philosophy

I'm starting the kids off. Their experience with music now is going to influence their experience with music later. Some kids it's not their thing, but some kids do like it, and you want to feed into that because you want to motivate them to keep on going, and be in those bands, and orchestras, and choirs, and show choirs, and whatever else is out there. If I make them hate it, they're not going to want to join band. They're not going to want to join choir. They're not going to want to continue with this particular art. If I somehow make something click, if I somehow make it fun for them, if I center on a genre of music that they like, then maybe they'll continue it. These are the little kids. These are the ones that are going to be the middle schoolers. These are the ones that are going to be the high schoolers. It's important to foster that foundation for the arts, now, rather than be like, "Oh it's just general music. Whatever. Who cares?" They obviously care.

Reflecting on Where She Is

I tried very hard over the past summer to get a band job down here and it didn't happen. I feel okay about it, I guess. I am a little disappointed that I'm stuck going back for my third year. It is what it is. I applied for any elementary or middle school instrumental music position I found that was within probably an hour drive. I had three in-person interviews. It just didn't happen for me. It's disappointing but good experience, I guess. I am not a good interviewer. I get very frazzled and very nervous. I

feel like I am put on the spot. Once I mess up a question, I freak out about it and I keep thinking about it and that makes me mess up on everything else. I do the very best I can in interviews; but, it's not a comfortable situation for me. Maybe I should get somebody else involved and have them actually ask me the questions and try to prepare myself that way instead of me just self-preparing.

I'm not completely miserable. I still play my instrument. Here, they actually do a district faculty recital. All the music teachers in the district prepare a piece and we all perform it. I don't come home from work every day and cry my eyes out because I hate my job. I would be happier in a band position, but this is all I can get right now, so I'll just make the best of it. Generally my students say and do cute stuff all the time. It's always interesting when I ask a question and someone gives the right answer. I think, "Oh my God. They got something from my class!" Plus, I have a wedding to plan now. I've met someone down here. He is a transplant from the Midwest, too.

It's not necessarily that I hate what I'm doing or anything of that nature. It's more or less that I always wanted to be a band director and I miss it. I miss it a lot. They're always looking for general music teachers, and I feel that band is something that I need to try, just for me, just to show myself that all that training I went through in college can be applied. At least I won't be going into it ice cold like I did with general music and if I find that it's not everything I wanted it to be, then I can go back to general music.

Lynn's Story

Lynn came to general music later in her career than the other informants in this study. She taught band at all levels for four years before the birth of her son. While

continuing to teach instrumental music, her interactions with him eventually inspired her to investigate early childhood music. She is currently a doctoral candidate at a mid-sized, Midwestern university. Having gained an interest in teacher education while training teachers for her Kindermusik (www.kindermusik.com) studio, she then sold that studio to return to school for her PhD and pursue music teacher education. The key informant through whom we met is a professor at her university. We talked via SKYPE.

It turns out that Lynn and I have a close connection. During the course of our interview, we discovered that she taught beginning instrumental music to two of my extended family members! We also connected via our current status as doctoral candidates. Our conversation was littered with names like Edwin Gordon and Lucy Green and terms like “social constructivism.” The common language made our communication easy and fluid.

I found Lynn to be very direct. Her story is shorter than some others. I do not attribute this to a lack of rich experiences, but instead to her ability to portray her meaning succinctly. Lynn gave me very specific edits when I sent her narrative for participant review. She wanted to ensure that her use of language, in the written rather than oral form, was portraying exactly the meaning she intended. Her narrative is in five sections: initial experiences with general music, leaving secondary ensembles and finding general music, challenges, teaching philosophy, and reflecting on her career.

Initial Experiences with General Music

In my first teaching job, I taught band fifth through twelfth grade band and seventh and eighth grade general music. I can quote my own words. I said the most terrible thing. I said that once people hit middle school, they have decided whether

they're going to be musicians. They are either going to be in band or choir, and there should be no general music in middle school. Isn't that terrible? I have since discovered the error of my ways.

I was definitely uncomfortable because I was a brand new teacher, first of all, and of all the ages to have, seventh and eighth grade general music! It was just a difficult situation. The class was not an elective; they had to be in it if they weren't in band or choir.

I'd like to do it again. I would be much better. I can't quite remember exactly what I did with those classes. We did try to sing, but mostly it looked like I was a band director trying to teach general music. I think it was the typical just, you have a book, you sit, you sing. I did things that I was trained to do as a band director. I'm sure I taught them about instruments. We counted rhythms up on the board. Mostly, I remember the fact that I never wanted to teach general music again, ever.

I did that first job for two years. It was an enjoyable and successful experience, but I felt it was important to pursue my master's degree. I quit teaching to do my masters in clarinet performance.

Leaving Secondary Ensembles and Finding General Music

When I was teaching high school band, it never occurred to me that I would end up in the path I have. In fact, when I started my master's degree, I was undecided, "Should I be a conducting major or a clarinet performance major?" I decided to stick with clarinet performance and a minor in wind conducting. After my masters, I kept teaching high school band. General music never occurred to me. Then, I taught for another two years in another state, high school band only. I had gone there because my

husband-to-be was pursuing his master's degree. Then we moved back to our home state. I was not going to get another high school band job, because it's very difficult to change jobs every few years. Also, a family decision had to be made regarding our careers. Having two high school band directors in one family would be very difficult, so I pursued the major area of my master's degree, clarinet performance, and my husband taught band, grades 5-12. I built my clarinet studio and got into a woodwind quintet. We played wedding gigs and so forth. I made a contact through my private teaching to start the elementary and middle school band at the local parochial school. I started that job the year my son was born and I continued teaching band and private clarinet lessons for five years before I started to teach early childhood music using the Kindermusik curriculum. In total, I was at the parochial school for seven years from 1992-1999.

The birth of my son changed my focus. I wanted to do something musically with him. I thought, "Oh, what better thing to do with my son than music? I could come up with a curriculum for small children." I was at a national MENC convention and Kindermusik had a booth there. I started doing Kindermusik to really involve him. I am so glad I didn't come up with my own curriculum. It would not have been nearly as good. It wouldn't have been developmentally appropriate at all. I'm sure that I had a child development course in undergrad but, when we are young, you know, we become singularly focused and we think certain things aren't going to apply to us. I just don't think I paid attention as well as I could have because I thought I was going to be a high school band director.

I began to investigate Kindermusik and trained while continuing at the parochial school and continuing to give private lessons. At that time they were offering live

training. I would go and do a workshop. I got trained in all the curricula, birth through second grade, through age seven. After the third year of band directing, teaching private lessons, and doing Kindermusik, I decided to concentrate on early childhood solely. My studio had grown from one class of six students to an enrollment of 170. It needed to be my focus. In addition to teaching classes, I was also hiring and training additional teachers.

Challenges

There are differences between general music teaching and band directing that initially offered challenges to me. I definitely did not feel like a general music teacher that first year! It was a big transition – conducting and teaching from a score, versus having 10-12 songs and activities memorized for every lesson. The basic skills of musicianship like rhythm, tempo, dynamics, and other musical concepts are all there; they are just used in a much different way. I was no longer trading one score for another, but moving between singing, listening, gross-motor, lap bounces...sometimes with associated instruments or props. Singing became my primary instrument and I didn't sing that much as a band director. The multifaceted lesson plans were also different. The children are moving—a lot. They like to move! Unlike a concert band classroom, the general music classroom is a movement-oriented environment so classroom management is more difficult. Classroom management is a little more challenging with the age of the children, too. They're more active. When lesson planning for band, you study your score and you have your issues that you're going to rehearse. You give the band an objective, they play, you listen, evaluate and so on. In general music, there's a greater variety of activities—singing, moving, listening, creating, instruments, and transitions to plan for

and manage. There can be no downtime between activities. Transitions are sung or chanted rhythmically: “Scarves away, scarves away, time to put the scarves away.” Then it’s right into the next song.

There was an added layer during my first years, as parents were present in all classes up to age 3, then for the last 15 minutes of the class in the 3-5 year and grade 1 and grade 2 classes. It felt really strange having the parents in class. Now, the reverse is true!

In my second year of general music teaching my daughter was a toddler, and I wanted to be the mom with her and not the teacher, so we enrolled in a class at another Kindermusik studio. I was amazed at how the teacher had everything memorized, and could add songs on the fly to fit the class dynamics. After I had taught general music for a few years, I recalled this, and realized that I had begun doing the same thing. When I realized I had achieved what I had admired in my daughter’s teacher, I felt like a general music teacher.

Teaching Philosophy

It's just such an overlooked area in education overall, early childhood, even in music education. I certainly overlooked it. I'm just a really good example of, “Don't think things won't apply to you as an undergraduate, because really you can't tell.” We all have desires and so forth, but circumstances change and we change as people. I tell my undergraduates, “Just try to take advantage of everything that you can.” Although, I realize I am the professor: Will they value my personal experiences? For that reason, I think it's important to bring up those multifaceted job descriptions that are on the music education association website. It's everything—general music, band, everything. It's a

very real possibility that they are not going to just be a band director. They are going to have general music and choir and other duties.

In contrast to statements I made early in my career, I have come to believe in general music for students of all ages. It needs to start in early childhood because of what we know about brain development and brain research. Undergraduates need to learn more about Gordon and his work in this area. The national standards all mention K-12, but there are prekindergarten standards in the same document. That foundation is really important to develop the readiness skills to begin to learn concepts in kindergarten. Early childhood music education is foundational for all the performance areas.

There should be music training from infancy through high school. General music classes and a variety of performance options should be available for students at every grade level. It could be any combination of keyboarding, guitar, drumming, or a more appreciation type class—absolutely any and all of these. There are so many students that we are not serving throughout high school. It comes down to knowing your students. I'm very much a social constructivist. Finding out what the strengths and developmental levels of the students are applies in all areas of teaching.

Lucy Green speaks about the difference in the informal music making, advocating freedom in choice and bottom up instead of top down. If I would have known some of that way back when I started, I could have given my seventh- and eighth-grade general music students some freedom and choice. But, that wasn't part of my teaching style at that point.

Reflecting on Her Career

While I was initially motivated to investigate early childhood music by my desire to educate and bond with my son, I resigned my band job and concentrated solely on general music because of the creativity. So much of band directing is invariable in teaching and in the calendar of events. There are only so many different ways to teach embouchures. I thought at one point, “I just cannot teach these chromatic clarinet fingerings one more time!” The calendar has many fixed items also, depending upon the level—football games, contests, holiday concert, solo and ensemble, pre-contest concert, concert band contest, spring concert, graduation, parades, pre-band camp rehearsal, band camp, and then we’re back to the football games again! Certainly, some teaching and calendar creativity is possible, and if I were to return to band directing now after teaching general music, I could be much more creative. However, overall I’ve found I can encourage musical development in a greater variety of ways as a general music teacher. I was motivated to change domains because of my son, but I stayed because of the creativity.

Alex’s Story

I met Alex by somewhat surreal happenstance. I was sitting one evening, revising the proposal for this study, with the television on in the background. Alex appeared on a television program on which they introduced him as a music teacher. I could tell from the images that he was teaching elementary general music. Then, the program showed footage of Alex playing his trumpet. Given that I was working on this document at the time, I immediately wondered if he was an instrumentalist who had chosen general music

for his career. I recorded the program in a later showing and obtained Alex's name. I was then able to look him up via his school system's website.

I contacted Alex using the same email I used to contact the other participants, but I included a paragraph describing how I obtained his name and included the sentence, "Though you may not have imagined when you went on television that a random woman from the University of Maryland would be contacting you, I promise you that this request is completely legitimate and professional in nature." (email correspondence, April 9, 2012). He replied, "I never would have imagined that I would be asked to take part in a dissertation when I signed on to do the show. It is funny how the world works" (email correspondence, April 9, 2012). He continued, "I would be honored to take part in your research. It sounds very intriguing, and very worthwhile to other instrumental musicians/teachers like us and those just starting out in the field."

I interviewed Alex in his classroom after school. He met me at the front door of the school and was immediately engaged in our process. Throughout our interview, he seemed concerned that he was giving me appropriate answers. He would ask, "Does that answer everything enough?" (interview, May 21, 2012) It did not seem to me that he was concerned with giving me the answers that he thought I wanted as much as giving an appropriate amount of detail. He also asked clarifying questions of me. When I asked him about which parts of the curriculum were his strengths and weaknesses, he clarified, "For the curriculum, brass tacks like rhythm and melodies, is that what you're referring to?" (interview, May 21, 2012). When we ended our conversation, he added, "I hope I was at some point helpful." I assured him that his story would, indeed, be helpful and that he need not worry about having given "correct" answers. Each person is an

individual with an individual story to tell. Alex's story begins at a small private school in the upper Midwest. His narrative is in four sections: experimenting in the job market, finding creativity, greeting challenges and building on strengths, and leaving the box.

Experimenting in the Job Market

When I was finishing up my undergraduate, I already had the feeling that I definitely didn't want to do a whole high school program. There were no full time band director positions open. I searched as far out from home as I wanted to and there was really nothing, so I took a part time middle school instrumental position at a private school. I had the feeling I might want to be with younger students.

Because that was a part time position, I was doing some preschool music classes at the local community music school. They had private lessons there, which I also taught. Then they had pre-school classes and some dance classes as well. They offered two or three pre-school music classes throughout the week. I guess that got me off to this direction, as far as how to teach the basics of music to very, very young children.

My now wife, girlfriend back in the day, got a job on the east coast. We moved at the very end of the summer four years ago. I was late in the game applying for anything, so I actually accepted a position at a very different private school in an area with pretty difficult schools. Parents who didn't want their kids in the public schools came there, but also kids who got kicked out of their schools came there, so it was pretty difficult. They wanted an instrumental program to get started in their upper grades, and then they also needed somebody to teach their lower grade general music. So that's how I got started with general music, actually, was at that position. Coming out here and finding that

position, it felt ideal, because I could start working with younger kids as well as continue doing what I knew how to do which was band.

After a year of that, I took my first Orff level and fell in love with that. Through that, I met a lot of people in the public schools and they kind of got me registered and hooked up in this district. I did a long term subbing position at another school. Then my current position opened because the teacher decided not to return from maternity leave. I came here at the end of November my first year, so that was difficult, that first year. Technically, they say it's my third year, but I really have two and a half.

When I was at the private school here on the east coast, not making any money at all, I had to find something to do, so I found an opening for a music position at a gym for tots. I went there and I still do that on the weekends, just to make some extra money. I have learned an extensive amount of preschool literature through doing that. They do a different genre of music, a different area of the world, every month. I've learned a lot of folk songs from other places that I've actually taken into my real classroom.

Finding Creativity

When I first went into one of those classrooms there were three pre-school kids and they were dropped off. Parents were not in the room. They were probably four years old. I learned right away that you had to do a lot in a little amount of time and you cannot spend too much time on one thing at all, especially in that small of a group. They were very shy and they didn't really know what to do with me, so I was definitely figuring out how to get them on the same page and get them on board with what I was doing. Sometimes you've got to be silly, and you've got to be entertaining, and you've

got to be enthralling to them. You've got to appeal to what four year olds are interested in.

I feel like I'm a pretty creative person. I've been a songwriter for a while. Trumpet was my main instrument, but I'm a big lyricist and that kind of stuff. I love making up my own songs. I think that really helped me with that creative edge with younger kids. Being able to create things for them and help them create things as well I think is a big strength that I bring to the table.

I feel like general music is a much more creative outlet than instrumental music for the teacher as well as the students. I am not saying there isn't any creativity in band. There is, but I feel like you don't get as much creativity in what you need to do. You've got to stick to the rules pretty well and go to festivals and you've got to earn these ratings. I knew I definitely wanted to major in music when I got out of high school, so my senior year I got to follow my band director around and do what he did. It wasn't until college that the amount of work that you have to do for putting together a whole instrumental program started weighing on me. Just thinking about putting together trips and putting together marching band shows. I felt like all of those things stifled me a little bit more. You need to present a concert and it needs to be with these specific instruments. So, that's the kind of stuff, I guess, that kind of started turning me off especially. I just never really wanted to be in charge of that huge band program. Band directors are out there all the time, working constantly. I would be afraid that a position like that would really make me regress—regret going into music or not enjoy it as much as I could.

A love for all kinds of music is something else that is really important that I bring to the table. I am very open to all kinds of music, wanting to expand the knowledge of

our general population as to what is out there musically rather than just what is being played on the radio, which is what kids hear every day. I really try to strive with the older kids to introduce to them some music that they haven't normally heard. They love things that don't sound like what they are used to. We were just recently talking about using pentatonic. The pentatonic modes all sound so different that it really gets them excited like, "We're going to do something in Dorian!" They don't know what that is, but it sounds different than other things that they've done in the past and hopefully it gets the kids to appreciate the art.

We play a lot of instruments in here, which is fun for them and fun for me. Instrumentally I've taken lots of percussion courses and those kinds of things, so I feel really comfortable whenever we do anything instrumentally in the general music classroom. That's a non-issue completely for me. The chorus thing was the other side of that. I learned my first year here that starting with the song and getting them to sing it first and then moving to instruments afterwards is the best way to get them to sing. I remember the first couple of lessons I taught. As soon as we got to the instruments they would stop singing, completely. It was like, "Am I doing something completely wrong? I need to get them to be doing both things." So now the rule is, "If you're not singing then you can't play instruments."

Greeting Challenges and Building on Strengths

When I think of challenges, the one that pops right into my head is chorus. We are required to have a chorus group for fifth and sixth graders. The sixth graders here are done with elementary school by the time they're in sixth grade. It's very difficult to get them engaged. I never, ever sang in chorus—not in high school, not in college. Never.

Ever. I was a singer in a rock band but obviously that's very different. When chorus was thrown at me that first year I thought, "I feel so uncomfortable here with this."

In undergraduate, voice production, in general, was not a focus. I guess that would be one thing I would attribute to my undergraduate education leaving me a little high and dry. Ear training was about the only singing we really had to do. We did do some singing in our conducting classes but it was not anything that taught us how to teach singing. We had one general music class that was taught to all instrumental students, because we are technically certified K-12, so they had to give us something. But, we really focused on upper elementary to middle school general music. The book we used was for teaching fourth through eighth grade general music, never anything younger than that. Then we went to a school for practicum assignments but it was as a whole class. Besides that, our training at the university was very minimal for general music if we were on the instrumental track. It would have been nice if I had figured out earlier that I wanted to do general music, but you can't really go back. Seeking graduate courses was a necessity really.

When I was at the long-term subbing position before I came here, there was another teacher who was a really good choral major. He helped me out a lot, feeding me a little bit at a time about what I needed to do. The teacher I covered for in that first position has also been really helpful in giving me resources and ideas. I just picked up more every single time.

Every year I get more comfortable and better at it and taking the Orff levels has helped me significantly. When I was at the private school, lesson planning was a challenge—trying to figure out exactly how many activities I needed to plan out for every

period, picking good songs for the age group, good literature for the elementary school and those kinds of things. With the band it was kind of set. The lesson planed itself. It's just a rehearsal. You needed to work on these measures and that kind of thing.

Singing has definitely become one my top priorities. I do believe I should give them the best singing voices that I can train them in. That's what I'm working on right now, just to get them to use a proper singing voice and to know their head voices, where their registers lie, and all that kind of stuff. I think that's very, very important. I do a lot of falsetto singing, which they laugh at of course; but, I do whatever I can to get them to sing in a proper register.

I've got some really quality ways to teach rhythm and rhythmic notation. I think I'm doing a pretty good job with that. Melodically I think I'm getting better, too. And even though I'm an Orff teacher, I think by the time my kids leave they should know how to read treble clef to the best of their ability in sixth grade. If they don't choose to play instruments or sing in middle or high school, I still think that if they're at church they should be able to look at a hymnal and read a melody line. That's one of my personal philosophies so that's one thing I really would like to see all my students do.

Our sixth grade has to take an assessment. They have to create their own melody to a set of text. I think this year, my sixth graders did a much better job than in the past. I feel like I'm getting a better knowledge on how to get them to understand first how to put words into a proper rhythm and then take those words and make it into a singable melody. It's pretty cool, actually. At first I think that everyone was nervous about how the grades would affect the teacher performance overall; but, I think it's a good way to show how our program is just as important as some other subjects in the school.

Leaving the Box

Building an appreciation of all music makers and all forms of music, I think that's a big thing that we can instill. I think that's one of the big things that brought me to general music in the first place was being able to get them first—being able to mold them maybe in a different way, to see the world a little bit differently, to hear things they wouldn't normally hear and to appreciate those things. That's a big thing for general music teachers.

I guess I would say the same thing to any kind of instrumental musician as I do to my kids. I feel like you're told what to do exactly and how to do it a lot, exactly how to play something, et cetera. At least that was my experience. Try to experience as many different ensembles and styles of music as you can. And even if you are not very inclined in one area, like an instrumental person going vocal, I still think you should definitely force yourself into having that experience. Because from my experience, most people at some time or another have to teach something that's not their number one instrument. They're going to have to do something outside of their comfort zone. So, pushing into those things earlier would be really helpful.

Carina's Story

Carina is a colleague of mine. We worked in the same district for eight years, attended the same master's program (although not at the same time), and have served on the district curriculum committee together. Still, I learned many new things about her during our interview process. For example, she was a member of her State and MENC All-Eastern honors ensembles in high school and continues to play as a member of the

horn section of the local community orchestra. She spoke proudly of their recent performance of Schumann's *Concert Piece for Four Horns and Orchestra, Op. 86*.

I met Carina at her home after school. Our local division of the NEA was observing a work-to-rule job action to stress the need for teacher salary increases, and so we did not want to be on school grounds after the designated end of our workday. Carina lives on the outskirts of town in an older subdivision with a large yard and no homeowner's association. She grew up in a rural area and feels a comfort with the lack of homeowners' restrictions and a hen house in the backyard for fresh eggs. Her narrative is in seven parts: valuing education, valuing general music, entering the profession, challenges, strengths, matching teaching and philosophy, and being a musician.

Valuing Education

I come from a family of teachers. My grandparents on my mother's side were teachers, both of my parents are teachers, two of my sisters are teachers. My brother is the only one that's not. He's an accountant. So it was just kind of normal. It was like the family business. In high school I was playing around with medicine and I thought that's where I would go for a while, but then at some point I said, "Okay, I'm ready to do education." I liked the lifestyle; it was what I was used to.

I did not specifically identify myself with music education the whole time. I entered college as a dual major in Math Ed and Music Ed. In Music you have the pre-requisite courses that you take freshman year, like Theory 1, so I started off on the music track and then it was several semesters before I started taking the math courses. And then I was kind of at the point where I had taken just enough math courses to meet the math

requirements for a music and I decided I was ready to be done and get on with graduation, and I always figured that I could go back if I wanted to finish up my math certification.

Valuing General Music

We had a lab school when I was in college. In our Elementary Methods class, my professor was the elementary music teacher at the lab school. We were assigned into groups and we taught lessons. My group was assigned to a fourth grade class. So, starting in the beginning of the semester we did warm ups and small activities until we got to the point where we were doing a full lesson by the end of the semester. I found that I enjoyed the elementary students and I enjoyed the more basic music making where everybody was participating in the same kind of activities.

Also, the elementary general music had a more appealing schedule. In my high school, we only had one ensemble that met during the school day and it only met every other day. Even numbered days were chorus and odd numbered days were band. The rest of the school day for my band director was teaching lessons. There was no theory or music history. There weren't any classroom courses like keyboarding or guitar or anything. Additional ensembles like marching band and brass ensemble were all after school. So it was one period of band every other day and it was lessons and study hall coverage and things like that throughout the day. I was more interested in the elementary situation and the general music situation where I would be teaching classes throughout the day and not only rehearsing one ensemble for one period, teaching lessons for the rest of the day, and then having additional ensembles after school.

When it came time for student teaching, I was placed first with a teacher who taught all of the elementary general music and beginning instrumental at one elementary school, and then with the high school band director in the same district, who taught one period of high school instrumental and then the rest of the day was elementary. My secondary placement was only that one period of ensemble. There were no lessons. There was nothing at the high school beyond that one period and then marching band after school. I had heavy elementary and I loved it so I ended up staying. I only looked for General Music positions. I didn't look for Instrumental positions when I was applying.

Entering the Profession

I went to a job fair at the university and put my resume out with everybody who was there. My current school system actually called me and said that they had a position and asked if I would be interested in interviewing. That was 2004, when school districts were still hiring and calling people from job fairs. So, I came down and interviewed.

I was split between two schools so just having two spaces up and going was a big challenge for me as a first year teacher. Not having the same resources at the two different schools meant not being able to just have one set of lesson plans that I used at both schools. If I did use the same plans, then I had to transport the materials back and forth. I was also working with colleagues who were only in their second and third year of teaching and who were first-time lead teachers in their buildings. At one school, I was on the stage and they did have one of the accordion curtains, but the seals into the wall weren't working and lunch seemed to stretch forever. It was so hard because you couldn't hear anything at all, and the few instruments that I had were all the broken ones.

There were tables set up because I shared the space with the second art teacher and I didn't know enough that I could ask for it to be a different setup on my days. It was another year before I got rid of the tables on my days.

Challenges

I think classroom management was definitely my greatest challenge—especially learning that many students and that many classes. I would have so loved to have just gone to a different school and had been able to start all over my second year and not have been like, “Uh, it's completely my fault that you're acting the way you are because I didn't have it together my first year.” In college, we didn't have training in classroom management; it was just philosophies and reading, but no actual experience leading a classroom until student teaching. In student teaching you only somewhat get an idea of what classroom management is like because you exist in the system with your cooperating teacher. It's their system and you just learn to follow it. I student taught in the fall, so I did get the experience of starting the school year at least with my first placement. Still, the cooperating teacher has the system setup and you just get to work within it.

The other big challenge was long-range lesson planning. Where I did my student teaching there was not a curriculum at all for elementary general music. I asked my coop at one point in time, “How do you choose what to do next?” I had no idea of sequencing. That was actually a big plus whenever I interviewed here. I looked up the school district online before my interview and they had objectives and indicators online, so I knew that there was some framework. Still, there was no map and there weren't really sample lesson plans at that point in time, so there was no starting point. It's like, “Here, do

whatever.” It would have been really helpful to have it narrowed down, to have a map, to have something, a skeleton plan.

I would have loved to have had more opportunities during college to actually get in front of ensembles, get in front of a class and to actually be teaching—even if it’s something like having the opportunity to warm up the choir or just to take advantage of any chance to get more authentic experiences like that and not just this is how you lesson plan, but actually getting a chance to teach the lesson. Even in the lab school we were teaching with a group and we were teaching part of the lesson and then our professor would finish and we would watch and observe. We didn’t get a feel for what it’s like to have a full lesson for every grade level everyday or the workload involved. The unit that we ended up with was about a four-lesson unit. That’s two weeks and we had a whole semester to work on it! You really don’t get a feel for long range planning and just how much is involved in prep work. Even if we had only focused on a single grade level and done all of the lesson planning for that grade level versus doing a warm up song in each of the grade levels. That may have given us a better handle for the prep of a class.

Strengths

As a new teacher, rhythm was a strength of mine because I had a pretty good foundation in that from my Secondary Methods as an undergrad. We did a lot of card reading and we actually had to go through a sequence starting with doing a four-beat pattern with motions and then you add on the teacher reading with the card there and the class echoing, and then the class reading without the teacher leading. We all had multiple opportunities in front of the class where we went through that process with the other

classmates playing the role of students. So that was something that I was comfortable with, not only the material, but also the process.

Singing standard repertoire songs and vocal modeling was another strength. In high school I was very involved in the choral program as well as band and I wasn't just in the concert choir, I was in the select groups in high school and then I continued to be in choir in college. I had class voice in college. Actually, it was supposed to be Class Voice for two semesters I think, but there was a scheduling conflict between Class Voice II and Wind Ensemble. So I actually technically took Class Voice I and then Voice Lessons I. Technically, I did a jury but it was with the understanding that I was really a class voice student. I also had an opportunity to do a choral internship with the chorus leader at the lab school.

Anything that was written, like notation and things like that, was something that I was fairly strong at. For example, picking materials for recorder that were manageable for the classroom and appropriate. We do a lot where they're playing along with the recording. It's not just learning how to play "Mary Had a Little Lamb." It's more of an ensemble experience. It's also playing along and needing to be in time with the recording and getting a more authentic experience than "I can stop whenever I want, and if it's not in time and if it's not in tune it doesn't make that much of a difference." We do concerts for every grade level, providing that experience that a lot of the students wouldn't have except for at school. Pieces for concerts have to be performance ready and polished.

Matching Teaching and Philosophy

Something that I struggle with is how we fit in, how the general music classes fit both with music and education in general, and what I would want our role to be versus

what the role really is. I often times don't see the connection between general music and other music education K through 12 in that I really don't have much knowledge of what goes on in the secondary level. That's especially true in this state because I didn't grow up in this system and in our district, elementary teachers don't have much connection with the secondary level. I don't consciously make any connection. I'm not planning or teaching lessons thinking, "Okay, this is what they need for band or for chorus going forward." So, I'm not really sure how it fits in.

My approach, with general music being compulsory, is to try to get students into experiences where they're making music and evaluating music knowing what options are out there. During graduate school, I especially liked Reimer's approach—his idea that the way the national standards were envisioned was that you would have a class that would focus on performing a varied repertoire of vocal music and that you'd have another class that would focus on composing. It wasn't everybody does everything all the time. You have the freedom to say, "This is a composition focused course, and this is a performance focused course, and this is a theory focused course." I wish I had the opportunity to go more in-depth instead of feeling like I have to balance and really be covering all the standards in every grade. We just touch all these different topics, some of which you have to do those because those are on the test. Students need to know why. Instead it's just "What is this note and how many counts does it get?" It's not in a real setting. It should be, "Which of these measures is incorrect for the time signature?" or something more authentic. There are too many things that are wonderful activities and great musical experiences that we don't have time to do. I see a general music class as giving students the opportunity to experience different settings, access instruments, and access listening

so that they can start to develop tastes and have knowledge of what's out there. Then, they should have the opportunity to choose and pursue certain areas in more depth.

Being a Musician

I certainly would miss being a musician if I didn't have an outlet for playing, so it's really good that I am a member of the community orchestra. I was in district and regional band, then I went to All-state, and I even went to All-Eastern. Part of how I got into being a music education major was I realized leaving the field after our last show in marching band my senior year of high school that I would really miss being a part of the ensemble. That was part of the impetus for music education as well as math education. I wasn't interested in committing only to music ed but wanted the opportunity to continue to be involved in ensembles so I added music ed as a dual major along with math ed. I had been playing in ensembles throughout high school and college too, and after college if I wasn't playing my horn that would have been a huge loss, so I was really fortunate to be asked to join the local orchestra.

I don't have anywhere near the chops that I had at one point in time. I play second horn so it's nice because I don't have to have quite the same high chops, although the low chops for second horn can be equally challenging at times. At the December concert this year we played Schumann's *Concert Piece for Four Horns* and it was the horn section, we were the four horns, and that was killer. It required that I practice more than I have since I left college. I got my chops pretty much back for that. It was so nice to be in shape and able to pick up my horn and play something challenging again.

Maurice's Story

A key informant introduced me to Maurice. I contacted him via email and we met via SKYPE. Maurice is a second-year teacher and exudes the unfettered enthusiasm of being in that stage of his career. His undergraduate career is very fresh in his mind, and much of his narrative focuses upon it. Everything is new. Everything is exciting. Moreover, Maurice has many of the personal qualities that, in my opinion, can help him evolve into a model educator. He couples his enthusiasm with the ability to appropriately reflect and strategize adjustments to his teaching. Throughout our conversations, he consistently reflected on specific instances within his lessons where he was pleased or displeased with the results and offered analysis at a level beyond most young teachers I have worked with. Without prompting from me, the narrative he shared was both deeply honest and reflexive. At one point, we even ended up discussing Lee Shulman's (1986) concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge. He was describing the concept in his interview but did not have a label. I labeled it for him and he was like a sponge, wanting to know more and more.

Maurice bubbles with enthusiasm when he speaks of his profession. In transcript form, his initial interview was longer than any of the others in the study. This was not necessarily because the interview was longer in time, but rather because he speaks so quickly and with so much enthusiasm that we covered a lot of ground very quickly. This quick quality of his mind comes through in his narrative. He jokingly labels himself as ADD. He said:

I jokingly just put it on myself. I can be very...like when I'm talking to my girlfriend, I can be very much like, "Yeah, so we had a really good

day...Oh, look, there's a such and such over there...Anyway, so we were having a good day at school and blah, blah, blah, blah." Yeah. I'm just very hyperactive so I just joke around saying that I'm ADD. That's me. (interview, August 9, 2012)

Maurice is also a proud Christian, but does not wear the label overtly. In our initial interview, he twice mentioned feeling "called" to general music and he used the word "blessed" to describe how he felt about his undergraduate program (interview, May 16, 2012). I followed up with him and asked what being "called" meant to him. It was then that he shared with me the importance of faith in his life (interview, August 9, 2012). During our second conversation he witnessed for me by sharing that upon graduation he prayed about what would be next in his life. He feels a genuine calling from God to teach elementary general music. His narrative is in five parts: undergraduate education, finding general music, current teaching position, challenges, and building a philosophy.

Undergraduate Education

The more that I venture out into the world, the more that I realize how blessed I am to have gone through my undergraduate program. Because I see whereas some are more very knowledgeable in one area of music education, I am kind of well rounded and so I can pull a little bit from the choral area, some from the orchestral area, some from the instrumental area, and just kind of all put it together into what I do.

There was no track. It was basically just a combination—a well-rounded introduction as an undergraduate, into the world of music education. Everyone had to take a singing class. For some of us who hadn't really sung at all in our public school

years it started to get us singing again and talking about singing in groups. One of the vocal teachers got us to be able to use our voices so that we are able to orally present material to students if we didn't have an instrument with us.

Then, as you get beyond your beginning theory, as you get beyond your introduction to education, you start taking your pedagogies. The five pedagogies were woodwind, brass, vocal, strings, and percussion. You had to have all the pedagogies in order to move into your methods. Each pedagogy ended up providing its different challenge.

Everyone took all the methods. So, in instrumental methods, you would have the vocalists really looking to and leaning upon instrumentalists. They might ask, "Well, do you think that this part up here is something that I should have my clarinets practice?" We would reply, "Well, yes because it goes over the break." Vice versa, we could go to a vocalist during Choral Methods saying, "Okay. I'm teaching this piece. Are these ranges too high for a high school vocalist?" They might reply, "Well no, they're actually right in the right range, but you're going to be careful because this melody is not the most melodic of melodies. So it's going to be hard for the students to hear it, if they're singing it by themselves. You're going to need to model it."

General Methods did have pre-requisites. Within the string and woodwind pedagogies, we had modules. One was a guitar module, which taught you the basic mechanics of guitar. We ended up with about a six-week module where we took a guitar class. We learned about getting the basic strum patterns flowing, the basic chord fingerings, and the basics of being able to pick out melodies on the guitar. In General Methods, our teacher was heavily based in being able to accompany yourself as you're

leading students. So, you needed guitar plus the recorder module that came with the woodwind pedagogy because the Orff-Schulwerk approach does a lot of recorder work in the older grades.

In General Methods, everyone was just learning about it on their own. It was fun. That's where everybody was like, "You mean those kids don't know how to do this, this, and this?" Well no, you have to be as sequential as possible. In General Methods, one of the things that I know we always talked about was knowing how to teach concepts to students. I know it and I just understand it; yet, I have to teach that to students? It was a fun learning process for all of us. That's why I loved our general methods teacher. It was because I think she clearly had that pedagogical content knowledge because every single semester, she was in the elementary schools with some of her former student teachers or former students. She's in with the current classroom, so she knows how to teach us to teach them. She has that real-world application, because she's there and she's doing it.

Finding General Music

We went to one of the elementary schools in town. Once a week on a Thursday, we would go and observe. I observed a fourth grade class. I got to watch the teacher creating these beautiful lessons. She was using scarves and they were doing movements. She was using xylophones and teaching the kids how to play. She was incorporating drumming patterns into their curriculum, just doing all these things. And all of a sudden I switched.

Previously I had thought I would be a high school band director because I saw what my band director was doing and there were parts of it that I didn't like. I wanted to be able to control all of it. I wanted to be the hot shot, the head honcho, whatever you

want to call it. But after seeing those beautiful elementary lessons, I didn't want to be a high school band director anymore. I wanted to teach children. I wanted to teach elementary school. So we continued to go through the class. I loved how in one week I could teach how to sing, I could teach how to do drumming, I could teach movement, I could teach xylophone playing all in one week. And then I was like, "If I'm a band director, I'm just on a stage conducting pretty much every single week, leading kids through songs, repeating those songs, doing things like that." I'd much rather be having the diversity in my lessons.

It was also about that time that I was really looking to my faith and allowing the God who created me to guide my life. Beginning in my senior year, I was meeting with our pastor once a week and he was actually kind of mentoring me. He was encouraging me to just pray about what I wanted to do after college. I've always felt and wanted to be a role model to students, to boys especially who don't have that sort of role model in their lives. We took a mission trip to a home for at-risk boys. I was up there working with them and just really enjoyed it and realized that this is partially what I want to be doing.

At the school where I teach, I have some really well off kids but I also have very disadvantaged kids. I have some kids who don't know their fathers, whose fathers are in jail, whose father happened to father many children all around the area so they actually have several half-siblings at the school. It's a mess. Their homes are often chaotic. And so in my heart and what I was feeling led spiritually was that I needed to be a sort of role model to them. I wanted to be in the elementary school where I can influence kids, where I can leave an impression on them of what a man could be to counteract their image or lack thereof of a man in their life. Granted, I'm approaching it using the image of Christ

as my model. How can I love them unconditionally regardless of what they bring into my classroom? How can I encourage them on a daily basis so that they feel that they can actually trust somebody in their lives? How can I bring into my classroom a very stable, non-chaotic environment?

So it just kind of came together at the end of my junior and senior year. And I was just like, "General music! Elementary music!" From there I was hooked. I was set on wanting to know more about the Orff-Schulwerk approach to teaching elementary school. I got placed in a student-teaching placement with a fantastic general music teacher who was Orff-based and did everything with an Orff approach.

Current Teaching Position

Last year was my first year in the big boy world. I graduated in spring of 2010. So, I spent the majority of the year subbing in elementary regular education classes. I subbed a lot where I teach now, which is also where I did my student teaching. So all the teachers in the area knew of me, they knew what I capable of. I walked down hallways and they would say, "Hey Maurice can you serve on this day for this time?" I am, like, "Yeah. Absolutely." I fit in the school. I learned every single duty; I learned every single responsibility that our music teacher left. She was pregnant and I jumped in and finished the rest of the year. She opted not to come back. Conveniently nobody wanted the job in the county, so that someone from the outside could come in.

Challenges

There is so much to teach and when it comes to just sitting down with no guidance and needing to plan a lesson for K through 5, if I don't have a concept to think about or a "what do I want to teach them," then I am completely helpless. I can't think of

a lesson. It's been a big process of gathering materials. One of the teachers in the county produced a "this is what they should know" for each grade, so that helps me. I can look at that and say, "My kindergartners should learn to at least aurally identify so-mi. I haven't taught that yet. So let me find the last thing when you can clearly hear it." Or I remember about a month ago, my second graders had learned to identify *mi-re-do* and play *mi-re-do* on the xylophones. I thought, "I should bring back a piece and teach it to them to see that they can identify it again and play it again." So it's been starting to build my curriculum, starting to build what I want my second graders to be able to play at the end of the year. I need to make sure they are prepped by doing xyz leading up to that.

Another challenge that I have had is I tend to think about getting the lesson done following the objectives, but I never actually take the time to stop and talk with them about performance and talk with them about just making it sound like a work of art from start to finish. I am usually rushing. "All right everyone did their part and everyone had their chance to play all right. You just go and come back in next week and we will do something different." There's no noticeable end to what they're learning. There's no moment when we actually perform it and we finalize it and we feel good about it. I need to do more reflecting on the performance aspect.

Here's a perfect example. I am using the book "Very Lonely Firefly." There's also this recorder book called "Recorder Roots" by Carole King. And there's one piece in there, I think it's from Japanese folk song, called "Fireflies." So, there's one part in there that repeats twice and it's very easily played by first graders. It's like just playing A-A-A-G-A. So I need to get them to first think about how to move as a very sad firefly. They are looking for their friends. So there's the movement aspect. They are taking

scarves, they are flying around the room and they are trying to be sad. And then I teach them xylophone part and create a whole piece where the xylophone plays as my fireflies are dancing throughout the room.

On Monday, I was very rushed, and we never really got it into a performance. But today their first grade teacher walked into the room and he was able to watch the entire performance. Then, when we stopped, we talked about freezing and our music should end in silence and then we had closure on that piece. And that's what I haven't been doing much this year is getting that closure.

Also, I am not spending as much time teaching them concepts and being able to say, "Okay, I taught you adagio or allegro last week, two weeks later, have you been able to remember? Can you identify adagio or allegro in this music?" I could imagine how I need to strengthen more in my repetition. I think once I start to think about that, that's going to enhance my curriculum. For now, I am still reverting back in simple terms. "Is it fast or slow?" I need to build in vocabulary and say, "Is this AB form or is this ABA form? You tell me, you should know." Or I tell my fifth graders about different meters once this year and I haven't really come back to that. It's the higher level, educational side that I am not strongest at yet..

The school that I'm in has a lot of challenges in the population. We have one of the larger groups of special education students. The administration is challenging sometimes. I also bring my own challenges in terms of my teaching style. Sometimes I don't control my enthusiasm well and the kids sense it. The kids just naturally feed off of my energy and I think they don't know how to control it so they get a little bit too crazy. It can create some management problems. My student teaching supervisor spoke with me

about creating contrasts in my teaching, saying that she would like to see me do more quiet, soft moments.

My position includes elementary music and a fifth grade volunteer choir. In the back of my mind, I was like, "I will never be a choir teacher. I'm good with that." And then here I am and I have to teach choir. But I love it. I actually love teaching choir. The more I teach it, the more I'm enjoying it. I think within these last two years I'm realizing that I can do more. I can have some of the students play xylophones as everyone's singing and have some movement going on. I'm starting to see the possibilities with the choir and with allowing it to be more than just everyone stands on stage, everyone sings the songs and we're done. I'm also very much attracted to being able to teach them how to sing a two-part song and how to do harmonies. It's fun.

Building a Philosophy

I see myself as being the one who first introduces music into a child's life—getting them to not just be the listeners of it, but to be the creators of it. I want them to be actually involved in the music-making process rather than just enjoying it as a result of hearing it. That first really came into an understanding when I had to start my kindergartners this year, realizing my kindergartners have never really experienced music before. They probably sang songs in Pre-K. They probably listened to it on their own, but they've never actually created music on their own. In thinking about them, and then thinking about where they might be in fifth grade, where they might be in eighth grade, where they might be in twelfth grade, if they're still involved, whether they're in band, or whether they're in a percussion ensemble in school or whether they're in a choral ensemble. Some of the basic principles of music, in terms of just being able to follow a

steady beat, start even before kindergarten. Are they able to start to read notes, even before they start band? Are they able to carry a tune? Are they able to understand the terminology of music? There's a lot of basic building bricks that I can lay so that they're better equipped when they get to the high school level, when they get to the middle school level. I want them to grow to a point where they become passionate about it, where they're able to hear how the various layers of a piece come together, to hear how each part relates, enhances, and colors the piece. I hope they will just be captivated.

My basic philosophy is that I know that 75 percent of the students that I teach probably won't, by the time that they finish high school, really be involved in something musical. They might start out in band. They might start out in choir. But then they get involved in a sports team or maybe a club if they're really into reading or they're really into math, and by the time they graduate high school they're not going to really be involved in some sort of structured, strict music group as we would think of as like a band or choir. I think that relates to part of my philosophy of music and my philosophy of why I teach and how I teach. It's not necessarily related to music education in the grand scheme. I want to be able to teach them how to be passionate about something, how to be creators of something. I want to be able to get them to a point as fifth-graders that they can take x, y, and z, put it together and create a piece out of it. They are able to be problem-solvers, whether it's in music or whether they are in science and they have to create an experiment.

The one music mentor that I've had, the music mentor that was my cooperating teacher said, "I hope that you don't get burned out on what you're doing." But it's always kind of been my general nature not to lose passion for the things I love. As long as I'm

feeling led to be in front of those students, as long as I feel that my students need me, especially some of my boys, as long as I feel that they need me to be there for them, I can't imagine how I would get burned out doing this. When I get to a point that I know I have lost that desire that when I get to school for a length of time and I'm just not motivated, I'm not excited, I don't look forward to seeing the next class, then that's when I'm going to reevaluate what I do as a teacher. But, as long as I feel that drive and I feel the desire to be in front of students, there's no way that I can change my profession. There's no way that I can be in a school that has a different population than the neediness that my school has. I love my job.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS

In this chapter I return to the research questions that guided this investigation and use the data to answer these questions for each individual and to present emergent themes. While many themes were self-evident in the narratives of the previous chapter, recapitulation in case study format facilitates the relation of emergent themes to existing literature and clarifies the role of this study as a continuing avenue of research.

As in Chapter 1, I have used the questions that guided this investigation as an organizational structure. In summary, the three questions guiding this investigation were:

1. What challenges do instrumentally-trained general music teachers describe when discussing their initial experiences in general music classrooms?
2. If instrumentally-trained music teachers now self-identify as general music teachers how did that change occur?
3. How do teachers self-identifying as instrumentally-trained general music teachers construct individual/group positionality in the music education profession?

I first address each of these questions for the individual participants in this study. In the second section, cross-case analysis, I have grouped the emergent themes based upon the question to which they most pertain. While the use of the questions as headings supports clarity in presentation, the questions are interrelated and themes presented within one section should not be considered unrelated to themes presented under other headings.

Rachel

Rachel stated that when she graduated college, she felt more prepared to teach instrumental music than to teach elementary general music, even though she had a general methods class and did part of her student teaching placement in general music. She took a general music position as a foot in the door to the district and did not plan to stay in that position for an extended period. She has stayed for 13 years, turning down opportunities to return to elementary instrumental instruction as recently as 2005.

What were Rachel's Initial Challenges in the General Music Classroom?

Rachel recalls that her biggest challenges when she initially entered the general music classroom were curriculum integration, the use of kid friendly language, singing and vocal mechanics, and movement. She noted that she did not know any repertoire from the countries that students were studying in their social studies classes. "That was actually still at the birth of the Internet, so it wasn't even easily accessible for me to research that stuff online. I still had to go to the library" (interview, April 23, 2012). Rachel put in extra hours to ensure she had the materials she needed. She spent three hours each Sunday at her school planning lessons for the week and ensuring that she had her materials well prepared. With limited curricular resources available from her school system, she turned to the Macmillan Teacher's Editions for *Music and You* (Staton, Staton, Davidson, & Ferguson, 1988) as a resource for curriculum integration and lesson sequencing.

Rachel also felt the need to adjust her manner of speaking when she started teaching general music. She found herself discussing music theory as if she were still in her university theory classes. She noted that the kids "just glazed over" (interview, April

23, 2012). Rachel's use of language improved over time through trial and error. This process of self-discovery and self-correction is one of the hallmarks of developing teacher expertise (Anderson-Nickel, 1997; Berliner, 1986).

Movement was and remains a challenge for Rachel, especially with older students. She recalled, "I had no idea how to teach movement to students because in band we sit in chairs with instruments in our hands to play music" (interview, April 23, 2012). Over her career, she has gathered strategies and is more comfortable with movement in the primary grades. She remains uncomfortable with, and therefore avoids, using movement in the intermediate grades. This finding is similar to findings in Gohlke (1994) and Peddell (2005) who found that teachers gravitate toward the areas of the curriculum with which they have the most comfort. I discuss this theme in greater detail under the heading of the third question below.

After thirteen years, Rachel still cites vocal mechanics and vocal teaching as an area for improvement. She commented that she does not really enjoy vocal teaching.

With the younger students, I'll do a lot with matching pitch, but not a lot with enunciation and breathing. We'll talk about it, but I don't know really a lot about what I'm talking about—sit up straight and tall so you can breathe right, bring it into your stomach, into your lungs, don't breathe into your shoulders, that stuff—I'm kind of faking it, I guess, a little bit.

(interview, April 23, 2012)

Still, she has clearly gained some knowledge about vocal teaching because she is able to apply appropriate terminology, such as "enunciation" and "don't breathe into your shoulders," when discussing the topic. The techniques she mentions, however, are about

proper breathing in general. With the exception of “enunciation,” she could be describing breathing for a woodwind or brass player using the same language. Her language lacks descriptions of vocal technique such as the use of the palette or sinuses to shape sound, the presence of diphthongs or glottal clicks, or other similar language familiar to choral educators. It seems that vocal teaching is one of Rachel’s least favorite parts of her job. She continued, “In all honesty, between you, me, and the recorder here, I do it because I have to do it, not because I love choral music. I dislike the process of teaching vocal techniques. I just don't enjoy it at all” (interview, April 23, 2012). Over time, Rachel has adapted to learn how to use her voice effectively in her job. She commented on her improvement.

When I first started out, I had to have a recording to sing with when I was teaching the children, and now that's not the case. Now I can sing on my own and get a pitch off the piano and go with it, but it wasn't always that way. (interview, April 23, 2012)

It seems that Rachel’s dislike of choral teaching has led her to learn just enough about the topic that she feels she can do her job, but has also led her to focus her classes on other areas of the curriculum.

Rachel described three of the ways she has met her challenges. First, she has sought print resources to gather ideas and strategies for teaching. Second, despite any embarrassment she may have been feeling, she sought the advice of mentor teachers and colleagues. “I found myself feeling embarrassed,” she said, “having to call my mentor and admit that I needed help or that I didn’t know something” (interview, April, 23, 2012). Her mentor taught her about Orff-Schulwerk. She found more comfort and

confidence in a method that employed instruments as part of the teaching system. Finally, during our interview, Rachel talked about her graduate program as having a practical, rather than research-oriented, approach. My investigation of her graduate institution's Graduate Music Education Handbook confirmed her description of the program. The degree includes Current Trends in Music Education, a Seminar in Choral Music, and Research Methods in Music Education classes. The remainder of the required 19 credits included musicology, theory, and performance. Students then choose a 15-hour program of electives, which are specialized classes that focus on specific philosophies, pedagogies, and the applications of those pedagogies in the classroom. I have omitted the citation of the University's website to help protect Rachel's identity. By enrolling in this program, Rachel's graduate study essentially became a general music methods course.

In What Ways Does Rachel Identify as a General Music Teacher?

One of the reasons Rachel feels committed to her job now is because "the majority of my graduate work was in general music" (interview, April 23, 2012). Rachel did not graduate with a master's degree because she did not complete enough electives in general or instrumental music to constitute a focus area for her degree. "Part of the reason is because I could not choose a track. I was so conflicted between instrumental and vocal I ended up doing a little of both. Go figure!" (email correspondence, September 24, 2012). This situation is a window into Rachel's conflicted professional identity. Although Rachel has been teaching general music for thirteen years, she does not professionally identify as a general music teacher.

Rachel's identity fits Gee's (2000) description of an identity that changes from context to context and is, at times, ambiguous. Rachel accepts the institutional identity of "general music teacher" that has been assigned to her by the institutions that govern the title—the profession of music education and her school system. Her acceptance of this identity is evinced by her choice to pursue some graduate work in general music in order to improve her qualifications in her job. Perhaps she accepts her institutional identity because she has stayed in the job for thirteen years. These evidences support a claim that others view Rachel as general music "kind of person" (p. 99) and that Rachel has accepted this label, to some extent, as part of her core identity.

Institutional identities exist on a continuum between a "calling" and an "imposition" (Gee, 2000, p. 103). Rachel may exist somewhere in the middle of this spectrum. She answers the institutional call for general music teaching by striving to create an environment where those children who wish to continue with music will gain the skills necessary to do so and where all children can get a break from their high-stakes educational lives. At the same time, the employment conditions in her district have in some ways imposed her institutional identity upon her.

In one important way, Rachel has made an active choice to remain a general music teacher. When I emailed her after our interview and asked her about the instrumental opportunity she allowed to pass, she replied,

I can actually tell you the year. It was the 2005-06 school year. I know this because I had just had my daughter. She was less than one year old and the timing to go full time and make a career change could not have been worse. This was the time when my children became my primary

focus and my career took the back seat. I was at a crossroads; choose what I wanted for myself, or to stay in my vocal position and have the ability to work part time (3 days a week). I chose to let the opportunity pass me by. Honestly? I don't regret it! (email correspondence, August 19, 2012)

While gender was not paramount in guiding this work a priori, gender roles were noted. For Rachel, motherhood was an important part of her core identity that outweighed any changes she may have desired for her professional life. Rachel spoke in a dichotomous way about work/home balance—choose what she wanted for herself or choose her family (Jackson & Sharman, 2002). This finding is similar to findings in Robinson (2010) whose participants cited work/home balance as an important factor in their decision to choose elementary general music.

In professional settings, Rachel identifies herself both as a general music teacher and as an instrumental specialist. After our interview, Rachel later wrote to me in an email.

When I first took my position, I felt as though I identified with the instrumental teachers far more than the vocal teachers. As I moved around the district, I always made it a point to get to know these teachers, and I tried my best to help or accommodate these teachers because we often shared a space and having been an instrumental teacher myself, I understood what it was like to be a teacher without a home. All the while, I let these teachers know that I was still interested in getting back into instrumental teaching because at the time that was my intention. When

years went by without any positions opening up, I found that I had made great connections and friends, but still found myself as a vocal teacher. To this day, many of these teachers let me know when they hear of a position opening up, but the timing has just never been good for me to make the change. (email correspondence, August 19, 2012)

In dialogue with other professionals, Rachel makes her instrumental background and preference known. Her district music supervisor is aware of her continuing desire to teach instrumental music and has offered her the opportunity to apply for instrumental positions over the course of her career. This piece of evidence would seem to indicate that, at least to some, Rachel is an instrumental music “kind of person” (Gee, 2000). This is one possible D-identity, one that Rachel actively recruits through discourse with others.

For Rachel, the representational system (Gee, 2000) through which she is defining her identity is a system that, in her view, has “types” of music educators. She looks through a lens that distinguishes general music specialists and elementary band teachers as two distinctive “kinds of people” within music education. Gee suggests that the ways we narrativize our experiences in relation to an interpretive system constitute our core identities—the identities that hold “uniformly, for ourselves and others, across contexts” (p. 99). Rachel’s comment that sometimes she feels as though she is “hanging out here until something better comes along” (interview, April 23, 2012) indicates that she has not adopted a “core identity” (Gee, 2000) that aligns with the institutional identity of “general music teacher” assigned to her by her school district and profession. Based upon her narrativization of her career, her core identity seems more in line with the D-identity she actively recruits during dialogue with instrumental teachers.

Rachel has sought out professional development and gained the knowledge necessary to engage her students in the musical experiences she believes they deserve. She is an experienced general music teacher, able to assist her younger teaching partner in finding activities, planning lessons, and assessing curricular standards. She seems content to carry the I-identity “general music teacher” even though it is not her preference to do so. Rather than resolving tensions by changing her “core identity” to more closely match her I-identity, she has instead expanded her core identity to include both instrumental and general music teaching.

In our interview, she said, “Don’t sweat the small stuff, and it’s all small stuff” (interview, April 23, 2012). Rachel places great value on her family and her relationships with people, including her students. This perspective has helped her to see beyond the details of her day-to-day and moment-to-moment professional tasks and instead to find happiness by expanding her notion of what it means to be a “general music teacher.”

How does Rachel Position Herself Within Music Education?

When Rachel first started teaching, her approach to general music was colored by her preference for instrumental teaching.

When I started teaching elementary vocal music, I drew a lot from my experience of instrumental music because it would frustrate me what the students didn't know. I would spend so much time trying to teach my instrumental students, “This is a quarter note, this is worth one beat.” I was almost teaching my general music students just to prepare them for band, so that the band teacher would be able to start teaching the mechanics of the instrument and musicality as opposed to the nuts and

bolts of things that they should have learned in general music. That's the way I really focused in on rhythm, reading pitch, dynamics, tempo, and those performance pieces. I really was preparing these students for band.

In some ways, she continues to “play to her strengths” in her teaching. Rachel focuses on the elements of music that she feels are most important to developing good reading skills. She focuses on counting rhythms, reading absolute pitches (rather than solfège), and the expressive elements of dynamics and tempo. Additionally, she enjoys the unit on instruments of the orchestra. She enjoys performing on a variety of instruments for the students.

As I noted above, this preference for teaching instruments of the orchestra, along with a “band preparation” curriculum is similar to findings in Peddell (2005). Peddell found that among general music teachers in Pennsylvania, those with instrumental training were more likely to rate “instrumental recognition as one of the most important activities to teach” (p. 98). The participants in the study, no matter their performance backgrounds, also indicated a preference for activities more closely related to their training or more in-line with personal areas of comfort. Similarly, Gohlke (1994) found that vocal majors in a general music methods class tended to develop lesson plans focusing on the concepts of pitch and genre. They developed activities around singing, movement, and drama. Instrumental majors focused more on music literacy. Participants in both the Gohlke and Peddell studies seemed to gravitate toward teaching what was most comfortable for them. Rachel has done the same.

Sometimes, if I'm being honest, I just wouldn't teach certain topics because I just didn't know what I was doing. It just didn't get taught.

“Well, maybe next year I'll figure that out!" Those poor kids were robbed.

(interview, April 23, 2012)

Rachel continued, “Even now, it seems I’m still preparing them for band even though I know they won’t necessarily join” (interview, April 23, 2012).

Rachel’s curricular choices seem to indicate a philosophical position that focuses on music literacy and preparation for instrumental ensembles in older grades; but, when I asked her to cite her beliefs about her role in the greater scheme of music education, she took a wider view than her curricular choices may indicate.

A lot of times I say that I'm more a teacher of life than I am of music. If something happens in one of my classes and we get off topic and we can sit there and talk for a majority of the lesson, but we get a life lesson out of it, then I'm okay with that. I enjoy getting to know the kids on the individual basis. I like knowing about their families and their cultures and what their life is like, what's important to them. I love sharing stories about my own family and my own experiences with them. And that has nothing to do with music. I feel like in some respects I'm a blast from the past because I'm not all about the next assessment. I still teach in a way where we're going to have fun and experience it. If they hate music and it's not their thing, I hope that they would be able to look back and say, “That was one teacher that really actually cared about me. She really wanted to know what my dog's name was or when I had a bad day she was there to listen to me.” (interview, April 23, 2012)

Rachel sees her role as going beyond that of a music teacher. In her view, she is preparing those students who want to continue with music to do so and providing valuable experiences to those students who do not wish to continue. In this way, she positions herself as more than a music teacher. She is a teacher of children who teaches music.

Annie

Gee (2000) suggests “I-identities can be put on a continuum in terms of how actively or passively the occupant of a position fills or fulfills his or her role or duties” (p. 103). The continuum extends from *calling* to *imposition*. Of the six participants in this study, Annie seems the least comfortable with her institutional identity as a general music teacher. She accepted her position out of a sense of economic need. Her institutional identity may be interpreted as an economic imposition. Still, this does not necessarily mean that Annie is passive in fulfilling her duties. On numerous occasions during our two interviews, Annie articulated a theme of earnestness. She wants to do well in her job, even though it is not the job she would choose if she were offered a chance at an instrumental position. She is struggling because, in her view, her undergraduate education gave her little preparation for a general music position and when she took her position she felt she had “no clue” (interview, May 1, 2012) what she was doing.

In addition, Annie has had personal challenges to overcome. She was bullied as an overweight child. During our interview she described herself as the “unpopular fat girl” (interview, May 1, 2012). Music was her escape from the cruelty of her peers. Additionally, her family life was disrupted by a poor relationship with her father and the death of her mother during her early adult life. “I don’t have any family left, really,” she

stated (interview, May 1, 2012). This lack of family connections was one reason she was willing to move more than 1,000 miles for her job.

Annie's unfamiliarity with the structure and practices of general music and her personal challenges are compounded by her teaching placement. She is working in a Title I school where some students are openly "defiant" with parents that "don't care" (interview, May 1, 2012). The two music teachers before Annie left after one year, although Annie did not know the reasons for their departures. According to the district website, approximately 85% of the students in her school are considered "economically disadvantaged." This is higher than the district rate of 67%. Nearly 20% of students have Limited English Proficiency. The school has a 21% mobility rate. Forty-five percent of the teachers in her building have five or fewer years of teaching experience with an average of twelve years' experience. I gathered this demographic information from the "report card" for Annie's school as issued by the state's education agency. It was available in .pdf format from the district website. I have not given a specific citation for this information in order to protect Annie's identity.

If I had to choose one word to describe Annie, it would be resilient. Each of the factors I have described could negatively affect a person's professional morale. The fact that Annie is coping with them in combination increases my respect for her. Although there is some bitterness to her tone when she speaks about her professional journey, there is also excitement when she talks about the activities she does with her students, such as drama, or when she talks about resources she has found that she really likes, such as Artie Almeida's *Mallet Madness* (2007). Her enthusiasm also comes through on the music page of her school's website. It features a picture of students actively engaged in a

composition activity. Based upon my navigation of the site, Annie is the only teacher in her school to have developed a specific webpage for her class.

What were Annie's Initial Challenges?

Annie's greatest challenges stem from unfamiliarity with the content and format of general music lessons. In her first year, her discomfort with the format of the lessons included a lack of understanding as to how to structure a classroom to facilitate efficient transitions. This contributed to classroom management challenges but she states that she is more comfortable with management the longer she teaches and cites her skills in this area as a "work in progress" (interview, August 23, 2012).

Management was also one factor in her decision not to use her barred instruments in her first year. "Kids with mallets and bars," she said, "it just freaks me out" (interview, May 1, 2012). In addition to management concerns with Orff lessons, Annie does not feel "personally comfortable" with the method. Her undergraduate education did not include general methods and she did not student teach at the elementary level. She has gathered some materials from her state music education conference and has begun to incorporate the barred instruments into her lessons, but two years into her career she still expresses a high level of discomfort.

Annie expressed frustration with a perceived lack of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) for certain specifics of the curriculum—vocal technique, solfège, and Orff ensembles. One example she gave really stood out in this regard.

I feel like I'm good at singing, but I don't know a whole heck of a lot about teaching vocal technique. I do have a good voice. I was a vocal major when I first started music education at a different university because

I was not good enough yet on the clarinet. I only stayed there for one term. It was too far from home. I continued voice lessons at the community college for a year and a half. Even with that background, I feel as if everything that I was taught when I took voice lessons is way too advanced for these kids. If I said, “Take that soft part in the back of your throat and lift up,” those kids would be, “What are you talking about?”

(Interviews, May 1, 2012 & August 23, 2012)

Here, Annie is demonstrating a depth of content knowledge about vocal technique. She understands the mechanics of the voice and how it can be used to produce good tone. Her frustration comes from her impression that she doesn’t “know a lot about teaching vocal technique.” She does not feel she has the pedagogical tools to share her knowledge of the soft palette with students.

Annie also cited solfège as a specific challenge. She distinguished teaching singing and songs from teaching solfège. Annie is a quality vocalist and is familiar with children’s repertoire. She has learned how to use an echo technique to facilitate the learning of songs by rote. She does not feel challenged by singing, just the specific aspect of solfège.

I actually talked to one of the other elementary music teachers. She started the same year I did, but she was a vocal major so she followed her track and knows what she is doing. I asked her, “When do you teach what solfège?” Being the band-o and being the real smart one that I am, I started them all on *do*, and we all started *do-re-mi*. When you play in band, it often starts on the *do* of the key, or ends on the *do* of the key.

That's just how it works. I assumed *do* would be the start, and then *do-re-mi* just makes sense because it's stepped and there's no big leap. It's just comfortable for the kids to just go *do-re-mi*. I had no clue what I was doing. (interview, May 1, 2012)

Two primary themes emerged from this story. The first is that Annie said twice that she does not know what she is doing. First, she referenced a vocally trained colleague who “followed her track and knows what she is doing,” implying that Annie does not. Then, at the end of the statement, she actually said, “I had no clue what I was doing.” Annie also belittled herself by saying “being the real smart one that I am” in a tone meant to convey a meaning opposite her words. The second theme is counter evidence to her claim that she does not know what she is doing. Annie drew on her knowledge as a musician, and, to the best of her ability, developed a system for her students to use. She attempted to apply musical logic in her choice—the song most often starts or ends on the tonic of the key. Annie also tried to apply pedagogical logic in her choice. She discussed how having the students sing by step makes sense because it is “comfortable.” Contrary to her statements, Annie does have a clue as to what she is doing. The solution she developed lies outside the traditionally accepted progression for elementary solfège and she therefore decided that her solution was “wrong.”

After she told me this story, I let her know that not everyone starts with *so-mi*, and that there are some methods, such as John Feierabend's (2001) *Conversational Solfège*, that advocate for beginning with the first three tones of the scale. She seemed gratified to know that perhaps she was not as entirely off base as she had previously thought.

As a second year teacher, Annie has had few opportunities to pursue professional development and learn more about the content of the general music curriculum. She is facing her challenges by attending state music education conferences and by relying heavily on her support network of fellow elementary music teachers. She has worked with a few of them on a team to develop a scope and sequence for elementary music in the district.

The networking has been key. Those people will get you through some of the darkest hours. There's a lot of things that you learn in the field that there isn't coursework for, like parent phone calls, but that's stuff you learn along the way. You've got to network and you'll have people to help you. (interview, May 1, 2012)

Each participant in this study received a printed resource from me as a form of reciprocity. I went a bit farther for Annie by providing a list of suggested resources for Orff, Solfège, and movement with young students. I also took some pictures of the proactive behavior management system that I use in my classroom and gave her some suggestions as to how she might implement similar measures in her space. I will continue to be available to her as part of her extended network of support.

In What Ways Does Annie Identify as a General Music Teacher?

Annie is still uncomfortable in many aspects of her job. She has not adopted a “core identity” (Gee, 2000) as a general music teacher.

It's not necessarily that I hate what I'm doing or anything of that nature.

It's more or less that I always wanted to be a band director and I miss it. I miss it a lot. They're always looking for general music teachers, and I feel

that band is something that I need to try, just for me; just to show myself that all that training I went through in college can be applied. (interview, May 1, 2012).

In line with this statement, Annie is continuing to seek instrumental positions. In the summer of 2012 she applied for instrumental positions and had three in person interviews. “I do the very best I can in interviews; but, it’s not a comfortable situation for me” (interview, August 23, 2012). She expressed her desire to keep trying.

In many of her day-to-day activities, Annie has a large gap between her I-identity and core identity. She attempts to navigate that gap by applying new materials of instruction in her lessons. After our first interview, I sent Annie a follow-up question. I asked, “When did you first feel like a general music teacher?” She replied:

I don’t think I felt like a general music teacher until the spring semester of my first year teaching. I went to the music education conference, and I received a lot of excellent teaching tools for my classroom. I attended numerous seminars, and I purchased a lot of books to help me along my way. They had some awesome activities for kids. When I began implementing what I learned from those sessions, I began feeling much more comfortable. The kids loved the activities, and I had no problem using them in my room. I even started incorporating my own ideas, and that’s when I felt like I was “coming into my own.” When I saw that the kids were retaining what I taught them, I felt like I was doing something right. I thought: if the kids get it, and they remember it, then clearly I

know at least a LITTLE bit about what I'm doing! (emphasis in original, email correspondence, May 16, 2012)

In this short essay, Annie directly relates “feeling like a general music teacher” with her level of comfort with the materials and activities of instruction. This is in line with findings in a study by Beijaard, Verloop, and Vermunt (2000). In their survey of experienced secondary school teachers ($N=80$), they focused on three areas of knowledge that contribute to a professional identity—content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and didactic knowledge. They concluded, “In their perceptions of their professional identity, many teachers shifted specifically from subject matter expertise to didactical and pedagogical expertise during their careers” (p. 761). Similarly, according to Annie’s statement, the more comfortable she feels with her pedagogical and didactical skills, the more she identifies as a general music teacher.

How does Annie Position Herself Within Music Education?

“I’m starting the kids off,” Annie told me. “Their experience with music now is going to influence their experience with music later.” (interview, May 1, 2012) Her focus seems to be on getting students to enjoy the content so that when they get to secondary school, where music is an elective, they will choose continued participation. Beyond this desire to help students develop an appreciation of the content, Annie spoke little about how she positions herself within the larger scheme of K-12 music education. My interpretation of this is that Annie is too early in the process of developing her professional identity to give many cognitive resources to thinking about the larger scheme of music education. She is facing the day-to-day challenges of the early years of teaching with little time to plan lessons, let alone think about the larger scheme into

which those lessons fit. She described her schedule and her administration's expectations this way during our first interview.

I don't have choir in my school. I have grade-level concerts. The principal actually lets me get away with a lot. As long as I do one performance per grade level, she's very lenient on what they do, just as long as they get that performance experience. I can take them Christmas caroling to the nursing home and that counts. In general music class, I have half-hour periods. I'm actually pretty lucky. I see the kids at least twice a week, sometimes three, depending upon the week. My planning period is first thing in the morning for one hour, and then I have 10 classes. I usually plan from 7:55 to 8:45, and then I get classes up until 12:05, take my half-hour lunch, and then I get classes the rest of the day. (interview, May 1, 2012)

Annie's statement that she "gets away with a lot" may come from inexperience. Ten classes per day with six grade level performances per year is a demanding schedule. If Annie continues in her position for a fourth year or beyond and as she becomes more comfortable with the general music curriculum, she may have greater cognitive resources to devote to broader philosophical issues.

Lynn

What were Lynn's Initial Challenges?

Lynn cited use of her voice as her primary instrument and the "multifaceted lesson plans" (interview, May 21, 2012) of general music lessons as her most important initial challenges. Along with the multifaceted lessons, she cited classroom management as a challenge.

In general music, there's a greater variety of activities—singing, moving, listening, creating, instruments, and transitions to plan for and manage. There can be no downtime between activities. Transitions are sung or chanted rhythmically: “Scarves away, scarves away, time to put the scarves away.” Then it's right into the next song. (written essay, May 30, 2012)

Still, when Lynn spoke about these challenges, she did so casually. There was no note of complaint in her voice. These were challenges that she accepted as part of her decision to change her focus to early childhood music. She wanted to confront and conquer them. She did so by seeking continued Kindermusik training and also by learning from other Kindermusik teachers.

In What Ways Does Lynn Identify as a General Music Teacher?

In applying the definition given by Gee (2000), Lynn has adopted a “core identity” as a general music teacher. Changing from instrumental to general music was a purpose-filled decision for Lynn. She readily accepted the professional challenges that accompanied that decision.

Lynn had several distinct and important moments of decision during her life that could be cited as times when a change toward a “core identity” as a general music teacher was occurring. First, there was her decision to pursue musical activities with her son. Second, there was the decision to pursue Kindermusik training. Third, there was the decision to leave instrumental music entirely and focus on teaching and running her studio. Finally, there was her decision to pursue her PhD in teacher education with a focus on early childhood. All of these decisions have led Lynn to welcome the

expectations of the I-identity and D-identity known as “general music teacher” into her core identity.

Additionally, Lynn recalled a specific moment when she began to identify herself as a general music teacher.

In my second year of general music teaching my daughter was a toddler, and I wanted to be the mom with her and not the teacher, so we enrolled in a class at another Kindermusik studio. I was amazed at how the teacher had everything memorized, and could add songs on the fly to fit the class dynamics. After I had taught general music for a few years, I recalled this, and realized that I had begun doing the same thing. When I realized I had achieved what I had admired in my daughter’s teacher, I felt like a general music teacher. (written essay, May 30, 2012)

Here, Lynn is equating a core identity transition with metacognitive recognition that she possessed pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) and the expertise to flexibly adapt lessons in process (Berliner, 1986; Elliott, 1992). Her level of comfort with the material and pedagogical practices of general music seems an important key to her identity transition.

How does Lynn Position Herself Within Music Education?

The way Lynn positions herself within the music education community has evolved across her career. In each phase of her career, she has adopted new philosophical positions that have in turn changed the way she positions herself within the music education community.

Lynn began her career as a teacher of the few. She recalled:

I said the most terrible thing. I said that once people hit middle school, they have decided whether they're going to be musicians. They are either going to be in band or choir, and there should be no general music in middle school. (interview, May 21, 2012)

At that early time in her career, Lynn positioned herself within music education as a teacher of those who had the talent, drive, and desire to pursue it. Her desire to spend time musically with her son inspired her to investigate early childhood music, and as she began to pursue Kindermusik training, she developed a philosophy focusing on the importance of music to children's development.

The national standards all mention K-12, but there are prekindergarten standards in the same document. That foundation is really important to develop the readiness skills to begin to learn concepts in kindergarten. (interview, May 21, 2012; narrative edits, August 30, 2012)

As she moves into a third phase in her career, Lynn has maintained this philosophical point of view but is striving to play a new role in its implementation. Influenced by her reading of music education research, particularly Edwin Gordon and Lucy Green, Lynn supports music of all kinds for students of all ages.

There should be music training from infancy through high school. General music classes and a variety of performance options should be available for students at every grade level. It could be any combination of keyboarding, guitar, drumming, or a more appreciation type class—absolutely any and all of these. There are so many students that we are not serving throughout high school. It comes down to knowing your students.

I'm very much a social constructivist. Finding out what the strengths and developmental levels of the students are applies in all areas of teaching.

(interview, May 21, 2012)

In obtaining her PhD degree, Lynn is repositioning herself for a third time. From her institutionally authorized position as a teacher educator, she may be able to influence music education through her work with undergraduate and graduate students, and her work as a researcher and author.

Alex

What were Alex's Initial Challenges?

Alex cited the structure and transitions of general music lessons, "figuring out" how to work with young children, and teaching singing and choir as his biggest initial challenges. He first encountered difficulty with structure and transitions during his part-time jobs as an early childhood music instructor.

I learned right away that you had to do a lot in a little amount of time and you cannot spend too much time on one thing at all....You've got to appeal to what four year olds are interested in. (interview, May 21, 2012)

Working through these early difficulties has paid dividends for Alex in his public school position. He cited the benefits of the early childhood classes as a source for learning about transitions and management as well as a wellspring for learning children's musical literature from around the world. The structure of lessons continued to challenge Alex in his first general music position at a private school. He cited differences he sees between planning an effective band rehearsal and planning the numerous age-appropriate activities in a general music lesson

In addition to the challenge of structuring lessons, the challenge that “pop[ped] right into” (interview, May 21, 2012) Alex’s head was chorus. Alex did not have any vocal training as part of his university program. According to Alex’s transcripts, he had no coursework that required singing beyond that required for aural theory or conducting classes. He had one general music methods class that, according to him, focused mostly on upper elementary and middle school general music. “I guess that would be one thing I would attribute to my undergraduate education leaving me a little high and dry.” He qualified his statement by saying, “I don’t know how they would fit more credits into a program that’s already so full of credits.” (interview, May 21, 2012).

He also commented that he wished he had figured out earlier that he wanted to teach general music. His statement carried a matter-of-fact rather than negative tone. “You can’t really go back. Seeking graduate courses was a necessity” (interview, May 21, 2012). Alex has actively pursued graduate coursework and plans to begin a masters’ program in the next few years. During the summer of 2012, he took a Level IV Orff workshop. “Every Year,” he says, “I get more comfortable.” (interview, May 21, 2012)

In his three years in the public schools, Alex has sought the assistance of colleagues to help him in what he felt were areas of weakness.

When I was at the long-term subbing position before I came here, there was another teacher who was a really good choral major. He helped me out a lot, feeding me a little bit at a time about what I needed to do. The teacher I covered for in that first position has also been really helpful in giving me resources and ideas. I just picked up more every single time. (interview, May 21, 2012)

Anderson-Nickel (1997) and Duling (1992) both noted the assistance of colleagues as an important factor in the development of teaching expertise. Additionally, Hobbs (2012) has written that the assistance of within-area colleagues can be especially crucial to teachers who are teaching outside of their sub-specialties. Colleagues have been a supportive factor in Alex's transition to a core identity as a general music teacher. I continue to address this aspect of Alex's case under the next heading.

In What Ways Does Alex Identify as a General Music Teacher?

Alex has developed a strong "core identity" as a general music teacher. He enjoys many aspects of general music teaching including singing, but during the interview, he returned three times to the concept of creativity. He enjoys helping his students to find their creativity.

Our sixth grade has to take an assessment. They have to create their own melody to a set of text.... I think this year, my sixth graders did a much better job than in the past. I feel like I'm getting a better knowledge on how to get them to understand first how to put words into a proper rhythm and then take those words and make it into a singable melody. It's pretty cool, actually. (interview, May 21, 2012)

He sees himself as a creative person and believes it helps him in his job.

I feel like I'm a pretty creative person. I've been a songwriter for a while. Trumpet was my main instrument, but I'm a big lyricist and that kind of stuff. I love making up my own songs. I think that really helped me with that creative edge with younger kids. Being able to create things for them

and help them create things as well I think is a big strength that I bring to the table. (interview, May 21, 2012)

Finally, Alex draws an important distinction between the creativity he sees in general music and the lack of creativity in an instrumental teaching position. He noted that in instrumental music you have to “stick to rules...go to festivals...and...earn those ratings” (interview, May 21, 2012). He feared that he would be stifled creatively in that type of work environment.

The initial shift in Alex’s core identity was away from high school band rather than being specifically toward general music. His move with his fiancée to the east coast provided him an opportunity to work in a school where he could continue to teach band while testing the waters of general music. “It felt ideal, because I could start working with younger kids as well as continue doing what I knew how to do which was band” (interview, May 21, 2012). During his time in this position, Alex had an opportunity to compare the teaching and learning occurring in both settings and decided general music was more in line with his vision for himself as an educator. The “creativity” aspect of Alex’s core identity was a match for an I-identity as a general music teacher. It is an I-identity that Alex holds as a “calling” (Gee, 2000, p. 103) rather than an “imposition.” Thus, he has integrated that I-identity into his core identity.

Orff Schulwerk also influenced Alex’s shift to self-identifying as a general music teacher. His interaction with the method continues play a role in how he identifies himself because it shapes his pedagogical choices and his interactions with other professionals (D-identity). When describing his Orff coursework, he mentioned that he “fell in love” with the method (interview, May 21, 2012). He clearly enjoys it and his

depth of knowledge of the method was evident in our conversation. Several of the examples of his teaching that he offered during our interview were Orff lessons of which he was particularly proud. He discussed creating arrangements and using modal tonalities with the students. He also expressed frustration with the physical arrangement of his room, which contains permanent risers that limit the locomotor movement that is an essential component of the Orff-based lessons.

There are specific times, such as teaching chorus, when Alex is challenged by holes in both his content knowledge (singing) and his pedagogical content knowledge (how to teach singing). The evidence from his interview, however, suggests that he sees those as challenges to be met and conquered. Alex finds creative ways of adapting and changing to meet the needs of his students. Overcoming the challenges strengthens his core identity as a general music teacher. Alex's adaptation and efforts to overcome deficiencies in his pedagogical knowledge are evidence of a core identity strongly associated with general music.

How does Alex Position Himself Within Music Education?

Alex's responses indicate that he believes his job is to offer as comprehensive a music education to his students as possible. When I asked him about the ways his classroom choices align with his view of his contribution to music education, he cited the importance of performing, notational literacy, creativity, and aesthetic appreciation.

He cited performing in two areas.

Singing definitely is one of the top priorities. I do believe I should give them the best singing voices that I can train them in. That's what I'm working on right now, just to get them to use a proper singing voice and to

know their head voices, where their registers lie, and all that kind of stuff. I think that's very, very important. I do a lot of falsetto singing, which they laugh at of course; but, I do whatever I can to get them to sing in a proper register. (interview, May 21, 2012)

He also cited performance on recorder.

They learn all the treble clef note names at the end of second grade, beginning of third grade. Then, I give out the recorders in January of third grade and they know that this is G and this is E. It's like going backwards, if you will. They've been reading all the notes so far and then once they get the recorder, they can see it, and they know that this is G and this is E. (interview, May 21, 2012)

Interwoven in this statement is his focus on notational literacy. He also cited the importance of notation on another occasion during our conversation when he discussed how he'd like them to be able to read music in the treble clef so that they can participate in group singing such as at church.

As I noted in the previous section, Alex's students apply their skills in singing and notational literacy in a culminating sixth-grade composition project. The project is required by his district, but Alex' expressed agreement with the principles of the assignment.

At first I think that everyone was nervous about how the grades would affect the teacher performance overall; but, I think it's a good way to show how our program is just as important as some other subjects in the school. (interview, May 21, 2012)

Alex's various statements about the assessment reflect a growing confidence in his pedagogical content knowledge. He is gaining knowledge about how to better help his students to access their own knowledge in new or unique situations. Alex values creativity and supports his students in learning to exercise their own creativity.

Finally, Alex tries to promote aesthetic appreciation for all types of music in his classroom. He mentioned it on multiple occasions during our interview. This quote summarizes his meaning on those occasions.

I think that's one of the big things that brought me to general music in the first place was being able to get them first—being able to mold them maybe in a different way, to see the world a little bit differently, to hear things they wouldn't normally hear and to appreciate those things. That's a big thing for general music teachers. (interview, May 21, 2012)

Alex values that among all music educators, he gets to see the children first, and he positions himself to provide them with the most comprehensive music education he can.

Carina

What were Carina's Initial Challenges?

Carina was one of two participants in this study who considered her undergraduate education to be comprehensive, including both choral and instrumental methods. Carina did not mention any challenges with the format of single lessons or with understanding how to scaffold concepts for students. She provided me with her notebook from general music methods class. The topics covered in the class could be divided into three areas—(a) history and philosophy, (b) materials of instruction, (c) objectives and lesson planning. The class included an introduction to the philosophies of Dalcroze, Orff,

and Kodály as well as an introduction to Froseth's concept of aural skills training. It also included an introduction to materials and skills of instruction including chording on guitar, speech pieces, folk songs, and recorder. Finally, the course required writing objectives, developing plans, and delivering instruction at a local elementary school. The lessons Carina developed included the concepts of rhythm, melody, harmony and form. These evidences support Carina's characterization of the class as providing her a broad foundation for teaching elementary music.

When Carina began her teaching career, she was the "extra" music teacher at two different elementary schools in the district. Each school had a full-time music position but had too many students for the primary teacher to see all of the classes twice per week. In one of the two schools, she did not have her own classroom and instead taught on the stage, divided from loud lunch periods by only a broken accordion curtain. When she was able to teach the same lesson at both schools, she transported the materials for her lessons with her from one school to the other. Additionally, the teachers she was cooperating with were second-year teachers themselves, and were first-year lead teachers in their buildings. They were still finding their own way and could not offer much help to her as informal mentors.

Carina also cited classroom management as a particular challenge. She felt ill-equipped by her student teaching experiences to manage the classes of students she was just getting to know. "In student teaching you only somewhat get an idea of what classroom management is like because you exist in the system with your cooperating teacher" (interview, April 30, 2012). She noted that even as she developed more

strategies for how to manage the classroom, retraining the students to meet higher behavior expectations was taxing.

I would have loved to have just gone to a different school and been able to start all over my second year and not have been like, “Uh, it’s completely my fault that you’re acting the way you are because I didn’t have it together my first year.” (interview, April 30, 2012)

Gordon (2001) notes that classroom management “may be among the most difficult challenges for teachers, particularly for beginning teachers” (paragraph 1). The four music educator participants in the case study portion of her mixed methods study each cited classroom management as a significant source of professional stress (Gordon, 1997). Like Carina, Gordon suggests that more attention should be paid to management strategies during pre-service teacher education and in the early years of induction to the profession.

The third challenge Carina cited during her early years of teaching was long-range planning. This was one shortcoming she cited of her general music methods class. The unit plan she developed, according to her account, covered the span of four lessons. I was able to find the unit plan in the documents she provided. It was an Orff-style arrangement of *This Land Is Your Land*, but it was unclear as to how many lessons it was intended to span.

When she entered the job market, the district that offered her a position had curricular indicators that, at minimum, let her know what kids should be able to do at what age. This positively influenced her decision to accept the position. Her district did not provide a scope and sequence, however, and she noted that she taught “whatever”

objectives she wanted to teach each week without necessarily making important connections for students from week to week. “It would have been really helpful to have it narrowed down, to have a map, to have something, a skeleton plan.” (interview, April 23, 2012)

Carina has continued her education. She completed her master’s degree in an academic music education program with courses in assessment, curriculum, research methods, music education history, sociology, and philosophy. That education affected her view of her position within music education, which I discuss in the third question.

In What Ways Does Carina Identify as a General Music Teacher?

Carina’s trajectory toward general music occurred within a specific Discourse space filled by individuals that valued certain “ways of being” (Gee, 2000, p. 110), including valuing the education system as an institution. Over time, she gained experiences with the dialogue of professional educators because both her parents and grandparents were educators. Within her own generation, two of her sisters are educators. It was a lifestyle to which she was accustomed and a professional identity she decided to adopt for herself while still in high school. Because of this background her desire to teach was initially more important than music education in particular. She entered college as a double major in math education and music education but she never completed her math certification.

Carina made a core-identity transition to general music teaching during her undergraduate years. This early decision was precipitated by her experiences with band directors in her high school and student teaching experiences. The teachers did not have a full schedule of ensembles. Rather, their schedules were filled with elementary-level

group lessons and study hall monitoring. This type of schedule did not appeal to her. “I was more interested in the elementary situation and the general music situation where I would be teaching classes throughout the day and not just rehearsing one ensemble and doing only lessons and having additional ensembles after school” (interview, April 30, 2012).

In some ways, during times she was making decisions important to her identity, Carina chose to avoid tension. Although she did consider a career in medicine during her high school years, a desire to remain within her comfort zone and enter teaching shaped her identity as she entered her undergraduate education. Carina did not like the conditions under which the band directors she knew were working. She chose general music, in part, to avoid working in those conditions herself. This is not unlike the participants in Robinson’s (2010) study or Samuel and Stephens’ (2000) study where participants chose positions that would complement rather than conflict with their personal philosophies.

An important aspect of Carina’s “core identity” is that she maintains her skills as a French horn player outside of school hours. She is a member of the community orchestra and recently performed Schumann’s *Concert Piece for Four Horns*. “I certainly would miss being a musician if I didn’t have an outlet for playing” (interview, April 30, 2012). Carina was one of only two participants who mentioned maintaining her skills as an instrumentalist as an important aspect of her core identity.

How does Carina Position Herself Within Music Education?

Carina noted that she does not know “where we fit in” (interview, April 30, 2012) as general music teachers. She attributes her uncertainty about her position to two

factors—a separation from her secondary colleagues in music education and the new philosophies she encountered during her graduate education. Carina teaches in a different state than where she grew up and she has never had the opportunity to get to know the music programs in her district at the secondary level. In her district, elementary general music teachers rarely if ever meet with 6-12 choral and instrumental directors.

I often times don't see the connection between general music and other music education K through 12 in that I really don't have much knowledge of what goes on in the secondary level. That's especially true in this state because I didn't grow up in this system and in our district, elementary teachers don't have much connection with the secondary level. I don't consciously make any connection. I'm not planning or teaching lessons thinking, "Okay, this is what they need for band or for choral studying going on." So, I'm not really sure how it fits in. (interview, April 30, 2012)

This aspect of the way Carina positions herself within music education echoes the survey respondents in Schonauer (2002). A salient theme among the respondents was that they preferred the company of other elementary music or elementary classroom teachers and they did not feel that secondary directors understood what elementary general music teachers do in their jobs. While Carina did not echo the sentiment that she feels secondary directors misunderstand elementary music, she does offer evidence of a disconnection from her secondary colleagues.

The second factor in Carina's indecisive self-positioning comes from her examination of music education philosophy during her graduate coursework. Carina

lamented the breadth of the general music curriculum in her district. I quote her here at length, even though this passage is in her narrative, for easy reference in the analysis that follows.

My approach, with general music being compulsory, is to try to get students into experiences where they're making music and evaluating music knowing what options are out there. During graduate school, I especially liked Reimer's approach—his idea that the way the national standards were envisioned was that you would have a class that would focus on performing a varied repertoire of vocal music and that you'd have another class that would focus on composing. It wasn't everybody does everything all the time. You have the freedom to say, "This is a composition focused course, and this is a performance focused course, and this is a theory focused course." I wish I had the opportunity to go more in-depth instead of feeling like I have to balance and really be covering all the standards in every grade. We just touch all these different topics, some of which you have to do those because those are on the test. Students need to know why. Instead it's just "What is this note and how many counts does it get?" It's not in a real setting. It should be, "Which of these measures is incorrect for the time signature?" or something more authentic. There are too many things that are wonderful activities and great musical experiences that we don't have time to do. I see a general music class as giving students the opportunity to experience different settings, access instruments, and access listening so that they can start to

develop tastes and have knowledge of what's out there. Then, they should have the opportunity to choose and pursue certain areas in more depth.

(interview, April 30, 2012)

Carina demonstrates metacognitive awareness in this passage—a struggle to integrate her personal philosophy into the curricular standards she is required to meet for her district. Several researchers address this phenomenon. Jorgensen (2003) suggests that teachers “make situated judgments on the basis of practical experience rather than rational theories and instructional methodologies” and on “externally mandated or more or less universally accepted rules or standards” (p. 12). Rodgers and Scott (2008) suggest, “Awareness and voice represent the ‘contested’ place where the normative demands of the external encounter the internal meaning making and desires of the teacher” (p. 733). Coldron & Smith, 1999) suggest that during the process of choosing, teachers are forced to adopt certain realities while rejecting others. In this way, Carina is struggling to position herself within the larger institution of her profession because she has difficulty reconciling her personal beliefs with external requirements. Within this contested place, she chooses pedagogical approaches, management style, repertoire, and advocacy positions. Carina recognizes that she is making situated judgments and it frustrates her because they are not the same judgments she would make if she had the freedom to make choices aligned with her personal philosophy. She has difficulty positioning herself within the larger institution of music K-12 music education because she does not necessarily agree with the “universally accepted rules or standards” (Jorgensen, 2003, p. 12) of that institution.

Maurice

What were Maurice's Initial Challenges in the General Music Classroom?

Maurice stated that the main challenges in his first year have been choosing age-appropriate activities, long-range planning and concept reinforcement, and putting closure to his lessons. He mentioned that he greatly appreciated a colleague who gave him a document that tells him “this is what they should know” for each grade level. With that document in hand and by gathering other resources, he is able to set a goal for a lesson and design appropriate learning experiences for his students. Without such a document, he states that he feels “completely helpless” (interview, May 16, 2012).

Maurice demonstrated his skills as a reflexive practitioner even when describing his challenges. He was strategizing ways of meeting his challenges during our interview.

One of the teachers in the county produced a “this is what they should know” for each grade, so that helps me. I can look at that and say, “My kindergartners should learn to at least aurally identify so-mi. I haven't taught that yet. So, let me find the last thing when you can clearly hear it.” Or, I remember about a month ago, my second graders had learned to identify *mi-re-do* and play *mi-re-do* on the xylophones. I thought, “I should bring back a piece and teach it to them to see that they can identify it again and play it again.” So it's been starting to build my curriculum, starting to build what I want my second graders to be able to play at the end of the year. I need to make sure they are prepped by doing xyz leading up to that. (interview, May 16, 2012)

In this dialogue, Maurice spoke about the challenge of knowing which skills his students should demonstrate and at what age. He also demonstrated that once he has a concept in mind, he is able to build that concept across multiple lessons to achieve a goal. He has both a long-range goal, “what I want my second graders to be able to play at the end of the year” and a short-range goal of “bringing back a piece and teaching it to them to see that they can identify *mi-re-do*.” He is aware of the importance of scaffolding across time to achieve understanding, which I consider to be an advanced skill for a first-year teacher. Later in our discussion, he again called attention to his desire to do better at offering conceptual reinforcement to students across time.

Okay, I taught you adagio or allegro last week, two weeks later, have you been able to remember? Can you identify adagio or allegro in this music?”

I could imagine how I need to strengthen more in my repetition. I think once I start to think about that, that's going to enhance my curriculum.... I need to build in vocabulary and say, “Is this AB form or is this ABA form? You tell me, you should know.” I told my fifth graders about different meters once this year and I haven't really come back to that. It's the higher level, educational side that I am not strongest at yet. (interview, May 16, 2012)

Maurice also criticized the timing of some of his lessons. He stated that he feels that he fails to bring musical closure for the students. He gave an example of a lesson where students were using scarves to create movement associated with the book *The Very Lonely Firefly* (Carle, 1995). The xylophones play as the fireflies “are dancing throughout the room” (interview, May 16, 2012). The first day that Maurice taught the

lesson, the students never got to perform the entire ensemble together and feel a sense of musical closure. Later in the week, with another class, Maurice was able to guide the students into a performance. The students performed for their teacher and created what he described as a more aesthetically pleasing experience.

Maurice has met his challenges by seeking the advice of colleagues, gathering printed resources, and attending Orff trainings. This past summer, he traveled to a well-known school of music to study for his Level II Orff certification.

In What Ways Does Maurice Identify as a General Music Teacher?

Maurice holds a core professional identity as a general music teacher. For Maurice, the transition from identifying as an instrumentalist to a general music specialist occurred during his undergraduate education. As he narrativized his trajectory (Gee, 2000), the themes most prevalent in his story were preference for lessons with creativity and variety, his desire to be a role-model for young children, especially boys, and his attraction to the Orff-Schulwerk approach.

The confluence of these three factors during his junior and senior years of college coincided with his enrollment in elementary general music methods.

Previously I had thought I would be a high school band director because I saw what my band director was doing and there were parts of it that I didn't like. I wanted to be able to control all of it. I wanted to be the hot shot, the head honcho, whatever you want to call it. But after seeing those beautiful elementary lessons, I didn't want to be a high school band director anymore. I wanted to teach children...I loved how in one week I could teach how to sing, I could teach how to do drumming, I could teach

movement, I could teach xylophone playing all in one week. And then I was like, "If I'm a band director, I'm just on a stage conducting pretty much every single week, leading kids through songs, repeating those songs, doing things like that." I'd much rather be having the diversity in my lessons (interview, May 16, 2012).

For Maurice, band directing was an activity of rehearsal and refinement. The variety he saw in general music was a match for his eclectic background as a performer and dancer. He was attracted to what he saw as the diversity and creativity in general music lessons.

During this time when Maurice was finding a personal connection with general music, he also described a process of finding a more personal connection with God. As a devout Christian, Maurice sought guidance through prayer and pastoral counseling. A visit to a home for at-risk boys reaffirmed for him a desire to be a role model for young children, particularly young boys. "I wanted to be in the elementary school where I can influence kids, where I can leave an impression on them of what a man could be to counteract their image, or lack thereof, of a man in their life" (interview, May 16, 2012).

Maurice's attraction to the Orff-Schulwerk approach to general music education solidified his choice to pursue general music teaching. He did a student teaching internship with a teacher who used the Orff approach, and he is seeking professional development during the summers. This past summer, he attended a Level II Orff workshop. His training influences the ways he structures his lessons. For example, in the firefly lesson description above, he involved the children in performance on barred instruments and improvised movement, both of which are part of the Orff tradition. He

spoke enthusiastically about what he learned during his summer session and stated his excitement to try modal arrangements with his students.

How does Maurice Position Himself Within Music Education?

Maurice described a series of influences—including his relationship with God, his background in dance, and his position as a male role model—that he holds as personally important. These influences have shaped the way he positions himself within music education.

Maurice described his classroom as a place where creativity is paramount. He expressed his desire to help students become creators, not just listeners. In his opinion, the creativity of the art is what helps inspire individuals to be passionate about it. In Maurice’s classroom, creativity can be an avenue to help his students find something that they are passionate about, even if it is not music.

I want to be able to teach them how to be passionate about something, how to be creators of something. I want to be able to get them to a point as fifth-graders that they can take x, y, and z, put it together and create a piece out of it. They are able to be problem-solvers, whether it’s in music or whether they are in science and they have to create an experiment.

(interview, May 16, 2012)

He added that when they are older, 75 percent of them would most likely not be involved in the arts. In the grand scheme, he added, his overall philosophy is “not necessarily related to music education” (interview, May 16, 2012) in the traditional sense of music literacy. Maurice’s statements on creativity and problem-solving are congruent with and importantly related to his desire to act as a role-model for students. He seems to be

expressing a desire to have a wider influence than helping students to be musically literate.

Individual Case Summary

In this section, I have used the research questions that guided this study to present individual-case analyses for the six participants. I have discussed the challenges each participant faced when they entered the general music classroom and related these challenges to the participants' backgrounds. Each participant in the study had a unique perspective on why he or she came to general music and each person's unique background posed different challenges when the participants entered the field. I also discussed these individuals' identity transitions in relation to a conceptual framework based on Gee (2000). I used the concepts of core identity and institutional identity to discuss the tensions these teachers navigated when developing their professional identities. I discussed how some participants have institutional and core identities that are in agreement while others have a gap between their institutional and core identities. Finally, I discussed the ways these teachers position themselves in relation to the institution of music education as a whole. There are some commonalities and themes in their stories. In the next section, I present the emergent themes from the study in cross-case analysis.

Cross-Case Analysis

Cross-case analysis provides the opportunity to interpret evidence from several cases and has the effect of making results more compelling because they occurred "across several representations of the phenomenon" (Borman, Clarke, Cotner, & Lee, 2008, p. 123). As with the individual analyses, I promote clarity in the cross-case analysis

utilizing the research questions as an organizational tool. Table 1 shows the organization of this section. There are four sections in the cross-case analysis. In the first section, I discuss emergent themes from this study that act as replications (Yin, 2009) of findings in Robinson (2010). I then discuss themes related to each of the three research questions in turn.

Table 1 Organization of Cross-Case Analysis

Research Question	Emergent Theme
Replication Findings	Concerns about “perceived limitations” (Robinson, 2010, p. 41) of ensemble teaching as an important factor in the choice to teach general music The structure and requirements of a band directing position can be a factor in a turn toward working with younger students
What challenges emerge when instrumentally-trained music teachers’ discuss their initial experiences in general music classrooms?	The uniqueness of general music can be a source of initial challenge Vocal topics are challenging for some instrumentally-trained general music teachers A given curriculum or scope and sequence guide can be of value to new teachers
If instrumentally-trained music teachers now identify as general music teachers, how did that change occur?	Changes in identification occur when core identities and institutional identities are in agreement
How do teachers self-identifying as instrumentally-trained general music teachers construct individual/group positionality in the music education profession?	These teachers position themselves as professionals in relation to their students, not their colleagues

Replication Findings

It was not my intention to attempt to replicate themes from Robinson (2010). Robinson's study investigated the initial choice to enter general music upon graduation. This study investigated the challenges instrumentally-trained teachers face when they enter the field and the ways these challenges shape their professional identities. Nonetheless, two emergent themes from Robinson's study were replicated in the data for this investigation. I present them here because, as Yin (2009) suggests, they provide "compelling support" for Robinson's propositions (Chapter 2, What are the potential multiple-case designs, Replication not sampling logic for multiple-case studies, paragraph 2).

Theme 1: Among those who chose general music because of preference, concern about "perceived limitations" (Robinson, 2010, p. 41) of ensemble teaching was an important factor in the choice to teach general music. Maurice, Alex, Carina, and Lynn all teach general music because they found that they prefer it to instrumental instruction. The participants described ways in which some aspect of teaching that they value, such as variety or creativity, was missing from instrumental ensemble teaching.

For Maurice, the variety of general music lessons excited him. "I loved how in one week I could teach how to sing, I could teach how to do drumming, I could teach movement, I could teach xylophone playing all in one week" (interview, May 16, 2012). Maurice described his undergraduate observation experiences, noting that he was excited for the next time he could observe in the schools to see what new and different activities the teacher would present in each lesson. His instrumental ensemble experiences did not

provide the variety he was seeking. Maurice described a lack of variety as a limitation of instrumental ensemble teaching.

Alex cited personal creativity as an exciting part of teaching general music. He described himself as a lyricist and songwriter. He enjoys composing songs for the students and helping them to compose their own songs and create their own activities for learning music. Alex mentioned how much he values creativity, personally and for his students, three separate times in our interview. He did not see as much room for creativity in instrumental music and that perceived limitation influenced his career path.

The limitations Carina perceived regarding instrumental ensemble teaching were more to do with the structure of secondary scheduling than limitations in teaching. I discuss these structural limitations a factor in career choice in Theme 2. Although she made no direct comparison with instrumental teaching, she implied that creativity in general music is important to her when she lamented that some of the creativity in her job has been limited recently by a requirement for two standardized tests per quarter in third, fourth, and fifth grades. She described the testing as impeding on musical experiences she wants to share with students. Her classes touch briefly on a breadth of topics and focus on the topics that are tested. Carina went on to describe a vision for music education where students would have the opportunity to exercise their own creativity by pursuing avenues of choice such as performance, composition, and individual lessons, that could foster a greater depth of experience.

For Lynn, creativity was a deciding factor for why she has stayed in general music.

While I was initially motivated to investigate early childhood music by my desire to educate and bond with my son, I resigned my band job and concentrated solely on general music because of the creativity. So much of band directing is invariable in teaching and in the calendar of events. There are only so many different ways to teach embouchures. I thought at one point, “I just cannot teach these chromatic clarinet fingerings one more time!” The calendar has many fixed items also, depending upon the level—football games, contests, holiday concert, solo and ensemble, pre-contest concert, concert band contest, spring concert, graduation, parades, pre-band camp rehearsal, band camp, and then we’re back to the football games again! Certainly, some teaching and calendar creativity is possible, and if I were to return to band directing now after teaching general music, I could be much more creative. However, overall I’ve found I can encourage musical development in a greater variety of ways as a general music teacher. I was motivated to change domains because of my son, but I stayed because of the creativity. (Email Correspondence, May 30, 2012)

Lynn’s comparison of the creativity in general music with the creativity (or lack thereof) in band directing echoes an emergent theme in Robinson’s (2010) study among individuals who chose general music teaching over instrumental instruction upon graduating. Robinson entitled his theme “Concerns regarding perceived limitations of instrumental music teaching and learning as it exists in schools” (p. 41). For these participants, the perceived limitations concerned issues of creativity and variety. The participants who chose general music from preference valued the variety of activities in

general music lessons and the creativity they can exercise in the general music classroom, even when it is limited by testing requirements.

It is important to note that each participant provided differently nuanced meanings for “creativity” and “variety”. However, the effect of any differing definitions is “less important” (Butt, Raymond, McCue & Yamagishi, 2003, p. 94) when one considers that what is important to this theme are the participants’ perceptions of creativity and variety in the moments they are making professional decisions. They based their decisions, in the moment, on their individual definitions. When they made the decision to teach general music, their personal perceptions of creativity and variety were features they found to be missing from instrumental instruction or valued in the general music setting.

Lynn, who is also a doctoral candidate, noted that if she were to return to instrumental music after teaching general music, she would approach it differently and would feel better able to be a creative pedagogue. The work of Lucy Green (2001, 2008) surfaced during our conversations. As a prominent scholar in the area of alternative pedagogies, Green highlights the importance of the musical knowledge and preferences that students bring to the classroom. Her original ethnographic work in *How Popular Musicians Learn* (2001) was a catalyst for the development of an experimental program of music learning, which she discusses in *Music, Informal Learning, and the School* (2008). Green argues that although there have been major changes in recent years to the content of the music education curriculum; there have been few changes to the method of delivery. Music education remains a largely teacher-as-deliverer/student-as-receiver model of apprenticeship. Based upon her work with 1,500 UK secondary school students and teachers, Green challenges the music education to adopt a curriculum that not only

includes popular content but also grants students “autonomy to *direct their own learning*” (emphasis in original, Chapter 1, Current trends and aims of the project, para. 2, Kindle Location 283).

Clements (2008) credits Green with bridging the “all too elusive gap between research and practice” (p. 1) and agrees that the time has come for music education to stop discounting the music of the youth culture. In critique, Clements suggests that Green’s work discounts the knowledge of the music teacher to the extreme, and that a balance between student-centered learning and an apprenticeship model is possible, and normal in many musical cultures of the world. Clements (2008) argues that the music education profession is in need of an overhaul.

Changes such as those that Green (2008) and Clements (2008) suggest may have made these participants less likely to perceive limitations in instrumental teaching. They may instead have found freedom to creatively express their musicianship, develop creativity in students, or plan lessons containing greater variety. These perceptions may have helped them to feel that they had more avenues to pursue within the field of music education.

Theme 2: The structure and requirements of a band directing position can be a factor in a turn toward working with younger students. Each participant with a preference for general music cited an aspect of band directing that acted as an important factor in the decision to teach general music. The two participants who still feel they may return to instrumental instruction are looking for elementary or middle school positions.

Alex, Maurice and Carina all made comments that they turned away from instrumental education because of an aversion to some aspect of the job. Alex gave an in-depth commentary.

I knew I definitely wanted to major in music when I get out of high school, so my senior year I got to follow my band director around and do what he did. It wasn't until college that the amount of work that you have to do for putting together a whole instrumental program started weighing on me. Just thinking about putting together all of those trips, putting together marching band shows. I felt like all of those things stifled me a little bit more. You need to present a concert and it needs to be with these specific instruments. So, that's the kind of stuff, I guess, that kind of started turning me off especially. I just never really wanted to be in charge of that huge band program. (Alex, interview, May 21, 2012)

Similarly, Maurice shared his thoughts about the repetitive nature of a band director's daily activities. He perceived it as more mundane than general music, which I have already discussed in the first emergent theme. Carina also found that, in her experience, the schedule of a band director was somewhat mundane during the school day and required an extended workday in order to develop a larger program with additional offerings. In both the high school she attended and the one where she student taught, band met for only one period in the school day. The remainder of the directors' schedules was filled with lessons at the elementary level and ancillary duties such as study hall. All additional ensembles, such as marching band or jazz band, were after school. There were no electives in the schedule such as music history or theory. Carina

concluded, “I was more interested in the elementary situation and the general music situation where I would be teaching classes throughout the day and not just rehearsing one ensemble and doing only lessons and having additional ensembles after school” (interview, April 30, 2012).

Before she began training in Kindermusik, Lynn had already made a turn from high school instrumental instruction to 5-8th grade instruction. After returning home from another state where her husband was pursuing his masters’ degree,

I was not going to get another high school band job, because it's very difficult to change jobs every few years. Also, a family decision had to be made regarding our careers. Having two high school band directors in one family would be very difficult, so I pursued the major area of my master’s degree, clarinet performance, and my husband taught band, grades 5-12. (interview, May 21, 2012; email correspondence, narrative edits, August 30, 2012)

The demanding schedule of high school band directing affected Lynn’s decision. She and her husband placed family before career. Lynn expressed no regrets about this decision.

Rachel and Annie are the two participants who feel they may return to instrumental instruction. However, the demands of high school directing have also affected their decision-making processes. When Rachel left her parochial schools to look for positions closer to home, she was offered a high school instrumental position in the district she currently works for. “I was offered the job but the program at the time was just a disaster. It scared me. I just didn't feel prepared to take it on” (interview, April 23,

2012). She said later in our interview that she kept an eye on the district's internal transfer list to watch for elementary positions.

I did look at the transfer list, and there were middle school and high school positions available for years and years and years, and the elementary positions just didn't come open. I'd had the instrumental position in the Catholic schools from grades four through eight, and then I had an elementary general position. I realized that I was much more comfortable with the elementary kids than I was with the middle school-aged kids. Honestly, I don't think elementary instrumental positions started to become available again until last year. That definitely played into my decision-making. If an elementary position had become available earlier, I think that I would have probably jumped on it. (interview, April 23, 2012)

Although she believes she may return to instrumental music, Rachel shares a common desire with the other participants in this study and with the participants in Robinson's (2010) study who chose general music because of a preference for working with younger children. Rachel fostered relationships with the band directors at the elementary schools where she taught general music. Although she taught general music, she let them know about her instrumental background and her desire to return to elementary instrumental instruction. In turn, they have let her know when elementary positions have come to be available. She specifically remembers the single occasion when an elementary instrumental position came available and she turned it down. "I can actually tell you the year—it was 2005-06 school year. I know this because I had just had my daughter" (email correspondence, August 19, 2012). Rachel did not want to return to full time work

in her daughter's early life. She described checking the vacancy list for her district and watching secondary level positions become available and passing them by, waiting for another elementary position that never opened. Like Lynn, Rachel considered her role as a mother to be an important factor in her decision to avoid high school positions. Narrowing her search to only the elementary level has limited her options for leaving general music.

Annie is actively seeking instrumental positions in an area up to one hour from her home. During our second interview she updated me on her summer job search.

I applied for a couple beginning band positions and one middle school. I didn't do any high school ones because high school is very competitive down here and I am not ready for that. I have no interest in getting a high school band position, at least not right now, because it is so competitive. Bands are expected to get their highest ratings. I'm not used to that kind of atmosphere. I don't feel adequately trained to be in that kind of atmosphere yet. (interview, August 21, 2012)

Despite wanting to return to instrumental instruction, Annie expressed that she does not feel the competitive nature of high school band in her state is a good match for her right now. "I have a wedding to plan. I can't even imagine doing that being a high school band director" (interview, August 21, 2012). She has limited her search for an instrumental position to elementary and middle school positions.

Robinson (2010) found that a preference for working with young children was a contributing factor in his participants' decision-making processes. This factor was also salient among all six participants in this study. Additionally, Rachel and Lynn serve as

confirmatory cases for a desire for work/life balance. In this sense, the six participants in this study act as confirmatory cases (Yin, 2009) for Robinson's findings.

What challenges do instrumentally-trained general music teachers describe when discussing their initial experiences in general music classrooms?

Theme 3: These participants see general music as unique and fundamentally different than band directing. The uniqueness of general music can be a source of initial challenge. The participants cited creativity, multi-faceted lesson plans, and classroom management as important aspects of general music that are different than instrumental instruction. For clarity, I will address each of these in turn and discuss the ways the participants used these aspects as a dialogue of “difference” (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

As I stated above, Lynn stayed in general music because of the creativity she perceived in direct relation to her earlier career as an instrumental teacher. She cited the monotony of a band director's routine as being very different from the multi-faceted nature of general music lessons. Alex and Maurice also made direct comparisons between the creativity and variety in general music and their perception of instrumental music as lacking those features.

I feel like general music is a much more creative outlet than instrumental music for the teacher as well as the students. I am not saying there isn't any creativity there. There is, but I feel like you don't get as much creativity in what you need to do. You've got to stick to the rules pretty well and go to festivals and you've got to earn these ratings....I would be afraid that a position like that would really make me regress—regret going

into music or not enjoy it as much as I could. (Alex, interview, May 21, 2012).

Similarly, Maurice stated that band directing involves leading kids on a stage “pretty much every single week” (interview, May 16, 2012). According to their statements, the freedom to express oneself creatively in a variety of ways is a fundamental difference between general music and instrumental instruction.

The participants did not only cite the variety in lesson plans, which Lynn described as multi-faceted, as a difference between instrumental instruction and general music. It was also a source of challenge for the participants.

Very early on, I had no idea what to do with some of the things in the general music curriculum. I had to teach myself before I could teach the kids. I spent three hours every Sunday at school, planning my lessons for the week and just sitting there scouring books, resources, and trying to figure out what to do with these kids. (Rachel, interview, April 23, 2012)

When I was at the private school, lesson planning was a challenge—trying to figure out exactly how many activities I needed to plan out for every period, picking good songs for the age group, good literature for the elementary school and those kinds of things. With the band it was kind of set. The lesson planned itself. It's just a rehearsal. You needed to work on these measures and that kind of thing. (Alex, interview, May 21, 2012)

When lesson planning for band, you study your score and you have your issues that you're going to rehearse. You give the band an objective, they play, you listen, evaluate and so on. In general music, there's a greater variety of activities—singing, moving, listening, creating, instruments, and transitions to plan for and manage. There can be no downtime between activities. Transitions are sung or chanted rhythmically: “Scarves away, scarves away, time to put the scarves away.” Then it's right into the next song. (Lynn, interview, May 21, 2012)

I should be dividing my class up more—five minutes of working on solfège, ten minutes of singing, ten minutes of rhythm, then five minutes calming them down and lining them up or something. I feel like I should have more of a rubric that I follow, I guess. (Annie, interview, May 1, 2012)

Annie, Lynn, Alex, and Rachel perceived the unique structure and variety of general music lessons as an important initial challenge when they entered the field. In our dialogue they made a direct connection between this challenge and their lack of experiences with general music in their instrumental training.

Finally, the multi-faceted nature of the lesson plans requires different management techniques than an ensemble setting. Alex recalled his first year working with toddlers. “I learned right away that you had to do a lot in a little amount of time and you cannot spend too much time on one thing at all” (interview, May 21, 2012). Annie

and Lynn also commented on transitions and management in a movement-oriented environment.

My management has gotten better in my second year. I'm a lot better as far as transitions. My first year I was like, "Oh my God, we have to go to something else. How am I going to do this?" Now I can be like, "Okay, you have five seconds to get from A to B." I'll count down and they will get there and they will be ready. It's a lot better from what it was when I started to what it is now. It's still not where I would like it to be, but it's a work in progress. (Annie, interview, May 1, 2012)

Similarly, Lynn noted that young children "like to move!" (email correspondence, August 30, 2012). She discussed general music as a movement-oriented environment requiring classroom management strategies including singing during transitions with the directions embedded in the song.

Carina cited classroom management as a challenge, but she did not relate it specifically to transitions during lesson activities. She instead related it to the volume of kids she had to get to know during her first year, the difficulty of teaching in two different schools where she was not the primary music teacher, and the auxiliary spaces that served as her classrooms, such as the stage.

Throughout these examples there is a common thread of "difference." This thought first occurred to me when reading Coffey and Atkinson (1996). In the book, they discuss their coding process during their research with anthropology graduate students. Their participants discussed the difference between anthropology and other social science disciplines and the difference between the culture of fieldwork and the culture of

academic writing. In both of these instances, Coffey and Atkinson applied the code “difference.” I saw a similarity in my research. On multiple occasions, the participants in this study described a challenge, strength, or aspect of general music that they enjoy by directly comparing general music to instrumental instruction. This makes sense for several reasons. First, the participants were aware of the nature of the study before our interviews. My initial email contact with them stated that I was investigating the challenges instrumental teachers face when entering the field of general music. Second, instrumental music education is an important frame of reference for these individuals. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggest that the way we tell our stories in the present is informed in important ways by our interpretation of the past. Given that these individuals have an instrumental background, it makes sense that such a background would serve as an important interpretive tool for them as they make sense of their present positions as general music specialists. Additionally, Gee (2000) suggests that we develop our identities using interpretive systems that exist in the discourses of institutions and individuals. In this case, the participants seem to be interpreting their experiences using a system that delineates between “types” of music educators. The presence of such an interpretive system has important implications for music education and I revisit this idea in Chapter 6.

Theme 4: Vocal topics, such as technique or solfège, are challenging for some instrumentally trained-general music teachers. Five of the six participants in this study mentioned some aspect of vocal teaching as a challenge. Chorus “popped right into” Alex’s head when I asked him about challenges during our interview (interview, May 21, 2012). “When chorus was thrown at me that first year I thought, ‘I feel so

uncomfortable here with this.” (interview, May 21, 2012). Finding himself a bit “high and dry” (interview, May 21, 2012) from the lack of singing in his personal life and little exposure to singing during his undergraduate education, Alex has turned to choral colleagues for assistance in developing his choral conducting skills.

Rachel accepts choral music as an area that she must do for her job, but she doesn’t prefer it and instead places greater emphasis on other areas of the curriculum. She doesn’t prefer choral teaching. “I do it because I have to do it, not because I love choral music,” she told me (interview, April 23, 2012). She emphasized that she doesn’t ignore singing in her curriculum. “In chorus, I’ll teach them vocal techniques, but I don’t do a lot with the in-class students.” It is important to her that the kids learn to match pitch, but she stated that she does not focus on enunciation and breath in her general music classes.

Lynn did not teach general music in a school setting, but instead in a private Kindermusik studio. Our conversation did not include discussion of choral techniques or solfège. Lynn did, however, mention that using her voice as her primary instrument was a challenge when she first began teaching Kindermusik. “I didn’t sing that much as a band director,” she commented (interview, May 21, 2012).

Annie and Carina both mentioned that they are comfortable with teaching singing, but that they particularly struggle with teaching solfège. As I outlined in Annie’s individual case analysis, she created her own process for approaching the subject with the children. Similarly, Carina mentioned that solfège was a challenge when she first started teaching. Even with college-level vocal training and participation in high school choral ensembles, she stated that she “didn’t have very much training and experience with

solfège” (interview, April 30, 2012). Sight singing in her university coursework was the first time she had used solfège syllables. “I think whenever I got more comfortable with other aspects of the curriculum then it was like, ‘Okay, now we need to start adding in solfège.’” She stated that she looks to published resources such as *The Game Plan* (Kriske & DeLelles, 2009) as a guide for solfège instruction.

Maurice was the only participant who did not specifically mention any aspect of vocal pedagogy as a challenge. Here, Maurice serves as a disconfirming case. He credited the thoroughness of his undergraduate training with preparing him in the specifics of vocal teaching.

Theme 5: A given curriculum or scope and sequence guide can be of value to new teachers or those changing specialization. All six of the participants mentioned that a curriculum guide, a scope and sequence chart or provided lesson materials were essential to helping them develop lessons early in their careers. Some participants specifically mentioned the value of such materials. Others mentioned that they did not have such materials and wish that they had.

Lynn and I discussed the Kindermusik curriculum. She mentioned how helpful it was to have specific lessons and activities provided. “I am so glad I didn't come up with my own curriculum. It would not have been nearly as good. It wouldn't have been developmentally appropriate at all” (interview, May 21, 2012). With the support of the Kindermusik curriculum and through watching other teachers, Lynn was able to develop her own successful style of teaching.

Alex also stated that his teaching has benefited from lessons given to him as a prescribed curriculum. When working at a private school during his first year on the east

coast, Alex accepted a Saturday morning position teaching infant and toddler music at a gym for tots. He mentioned that the materials of instruction he has gained from that curriculum have enhanced his teaching in his current public school general music position. (interview, May 21, 2012).

Carina and Rachel work in the same school system. Both specifically mentioned relying on the district's listing of standards and indicators when planning lessons. For Carina, the presence of a curricular document was a deciding factor in her accepting the job.

Where I did my student teaching there was not a curriculum at all for elementary general music. I asked my coop at one point in time, "How do you choose what to do next?" I had no idea of sequencing. That was actually a big plus whenever I interviewed here. I looked it up and they had a curriculum online, so I knew that there was some framework.

(interview, April 30, 2012)

Carina continued by mentioning that although there was a curricular framework, there was no scope and sequence. "There was no starting point," she said. "It would have been really helpful to have it narrowed down, to have a map, to have something, a skeleton plan" (interview, April 30, 2012). Rachel shared the same view.

There was no curriculum mapping at that time. So, it was just like take the curriculum and pick something and look at the manual and figure it out. I don't think I got my own scope and sequence down pat until I had been teaching for probably five years. Then I remember being upset because a year later they came out with the mapping. It was all there for you. I

thought, "This is what I've been trying to do for the last five or six years!" My first couple of years, I literally just pulled things out of the curriculum. It made no sense. There was nothing blended into the next thing, nothing. It was like this week we're going to do rhythm, next week we're going to do pitch. There was no sense to it whatsoever. Now, I would say for the past probably 10 years I could tell you exactly what I'm doing the second week of October and that sort of thing. I've got it down now. (interview, April 23, 2012)

In place of a scope and sequence and lacking lesson examples, Rachel turned to the teacher's editions of Macmillan's *Music and You* (Staton, Staton, Davidson, & Ferguson, 1988) for guidance on lesson content and sequencing.

Lynn and Annie also mentioned relying on textbooks from major publishers to find content for their lessons (Lynn, interview, May 21, 2012; Annie, interview, May 1, 2012). Lynn used the book in her earliest middle school general music teaching, when she saw it as ancillary to her position as a band director. Annie, who is only in her third year of teaching, relied on the textbooks for only a few weeks before she determined that she was not engaging the students with her approach.

Maurice and Annie are the least-experienced teachers among the participants with one and two years experience, respectively. Both mentioned the value of a scope and sequence to their teaching. Maurice obtained his document from a colleague, which he uses to help him determine the skills students should have at certain ages and to track which skills and concepts he has and has not covered over the course of the year.

Annie's district created a fine arts director position just a year before she began teaching. She mentioned that one of his goals was to have

something compiled where a brand new first-year teacher would walk into the classroom, pick this thing up, look at it, and know immediately what to do. I told him, and the other friend of mine told him, it would have been amazing to walk into a classroom and have that resource—not necessarily have lesson plans made out, because each teacher likes to do his or her own thing—but at least if we had something to follow that said, "At the end of this six weeks, the children should know this." (interview, May 1, 2012)

Annie has been working with a team of educators in her district to create a scope and sequence chart and she mentioned that she now relies on the document they created when planning her lessons.

Thus far, I have identified five emergent themes related to previous research and to the first research question in this study. The remaining emergent themes address the final two questions in the study: (a) if instrumentally-trained music teachers now self-identify as general music teachers how did that change occur, and (b) how do teachers self-identifying as instrumentally-trained general music teachers construct individual/group positionality in the music education profession?

If instrumentally-trained music teachers now self-identify as general music teachers how did that change occur?

The sixth emergent theme addresses this question. Before discussing the theme, I first discuss the nature of this theme as related to the tradition of narrative analysis and

offer a brief summary of Gee (2000) as a service to the reader. A complete outline of Gee's (2000) four identities is contained in Chapter 2. I then discuss the sixth emergent theme: changes in self-identification occur when institutional identities and core identities are in agreement.

The answers to this question are as unique and varied as the participants in this study. The term self-identify had a dual meaning in this study. For the purposes of case selection, self-identify meant identifying oneself as having been assigned the I-identity "general music teacher." The investigative meaning of "self-identify" differed. The assumption that a change of some sort has occurred is embedded within this question. As I stated earlier, the idea of change and the tensions that sometimes accompany it is significant in this investigation because it focuses on individuals who pivot from one subspecialty to another. As these individuals have transitioned to general music, they have re-conceptualized their core identities in relation to the I-identity assigned to them by their school systems. Re-conceptualization is the focus of this question.

The theme that relates to this question, in the tradition of narrative analysis (Connelly & Clandinin, 2008) is more about *how* the participants recounted their stories rather than the specific content of those stories. I noticed that as the participants described the challenges they initially faced in the general music setting, they were making direct connections with some aspect in their pasts. Most often, this was a perceived hole in their content or pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) due to a certain circumstance of their past. Conversely, when the participants described a strength, their use of language indicated a state of comfort. For example, "Instruments of the orchestra...that's my thing," (Rachel, interview, April 23, 2012), "[Rhythm] was

something that I was comfortable with, not only the material, but also the process,” (Carina, interview, April 30, 2012) or “Being able to create things for them and help them create things as well I think is a big strength that I bring to the table” (Alex, interview, May 21, 2012). In many cases, when the participants were making connections such as these, they seemed to be saying, “I am good at this because this is a part of who I am.”

This notion led me to a conceptualization that became the sixth theme of the study. Each of these individuals accepted the institutional identity (Gee, 2000) of “general music teacher.” They hold a core professional identity that sometimes aligns and sometimes conflicts with the institutional identity assigned them. Self-identification as a general music teacher occurred among these participants when their core identities and I-identities were in agreement. This research question asked, “How did that change occur?” The *how* is in the way these participants navigate the contested place (Rodgers & Scott, 2008) between their I-identities and core identities. In the sections below, I outline the theoretical basis for the sixth emergent theme and present a visual representation of the tension these participants described.

Core Identity, I-Identity, the Resulting Tension. In this section, I present a visual representation that might be used to analyze the role of core identity and I-identity (Gee, 2000) in the tension some of the participants feel as general music teachers or with certain areas of the general music curriculum. I am returning to the idea put forth in my conceptual framework, that professional identities grow from the “contested places” where external factors and internal desires meet (Rodgers & Scott, 2008). In the model, the decisions that teachers make within the contested places and the ways teachers narrativize (Gee, 2000) those decisions inform their professional identities. In this

section, I offer a summary of Gee (2000) as a service to the reader. Here I review only core identities and institutional identities because they are the most pertinent to the theme. A complete accounting of Gee can be found in Chapter 2.

Core identities. Gee (2000) distinguishes between the terms “core identity” and “identity.” Though his article focuses on what he describes as the four “identities,” he defines “core identity” as the way a person narrativizes his or her trajectory through specific discourses. The labels assigned to us through our interaction with others may or may not be the labels we desire for ourselves. The ways we navigate the “discourse space” (p. 111) that surrounds us affects our “core identity.”

For much of their lives, these participants held core identities as instrumentalists or instrumental music teachers. They made decisions based upon those core identities. They projected futures for themselves based upon their understandings of what it means to be an instrumentalist or instrumental music teacher. Their trajectories have been individual, but they have existed within a common social space or *interpretive system* (Gee, 2000). In this case, the interpretive system is “music education” as presented to them through their interaction with families, mentors, professors, school curriculum, field experiences, peers, supervisors, or any other external factor presented in the conceptual framework as the items outside of the circles.

I-identities. *Institutional identities* are those that are supported by the power and processes of an institution to authorize positions and to assign to individuals who hold those positions certain rights and responsibilities (Gee, 2000). I-identities can be placed on a continuum between a *calling* at one extreme and an *imposition* on the other.

One possible I-identity for the participants in this study is “general music teacher.” Within the interpretive system of “music education,” a person with the I-

identity “general music teacher” has certain responsibilities and is expected to be proficient in teaching singing and movement, and in managing frequent transitions. I-identities are sustained by discourse of a specific type.

When an identity is underwritten and sustained by an institution, that institution works, across time and space, to see to it that certain sorts of discourse, dialogue, and interactions happen often enough and in similar enough ways to sustain the I-Identities it underwrites. (Gee, 2000, p. 105)

In this study, the participants are forming their professional identities while navigating a discourse space that has specific I-identities as defined by the institution of “music education.” The “certain sorts of discourse, dialogue, and interactions” (p. 105) sustained by the profession underwrite the I-identity of “general music teacher.”

Theme 6: Changes in self-identification Occur When Institutional Identities and Core Identities are in Agreement. Annie, Alex, Lynn, and Rachel each described challenges they had when they began teaching general music. In each case, the participant related the challenge in some way to a skill he or she lacked because of an instrumental background. Each of these quotes has appeared previously in case analysis. I repeat them here for the reader’s convenient reference.

Being the band-o and being the real smart one that I am, I started them all on *do*, and we all started *do-re-mi*. When you play in band, it often starts on the *do* of the key or ends on the *do* of the key. That’s just how it works. I assumed *do* would be the start, and then *do-re-mi* just makes sense because it’s stepped and there’s no big leap. It’s just comfortable

for the kids to just go *do-re-mi*. I had no clue what I was doing. (Annie, interview, May 1, 2012)

I never, ever sang in chorus—not in high school, not in college. Never. Ever. I was a singer in a rock band but obviously that's very different. When chorus was thrown at me that first year I thought, “I feel so uncomfortable here with this.” (Alex, interview, May 21, 2012)

Singing became my primary instrument and I didn't sing that much as a band director. The multifaceted lesson plans were also different. The children are moving—a lot. They like to move! Unlike a concert band classroom, the general music classroom is a movement-oriented environment so classroom management is more difficult. Classroom management is a little more challenging with the age of the children, too. They're more active. When lesson planning for band, you study your score and you have your issues that you're going to rehearse. You give the band an objective, they play, you listen, evaluate and so on. In general music, there's a greater variety of activities—singing, moving, listening, creating, instruments, and transitions to plan for and manage. (Lynn, interview, May 21, 2012; email correspondence, August, 30, 2012)

Still, very early on, I had no idea what to do with some of the things in the general music curriculum. I had to teach myself before I could teach the kids. I had no idea how to teach movement to students because in instrumental music, we sit in chairs with instruments in our hands to play music. (Rachel, interview, April 23, 2012)

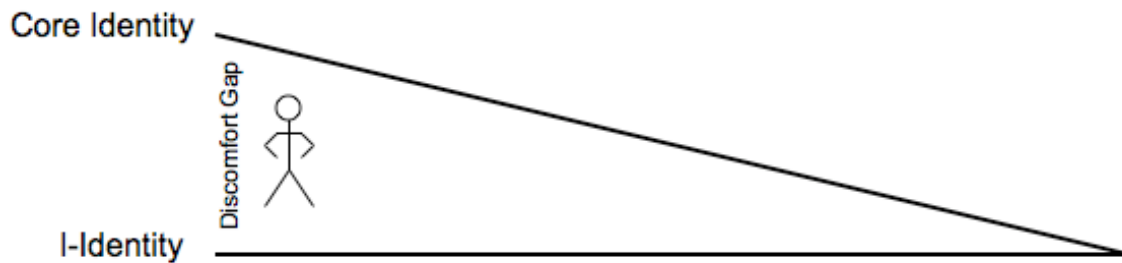
In each of the four cases above, the individuals carry the I-identity of “general music teacher” yet feel underprepared or inadequate with certain expectations of that identity, such as singing, movement, or managing transitions.

One possible way of interpreting the tensions that Annie, Alex, Lynn, and Rachel describe is as a discomfort gap between their I-identities and core identities. This gap becomes part of the contested place (Rodgers & Scott, 2008) where these teachers navigate their fears and challenges. The choices and decisions they make to address those challenges affect the formation of their professional identities. Figure 3 is a visual representation of this model.

Within this model, each line represents one of the identities. The core identity is represented in the top line of the model; the I-identity is the bottom line. The lines form a wedge. The central space, or gap, between the lines creates a spectrum of discomfort an individual teacher may feel. A large gap between the I-identity and core identity lines, which here is on the left side of the figure, indicates a greater level of discomfort. The point of the wedge represents a place of comfort where an individual’s I-identity and core identity are in agreement.

Figure 3

Visual Representation of a Gap Between Core Identity and I-identity



Conversely, Maurice and Carina made “core identity” transitions during their undergraduate educations. Alex made a core identity transition in his early years of teaching part-time pre-school classes at the community music school and general music in a private school after moving to the east coast. Although Lynn made her transition over a period of years, she did so later in her career and brought the perspective of a mother desiring more time with her children to the decision. The gap between these individuals’ core identities and I-identities is small on the macro level. They navigate their identities within a small contested space that is near the point on the right side of the model.

The model can also be applied on a micro level. In the three quotations from Annie, Alex, and Lynn cited earlier, their discomfort is tied to specific situations. Individuals may slide to the left or right on the spectrum at any given moment or context, in line with the conception of identity as continuously malleable, shifting, and changing (Gee, 2000; Rodgers & Scott, 2008).

Annie drew on her knowledge as an instrumentalist to try to develop a solfège system for her students. To the best of her ability she used her experiences to navigate

the wide contested space between her understandings of pitch as an instrumentalist, which form part of her core identity, and the expectation that a teacher with the I-identity “general music teacher” can teach vocal solfège. She “jumped the gap” by having the students start with *do-re-mi*, and for a short time her discomfort level slid toward the right side of the spectrum. Then, upon learning from her colleague that students most often begin with *sol-mi*, she was thrown again to the left side of the spectrum.

Alex described few personal resources to use to navigate his discomfort with teaching choir. He never sang in choir during his school or undergraduate careers and had little personal knowledge to draw upon. He navigated the gap and lowered his level of discomfort by seeking help from colleagues and pursuing Orff certification.

Lynn describes discomfort with using her voice and managing transitions during the multiple activities of a Kindermusik lesson. Her discomfort was the product of living for eleven years as an instrumental music teacher. Singing and lesson transitions were not skills she had developed in her professional life. However, because her decision to become a general music teacher grew mostly from personal desires, she may have had more tolerance for the discomfort she was feeling. She made the transition to general music later in her career, which gave her greater perspective to place any discomfort she was feeling.

Discomfort (or comfort) on the micro level is also cumulative in this model. A person who frequently finds him or herself on the left side of the model in the process of planning and executing lessons may be more likely to find a wider gap between his or her “core identity” and “I-identity” on the macro level. Conversely, a person who less

frequently finds him or herself with a wide gap to navigate may feel more of a union between his or her core and I-identities.

What this model does not account for is what an individual does in reaction to the discomfort he or she experiences. There are as many responses to discomfort as there are people to feel it. For some individuals, daily discomfort in multiple teaching situations may accumulate to such a macro effect that they feel they must leave general music in order to be professionally fulfilled. For these individuals, the way to narrow the gap between core identity and I-identity is to change the I-identity to more closely match the core identity. For others, the daily discomforts may inspire them to seek out resources, continue their education, and find new and creative ways to adopt the “I-identity” that the institution of music education has given them. In this case, they are making changes to their core identities—altering them to more closely match the I-identity. In a third scenario, a person may be perfectly comfortable existing with a core identity that is inclusive of an instrumentalist or instrumental teacher and a general music or vocal teacher. Such a person may see no need to define him- or herself as one or the other.

Finally, individuals have different levels of tolerance for discomfort. A person with a high level of tolerance may be perfectly happy existing with a larger gap. Indeed, one might even be inspired by the sensation of jumping it.

How do teachers self-identifying as instrumentally-trained general music teachers construct individual/group positionality in the music education profession?

This conceptual framework for this study is based largely upon Gee (2000). Gee writes that in a modern context others sometimes see us as a “certain kind of person” based upon the positions we occupy in society. I have previously discussed the position

of “general music teacher” as an institutional identity; however, this position could also be a D-identity or an A-identity. “General music teacher” is a D-identity when individuals assign the label through engagement in dialogue. The label can also be an A-identity when people associate with one another based upon the label. Music educators may choose which sessions to attend at a conference based upon a concept of “general music teacher” or “orchestra director”, etc., as affinity identities.

The concept of positionality in this study is predicated on Gee’s (2000) suggestion that the way we narrativize the positions we occupy, whether by choice or imposition, informs our core identities. It is also informed by the work of Schonauer (2002), whose survey respondents indicated that they felt disconnected professionally from their secondary music colleagues. The results suggest that the respondents had adopted insularly A-identities as general music teachers. I was therefore interested to know how these teachers position themselves in relation to other individuals and subspecialties in our profession. Only one participant, Carina, mentioned that she feels disconnected from what happens in music on the secondary level. Outside of Carina’s one comment, these teachers did not speak specifically of their colleagues in other areas of music education.

As I noted earlier, a dialogue of “difference” (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) was prevalent in our conversations when the participants described the factors that influenced their trajectory to general music. That dialogue was absent when the participants discussed the positions they see for themselves within the larger scheme of music education. Instead, the teachers turned philosophical, positioning themselves as helping their students to build a foundation for future engagement with music, whether it is through participation in secondary ensembles or in another form. These teachers seemed

to position themselves not in relation to their colleagues but instead in relation to their desired outcomes for their students.

Theme 7: These teachers position themselves as professionals in relation to their students, not their colleagues.

All six participants mentioned some variation on this theme of laying a foundation when I asked them the question, “Take a moment to think about music education, K-12, in all of its forms. What do you see as your contribution to this larger scheme?” For some, they want to provide a foundation for students who wish to continue in instrumental and choral ensembles during their school careers. Others mention the foundation for a lifetime of music making. Every participant mentioned laying a foundation for future engagement with music in some way. The ways that they define what that foundation should be and their definitions of future engagement differed.

Rachel and I discussed the fact that her frustrations as a band director have directly influenced her view of the position she occupies as a general music teacher. As a general music teacher, she tries to teach the “nuts and bolts” (interview, April 23, 2012) of music making, which she defined as the basics of rhythm, pitch, and expression. Although her curricular choices have widened over the course of her career, “Even now, it seems I’m still preparing them for band even though I know they won’t necessarily join.” (interview, April 23, 2012). Rachel’s view of her position as a general music teacher might be summarized as “Fundamentals for those who want them and fun and personal expression for those who don’t.”

Annie and Maurice also discussed giving kids the tools, knowledge, and desire to continue in music at the secondary level. In particular, they talked about teaching the

musical basics such as rhythm and pitch while also helping to inspire kids to want to continue.

These are the little kids. These are the ones that are going to be the middle schoolers. These are the ones that are going to be the high schoolers. It's important to foster that foundation for the arts, now, rather than be like, "Oh it's just general music. Whatever. Who cares?" They obviously care.

(Annie, interview, May 1, 2012)

Like Rachel, Annie expressed a desire to give students the tools they need to continue their musical careers, but she also wants her classroom to be a place of joy.

If I somehow make something click," she said, "if I somehow make it fun for them, if I center on a genre of music that they like, then maybe they'll continue it." (interview, May 1, 2012)

Similarly, Maurice stated that an important part of his position is to prepare students with information they can use later in their school careers and to instill in them the desire to continue with musical studies.

I see myself as being the one who first introduces music into a child's life—getting them to not just be the listeners of it, but to be the creators of it. I want them to be actually involved in the music-making process rather than just enjoying it as a result of hearing it. Are they able to start to read notes, even before they start band? Are they able to carry a tune? Are they able to understand the terminology of music? There's a lot of basic building bricks that I can lay so that they're better equipped when they get to the high school level, when they get to the middle school level. I want

them to grow to a point where they become passionate about it, where they're able to hear how the various layers of a piece come together, to hear how each part relates, enhances, and colors the piece. I hope they will just be captivated. (interview, May 16, 2012)

Here, Maurice makes a direct reference to band similar to Rachel, noting that students should be able to read the notes even before they begin instrumental instruction.

Additionally, his use of the words “passionate” and “captivated” also imply that, like Annie and Rachel, he sees his position as one of creating aesthetic joy.

Like Rachel, Annie, and Maurice, Lynn highlighted her belief in general music as “foundational for all performance areas.” (interview, May 21, 2012). However, Lynn and Carina also expressed a belief that their work is foundational for students to make knowledgeable choices about the way they will engage with music in the future. They also went further and highlighted their disappointment that, beyond secondary choral or instrumental ensembles, there is very little opportunity in the school system for students to engage in extension opportunities based upon their experiences in general music. “General music classes and a variety of performance options should be available for students at every grade level,” Lynn explained (interview, May 21, 2012). Nearly identically, Carina commented, “I wish there were more options than there are currently for electives in music.” (Carina, interview, April 30, 2012)

While she did make a connection between the foundations laid in general music and opportunities for further in-depth study, Carina was the only participant who did not make an explicit connection between her curriculum and secondary ensembles. In fact, she said just the opposite.

I don't consciously make any connection. I'm not planning or teaching lessons thinking, "Okay, this is what they need for band or for choral studying going on." (interview, April 30, 2012)

She continued,

I see a general music class as giving students the opportunity to experience different settings, access instruments, and access listening so that they can start to develop tastes and have knowledge of what's out there. Then, they should have the opportunity to choose and pursue certain areas in more depth.

Carina quoted the work of Bennett Reimer (2003) and his reconceptualization of the standards during our interview. In fact, her position matches Reimer's vision closely.

The goal of general music, in this conception, is to enable all students to develop their awareness of the roles that music encompasses in their culture, so that those roles can be appreciated, understood, and seen as the repertoire of musical possibilities open to all. (p. 252)

Notably, Carina and Lynn are the only two participants with completed graduate degrees, and their graduate educations seem to have affected their views. During our discussions, they each cited authors with whom they particularly agree and judge their positions within music education based, in part, on their understanding of the literature.

The position Alex described differed slightly from the other participants. He offered very concrete ideas of what skills he values as part of the foundation of lifetime engagement. Alex did say that notational literacy is one of his primary goals. He

stressed the importance of the ability to read a melody line and to sing, even if only so one can participate in worship services.

I think by the time my kids leave they should know how to read treble clef to the best of their ability in sixth grade. If they don't choose to play instruments or sing in middle or high school I think if they're at church, they should be able to look at a hymnal and read a melody line. That's one of my personal philosophies so that's one thing I really would like to see all my students do. (interview, May 21, 2012)

He continued, "I'd like to say that all my kids get to play an instrument and are able to improvise. I think that's not realistic." Rachel, Carina, Maurice and Lynn all mentioned both preparing students for ensembles and for a lifetime of engagement with music. In contrast, Alex focused on the latter.

As part of his focus on lifetime engagement, highlighted the importance of expanding musical tastes. If frequency is a measure of importance, then this particular aspect of general music teaching is paramount for Alex. During our conversation Alex mentioned the importance of an appreciation for "all music makers and all forms of music" (interview, May 21, 2012). He mentioned it twice as an important cornerstone of the position he holds for general music within the K-12 music curriculum.

Alex included the expansion of experiences in his advice for undergraduate students.

I would say try to experience as many different ensembles and styles of music that you can. And even if you are not very inclined in one area like an instrumental person going vocal, I still think you should definitely force

yourself into having that experience. Because from my experience, most people at some time or another have to teach something that's...outside of their comfort zone. (interview, May 21, 2012).

This particular part of Alex's core identity (Gee, 2000) as a teacher has roots in the values he holds for himself as a musician. In addition to studying classical trumpet, Alex was in a rock band. He described himself as "being very open to all kinds of music" (interview, May 21, 2012). His openness is an asset to him in his life as a musician and as a professional. He regards it as one of his most important strengths.

The creation of a musical foundation was an important aspect of what these teachers expressed, although their reasons for laying the foundation differed. In their view, they put the structures in place to allow their students a future of musical choice. Jorgensen (2002) suggests, "Music teachers sometimes disagree strongly about the underlying values of music instruction" (p. 49). These teachers do not seem to disagree about the values but instead differ on what those values look like in practice. What is important in this study is not to flush out the teachers' philosophical arguments, but instead to notice that these teachers do not position themselves within their profession in relation to their colleagues at other levels but instead by how well they believe they are doing for their students.

These teachers are thinkers. They think about who they are and who they want to help their students become, and that does affect their curricular choices. A weakness of this study is that it does not attempt to investigate the connections between these teachers' professional identities and the curricular choices they make in the classroom. There are enough data here to establish that there is a connection between these things,

and more importantly that the teachers see a connection between these things. In all cases, they specifically positioned themselves within the profession by discussing the results they want for their students. As I discuss in Chapter 6, Further study is needed help us to better understand the role of teacher identity in curricular choices.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have used the research questions that guided this study to present individual-case analysis. Each participant in the study had a unique perspective on why he or she came to general music and each person's unique background posed different challenges when the participants entered the field.

Despite differences among the participants, there were some commonalities and themes in their stories. There were seven emergent themes in this study:

1. Among those who chose general music from preference, concern about “perceived limitations” (Robinson, 2010, p. 41) of ensemble teaching was an important factor in the choice to teach general music
2. The structure and requirements of a band directing position can be a factor in a turn toward working with younger students;
3. The uniqueness of general music can be a source of initial challenge;
4. A given curriculum or scope and sequence guide can be of value to new teachers or teachers changing specialization;
5. Vocal topics, such as technique or solfège, are challenging for some instrumentally-trained general music teachers;
6. Changes in self-identification occur when Institutional Identities and Core Identities are in agreement;

7. These teachers position themselves as professionals in relation to their students, not their colleagues.

In Chapter 6, I discuss the implications of these themes.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This study was designed to present information about the challenges instrumentally-trained general music teachers face when entering the field and the ways navigating those challenges inform their professional identities. Through the use of narrative and multiple-case study, I have presented the professional stories of six individuals and called attention to commonalities in their experiences. The participants share a common background as instrumentalists—they took private lessons during their undergraduate educations and gave recitals as instrumental performers. They were specifically chosen for participation in the study because they have differences in their backgrounds. Four are female and two are male. They were originally from and teach in different geographic regions. Four made the choice to teach general music as a matter of preference. Two came to general music as a step into the job market. Four believe they will stay, one may or may not return to instrumental instruction, and one is actively seeking instrumental positions. Two participants had what they considered to be a “comprehensive” undergraduate education that included both vocal and instrumental methods. Four others felt under-prepared for general music by their instrumental backgrounds. Despite these differences in context, seven cross-case themes emerged as presented in Chapter 5.

In this chapter, I briefly revisit the research questions. The researchers whose work scaffolds the research questions are further detailed in Chapter 2. I then revisit the conceptual framework I presented in chapter 1 in light of the emergent themes in the study. I discuss implications for practice in undergraduate programs and school systems,

and suggest further research. Finally, I include a discussion of the importance of the concepts presented in this study for music education.

Recapitulation of Research Questions

The first research question in this study was, what challenges do instrumentally-trained general music teachers describe when discussing their initial experiences in general music classrooms? This question was informed by a compilation of literature. The first body of research indicated that the emulation of a mentor, often an ensemble conductor, is an important influence on students' choice of music education as a career (Bergee, et al., 2001; Bright, 2006; Gillespie & Hamann, 1999; Lee, 2003; Madsen & Kelly, 2002), and that general music teachers have little influence on the decision. The second body of research suggested that the differing contexts in music education require different skills, pedagogical content knowledge, and expertise (Ayres, 2004; Brand, 1984; Christensen, 2000; Duling, 1992; Eshelman, 1995). The third body of literature that informed this question indicated that instrumental undergraduates might feel under-prepared to teach elementary general music, whether by choice or because they felt pressured to take a general music job because of market conditions (Anderson-Nickel, 1997).

The second question in this study was, if instrumentally-trained music teachers now self-identify as general music teachers how did that change occur? This question was informed by Gee's (2000) concept of a "core identity." As we navigate our trajectories through the discourse space of institutions (I-identities) and individuals (D-identities), we accept or reject labels that are placed upon us. When we reflect upon and narrativize our experiences we develop a core identity—the way we see ourselves. I was

interested to know if and how the individual trajectories of these participants changed the ways they viewed themselves professionally.

The third question in this study was, how do teachers self-identifying as instrumentally-trained general music teachers construct individual/group positionality in the music education profession? This question was informed by the work of Gee (2000) who suggests that our identities are informed through our interaction with others and in the ways we relate ourselves to those others. Gee writes specifically about I-Identities (institutional identities), which are those where the power to authorize the existence of a given position is held by an institutional authority. In this case, I was interested to know the ways these individuals position themselves in relation to the institution of K-12 music education.

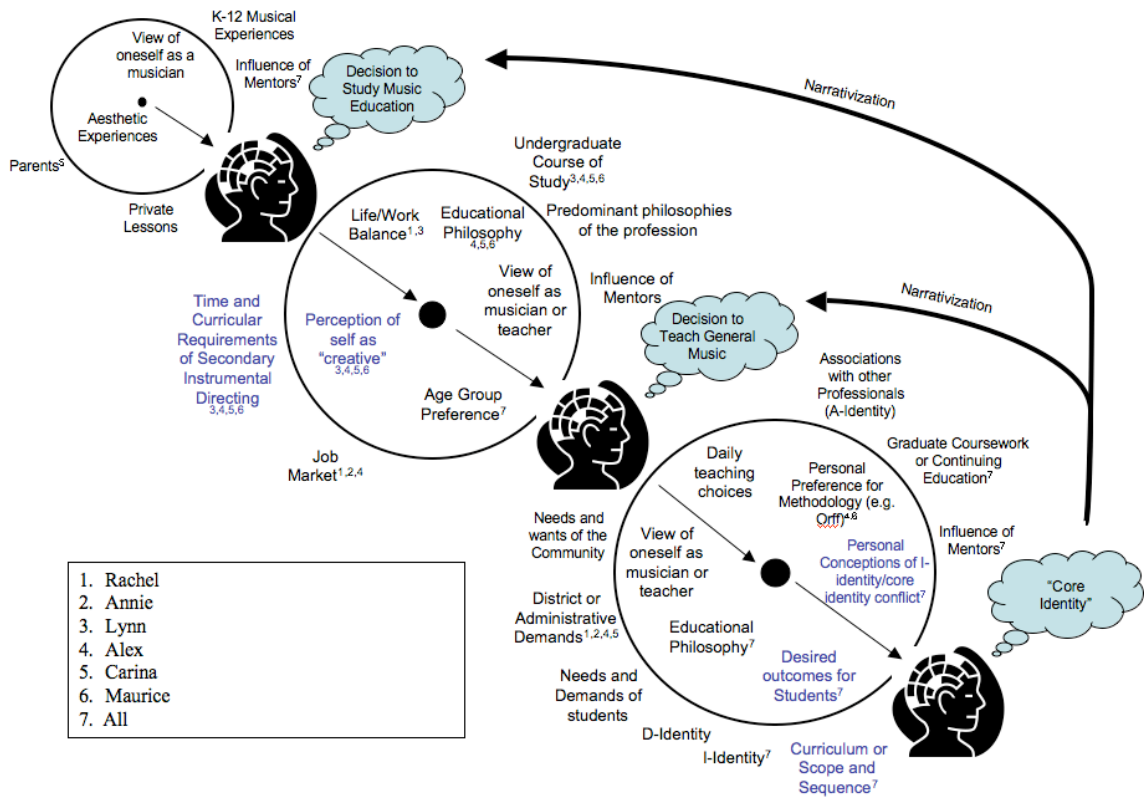
Revisiting the Framework

The conceptual framework that informed the interview protocol for this study was a linear model predicated on the idea that we each travel a trajectory through discourse space as we develop our identities (Gee, 2000). The original protocol, found in Figure 1 in the first chapter of this document, was informed by the literature from which I developed the research questions, as indicated by the superscripts. Figure 4 is a new conceptualization of that framework based upon the emergent themes in this study.

This framework contains minor but significant differences from the original framework. The superscripts no longer indicate the literature from which the concepts came but instead indicate participants for whom a given internal or external influence was especially salient. The internal and external factors in black with no superscripts come from the literature and were contained in the original framework. The factors in

Figure 4

Reconceptualized Framework



black with superscripts are parts of the framework that were reinforced with evidence from the participants. The factors appearing in blue were added from the emergent themes of this study.

Notably, gender disparity did not emerge as a relevant factor for these individuals. This does not mean that gender did not play a role in these individuals' professional identities, but for Lynn and Rachel, the participants who specifically mentioned their roles as mothers, life/work balance was the more important factor related to gender. None of the women in this study mentioned a glass-ceiling effect or fear of

discrimination in secondary instrumental ensemble direction as a factor in their decisions to teach general music.

Finally, I have included narrativization arrows. These participants developed their identities not only when they initially traveled their trajectories, but also continued to develop their identities as they reflected upon and narrativized those trajectories. Although the model is linear in order to portray the idea of an initial trajectory through discourse space, the participants in this study (re)traveled that trajectory when they narrativized their experiences. In this sense, the model is both linear and cyclical. The cyclical nature of the process was particularly salient within the sixth emergent theme as participants described their challenges in relation to their core and institutional identities. Upon reading the narrative I had prepared, Rachel wrote, “Wow! That was so fascinating and insightful to read my own words” (email correspondence, August 19, 2012). These participants (re)navigated the discourse space of those initial challenges and tensions and, at least in Rachel’s case, learned more about who they believed themselves to be in the process.

This framework is certainly not the only way to conceptualize identity among these participants. “There is no one right concept map” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 53). Other researchers with different perspectives on the literature, different personal backgrounds, and in different times and places could develop any number of models from the data in this study.

Maxwell (2005) suggests that researchers should “go back and rework your concept maps as your understanding of the phenomena you are studying develops” (p. 54) and that more than one map may prove useful in a given study. When I challenged

myself to develop a “plausible explanation” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 59) for the tensions the participants felt with some aspects of general music, the result was the core identity/I-identity wedge diagram found in Figure 3. I have reconceptualized the original framework in relation to my experience in creating the wedge figure. That concept is contained here within the third circle of the conceptual framework and labeled “personal conceptions of I-identity/core identity conflict.” Navigating a gap between institutional identity and core identity is only one segment in the larger trajectory toward developing a core professional identity.

Implications for Practice

In this section, I make suggestions for undergraduate programs and school districts based upon the findings in this study. The six cases in this study cannot be generalized. Instead they offer insight into the processes that some of our undergraduates and instrumentally-trained general music teachers go through while making decisions along their professional trajectories. The implications I am suggesting are intended as a guide or points of reference for those who work with these music educators.

Implications for Undergraduate Programs

Among the six music educators in this study, Maurice and Carina described their undergraduate programs as well-rounded, including both instrumental and vocal training for all undergraduates in music education, regardless of major performance area. Four others felt that their undergraduate educations were lacking in some way. With the exception of Annie, who expressed her disappointment in the singular focus of her instrumental undergraduate program and placed some amount of blame with the institution, the participants who felt under-prepared did not necessarily blame their

undergraduate institutions. Lynn noted that she did not pay attention as well as she should have in her general music coursework because she just didn't think it applied to her. Rachel remembered her general music coursework but, like Lynn, noted that she was just not absorbing as much as she should have from the class. Alex's statement may have been the most telling. "It would have been nice if I had figured out earlier that I wanted to do general music, but you can't really go back" (interview, May 21, 2012). Alex noted that he did not think that his university could fit much more into the curriculum in a four-year course of study.

Some of these participants may have been aided in their undergraduate years by further guidance on the nature of the music education job market. Information such as how many secondary ensemble positions have been open in any given region in the past five years, or how many beginning band or middle school positions have been available, could prove useful in helping them to chart a course through their educational trajectories. What classes are secondary directors in a given region generally asked to teach outside of their ensemble duties? These students may have an unrealistic view of the types of jobs that may be initially available to them upon graduation. Suggestions for helping them could include inviting recent graduates back to speak with current undergraduates or, as Lynn suggested, including an examination of current job postings as part of undergraduate coursework.

There was some evidence among the participants that "tracking" can be a hindrance to self-discovery. When asked what advice they would give to undergraduates, both Lynn and Alex explicitly gave the advice to pay attention to all things, even those that may not seem to pertain in the moment, and step outside the comfort zone during the

undergraduate years. Carina and Maurice, the participants with less “tracking” during their undergraduate educations, discovered elementary music during their elementary methods coursework. Though neither intended to teach elementary music when they entered college, they were presented with the opportunity to expand their comfort zones during their general music methods class and as a result, each had already decided to teach elementary general music by the time they graduated and neither looked for instrumental positions. Similarly, Alex stated in hindsight that he wished he had known he was going to like general music so much during his undergraduate years. Annie stated that had she known she was not going to be able to obtain an instrumental job, she would have stayed in school to obtain more coursework in other areas of music education. All of this evidence suggests that a more general, less tracked approach to undergraduate music teacher education could provide some students with the opportunity to discover their personal preferences earlier and give others a better footing to stand upon if they find themselves teaching in areas of music education outside instrumental ensembles.

The four participants in this study who chose general music saw very little room for creative freedom in instrumental music. Two of them, Carina and Lynn, discussed the importance of reaching more of the student population through music classes at the secondary level that allow students to explore a given area in depth.

Some educators, such as those profiled in Abramo (2009), are attempting to work from within the existing system to create change. Abramo mentions that the participants in her study predicated their alternative pedagogies based upon their graduate educations. The participants credited their undergraduate educations as preparing them well to function in the first few years of teaching but became dissatisfied with a pedagogical

discourse of “teacher as replicator” (p. 227). Another limitation of this study is that it did not seek to examine whether or not these participants feel they would have stayed in instrumental music if they had known that alternative pedagogies exist. Still, evidence from this study that the replicative nature of ensemble directing was a disincentive from instrumental teaching, coupled with compelling findings from Abramo (2009) and Robinson (2010), suggest that a reexamination of secondary music offerings and the nature of secondary ensembles is appropriate.

This statement is by no means new to the dialogue in music education. Some of our greatest philosophers have called for such change. Reimer (2003) suggests that the “long-standing belief that every teacher...must be...a performer” (p. 270) fits with a narrow conception of what music education can and should be. He calls for more general teacher education that reflects “our understanding of what constitutes the knowledge base of music as functionally manifested in its roles” (p. 270). Similarly, Jorgensen (2003) calls upon

music educators and those interested in their work...to break out of the little boxes of restrictive thought and practice and reach across the real and imagined borders of narrow and rigid concepts, classifications, theories, and paradigms to embrace a broad and inclusive view of diverse music educational perspectives and practices. (p. 119)

In this sense, the findings in this study are simply fuel for a debate that continues to simmer within the music education community, particularly among teacher educators.

Implications for School Districts

The current K-12 certification practices in music education serve school systems with flexible staffing needs well. For example, a half-time instrumental position can be paired with a half-time general music position to create a full-time music position for an individual teacher. School systems should be aware that when they create such positions they might be asking individual teachers to teach in a format less familiar to them. Teachers in those situations may need additional support from the district finding appropriate resources, structuring lessons, and developing age-appropriate activities.

The evidence from these individuals should not give school systems pause in hiring instrumentalists to teach general music. All six of the individuals demonstrated reflexive practice as we engaged in the research process. Reflexive practice is a hallmark of teaching excellence and important to the development of expertise (Berliner, 1986). Each of these individuals was able to note their challenges and discuss ways they were seeking to fill gaps in their knowledge. None of them described themselves as “just filling in” (Hobbs, 2012, p. 27). Even though Rachel and Annie would prefer instrumental positions they are both “making the most of it” (Hobbs, 2012, p. 27) by pursuing continuing education and making decisions they believe to be in the best interests of their students. The present study presents no reason they cannot continue to successfully teach general music.

Beyond their reflexive practice, these participants have well-developed skills in many important general music areas. They draw upon knowledge of instrumental literature for use in appreciation lessons. They bring skills of breath and tonguing to recorder lessons. They bring performance knowledge to classroom instruments and Orff

ensembles. Perhaps most importantly, they overcome challenges with a passion for their jobs and a belief in their mission to bring the best content they can to their students.

School systems could support them in this mission in several ways. They could be assigned a mentor to complement areas where they believe they need assistance. Alex could benefit from a formal relationship with a choir specialist. Annie could benefit the assistance of an Orff specialist who could help her learn how to best use the instruments and how to manage instruction that uses them. These teachers would also benefit from paid professional development opportunities to attend conferences and workshops.

Curricular documents such as scope and sequence charts, sample lessons, and sample units of instruction can be an invaluable resource to teachers struggling to build their pedagogical content knowledge and develop new ways of building students' skills and understandings across time. New teachers may have very limited experience with long-term planning. Individuals changing specialization may have limited knowledge of what students are expected to know at what age and at what level of proficiency. The curricular documents I have mentioned above can be an invaluable resource for teachers in these situations. School systems should be aware that the *ArtsEdge* website, hosted by the Kennedy Center in cooperation with NAFME can be a good starting place for the development of curricular documents (John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, 2012).

A professional lending library could also be an important resource. Individuals new to general music may have little knowledge of the major texts in general music and may not know where to begin looking for information. For some of the individuals in this study, this meant a reliance on the teachers' editions of the major general music

textbook series. While these texts can be an important resource of materials, there is a myriad of options for specific difficulties such as teaching singing to children, organizing Orff ensembles, and facilitating movement in the music classroom. A school system could begin developing such a library by sending an informal survey to the current teachers in the district and asking them to list the top five resources they would recommend to a teacher new in general music.

Finally, school systems should consider teachers' personal preferences when asking them to teach elementary general music. A teacher whose core identity is more in line with the institutional expectations of general music teachers may be better able to adapt to his or her new position. In some cases, districts may not have a choice in staffing, but when a choice exists the relationship of teacher identity to success in practice should be considered. More research is needed in this area, which I discuss in the next section.

Suggestions for Further Research

I have previously noted three areas for further research suggested by the outcomes of this study. In this section I review these three areas in detail and then make further suggestions.

Four of these participants discussed instrumental music as limited or monotonous and drew a contrast with what they perceive as the creativity and variety present in general music. What were the factors that would cause them to turn to general music rather than striving to bring creativity or variety to instrumental teaching? What about the present structure do they see as holding them back from making that contribution? This study substantiates Robinson's (2010) claim that further research about practical

ways to introduce more student-centered and creative ways of teaching in secondary ensembles is necessary to support a shift in music education practices that is more inclusive of individuals seeking creative outlets at the secondary level.

Second, a limitation of this study is that it did not explore the ways that the challenges and tensions the teachers described manifested in their lessons and interactions with students. Peddell (2005) suggested in her study of teachers in Pennsylvania that personal background has an influence on curricular choices. The teachers in this study described the ways their challenges have shaped their choices in brief, but an in-depth study involving participant observation rather than narrative recounting would be a better methodological match for research questions involving the manifestation of challenges in the classroom and the effects of personal identity on curricular choice. Participant observation studies could help us to better understand the ways out-of-specialization teachers adapt to challenges. Research in this area could go even further and examine the effect of teacher identity and curricular choices on student outcomes.

Third, the size and nature of the gap between a teacher's core identity and institutional identity could be an important factor in success in a new area of specialization. Teachers with a keen interest but little knowledge in an area, such as Lynn was when she made the decision to pursue Kindermusik, may have the drive to be successful. These personal factors can have an influence on the way teachers come to identify themselves in relation to the specialization they are being asked to teach and, more importantly, on student outcomes. More research is needed to investigate the complex relationships between teacher identity, the pursuit of professional development,

student outcomes, and the contexts of support that affect whether or not these teachers succeed.

The participants in this study framed their challenges and identities based upon the a priori idea of instrumentalists in general music. How many of the challenges they describe also exist for individuals who self-identify as vocally-trained general music teachers? A comparative multiple-case study, similar in structure to Anderson-Nickel's (1997) comparison of expert and novice teachers, could prove useful in answering this question.

The nature of a K-12 certification means that we have little if any data about the numbers of music teachers that are being requested to teach outside their areas of specialization. How many instrumentalists teach general music? How many middle school directors teach both instrumental music and choir? How many high school choral directors teach guitar? A national survey of individuals or a randomized district-by-district search of scheduling records could answer these questions. Data could be disaggregated regionally to assist universities in deciding which requirements make the best use of students' time within degree programs.

There are many avenues of research that can help us to better understand the extent of out-of-specialization teaching in music and its effects. Are formal support mechanisms helpful to teachers adapting to a new specialization? How might professional development play a role in easing a transition? This study examined the specific challenges of instrumentalists transitioning to elementary general music. What are the challenges of teachers transitioning to other areas? Are there particular personal characteristics that make one more likely to succeed when expanding into a new area?

Answers to questions such as these could assist school systems in making the best use of their personnel and achieving the best outcomes for students.

Discussion

The Importance of Tension in Teacher Education

The argument for or against specialization in music teacher education is not new. In this section, I build an argument for generalized degree programs based upon the concept of tension and its role in professional decisions as described among the participants in this study.

In a special issue of *Music Educators' Journal*, Hoffer (1987) writes:
Music teachers are rarely qualified to teach everything from bowing techniques in the high school orchestra to ways of helping first graders match pitch when singing. Fortunately, music teachers are seldom assigned to all areas and levels. While all graduates should have certain understandings and attitudes in common, it is both necessary and desirable that they receive specialized attention in the areas of music they expect to teach. (p. 28)

Here, Hoffer seems to suggest that disagreement between certification and training is mitigated by the ways school systems utilize teachers. The results of this study lead me to a critique of this position. During her undergraduate years, Annie did as Hoffer suggests and studied the area of music she expected to teach. Upon graduation, she was unable to find employment in her area of specialization and felt “terrified” to accept a general music job. Alex discovered his “place” in music education after experimenting with various jobs in the field for a few years. Annie and Alex may fall into the category

of “seldom” to which Hoffer refers, and such a critique of my argument is valid. Perhaps the system should not be changed because of outliers. Instead, the larger question may be how many music educators are being asked to teach in more than one area of specialization? If the answer to this question is more than “seldom,” then a re-examination of specialized training, broad certification practices, and human resource management practices in music education may be in order.

McCloud and Harbinson (1991) suggest that generalized music teacher education is “idealistic” and “impractical” given the time and curricular constraints of a four-year undergraduate degree. They make an opposite argument from Hoffer (1987).

Inevitably, the marginally prepared teacher is asked to teach a subject that he or she is indeed certified to teach and yet incompetent to teach; these situations are far from uncommon (for example, band directors may teach chorus, choral directors also may teach general music, or a middle school music educator may be responsible for chorus, band, and general music).

(McCloud & Harbinson, 1991, pp. 29-30)

These authors are suggesting that out-of-specialization teaching occurs more than “seldom[ly]” (Hoffer, 1987) in music education. They also suggest that a broad education that maintains sufficient depth for initial expertise is nearly impossible.

Maurice offers a counter narrative to their argument. He commented that the breadth of his undergraduate education was its strength and that the dialogue he shared during his methods classes with peers from all specializations was instrumental in shaping his pedagogical knowledge.

In my view, an important factor in both arguments (Hoffer, 1987; McCloud & Harbinson, 1991) is the assumption that young undergraduates have enough experience to know “what they expect to teach” (Hoffer, 1987, p. 28). I would instead argue that previous research indicates that they have chosen music education because they strongly identify with the musical experiences they have had. Specialized training at the undergraduate level may not provide them with new ones.

My research investigated the role of tension and its resolution in shaping instrumentally-trained general music teachers’ professional identities. The decision to teach general music was driven by tension of some type. In some cases it was a tension between needing a paycheck and waiting for the right job (Annie). In others, it was a tension between work life and home life (Rachel, Lynn). Still, others chose general music to alleviate tension between their desire for self-expression through creativity and their perception of instrumental music as reproductive rather than creative (Alex, Lynn, Maurice). The decisions these teachers make about whether to stay in general music or to go revolve around the possibilities for resolving tensions. Annie is making the best of her situation but sees leaving general music as her best option for relieving the tension she feels between her core identity as a “band-o” and the institutional identity she has been assigned and accepted. Rachel commented that at this point, an instrumental position would have to offer just the right combination of factors (close to home, good teaching partner) for her to leave general music. She describes a decision making process predicated on the idea that a new situation would need to have fewer professional tensions than her present one too make it worth her while. Tension has been a phenomenon central to these individuals’ decision-making processes.

If tension is an important factor in shaping professional identities, then it should be present, indeed purposefully placed, in undergraduate programs. Boswell (1991) argues against more specialized music certification. She suggests that the consequences of such a practice would be increased tracking that would fragment the profession by limiting young practitioners knowledge of music education as a whole and promoting intransigence. Similarly, Colwell (2007) advocates for an undergraduate program of study with flexibility in electives that would “enhance student strengths, free up resources to correct deficiencies, and give students what is most important about an education: options” (p. 25). Based upon the results of this study, I agree. Specialized certification and music teacher education practices may not allow students the opportunity to experience the tensions that force them to think about the type of teacher they want to be. Such tensions can best be facilitated at the undergraduate level when professors ask students to step outside of their “comfort zones” and think differently than the ways they have thought in the past. Teaching and learning of this type is more likely to happen in a less specialized degree program.

Lynn stated that if she were to return to instrumental teaching, having taught general music, she would do it very differently. She expressed a belief that experience in one area of music education can inform the practices in another. Similarly, Carina mentioned that her experience as a wind player and ensemble director really help her when teaching recorder. In a generalized degree program, music teacher educators can help undergraduates to make some of these same connections.

Reshaping Our Discourse Space

Gee (2000) writes that all identities, those assigned to us by others and those we seek out and hold for ourselves, are made possible by the presence of an interpretive system.

The interpretive system may be people's historically and culturally different views of nature; it may be the norms, traditions, and rules of institutions; it may be the discourse and dialogue of others; or it may be the workings of affinity groups. What is important about identity is that almost any identity trait can be understood in terms of any of these different interpretive systems. People can actively construe the same identity trait in different ways, and they can negotiate and contest how their traits are to be seen (by themselves and others) in terms of the different perspectives on identity. (p. 108)

In a sense, the conceptual framework for this study was an interpretive system for the participants—a pre-existing dialogue of difference pulled from the music education literature and my own experience. The email I sent seeking participants (Appendix E), in which I drew a distinction between instrumental education and general music, also built upon that dialogue of difference. It is no surprise, then, that the participants often highlighted parts of their stories with a dialogue of difference as well. The interpretive system they were given was one predicated upon the idea.

I am left wondering how this study would look different if it had not been predicated on a dialogue of difference. How might I have framed it differently to lessen or eliminate such dialogue? The question is difficult for me to answer. My own frame of

reference and experiences within musical education make it difficult for me to study this phenomenon of interest in any other way. Even with extensive graduate-level reading and education, I have difficulty reconceptualizing this study outside a dialogue of difference.

I believe the answer may lay in the concept of an interpretive system. The institutional discourse in music education and music teacher education, in many ways, creates an interpretive system that promotes a dialogue of difference. This may begin as early as elementary school when some of our students are told to choose choir *or* band. In high school, outside of musical theatre productions, how often do our choirs, bands and orchestras perform together? Do they have an appreciation for intricacies of one another's art? How often do we hear our undergraduates put down general music as the place that the conductors who can't cut it end up or hear instrumental students complain that vocalists are not equivalent musicians?

Even within our current systems of music teacher education, there are opportunities to change our institutional dialogue. I was struck by Maurice's recounting of his methods classes.

Everyone took all the methods. So, in instrumental methods, you would have the vocalists really looking to and leaning upon instrumentalists. They might ask, "Well, do you think that this part up here is something that I should have my clarinets practice?" We would reply, "Well, yes because it goes over the break." Vice versa, we could go to a vocalist during Choral Methods saying, "Okay. I'm teaching this piece. Are these ranges too high for a high school vocalist?" They might reply, "Well no,

they're actually right in the right range, but you're going to be careful because this melody is not the most melodic of melodies. So it's going to be hard for the students to hear it, if they're singing it by themselves.

You're going to need to model it.” (interview, May 16, 2012)

While Maurice is still engaged in this example in a dialogue of comparison between the instrumental and vocal specialists, his is focused upon the ways they are assisting one another rather than the differences between them. Music teacher educators could do much to facilitate dialogue such as this within teacher education programs.

Our current interpretive system labels teachers. Our future teachers come to maturity in a public school music education system that forces students into fairly strict musical roles and then complete degree programs that in many cases have a “tracked” structure that reinforces such divisions. They then return to the schools as teachers and replicate the system (Green, 2008). More importantly, when they are traveling in their trajectories through the discourse space of music education they may be unaware that possibilities outside the current interpretive system exist. If the only interpretive system our teachers have for interpreting their identities is the current one, then a dialogue of difference is inevitable. If we change the dialogue, we have an effect on the interpretive system our undergraduates and teachers will use in interpreting their identities and on the interpretive system the present to future music teachers.

The interpretive system we use as a profession could be further changed by including dialogue that does not frame “difference” as negative but rather as an alternative. The participants in this study who were seeking variety or creativity saw no room for it in instrumental music because the interpretive system they possessed for

making such a decision did not include the option of alternative choices. Might their career choices have been different if they made the choice within an interpretive system based upon a discourse that values all types of teaching that lead to positive student outcomes? In what ways did the dialogue of which they were a part limit their choices?

Earlier in the chapter, I discussed changes heralded by Reimer (2003), Jorgensen (2003) and Colwell (2007). If we are to pursue the changes these leaders in music education call for, a small place to start would be an effort to work within the current system to change the dialogue of difference the institution of music education promotes.

APPENDIX A

LETTER REQUESTING “ALEX’S” PARTICIPATION

[] indicate parts of the letter changed or removed to protect anonymity.

Dear Mr. [Alex]:

My name is Maggie Corfield-Adams and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland, College Park. I am contacting you to seek your participation in a research study about instrumentally-trained general music teachers. My dissertation study is entitled “Instrumentalists in general music.” I am investigating the career transitions of individuals who either (1) trained in the instrumental “track” of their undergraduate programs and took general music positions when entering the job market or (2) taught instrumental music for a time and made the decision to change to elementary general music. If either of these describes you, you qualify to participate in this study.

Why am I contacting you?

I was sitting at home one evening working on my dissertation with [the television] in the background. Low and behold, a couple from [...] appeared and the gentleman was a music teacher! Moreover, I saw that he was teaching general music but that he was also a trumpet player. I was able to DVR the program in a re-run and obtain your name. I then found you through the [...] Schools Website. Though you may not have imagined when you went on [television] that a random woman from the University of Maryland would be contacting you, I promise you that this request is completely legitimate and professional in nature.

Why am I doing this study?

I am also a general music teacher [...]. I intended to teach secondary ensembles when I entered my undergraduate education. I took advanced conducting courses and intended to get a masters degree in conducting. Then, I discovered Dalcroze Eurhythmics and fell in love with general music. I took a general music position right out of college and realized I had a lot to learn if I wanted to do my job well. I discovered that there were other individuals in my professional community who transitioned to general music from instrumental music. However, when I searched the research literature, I found little information about instrumentally-trained general music teachers.

Existing research suggests that students are influenced to enter music education programs by great aesthetic experiences in secondary performance settings and by the influence of strong mentors in the classroom or private studio. Most undergraduates choose music in an effort to emulate these mentors and because of a desire to facilitate strong aesthetic experiences among students. What causes some of these individuals to change paths and pursue general music instead of ensemble direction or beginning instrumental instruction? Why do some individuals feel forced by outside factors to take a general

music position? What challenges do instrumentally-trained individuals face when they enter a general music classroom? The answers to these types of questions are largely absent from our current music education research literature. The purpose of this dissertation is to collect the individual stories of professionals who can contribute to our understanding in this area.

What does participation entail?

Based on what I saw on the program, you have an interesting story to tell with regards to how you came to your current teaching position and I would be most appreciative if you would consider participating in this research project. Your participation involves the completion of an initial survey regarding your undergraduate education, which would take approximately ½ hour to complete. The survey will help me to get to know you better and prepare for our interview. Our interview can take place in person or via Skype or iChat and will take approximately 1-2 hours. In our interview, you will have the chance to share the story of how you became a general music teacher and the challenges you faced when you made that decision. 1-2 days following our interview, I will send you a reflection question via email and ask that you reflect upon our interview with a written response. This is not a formal essay but more like a “train of thought” journal entry. Overall, I expect that the project will take about 5 hours of your time. In addition to sharing your story I may ask to view some historical “artifacts” such as your notebook or syllabus from a general music methods class (if you had one), copies of undergraduate transcripts (to see the coursework you took, not your grades), or written lesson plans from your early years in general music (if you still have them).

Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you choose to participate and become uncomfortable for any reason, you may cease participation at any time. Any information I collect from you will be held by me in the strictest confidence and your name will never be used in any written report. You will have the opportunity to review my recounting of our interview and to make corrections, elaborations, or omissions before publication.

I thank you for your time and consideration. I am excited to provide a forum for instrumentally-trained general music teachers to share their voices and I hope you will be equally excited at the opportunity to share your story. If you would like to participate or need more information before you make your decision, please contact me at any time. My cell phone number is (301) 788-3222 and my email is mcorfiel@umd.edu.

My sincerest thanks.

Maggie Corfield-Adams
PhD Candidate, University of Maryland, College Park
Elementary General Music Teacher [...]
(301) 788-3222
mcorfiel@umd.edu

APPENDIX B

IRB Approval Letter



2100 Lee Building
College Park, Maryland 20742-5125
301.405.2412 TEL 301.314.1475 FAX
irb@deans.umd.edu
www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB

October 02, 2009

MEMORANDUM

Application Approval Notification

To: Michael Hewitt
Maggie Corfield-Adams
Music Education

From: Joseph M. Smith, MA, CIM *MS*
IRB Manager
University of Maryland, College Park

Re: **IRB Application Number:** 09-0618
Project Title: "Why choose general music? Instrumentalists in the general music classroom"

Approval Date: October 02, 2009

Expiration Date: October 02, 2012

Type of Application: Initial

Type of Research: Exempt

Type of Review for Application: Exempt

The University of Maryland, College Park Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved your IRB application. The research was approved in accordance with the University IRB policies and procedures and 45 CFR 46, the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects. Please include the above-cited IRB application number in any future communications with our office regarding this research.

Recruitment/Consent: For research requiring written informed consent, the IRB-approved and stamped informed consent document is enclosed. The expiration date for IRB approval has been stamped on the informed consent document. Please keep copies of the consent forms used for this research for three years after the completion of the research.

Continuing Review: If you intend to continue to collect data from human subjects or to analyze private, identifiable data collected from human subjects, after the expiration date for this approval, (indicated above), you must submit a renewal application to the IRB Office at least 45 days before the approval expiration date. If IRB approval of your project expires, all human subject research activities including the enrollment of new subjects, data collection, and analysis of identifiable private information must stop until the renewal application is approved by the IRB.

Modifications: Any changes to the approved protocol must be approved by the IRB before the change is implemented, except when a change is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. If you would like to modify the approved protocol, please submit an addendum request to the IRB Office. The instructions for submitting a request are posted on the IRB web site at : <http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB/addendumapp.htm>

Unanticipated Problems Involving Risks: You must promptly report any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others to the IRB Manager at 301-405-0678 or jsmith@umresearch.umd.edu.

Student Researchers: Unless otherwise requested, this IRB approval document was sent to the Principal Investigator (PI). The PI should pass on the approval document or a copy to the student researchers. This IRB approval document may be a requirement for student researchers applying for graduation. The IRB may not be able to provide copies of the approval documents if several years have passed since the date of the original approval.

Additional Information: Please contact the IRB Office at 301-405-4212 if you have any IRB-related questions or concerns or email at irb@umd.edu.

APPENDIX C

Texts Purchased for Participants in Reciprocity

Rachel:

Miller, C. C. (2008). *The Music Zone*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard

Annie:

Feierabend, John (2000). *Conversational Solfège, Vol 1*. Chicago: GIA Publications.

Lynn:

Darling-Hammond, L. & Bransford, J. (2005). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should know and be able to do*. San Francisco: Wiley Publishers.

Alex:

Crocker, E. & Dillworth, R. (2009). *Choir Builders for Growing Voices*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard

Carina:

Jorgensen, E. (2003). *Transforming Music Education*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Maurice:

Steen, A. (1992). *Exploring Orff: A teacher's guide*. New York: Schott

APPENDIX D

Questionnaire for Participants

Pseudonym: _____

Dear Participant,

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. The information I gather through this questionnaire will help me to get to know you and your background better. In getting to know you, I hope to shape my questions for our future interview to take advantage of the unique perspective you have to offer the study. Please do not put your name on this questionnaire. Instead, write the pseudonym you have chosen and return the document to me.

1. Where did you go to high school? Please include the location of the school.
2. What was your major instrument?
3. Who or what inspired you to major in music?
4. Did your university have a choral “track” and an instrumental “track”? If so, in which “track” did you study?
5. If you took classes in the College or Department of Education, were you treated as an elementary or secondary education major for the purposes of certification?
6. Did you have an elementary methods course? If so, was the elementary course a beginning instrumental course or a general music course?
7. Please reflect on when you first heard or learned about any of the following names:
Dalcroze –
Orff –
Kodaly –
Gordon –

8. For any of the names you discussed in question number 7, please provide a brief description of the type and depth of knowledge you held about them *before* you were hired as a general music teacher.

9. In general, did you feel that your undergraduate program prepared you for work as an elementary general music teacher?

10. Please check any statement below that applies to you.

_____ I always wanted to be a general music teacher.

_____ I entered college with the intention of teaching instrumental music but decided to teach general music instead during an elementary methods course or field experience.

_____ I entered college with the intention of teaching secondary instrumental music.

_____ I entered college with the intention of teaching elementary instrumental music.

_____ I looked for instrumental jobs upon graduation but was unable to obtain one and took an elementary general music job instead.

_____ I still feel I may want to teach instrumental music at some point in my career.

_____ I believe I will remain in elementary general music.

I know your time is valuable and I offer my sincerest thanks for your willingness share your stories and for your candid responses. – Maggie

APPENDIX E

Letter to participants, sent through key informants, requesting participation

Dear _____,

My name is Maggie Corfield-Adams and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland, College Park. I am contacting you because Dr. _____ of _____ University has suggested that you may be an excellent candidate to participate in a qualitative investigation of instrumentally-trained general music teachers.

My dissertation study is entitled “Instrumentalists in general music.” I am investigating the career transitions of individuals who either (1) trained in the instrumental “track” of their undergraduate programs and took general music positions when entering the job market or (2) taught instrumental music for a time and made the decision to change to elementary general music.

Why am I doing this study?

I intended to teach secondary ensembles when I entered my undergraduate education. I took advanced conducting courses and intended to get a masters degree in conducting. Then, I discovered Dalcroze Eurhythmics and fell in love with general music. I took a general music position right out of college and realized I had a lot to learn if I wanted to do my job well. I discovered that there were other individuals in my professional community who transitioned to general music from instrumental music. However, when I searched the research literature, I found little information about instrumentally-trained general music teachers.

Existing research suggests that students are influenced to enter music education programs by great aesthetic experiences in secondary performance settings and by the influence of strong mentors in the classroom or private studio. Most undergraduates choose music in an effort to emulate these mentors and because of a desire to facilitate strong aesthetic experiences among students. What causes these individuals to change paths and pursue general music instead of ensemble direction or beginning instrumental instruction? Why do some individuals feel forced by outside factors to take a general music position? What challenges do instrumentally-trained individuals face when they enter a general music classroom? The answers to these types of questions are largely absent from our current music education research literature. The purpose of this dissertation is to collect the individual stories of professionals who can contribute to our understanding in this area.

What does participation entail?

Based upon what Dr. _____ has told me, you have an interesting story to tell and I would be most appreciative if you would consider participating in this research project. Your participation involves the completion of an initial survey regarding your undergraduate education, which would take approximately ½ hour to complete. The survey will help me to get to know you better and prepare for our interview. Our interview can take place via Skype or iChat and will take approximately 1-2 hours. In

our interview, you will have the chance to share the story of how you became a general music teacher and the challenges you faced when you made that decision. 1-2 days following our interview, I will send you a reflection question via email and ask that you reflect upon our interview with a written response. This is not a formal essay but more like a “train of thought” journal entry. Overall, I expect that the project will take about 5 hours of your time. In addition to sharing your story I may ask to view some historical “artifacts” such as your notebook or syllabus from a general music methods class (if you had one), copies of undergraduate transcripts (to see the coursework you took, not your grades), or written lesson plans from your early years in general music (if you still have them).

Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you choose to participate and become uncomfortable for any reason, you may cease participation at any time. Any information I collect from you will be held by me in the strictest confidence and your name will never be used in any written report.

I thank you for your time and consideration. I am excited to provide a forum for instrumentally-trained general music teachers to share their voices and I hope you will be equally excited at the opportunity to share your story. If you would like to participate or need more information before you make your decision, please contact me at any time. I am in Eastern Daylight Time. My cell phone number is (301) 788-3222 and my email is mcorfiel@umd.edu.

My sincerest thanks.

Maggie Corfield-Adams
PhD Candidate, University of Maryland, College Park
Elementary General Music Teacher
(301) 788-3222
mcorfiel@umd.edu

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