ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis:	TEACHER PRACTICES AROUND REPERTOIRE LEARNING AND SELECTION IN THE ELEMENTARY GENERAL MUSIC CLASSROOM
	Elizabeth Rivera Nixon, Master of Arts, 2024
Thesis Directed By:	Professor Kenneth Elpus, Department of Music Education

In music education, it is sometimes said that “the repertoire is the curriculum.” This research seeks to study the ways that elementary general music teachers select repertoire for use in their classrooms, and how the repertoire that they choose in turn influences what students are taught. By interviewing four elementary general music teachers about their practices around repertoire selection, with a focus on one specific lesson, I attempted in this research to answer the following questions:

1. What resources (textbooks, digital resources, etc.) do teachers report utilizing when seeking repertoire for use in their classrooms?
2. When selecting repertoire for their classrooms, what musical and extra-musical factors do elementary general music teachers consider?
3. How do teachers describe the influence of repertoire selection on the concepts taught in elementary general music classrooms?

After conducting these interviews and analyzing the data collected, I have determined that the teachers in this study report drawing repertoire from a variety of different resources, including digital resources, print books, and their colleagues. From these resources, they select

repertoire based on a variety of overlapping selection criteria, including content-based, aesthetic, functional, and repertoire that provides opportunities for learning about different cultures. The repertoire selected has impacts on the remainder of the lesson, whether through pedagogical or structural impacts. Finally, this paper discusses the impacts of teacher pedagogical approaches on repertoire selection, and the ways in which repertoire is transmitted between colleagues within the world of elementary general music education.

TEACHER PRACTICES AROUND REPERTOIRE LEARNING AND SELECTION IN THE ELEMENTARY GENERAL MUSIC CLASSROOM

by

Elizabeth Rivera Nixon

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Music
Education
2024

Advisory Committee:
Professor Kenneth Elpus, Chair
Professor Robin Giebelhausen
Professor Stephanie Prichard

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

The phrase “repertoire selection” is heavy with meaning for a music teacher. In any area of specialty, there is a repertoire of pieces that one must be aware of- works of the classical canon, folk songs, relevant popular music, and more. As a music educator, however, the second word of the phrase may have even more significance. A mere awareness of the repertoire is only the beginning. The true pedagogical skill lies in knowing how to select repertoire that will challenge, inspire, engage, and grow the students one is responsible for teaching.

This may first call to mind the preparatory work done by music educators and conductors who are leading ensemble classes. However, all music educators engage in selecting repertoire for their students to engage with through study and/or performance. In fact, elementary general music teachers select a large number of pieces of song and chant repertoire as they prepare lessons on a weekly basis. In addition to the songs and chants that are directly taught to students, it is common for teachers to have a variety of pieces of music that are used for movement, welcoming and dismissing children, class transitions, listening, and other purposes. In my own experience, over the course of a day spent teaching in the elementary general music classroom, dozens of different pieces of music are utilized. Therefore, in order to effectively plan and carry out instruction, elementary general music teachers need to have access to and awareness of a wide variety of song and chant repertoire, and the pedagogical knowledge to select the appropriate pieces at the appropriate times. This study will seek to understand the ways teachers learn repertoire, select repertoire for use in their classrooms, and plan lessons using repertoire to introduce, reinforce, and illustrate concepts.

Fortunately, a wide variety of resources are available for elementary general music teachers to peruse and pull from when beginning the repertoire selection process.These include traditional textbook series, supplemental books and magazines, and online resources such as song databases and blogs. In addition to these resources, teachers also have opportunities to

learn repertoire from one another via formal professional development sessions and informal peer-to-peer learning. Although a quick Internet search is all that it takes to confirm the wide range of resources available to elementary general music teachers, not much is currently known about which of these resources are most frequently utilized. Furthermore, over their time in the profession, no matter which resources they originally consulted, elementary general music teachers inevitably memorize a significant number of the songs and chants that they share with their students. Once a piece has become part of this mental catalog, its original provenance may become murky even for the teacher utilizing it. I have been in more than one conversation with a colleague who said something to the effect of, “I don’t remember where I picked this tune up.” This lack of clarity around repertoire sources can be exacerbated by peer-to-peer song and chant transmission. Teachers may recall where they learned a given piece of music, but that recollection may not go further than “a colleague taught me this song,” with the original source given by their colleague long forgotten. In some cases, the original source may never have been known.

As in any music education role, repertoire selection as an elementary general music teacher necessarily includes more than just an awareness of songs, chants, and resources. This awareness of repertoire is an example of what Shulman (1986) defines as *curricular knowledge*. Music teachers, of course, have curricular knowledge that goes beyond the repertoire, but repertoire knowledge is certainly one example of this type of knowledge.

In addition to repertoire knowledge, music teachers must also have knowledge of how to best select a song in order to introduce, illustrate, or reinforce a concept, while also maintaining student interest and engagement. This intersection of repertoire and practical knowledge is an example of *pedagogical content knowledge (PCK)*, another category of teacher knowledge identified by Shulman, which refers to the ways teachers understand not just the content of their subject, but the best ways to teach said content to the students at hand.

In my experience as an elementary general music teacher, and in my informal observations of colleagues while collaboratively planning, the repertoire selection process has a third component which goes beyond repertoire awareness and making appropriate choices. This third component is akin to an iterative process, in which a teacher may identify a concept to be taught, select a piece of music to illustrate that concept, then identify further concepts within that piece that can also be highlighted for students, possibly even connecting to additional repertoire. When engaging in this toggling between repertoire and concepts as the basis for planning, music teachers are certainly utilizing PCK, but are also using a kind of flexible thinking that allows for the natural expansion of basic concepts into complete and musically rich lessons.

A deeper understanding of the repertoire selection process that elementary general music teachers engage in has many potential benefits for the profession. Repertoire selection is an important part of curriculum planning, and a clearer understanding of what children are actually learning in elementary general music classrooms can guide stakeholders, including current practitioners, preservice teachers, teacher educators, and administrators to a greater understanding of what children learn in music class, and whether this learning is aligned with standards and expectations. Furthermore, repertoire selection has implications beyond musical concepts. The songs that children interact with in music class create opportunities for cross-curricular connections to other academic subjects as well as social-emotional learning. As the music education profession works to embrace culturally sustaining pedagogy (Ladson-Billings 2014), an awareness of the sources of classroom repertoire is more important than ever to ensure that a wide variety of cultures and people are represented in music classrooms, and to avoid selecting pieces that may cause harm due to problematic origins. Finally, an understanding of how music teachers learn new repertoire could lead to more useful resources being created for and offered to practitioners, with less investment in resources that are not as highly utilized. If the textbooks on the classroom shelf are dusty, what resources

should replace them? This question can only be answered with a thorough understanding of what resources teachers actually utilize.

At present, however, this understanding is lacking, and it is difficult to pinpoint which resources teachers are primarily drawing from. Consequently, it is difficult to know which songs, exactly, are being sung and taught to children. If we as a field are not aware of how repertoire choices are being made by teachers, we do not have the knowledge necessary to improve these decisions in the name of educational, musical, and social progress.

In an attempt to peel back the curtain on this knowledge, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. What resources (textbooks, digital resources, etc.) do teachers report utilizing when seeking repertoire for use in their classrooms?
2. When selecting repertoire for their classrooms, what musical and extra-musical factors do elementary general music teachers consider?
3. How do teachers describe the influence of repertoire selection on the concepts taught in elementary general music classrooms?

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The literature on the specific topic of repertoire selection in elementary general music is scant. However, the topics of repertoire selection in general, teacher learning, teacher decision making, and other relevant topics do provide information that can help contextualize this study.

Teacher Knowledge

Lee (2018) has found evidence that teachers are more likely to select repertoire with which they are already familiar, which often leads to music from the educator's home culture being strongly represented in classrooms. Although these familiar pieces of music from one's home culture may be learned in part at home and in the community, it has been shown that pre-service music teachers gain pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) from a variety of sources. These include methods courses, intuition, apprenticeship of observation (in other words, learning from your own teachers), and cooperating teachers. (Haston and Leon-Guerrero, 2008). Haston (2018) repeated this study with practicing teachers and discovered two additional sources of PCK: colleagues and "other," a category that was primarily inclusive of books, workshops, and other forms of independent learning. There was significant variation among both preservice and practicing teachers in which of these sources were drawn from most heavily, which reflects the varying personalities, styles, and past experiences of individual teachers. However, in both studies, apprentice of observation was a significant source of PCK among all teachers. This indicates that, although there are many sources of PCK possible for teachers, powerful pedagogical learning takes place when one is a student oneself. This is corroborated by findings from Forrester (2017), who conducted an instrumental case study of six preservice band teachers around their beliefs and knowledge of repertoire selection. It was common for the participants in this study to refer to repertoire that they themselves had played while they were middle or high school band students. Furthermore, while these study participants demonstrated understanding of the importance of repertoire selection and the

usefulness of repertoire as a teaching instrument and tool, they lacked knowledge of important particulars. These preservice teachers were not confident about which pieces would work for a given ensemble; in other words, they lacked the appropriate amount of PCK to make repertoire decisions. This stands in contrast with findings from Millican (2013), who discovered that preservice instrumental teachers had many different PCK strategies that they were able to apply, including but not limited to sequencing instruction, anticipating problems, and comparing student performances with an internal ideal. Although these were not studied in direct relation to repertoire selection, it is easy to see how similar principles apply.

A possible knowledge gap was found by Prickett and Bridges (2000), who found that collegiate music education majors had what they considered to be a “weak” repertoire of American folk songs that they could recognize aurally. According to their research, this was true of both vocal and instrumental music education majors. Whether this type of aural recognition of tunes is an important skill for a beginning teacher is another question entirely, but the findings of this study do indicate that, at the outset of their careers, elementary general music teachers may not have a large song vocabulary upon which to draw, creating a space and need for rapid repertoire learning during the early part of a teacher’s career. It is worth noting that it is likely that today’s new teachers have a different experience of folk music than their predecessors did in 2000 when this study was published.

Peer-to-Peer Learning

Collaboration between teachers may be the remedy for these gaps in PCK and curricular knowledge. There is evidence that collaborative professional development has positive learning outcomes for teachers (Stanley, Bautista, and Candusso 2021; Sindberg 2016). Stanley, Snell, and Edgar (2014) reported on the qualities that made collaborative professional learning successful for teachers and found that successful collaborative learning experiences have the following qualities: 1) Musical richness, 2) Sustained over a significant period of time, 3)

Teacher choice is allowed, 4) Honor teacher wisdom and allow for teachers to share their wisdom with one another.

This type of professional development seems likely to facilitate the transfer of several types of knowledge between colleagues.

Teacher collaboration shows direct benefits for students- Jackson and Bruegmann (2009) found that, based on applied economics modeling, students performed better on standardized tests when their teacher's *colleagues* were more highly qualified or experienced. This finding supports the importance of knowledge exchange between teachers, and is a reminder that experienced in-service teachers have a wealth of curricular and pedagogical content knowledge that they can share with their less experienced colleagues.

More experienced in-service teachers also learn new teaching strategies and ideas from their peers, including during informal conversations in-person and on social media (Koner and Eros, 2019). This trend of teachers gaining new knowledge through interaction with one another is consistent across disciplines- Jones and Dexter studied how teachers learn, with a focus on math and science teachers acquiring new skills in technology. However, just as in the previous studies of music teachers, meaningful learning was reported through informal collaboration between teachers. Jones and Dexter (2014) also found that teachers gained meaningful knowledge through independent learning and practice, and therefore recommended that teachers engage in a mixture of formal, informal, and independent learning in order to avoid the shortfalls of any one style of professional development.

In some cases, it is difficult for music educators to interact with colleagues due to busy schedules and less robust staffing than in other departments. This difficulty may lead to feelings of isolation, especially among new music teachers. In such cases, digital technology may provide a meaningful alternative to in-person collaboration (Bautista, Stanley, and Candusso, 2020).

The ways that music teachers apply the knowledge gained through professional

development as they plan classroom activities and repertoire are also worthy of consideration and further study. How do teachers begin to operationalize the knowledge that they have learned from their peers, curricular resources, and elsewhere?

Teacher Planning

Outside of the world of music, Hatch and Clark (2021) found that experienced, well-regarded elementary teachers utilized a variety of resources when lesson planning, rather than solely relying upon the district-purchased curricula they had been provided. In order to supplement the provided material, teachers frequently found additional resources on the Internet.

Wang and Sogin (1997) found that music teacher planning is not always aligned with reality; self-descriptions of class time are not always accurate. In their study, teachers frequently overestimated the amount of time that their students spent engaged in curricular activities during lessons. The majority of class time in the aforementioned study was used on teacher direction-giving and modeling. It was also found that, when not listening to teacher directions or modeling, students spent large amounts of class time engaged in movement and singing activities, for which song repertoire was almost certainly used, although no mention is made of what specific pieces were utilized.

Vaillancourt (2009) calls attention to the difficulty of considering many resources when choosing repertoire for the elementary music classroom. He proposes certain selection criteria that music teachers should consider. These broadly include: 1) Musical/ aesthetic, 2) Psycho-pedagogical, 3) Pedagogical, and 4) Cultural.

He further highlights subcategories within the musical/ aesthetic realm, which include: musical quality, literary quality of text, text/ music match, type of accompaniment, quality of written instrumental accompaniment, and quality of audio materials.

Repertoire Selection and Resources

In Forbes's study of the repertoire choices of high school choral directors- both those who were identified by university faculty as being "outstanding," and others chosen from the general population- a less systematic approach prevailed. Across both groups, similar repertoire selection criteria existed, but did not appear to be uniformly applied. The teachers labeled "outstanding" were found to be more likely to follow a more systematic approach that prioritized musical quality, a balance of genres, and potential for student learning (2001).

The inconsistent approach that Forbes showed many teachers to be using, which may be mirrored in the elementary music sphere, is in contrast with the ethical approach to repertoire research that Howard (2021) recommends, which includes detailed research into the cultural context of every possible song that may be included in a music classroom. This research is perhaps not made easier by the format of most general music textbook series, which do not include detailed information about the origins of the songs contained in their pages, typically framing the context of a song with a very short description (i.e., "Scotland," or "American folk song"). In fact, some of the more popular textbook series were analyzed by Mason (2010) to assess their inclusion of multicultural song repertoire. Although the textbooks studied were found to have representation from many countries, the United States and Western Europe were significantly overrepresented compared to other regions of the world, with about half of all entries being categorized as American in origin. It is worth further noting that, in this study, the textbooks categorized "African-American folk songs" and "Native American folk songs" differently than "American folk songs;" fifty percent of the repertoire that they included was music that represented Americans of European descent.

When teachers select repertoire, their students' classroom experiences are shaped and altered. In some cases, student identities may even be shaped by the pedagogical choices that a teacher makes. This is illustrated in Kelly-McHale's 2013 study, which suggested that, even

with teachers who aim to be inclusive and welcoming, if student cultures are not being authentically honored, students will not self-identify as musicians outside of the classroom environment, and will not see their learning in music class as applicable to their lives outside of school. To borrow from Style (1988), the repertoire, then, should serve as a "window and a mirror," allowing students to see both their experiences and those of others- and ideally, to see the ways that their own experiences overlap with those of others.

Although the actual research on classroom repertoire selection amongst elementary general music teachers is scant, supportive literature does exist. More information is available in practitioner literature, of which the Howard (2021) article is an example. Further examples of relevant practitioner literature can be found from the perspectives of strings (Rotjan 2018), choral (Apfelstadt 2000), and band directors (Reynolds 2000). Each of these articles stresses the importance of choosing high quality repertoire in an ensemble setting. Kelly-McHale (2019) stresses this same issue at the elementary level, reminding readers that cultural relevance is of critical importance both when choosing and presenting repertoire. All told, however, many facets of this topic deserve more scholarly attention and thought; this research attempts to make one contribution.

Pedagogical Approaches to Repertoire Selection

Within the elementary general music space, there are a wide variety of pedagogical approaches, methodologies, and theories that teachers sometimes adhere to. These varied ways of teaching general music have differing, but sometimes related, views on repertoire selection. All of the approaches that I reviewed for this study admonish practitioners to select high quality repertoire for children, but each has its own ideas about what makes a piece of music appropriate.

The Kodály method has a wide following amongst elementary general music teachers. One major tenet of this approach is the inclusion of high quality folk music from the students'

home culture. Teachers are encouraged to select relevant folk music, analyze it, and maintain the repertoire that they use in song lists or databases. Kodály practitioners also encouraged to begin instruction in the primary grades with a limited pitch set, then gradually expand to the pentatonic scale prior to the major scale (Houlahan and Tacka, 2015).

Orff-Schulwerk is considered an approach to music education, rather than a method, due to its intentional lack of a specific prescribed sequence. Like in the Kodály method, pentatonic music is given a certain pride of place. In the case of Orff, this is because of the ease with which students can improvise and compose music that sounds pleasant when using a pentatonic pitch set. Furthermore, the founders of this approach, Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman, authored *Music for Children,* a five-volume collection of composed music that practitioners are still encouraged to utilize in classrooms today (Goodkin 2013).

Music Learning Theory (MLT), as pioneered by Edwin Gordon, is similarly, not exactly a methodology, but still influences the practices of some teachers. A critical element of MLT is the inclusion of a wide variety of tonalities and meters in the curriculum. Bluestine (2000) advocates for considering cultural, seasonal, and personal factors alongside musical factors when selecting repertoire within the MLT classroom.

Musikgarten, a more structured method for teaching early childhood music, is partially an outgrowth of MLT, and therefore retains some of the same focus on varied tonalities and meters.This methodology also places importance on the inclusion of folk music (Heyge and Wilson 2016). Similarly, the Feierabend method for elementary general music has pedagogical ties to both MLT and Kodály. The various resources offered through the Feierabend Association for Music Education (FAME) include a great deal of repertoire, almost all of which is either Western art music adapted for children or folk music (FAME 2019).

While it is not exactly a methodology, the Quaver™ digital textbook series feature lessons that are available for music teachers to select materials from or use wholesale in their classrooms. The repertoire included in Quaveer seems to include, in roughly equal measure,

Western art music, folk music, and original compositions (Quaver 2018). Quaver, however, is an evolving digital resource, so new repertoire is frequently added.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

In framing this research, I am looking through the lens of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) as outlined by Shulman (1986). In “Those Who Understand: Knowledge Growth in Teaching,” he describes PCK as knowledge of

> the most regularly taught topics in one’s subject area, the most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations- in a word, the ways of representing and formulating the subject to make it comprehensible to others.

Later in the same work, he describes curricular knowledge, which is one of the knowledge types that make up PCK. To illustrate curricular knowledge, he draws a parallel between a teacher’s knowledge of curricular materials and a doctor’s knowledge of different medications and remedies. In both cases, it is not enough for the practitioner to merely know the available resources. A physician knows which medications work best for which diseases, and when certain medications are not appropriate. Similarly, in the case of music teachers, this means knowing which pieces of music will work best for a specific group of students trying to master a specific concept. I contend that successful repertoire selection in the music classroom draws upon both curricular knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge more broadly. In the world of ensemble music education, it has often been asserted that “repertoire is the curriculum,” (Reynolds 2000). This assertion is a bit of an oversimplification, even when referring to performing ensembles. Although teaching musicianship through performance is a valuable technique in ensemble education, it is unlikely that a well-rounded ensemble education lacks any examples of sight-reading and aural skills work or technique exercises. It may be overly broad, but Reynolds’s statement holds a grain of truth. Even in elementary general music, the repertoire selected has the power to significantly influence what students learn and how they learn it. When selecting repertoire, teachers are using pedagogical content knowledge

to inform curricular choices. Those curricular choices then have the potential to activate additional PCK as the teacher draws new learning from the repertoire that has been selected.

At its outset, this research was further intended to view the transmission of repertoire knowledge and PCK between teachers as a sort of oral tradition, with the rationale that in some instances sharing notation may be secondary to teaching colleagues a new song or chant and giving ideas on how and when to present it, representing an “aural/oral/visuall/kinesthetic” tradition (McLucas 2013). This aspect of the theoretical framework was not entirely borne out in the data that I collected; a further examination of the ways that this lens was useful (and not useful) can be found in the discussion.

Chapter 4: Methodology

In order to address the research questions outlined above, I conducted a multiple case study focusing on four local elementary general music teachers, selected using criterion sampling. I intentionally sought teachers with differing pedagogical approaches to music education in order to generate results that better represent the diversity of thought within the profession. Consequently, the participants included one teacher who closely aligns with the Orff approach, one teacher who closely aligns with the Kodály methodology, and two teachers whose approaches to pedagogy are more general and eclectic.

In order to recruit participants for this study, I utilized my own positionality as a colleague and personal friend of the participants. Over the course of my own career, I have worked with each of the teacher participants in one capacity or another, and therefore had a general sense of their personalities and teaching styles prior to entering into this research, which proved helpful in facilitating conversations. However,

Each participant was asked to select one lesson that they had recently taught, which served as a focus for our conversation. I requested that they select a lesson that represents their teaching style well, especially with regards to repertoire selection and number of included activities. To gain a preliminary understanding of the lesson, I reviewed participant lesson materials prior to each interview. These included:

1. Lesson plans or notes
2. Notation for all songs and chants, if available
3. Slides or other audiovisual lesson components
4. Supplemental materials

I then generated lists for each focus lesson including all the repertoire utilized therein.

Because it is common practice for experienced teachers to do the majority of their lesson planning in their minds, with only some notes on paper (Hatch and Clark 2021), I stressed to the

participants that I wanted only those planning materials that they would typically create, not a “special” lesson plan such as what one might create for an observation. The materials that they submitted were in a variety of formats, but in all cases were comprehensible; generating repertoire lists and gaining a basic understanding of how each lesson would flow was straightforward.

After reviewing these materials, I conducted a semi-structured interview with each participant, with questions that focused both on their repertoire selection process broadly, and on the details of the specific songs used in the focus lesson, including where they were learned and why they were chosen. (See Appendix A for the interview protocol). All interviews were audio recorded with permission and transcribed in order to facilitate coding. Teacher participants were given the opportunity to review the findings of this study for member-checking; in one case, I also directly asked a follow-up question to one participant to clarify the source of one piece of music.

Following the transcription of all interviews, I applied inductive coding to each in turn, then compared, contrasted, and coalesced the various codes into themes using a self-generated spreadsheet database.

Chapter 5: Participants

All four study participants are veteran teachers employed in a large, suburban school system. They each teach full time at one school, although in some cases there is another full- or part-time music teacher present at their teaching site due to large enrollments. All four teachers are wholly or partially responsible for Chorus as well as General Music. Across the board, the school system is ethnically/ racially diverse. Socioeconomically, it is much more stratified; the four teacher participants in this study serve schools with varying degrees of socioeconomic diversity. The names used for the participants below are pseudonyms.

Maria

Maria began her career in music as a pianist, choral accompanist, and group piano teacher. She then pursued certification in early childhood music instruction through Musikgarten, completing all of their certification courses. Musikgarten is a curriculum authored by Lorna Lutz Heyge and Audrey Sillick, which focuses on music and movement from birth through age 9, with group piano classes that begin at age 6 (Musikgarten n.d.). According to Maria, the educational philosophy of Musikgarten draws heavily from Gordon's Music Learning Theory. She cites this training as guiding her to provide students with aural exposure to varied types of music, creating the sensation of a "wash of sound." Maria utilized her Musikgarten training first in private settings, teaching the 3-4 year-old and Kindergarten levels of the program at a private piano school and Montessori school.

After spending a few years focusing her attention on parenting her own young children, Maria decided to pursue additional opportunities outside of the home, at which point she felt that a certification to teach in the public school system would be beneficial. She earned a Master of Arts in Teaching degree, which included teaching certification. This degree did not include any music-specific coursework. In addition to relying on her previous teaching experience and Musikgarten training, Maria sought out guidance from mentor teachers during her transition to

K-5 music teaching. She has also pursued professional development in the form of Kodály training, completing her first level within the past two years.

Maria's experience as a piano instructor is still reflected in her teaching. In her words, "I like to have the kids playing instruments a lot and I've seen the value of having them… play in an ensemble and listening to each other." When asked about guiding principles of repertoire selection, Maria repeatedly referred to selecting repertoire that would allow students opportunities to play instruments. She also has a strong preference for aurally exposing students to meters and tonalities outside of the standard major tonality/ common time. When describing the "goodbye song" that was part of her focus lesson, Maria commented, "That's, like, another one that's… not 4/4, so that's why I use that one. Trying to incorporate some compound meters into their life."

Maria cited her Musikgarten training as a major source of foundational repertoire for her; in addition to this foundation, she is a frequent user of online resources when planning lessons. She specifically cites Beth's Music Notes and Becca's Music Room as favorite sites for repertoire gathering.

Kaitlyn

Kaitlyn has taught elementary general music since graduating from her undergraduate program, where she was an instrumental music education major. Due to her awareness of the broad nature of a Music K-12 teaching certification, Kaitlyn took additional coursework during her undergraduate degree in order to feel prepared to teach vocal/ general music. Generally, Kaitlyn describes her undergraduate program as one that encouraged students to explore a variety of approaches to teaching music, which is a philosophy that has worked well for her own eclectic style of teaching and planning. Kaitlyn's undergraduate program provided exposure to the basic ideas of Dalcroze, Orff, and Kodály; in the intervening years, Kaitlyn herself pursued additional professional development through the local Orff chapter. Her teaching style is not

strictly aligned with any specific methodology or approach; instead she chooses to draw upon different teaching strategies and ideas that align with her instructional goals.

Early in Kaitlyn's career, she worked closely with a veteran teacher who provided her with extensive repertoire and lesson planning resources. She says,

> I remember like when I first started working [with my mentor], she just kind of popped her giant binder of things down… and she's like, this is what I do, take it or leave it, and I was like, take it!

This peer-to-peer learning was very influential for Kaitlyn and provided her with an initial source of repertoire that she continues to draw from. To build upon this knowledge and learn additional repertoire, she consults a variety of resources, in keeping with her eclectic teaching style. Kaitlyn keeps several of John Feierabend's books, including *The Book of Echo Songs* and *The Book of Call and Response,* stored on her desk for frequent use. Like Maria, she is also a frequent visitor to online resources, including online song databases curated by other teachers as well as Quaver, which she draws resources from but does not use exclusively.

Kaitlyn takes a methodical approach to diversity representation in her classroom. At the start of each school year, she accesses student demographic data to compile a list of all of the countries from which her students' families hail. Using this list, she says, "... I try my best to sing a song from one of their cultures, like every culture in the room, throughout the year." To reach this goal, Kaitlyn reports extensively utilizing online resources to find repertoire.

Rose

Rose began her higher education with a focus on vocal performance, earning both a bachelor's and master's degree in the subject from a large state university and a small conservatory, respectively. During her master's program, she also earned a teaching certification. Subsequently, she began teaching elementary general music and earned a second master's degree in music education over the course of several summers. The coursework for

this second masters was highly focused on the Kodály methodology, which Rose closely aligns with as a teacher and holds full certification in. She is also a committed lifelong learner, and holds certifications in Dalcroze, Orff-Schulwerk, and Music Together. Rose explains that, “I do like to kind of pull the benefits of each philosophy…into my own lesson and kind of mix and mingle… but mainly the curriculum and the sequencing is based on the Kodály philosophy of prepare, present and practice.”

When selecting repertoire, Rose often utilizes her personal song database. Due to the importance that the Kodály approach places upon using folk music in the classroom, creating a song database with well-researched folk songs is an encouraged practice amongst Kodály teachers (Houlahan and Tacka, 2015). The importance of thorough repertoire research is something that Rose takes very seriously, saying, “...those songs that we research are really the ones that we can trust, you know, and so that we can bring the best for our students.” The importance that Rose places on research was apparent throughout our conversation; for each of the pieces in the focus lesson, she demonstrated a deep background knowledge of its history and origin. Interestingly, none of the repertoire included in Rose’s focus lesson was folk music- one song had been attributed as a folk song, but Rose’s research revealed that it was, in fact, a composed song. It is worth noting, however, that the song in question dates back to the 1940s and is ubiquitous in primary schools in South Korea, and has the broad cultural spread that is often associated with folk songs.

In order to search for additional repertoire to include in her lessons, Rose maintains a large collection of print resources that she consults. Some of the books that she mentioned during our conversation include:

- Roots and Branches (ed. Patricia Shehan Campbell, Ellen McCullough-Bobson, Judith Cook Tucker)
- 150 Rounds for Singing and Teaching (Edward Bolkovac and Judith Johnson)
- Sail Away: 155 American Folk Songs to Sing, Read, and Play, ed. Eleanor Locke

In addition to these print resources, Rose indicated that she enjoys incorporating music that she learns from others- both her music teacher colleagues, but also her students. Rose also included pop music in her focus lesson; she was the only participant to do so. The popular song that Rose selected is from a Colombian band, and was chosen in order to connect with student cultural backgrounds.

Sierra

After a brief stint teaching secondary instrumental music immediately after receiving her undergraduate degree, Sierra has enjoyed a long career teaching elementary general music in a variety of settings and locations. Her career is unique amongst the research participants for including a wide variety of teaching experiences in a multitude of states and settings; her fellow participants have primarily or exclusively worked in the same locale throughout their careers. Early in her career, a mentor teacher introduced her to the Orff-Schulwerk approach. Initially drawn to the joyful music-making she witnessed in this mentor's classroom, Sierra has gone on to become an expert in Orff. She employs this approach as a guiding principle of her teaching.

The Orff approach is highly based in musical imagination and creativity (Beegle and Bond 2016), which is reflected in both the repertoire Sierra selects and the ways she encourages her students to interact with it. She employs her own creativity to a great extent, and reports both composing her own songs for classroom use and frequently composing lyrics for her students to utilize. (Within the Orff volumes of repertoire, songs are given without lyrics, leaving this avenue open for teacher or student creativity). Throughout her focus lesson, and in various other activities that we discussed, Sierra's students are frequently engaged in activities that require them to create musically through improvisation, arranging, lyric writing, composing, and movement creation. The repertoire that she selects for her students is often either jumping-off point for, or connector between, student creative output.

In addition to utilizing the Orff approach in her classroom, Sierra is highly engaged in professional networks related to this approach, including teaching recorder as part of Orff certification courses for other music teachers. This deep level of involvement in a professional community has yielded many examples of peer-to-peer learning in Sierra's repertoire; during our conversation she referred to music learned from colleagues several times. Sierra also utilizes a variety of blogs and print books to guide her teaching and repertoire selection, many of which were/ are created by her fellow expert Orff practitioners.

Chapter 6: Findings

Repertoire selection in the planning process

The participants in this study represent a continuum from a highly structured to highly flexible approach to long- and short-term planning. In all cases, they consult long-range planning resources in order to ensure that students are meeting yearly benchmarks, but their approaches to doing so, and in turn selecting repertoire for lesson use, vary significantly. Kaitlyn represents the more methodical side of the spectrum. She has predetermined, content-based unit topics for each grade level, which are then fleshed out and broken into lessons. She further follows the policy of ensuring that every lesson contains, “three different major activities: singing, movement, instrumental play. No matter what grade level we always do those three things in some shape or form.” Kaitlyn generally selects repertoire at the unit level planning level. Rose is similarly structured, beginning with a yearly sequence of goals for each grade level, which she then divides into units, and finally lessons. She reports selecting repertoire at the lesson level in order to fit learning goals.

Maria also begins planning with yearly goals for each grade level, but then plans units around seasonal or thematic ideas, i.e. *The Nutcracker* in the month of December. Maria also reports selecting individual songs at the unit level.

Sierra approaches long-term planning with the largest degree of flexibility. She begins her planning around thematic and seasonal ideas, which she then builds into lessons. Instead of initially consulting long-range conceptual planning, Sierra refers to local teaching standards as a check-in to ensure that students are learning the appropriate content through this approach. In her words,

> I am pretty non traditional with how I would approach planning a lesson, or a unit or something like that, because other than keeping in mind, usually the time of year or like major events in the year to kind of like drive the inspiration for what the lessons will

become. I don't have a set list of lessons or songs or something like that, that I feel like I have to teach every single year. So that is a pretty fluid thing, but that's just because I want it to feel right for me and for the kids and for like what's going on in the world for whatever year that is.

Overlapping Selection Criteria

Throughout my conversations with the study participants, I asked the question, “why did you choose this particular piece of music?” many times. Teachers reported several different, but in many cases overlapping, criteria that they considered when selecting repertoire for use in their classrooms.

In most cases, teachers reported multiple selection criteria for each song. Out of 16 total songs utilized across the four focus lessons, five were chosen based on one criteria, nine were chosen based on 2, and two were chosen based on three criteria.

The criteria that teachers selected can be grouped into the following four categories:

1. Content- based
2. Aesthetic criteria
3. Cultural learning opportunities
4. Functional

The criteria that teachers reported using most frequently was *content-based* criteria, which was reported 9 times by teachers. Content-based criteria is selected on the basis of containing musical elements that are being highlighted for student learning. Within this category, teachers cited specific rhythmic and melodic patterns found within songs that they were working on with their students, as well as various ways that songs were used to give students opportunities to play instruments. When asked about her reasons for choosing a particular rhythm play-along in her lesson, Kaitlyn indicated, “So, the reason why I chose that one is the

rhythm is… dotted in the song," and went on to explain that her students were in the midst of learning about dotted rhythms.

Also included in this category are musical qualities that teachers are selecting in order to provide aural exposure to their students, such as meter and tonality. For example, when giving her rationale for selecting a particular listening example for her students, Maria remarked, "I wanted them to get the feel of the three/ four [meter] first, just by listening first."

Aesthetic selection criteria, which teachers reported using four times, is also related to the musical qualities of a selected piece of repertoire. However, when applying this decision criteria, teachers referred not to the musical qualities that they intended to either expose their students to or explicitly teach their students about. Instead, this category reflects less quantitative teacher impressions of the music and predictions for how students may react to it. In Kaitlyn's words, she chose a specific rhythm play-along because,

> I thought it kind of made you feel like a little bit of a rock star as you're like sitting there, because they've got drumsticks in their hands. So, if you're thinking of, you know, how you would feel, what kind of music you would want to play when you're holding drumsticks, you know, it kind of had more of… a rock feel.

Sierra applied a similar criteria when selecting a particular chant for use with her students: "The rhythm is fun, and it's something that kids like because it has syncopation in it. And it keeps their interest, and it's short, so they can all remember it."

Teachers also frequently reported selecting repertoire in order to provide students with *cultural learning opportunities.* This was cited as a selection criteria for 6 of the sample lesson songs, and was also brought up by both Kaitlyn and Rose as a guiding principle of repertoire selection. All four teachers had at least one example of a piece of music from a non-European culture as part of their focus lesson. For each of these songs, teachers emphasized their desire to ensure that their students were exposed to music from a variety of diverse cultures. For Kaitlyn, cultural learning opportunities are a priority due to the high level of diversity at her

school; in her words, “I think that's one of the reasons why I really like doing cultural stuff, because we are so diverse at [my school].”

The final category that teacher selection criteria fits into, I have broadly labeled *functional selection criteria.* This category was cited by teachers ten times, edging out content-based criteria as the most commonly used. This category primarily reflects the structural usage of repertoire to direct the flow of a lesson and support student behavioral goals. For example, Rose indicated that one reason for choosing a movement activity was that “There are some heavy concentration activities afterward… so then I had to have them move in some way so that they can get their body warmed up.” In addition to lesson flow, this category includes selection criteria based on extra-musical discussions that teachers wish to have with students. For example, Maria discussed the benefits of sharing video footage of a song being performed while a traditional game was played. She showed this video to her students while teaching them the song, and then led a discussion around how the children in the video likely prepared prior to filming. “So that’s another conversation that it brings up, right? Is like, the importance of practice and repetition…”

Within the realm of functional selection criteria, an important sub-category includes hello, goodbye, and “warm-up” songs. Although only Maria’s shared lesson included a traditional hello and goodbye song, both Kaitlyn and Rose indicated that the first song in their lessons served, in whole or part, as a warm-up. Kaitlyn and Sierra both indicated that they utilized hello and goodbye songs with grade levels other than the ones highlighted in their featured lessons. These opening and closing songs, while not always intended to address specific musical goals, do serve important structural functions for children during the transition into and out of music class. Maria describes it as

> …A way to start musically, and it’s a way to smile and wave at everyone, and I can kind of visually see while we’re singing the song… this person looks like they might need extra attention or someone’s not in their correct seat.

All teachers need to spend time on student readiness for learning- by using hello, goodbye, and warmup songs, music teachers choose to do so in a musical way.

Impact of Repertoire Choices

Obviously, each piece of music selected for classroom use impacts student learning; at a minimum, students will learn the piece of music that they are being taught. However, it does seem from this research that, in many cases, selecting a given piece of music impacts other aspects of the music lesson. This can happen in a multitude of ways. One commonly given example of a repertoire choice impacting other parts of a lesson is through contextualizing songs from non-Western cultures. In Kaitlyn's example lesson, she taught her students a Japanese folk song and game. In her words, "...this gave me a chance to talk about Japan. I showed them a really short video about fun facts about Japan… we actually kind of… pause the music aspect of class to just learn about Japan." The other participants spent time in a similar way on songs in their lessons of non-Western origin, providing context and cultural background information.

Another way that individual repertoire choices seem to have impacted lessons as a whole is through the curation of lesson flow that teachers practice. For example, when structuring her lesson around two higher-concentration music literacy activities, Rose intentionally selected additional repertoire that was engaging and conducive to movement to partially serve as a sort of "brain break," which was utilized in between the activities requiring greater focus.

From Sierra's perspective, repertoire selection has a wider impact on the rest of her planning that was not reported by her colleagues. Sierra was unique in utilizing "points of inspiration;" that is- holidays, celebrations, and thematic ideas- as jumping-off points for her planning. In the lesson that was shared with me, Sierra created a theme that was based on the Lunar New Year, and more broadly on celestial bodies such as the moon and stars. The various

songs that she selected maintained this theme. Sierra's repertoire selection and lesson planning style is a very clear example of the "iterative process" that I have observed anecdotally in colleagues and in my own teaching, wherein selecting one song can be the beginning of bringing several new ideas into a lesson.

In addition to shaping the theme, in Sierra's lessons, her repertoire frequently served as a jumping-off point for connecting to student improvisation, composition, arranging, or lyric writing.

Sources of Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Repertoire Knowledge

Throughout the interview process, all participants indicated a variety of sources that they utilized for repertoire, both generally and in their specific focus lessons. These sources are, in many cases, those from which the participants have drawn significant quantities of repertoire knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK).

Table 1, *Sources for repertoire used in focus lessons*

Participant	Repertoire Sources
Maria	1. Formal PD (district-sponsored) 2. Online resource (YouTube) 3. Online resource (Spotlight on Music online series, accessed for this lesson via Beth's Notes/ YouTube) 4. Memorized folk song, no specific remembered source
Kaitlyn	1. Peer-to-peer learning 2. Online resource (YouTube) 3. Online resource (Beth's Music Notes)
Rose	1. Formal PD (Music Together) 2. Print resource (Roots and Branches) 3. Pop song 4. Peer-to-peer learning
Sierra	1. Print resource (Orff volumes) with self-composed lyrics 2. Print resource 3. Peer-to-peer learning 4. Peer-to-peer learning 5. Print resource (Orff volumes) with peer text

As can be seen in the graph above, the focus lessons for each teacher drew on a variety of sources. Amongst the four teachers, Maria and Kaitlyn both drew from online resources twice, while Sierra relied primarily on print resources and repertoire learned informally from peers. Both Maria and Rose utilized one piece of music that they had learned at a more formal professional development session- Maria's came from a district-sponsored PD, while Rose's was drawn from her Music Together training.

Of course, the focus lessons represent only a snapshot of teacher repertoire sourcing- teachers also reported their preferred sources and sources of foundational repertoire, which gives an additional glimpse into their sources of PCK and content knowledge.

Both Maria and Kaitlyn reported extensive use of online resources. These resources included blogs of other music teachers, online song databases, YouTube, and online textbook-style resources such as Quaver and Spotlight on Music. Both specifically cited Beth's Music Notes, an online song database created by music teacher Beth Thompson, as a frequently used resource.

While Sierra indicated some utilization of blogs, both she and Rose spoke more extensively about print resources. Several of the selected songs in Sierra's focus lesson were drawn from the Orff volumes, and Rose referred to a variety of print resources as being frequent resources for her. Roots and Branches was the source of one of the songs in her focus lesson. Kaitlyn shared that several of noted pedagogue John Feierabend's books, including *The Book of Echo Songs* and *The Book of Call and Response,* are permanently stored on a small bookshelf on her desk, and that she reaches for them often while planning. During our conversation, Maria did not cite specific print resources.

All four participants reported learning repertoire directly from other music teachers in some capacity. One of the songs in Maria's focus lesson was drawn from a district-sponsored PD session that she had attended years ago. For Kaitlyn, peer-to-peer learning was

foundational in her development as a teacher; she also indicated that she has utilized repertoire that she learned in district sponsored professional development sessions, as well as through attendance at local Orff chapter meetings.

In addition to reporting that she utilized repertoire that she learned both through formal professional development programs and informally from peers, Rose indicated that she had shared repertoire with her colleagues through creating and sharing videos and presenting at professional development sessions.

Sierra extensively cited repertoire that she learned in a more informal peer-to-peer style of transmission. This repertoire included both songs that she had completely learned from peers, and songs from the Orff volumes, which are published without text, whose texts were composed by peers.

While online, print, and peer resources were referenced to greater and lesser extents by the various participants, there is one resource that is notable in its lack of use. All four participants specifically indicated that they never use a traditional textbook series.

Critical Examination of Resources

All four teachers indicated ways in which they examine the quality of a resource before sharing repertoire taken from it with their students. Although this exact terminology did not come up, it is clear that all of the study participants are striving to implement culturally sustaining pedagogy, or teaching that uplifts and honors the voices, backgrounds, and experiences of students from a variety of cultural backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 2014). This effort to be sensitive to and respectful of student diversity presents in several ways throughout the repertoire selection process.

First, in addition to striving to include repertoire from non-Western cultures, which all four participants highlighted, teachers are working to ensure that the repertoire that they select from is presented accurately. Rose shared her perspective on the importance of thorough research:

> ...we really need to be careful in researching what the original source is, and what… is the really original version of it. Because sometimes there are so many varied versions… I do try my best to stick to the original so that… we can actually, you know, honor the traditions.

For Kaitlyn, an important aspect of including repertoire from non-Western cultures is ensuring accurate pronunciation of non-English text. She reports, “I'm very self-conscious about speaking correctly, especially when I'm teaching a Korean song to a class that is 40% Korean.” She goes on to mention that Quaver is a helpful resource for her, due to its inclusion of pronunciation guides.

Another aspect of striving towards culturally relevant teaching is the removal of repertoire that causes harm. Rose and Kaitlyn both addressed this aspect, and shared that they have engaged in re-examining literature through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Kaitlyn shared that, in the past, “Chicken on a Fence Post” was a go-to song in her classroom when teaching students about sixteenth notes. This song has widely been removed from elementary curricula, Kaitlyn’s included; its original lyrics contained racial slurs.

Chapter 7: Discussion

Pedagogical Content Knowledge in conversation with the literature

Haston and Leon-Guerrero (2008) determined that, among pre-service instrumental music teachers, methods courses, intuition, apprenticeship of observation, and cooperating teachers were significant sources of pedagogical content knowledge. When Haston (2018) repeated this work with practicing secondary instrumental teachers, the same categories were found, with the addition of two sources of learning: colleagues and “other.” “Other” encompassed independent or self-directed learning opportunities that teachers took advantage of in order to gain new PCK, such as books or participating in professional development workshops.

The teachers who participated in the present study indicated different sources of knowledge. Of course, this study sought sources of repertoire knowledge as its main focus; a study that also examined other types of PCK, such as the teaching strategies used to present said repertoire, would likely yield different results. Repertoire selection in the elementary general music classroom is one example of PCK, but many others do exist among EGM teachers. With this in mind, it is still worthwhile to contrast these findings and to note the differing sources that study participants cited for their knowledge.

Of the six categories that emerged in Haston’s 2018 study, only two were mentioned as being significant among the participants in my research. Learning from colleagues, or peer-to-peer learning, was a significant source of repertoire knowledge reported by Rose, Kaitlyn, and Sierra. Although it was not cited as a source of repertoire for Maria, she did indicate that she has worked with mentor teachers. Perhaps, if her other PCK were to be investigated, this would emerge as a source of knowledge due to this time as a mentee.

The category that Haston labeled “other” was also important to all four participants. Including print resources, online resources such as blogs, and professional development, this category encompassed several sources that were reported by the participants as being foundational.

Collegiate methods courses and cooperating teachers, which were amongst the original categories proposed by Haston and Leon-Guerrero, were briefly mentioned by Kaitlyn, who said that the repertoire that she shares with students includes,

> ...a few [songs] from student teaching that I liked, but I would say a lot less from student teaching… a little bit from my methods classes… But definitely I felt like it was more like once I got into the field like in the trenches.

The other teachers in this study did not make mention of methods classes. It is worth noting that both Maria and Rose did not major in music education during their undergraduate degrees, so their coursework likely did not include methods courses at all.

Apprenticeship of observation refers to PCK that is learned from one’s own teachers when one is a student. This was seen in the Haston and Leon-Guerro and Haston studies; educators reported utilizing strategies that they learned from their own secondary or collegiate instrumental instructors. None of my participants reported using knowledge gained this way. This difference is perhaps explainable simply because of age- while most music teachers engage in ensemble experiences at least through their early twenties as college students, the experience of being in an elementary general music class, by its very nature, ends in middle childhood. It is possible that EGM teachers simply do not remember much that they learned in their own days as elementary school students. It is worth noting that Rose did teach her students one song that she remembered singing in elementary school- however, she first found it within a book, then remembered her own experience singing it as a child.

Intuition was similarly not mentioned by participants in this study- however, they utilized elements of intuition when discussing some of the aesthetic criteria that they felt were important

for their students, and further used their intuition when composing, editing, or re-arranging music for their students.

It is my speculation that, in addition to the differences in research scope outlined above, the differences between the present study and those conducted by Haston and Leon-Guerrero are the result of the differing experiences and knowledge bases of elementary general music teachers as opposed to secondary instrumental teachers. Because apprenticeship of observation is not a ready source of PCK, perhaps EGM teachers rely more heavily on ongoing professional learning, both from their peers and from print and digital resources.

Vaillancourt's (2009) proposed categories for repertoire selection amongst elementary general music teachers are well-reflected by the selection criteria that teachers in this study reported. He suggested that teachers consider musical/ aesthetic, psycho-pedagogical, pedagogical, and cultural criteria. These categories align fairly well with the aesthetic, functional, content-based, and cultural criteria that I identified in teacher responses.

Impacts of Approach

Maria, Kaitlyn, Rose, and Sierra are all experienced teachers; however, their decisions are, of course, different from one another's, and made with different criteria in mind. The roots of these differences are many- they all have different life experiences, educational and musical backgrounds, priorities, and teaching settings. However, their alignment (or lack thereof) with various pedagogical approaches does seem to impact their repertoire decisions.

Maria and Kaitlyn are both what I would term generalists- they have explored (extensively, in Maria's case with Musikgarten) various educational approaches, and have found strategies and ideas that work for them. They have not, however, self-identified as teachers of one particular style. Kaitlyn, in particular, highlighted her comfort with this approach by describing her music teacher self as an "eclectic bundle." Maria and Kaitlyn both also reported that they made frequent use of online resources, including blogs, song databases, and

YouTube.

To paint Rose and Sierra as exclusively relying on one teaching approach is to paint with too broad of a brush; both of them are flexible and creative, and Rose in particular has sought extensive formal training in a variety of pedagogical approaches. However, they do both find that their overall teaching style aligns with one approach more closely than others; for Rose, this is Kodály, for Sierra, Orff-Schulwerk. Interestingly, both Rose and Sierra reported more reliance on print resources than their "generalist" colleagues, with less frequent utilization of digital resources. In both of their cases, some (but not all) of the print material that they favor using is that which is associated with their pedagogy of choice.

Rose's reported print materials include more selections that are outside of the scope of her approach of choice; the majority of Sierra's are, in fact, drawn from Orff-based literature. This is perhaps reflective of the different approaches to lifelong learning taken by the two teachers: Rose has achieved an exceptional breadth of knowledge, and has studied a variety of approaches to teaching music. Sierra is deeply, continuously engaged in the world of Orff.

Based on this research, it seems possible that a close alignment with one pedagogical approach may lead to more targeted repertoire selection from specific resources, rather than broad online research. Future research could shine additional light on whether this pattern is consistent with other teachers and why it might exist, but the current findings pose interesting questions for scholars to consider. Is this more targeted style of repertoire selection a more efficient way to find great pieces of music for students, or should a broader, exploration-based approach be considered?

The teachers in this study each performed a balancing act- some balanced one pedagogical approach with broader research and resources, while others sought to give equal weight to a variety of sources and balanced broad research with careful selection. The teachers studied were also all experienced, dedicated professionals, who executed these balancing acts with grace. For a new or struggling teacher, finding the correct balance might prove more

challenging. This presents a quandary for teacher educators- should new elementary general music teachers be encouraged to find a pedagogical approach to align with, to select from a variety of sources, or to find a middle ground? There is perhaps not one easy answer to this question, but I contend that scholars and teacher educators should continue to reflect upon how to help new teachers find the sources of repertoire and other PCK that they need to quickly gain during their early careers.

Aural/Oral/Visual/ Kinesthetic/ Digital Tradition

At the outset of this research, I set out to examine the ways that repertoire is passed between teachers through the lens of an oral tradition, as in folk music. This lens, though partially useful, did not entirely hold up in light of the data collected. There were certainly many instances in which teachers reported receiving repertoire directly from peers. However, I did not find evidence of this exchange taking place without notation. Teachers may have learned new repertoire from their peers, but the written component was part of this transfer of knowledge.

This does not entirely refute the idea of a folk-style transmission of repertoire amongst teachers, as during these learning experiences colleagues certainly presented repertoire orally, visually, and kinesthetically, thereby imparting information beyond what the written record is able to convey. Furthermore, in some instances when repertoire is shared between peers, no original source for the shared repertoire is given; it enters the receiving teacher's pedagogy via their colleague, without any further origin information.

There are also examples of teachers sharing with one another without notation, instead using the medium of digital video files. Perhaps a digital tradition is part of the equation along with the aural, oral, visual, and kinesthetic.

Despite the ambiguous at best evidence for an oral tradition component, the regularity with which teachers share repertoire between themselves is certainly indicative of a musical community (Lornell 2013), evidence that music educators, while attempting to impart musical

culture to their students, are actively members and continual creators of their own culture. This culture is bound by ties that are both professional and personal; in many instances, the participants in this study referred to their teaching colleagues as “friends.” Future research into the ways that music teachers self-identify with this shared professional culture could shed fascinating light on the nature of this interconnectedness. Further work could also be done to help guide best practices around repertoire sourcing and sharing of sources with peers. For example, a study that connects research to practice and gains perspective on teacher collaboration, similar to the Stanley, Snell, and Edgar (2014) with a focus on repertoire transmission, would be fascinating.

This is also pertinent to the question of how to best support early career teachers, posed in the previous section. If there are informal, cultural or quasi-cultural ties between colleagues, how do new teachers enter into these networks? Perhaps sustained, ongoing mentorship or targeted professional development series might be created with an eye to transmitting this critical knowledge and introducing newer teachers to the varied sources of PCK that their colleagues are utilizing.

Repertoire Selection in a Changing World

Repertoire selection is a multi-faceted, nuanced, and sometimes iterative process. A teacher’s individual selections are based on their own priorities, methodology/ approach, resources available, educational background, students, planning style, and other factors. A teacher may select repertoire in order to fit a thematic unit, may create a lesson or unit theme based on the repertoire that they chose to illustrate a concept, may do neither of these, or some combination. What can be generalized, however, is that no teacher considers only one or two factors when selecting repertoire, nor consults only one or two resources. Furthermore, beyond the individual factors that teachers consider, broad cultural factors and trends in education effect the ways that teachers select repertoire, sometimes profoundly.

If I had conducted this research five years ago, I am confident that the results would have been significantly different. If I imagine repeating this study five years into the future, anything feels possible. We are in the midst of a broad cultural shift. The last five years have included massive global and national events that have had a profound impact on us all. The Covid-19 pandemic, in addition to being a massive trauma and tragedy, inspired a new level of reliance on technology and prevalence of online work. The cell-phone recorded murder of George Floyd in 2020 held up a mirror to Americans about the way that white supremacy is very much still alive in our country in this century, and inspired a new dedication to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in many educational spaces. Widespread political polarization has caused teachers in some areas to experience book bans and heavy restrictions on topics that they are allowed to address; teachers who do not suffer these restrictions in many cases consequently redouble their efforts to promote open-mindedness and inclusivity. In the light of these and other events, teachers have gained a new perspective on student trauma and dysregulation, and have begun making shifts to support student emotional and sensory needs in new ways.

What doors are open for music teachers in this shifting landscape? First and most saliently, teachers are dedicated to using their repertoire selection to create mirrors and windows (Style 1988) for students to experience their own and other cultures. Music classrooms have certainly utilized multicultural music for a long period of time, but the importance and urgency of doing so (and doing so with faithfulness and respect, rather than tokenization) is strongly felt today, as is the importance of avoiding songs with potentially harmful pasts. In Rose's words,

> And then, some of them I had to scratch out, because after all this researching, I noticed that these actually brought some harms… they had some questionable pasts, and so I do not use them anymore.

These potentially harmful songs generally include those with ties to blackface minstrelsy, racist or sexist original lyrics, and songs that in other ways represent caricatured or inaccurate portrayals of various races/ cultures. For examples of songs that are widely being removed from classrooms, see the Know Better Do Better Project's Song Lists (n.d.).

At this point in time, this research indicates that music teachers are beginning to gain confidence with both removing inappropriate songs and increasing the diversity of their repertoire; the elementary canon has changed. Perhaps we are beginning to see a second phase of growth, where teachers not only make changes to their repertoire lists, but begin to question the idea of a canon more broadly and choose repertoire in a way that is responsive to their particular students. As Sierra says, "I want it to feel right for me and for the kids and for… what's going on in the world for whatever year that is." This is also evident in Kaitlyn meticulously curating repertoire each year that reflects her students' unique cultural backgrounds. Thinking about repertoire selection as a critical aspect of a culturally sustaining classroom opens many avenues for teachers to explore. What about positive inclusion and portrayals of popular music? Allowing students to share their own voices by composing, then performing their own work? These ideas may come more and more into the forefront as we center student voices and allow students to both study a variety of cultures and build their own cultures within the classroom.

In addition to uplifting the music of a variety of cultures in an authentic and sustaining way, teachers are gaining awareness of the regulatory and emotional needs of their students. Each of the teachers that I interviewed had multiple instances in which their repertoire choices were guided by a need to allow students to self-regulate and understand classroom routines- whether in the form of a warm-up song, movement break, or transitional song. Each teacher also displayed awareness that some or all of their students needed specific assistance with regulation- whether in the form of modified lessons to allow for a looser structure, breaks to breathe or wiggle, or in maintaining very consistent procedures in order to make transitions

more manageable. This awareness of student mental health may also expand in the coming years. In addition to their popular online music textbook, Quaver™ offers a product called "QuaverReady," whose intended purpose is to utilize musical activities to support behavior. Will we see more music publishers creating with this purpose in mind? What about individual teachers? Whatever resources are found or created next for this purpose, it will be interesting to see what music teachers do to continue to support the social and emotional needs of their students.

The teachers included in this study are each, in their own ways, continually adjusting their sails to follow the changing winds of professional best practices and student needs. This perpetual change and growth may be part of the reason that print textbook series, which are by their very nature static and infrequently updated, have fallen out of favor, while online just-in-time learning and leaning on supportive peers have become such prominent sources of knowledge. The importance of peer-to-peer learning in teaching, while not a new trend, was very much highlighted by this study. To risk veering too far into the nautical, it brings to mind the aphorism that "a rising tide lifts all boats." If teachers are relying upon their peers for significant portions of their own learning, then improving professional development and access to resources for any one teacher has the potential to benefit all other teachers with whom they are connected. This consistent, powerful trend of teachers supporting one another is something that deserves not only additional study and analysis, but active support from stakeholders.

Limitations and Areas for Future Study

I acknowledge the limitations of this research. The teachers with whom I spoke all live in and work in the same broad geographical area and school system. They are also all experienced- a new music teacher would likely have very different perspectives on, for example, the importance of student teaching to their current practice. However, further research with a wider variety of participants might be able to shed more comprehensive light on this topic. Given

the ties of this study to culturally responsive teaching and uplifting student cultures, it would be illuminating to perform a similar study in a geographic location where local policy is less supportive of, or even hostile towards, culturally responsive teaching.

The teachers in this study also selected the lessons that we discussed and used as exemplars. It is certainly possible that, if a more “random” lesson were chosen for each teacher, rather than one that they selected as an exemplar, different patterns might emerge.

To expand upon this research, future scholars should consider tracing the provenance of the many folk songs found on online databases. Beth’s Music Notes, in particular, was a frequent choice for both Rose and Kaitlyn. Little cultural or historical context is given for most of the music included in that database. In recent years, some pieces have been removed, with their listings left active and containing a brief explanation of their harmful histories. It is not enough, however, to remove blatantly racist material- context needs to be given for all music in order for teachers to approach it authentically. Given the prominence of this resource, and others like it, it would be wise for scholars to determine the authenticity and history of these folk songs, and perhaps to guide the creation of databases that include easily accessible background information for teachers.

It would also be fascinating to study the patterns of repertoire transmission amongst teachers within professional organizations or other professional learning communities, as in Sierra’s Orff community. How do the ideas shared within these communities proliferate, change over time, and find their way to students?

This research also gave brief glimpses at teacher creativity in the form of composing, lyric-writing, arranging, and editing music for student use. There is a great deal of future study that could take place around the ways that music teachers create and change the repertoire that they share with students. This creativity may give rise to another way that, in elementary general music, we move past the canon and into a truly student-centered practice of repertoire selection.

Broadly, much more investigation is needed into the lesson planning and repertoire selection processes of elementary general music teachers, especially if we as a profession wish to find feasible process improvements to make lessons more effective, engaging, and culturally responsive.

Implications for Future Practice

Based on what this study indicates, music teachers consult a wide variety of sources when selecting repertoire to share with their students. The authenticity and appropriateness of these sources, especially those that are Internet-based, have not been uniformly studied or verified. It is my strong recommendation to teachers that, for each song that they share with students, they conduct their own research in order to ensure that what they are teaching is accurate and does not cause harm to students. In order to avoid having to continually repeat these tasks year after year, teachers might consider creating personal databases in order to retain their records of well-researched songs and chants. In order to help their fellow teachers, especially those that are newer in the profession, experienced teachers could also consider sharing their databases, either widely on the Internet or more privately with colleagues. It is even possible to envision a collaborative database that is maintained by a group of teachers who collectively determine the information that they wish to be included along with each piece of music uploaded.

This study also indicates that teachers rightly share a great deal of context when teaching pieces of music that come from non-Western cultures. This context is important, and helps students to engage in these pieces with a deeper understanding. However, I wonder whether more context could be shared when teaching pieces that are from within the dominant Eurocentric culture of the United States. The benefits of this additional contextualization are twofold. First, this normalizes the sharing of contextual details when working on any piece of folk music; if context is provided only for non-Western music, that music is treated as “other” while

Western folk music is treated as the default. Second, it provides teachers with the opportunity to share elements of American and European culture with their students- despite sometimes being treated together as the default culture, these cultures are certainly not a monolith and contain many opportunities for students to gain greater perspective on history and culture through music.

The responsibility of making this contextualizing work more approachable for teachers lies with teacher leaders and educators. Given the prevalence of online resource use and peer-to-peer song sharing found in this study, those who wish to shape educational practice should consider sharing repertoire via easily accessible, free online resources and/or professional development sessions with practitioners. Furthermore, stakeholders who wish to share knowledge via traditional textbook series should consider either sharing an online component, or presenting their work at professional development sessions, as these appear to have more reach within the music education community than print textbook series.

There is also an opportunity for teacher leaders and educators to examine and curate the many YouTube offerings that, post-Covid, have become a part of many teachers' lessons. Publishing content for classroom use on YouTube and creating playlists of selected resources may be a way to shape the way that teachers utilize this online resource.

For practitioners and teacher educators alike, another practical consideration is teacher creativity. In addition to further study, teacher creativity needs further growth and encouragement. Creating space and encouragement for teachers to compose and arrange their own music and share it with others may provide new foundational sources of repertoire in the future.

Finally, I urge all stakeholders to consider ways to promote knowledge and repertoire exchange between teachers who are not part of the same approach-based communities. Incredible work is being done within the various professional organizations and informal

communities of practitioners who share pedagogical approaches. Sharing between these groups can only expand the richness of repertoire within our profession as a whole.

By encouraging peer-to-peer exchange within and across groups, helping to make quality resources readily available, and fostering greater teacher creativity, those who teach and support teachers can positively impact repertoire selection practices. By doing so, they will positively impact the richness and quality of student classroom experiences.

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Date:

Time:

Participant Name:

Introduction (to be read aloud by researcher): *Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. This interview is part of the research that I am doing for my thesis, and is on the topic of repertoire selection in elementary general music classrooms. Since you already reviewed the informed consent form prior to submitting your classroom materials, we don't need to review that. However, I do want to remind you that all of your answers are confidential, and a pseudonym will be used for you in my thesis paper. Remember, this research is focused on general music classes, so we will be focused on how you select repertoire in those classes, rather than for your Chorus students.*

1. Briefly describe your own background in music education and training to be a music teacher. Are there any methodologies or approaches that you frequently utilize in the classroom?
   <Insert notes>

2. How do you begin the process of planning a lesson? At what phase of planning do you begin choosing specific song/chant repertoire?
   <Insert notes>

3. When you start to think about repertoire for a lesson, what is your thought process like? What resources do you consult first?
   <Insert notes>

4. Tell me a bit about your own song repertoire. Do you have favorites or standards that you often return to? Are some of these committed to memory?
   <Insert notes>

5. Where did you learn these favorites?
   <Insert notes>

   The following questions will be repeated for each song/chant from the focus lesson.

6. Why did you choose this particular song/chant?
   <Insert notes>

7. Do you recall where you learned this piece, and/or what source it is taken from?

<Insert notes>

8. How did including this song impact the rest of your lesson?
<Insert notes>

If probes or clarifying questions are asked, insert notes below:

References

Apfelstadt, H. (2000). First things first selecting repertoire: Finding quality, teachable repertoire appropriate to the context, compatible with the National Standards, and interesting to play is an achievable goal. *Music Educators Journal*, *87*(1), 19–46. https://doi.org/10.2307/3399672

Bautista, A., Stanley, A.M., and Candusso, F. (2021). "Policy strategies to remedy isolation of specialist arts and music teachers." *Arts Education Policy Review* 122(1) 42–53. https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2020.1746713

Beegle, A., and Bond, J. (2016). "Orff-Schulwerk: Releasing and developing the musical imagination." In C.R. Abril and B.M. Gault (Eds.), *Teaching general music: Approaches, issues, and viewpoints.* Oxford University Press.

Bluestine, E. (2000). *The ways children learn music.* GIA Publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Guetterman, T. C. (2019). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (Sixth edition). Pearson.

Feierabend Association for Music Education (2019). *Curriculum.* https://www.feierabendmusic.org/curriculum/

Forbes, G. W. (2001). The repertoire selection practices of high school choral directors. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *49*(2), 102–121. https://doi.org/10.2307/3345863

Forrester, S. H. (2017). Repertoire selection for concert band: Preservice music teachers' perceptions and development of knowledge. *Research Perspectives in Music Education*, *19*(1), 14–31.

Goodkin, D. (2013). *Play, sing, and dance: An introduction to Orff-Schulwerk.* Schott.

Haston, W. (2018). In-service music teachers' self-perceived sources of pedagogical content knowledge. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, *217*, 45–66.

https://doi.org/10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.217.0045

Haston, W., & Leon-Guerrero, A. (2008). Sources of pedagogical content knowledge. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, *17*(2), 12.

Heyge, L.L., & Wilson, M.L. (2016). *New friends: Teacher's guidebook.* Musikgarten/ Music Matters. https://www.musikgarten.org/uploads/New%20Friends%20Teacher%20Guide.pdf

Houlahan, M., & Tacka, P. *Kodály today: A cognitive approach to elementary music education*. Oxford University Press, 2015.

Howard, K. (2021).“Ethical song research for the general music teacher.” *General Music Today* 34 (3) 42–44. https://doi.org/10.1177/1048371321996289.

Jackson, C. K., & Bruegmann, E. (2009). Teaching students and teaching each other: The importance of peer learning for teachers. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, *1*(4), 85–108. https://doi.org/10.1257/app.1.4.85

Johnson, D. C., & Matthews, W. K. (2017). Experienced general music teachers' instructional decision making. *International Journal of Music Education*, *35*(2), 189–201. https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761415620531

Jones, W. M., and Dexter, S. (2014). “How teachers learn: The roles of formal, informal, and independent learning.” *Educational Technology Research and Development* 62(3) 367–84. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-014-9337-6.

Kelly-McHale, J. (2013). The influence of music teacher beliefs and practices on the expression of musical identity in an elementary general music classroom. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *61*(2), 195–216. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429413485439

Kelly-McHale, J. (2019). Research-to-Resource: Developing a culturally responsive mind-set in elementary general music. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, *37*(2), 11–14. https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123318810111

Know Better Do Better Project (n.d.). *Song lists.* https://www.knowbetterdobetterproject.com/resources

Koner, K and Eros, J. (2019) "Professional development for the experienced music educator: A review of recent literature." *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 37 (3). 12–19. https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123318812426.

Ladson-Billings, G.. "Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: A.k.a. the remix." *Harvard Educational Review* 84, no. 1 (April 1, 2014): 74–84. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.84.1.p2rj131485484751.

Lee, Soojin (2018). "General music teachers' backgrounds and multicultural repertoire selection." *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 36, no. 2 (February 2018): 38–44. https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123317717052.

Lornell, K. (2012). *Exploring american folk music: Ethnic, grassroots, and regional traditions in the United States*. University Press of Mississippi. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/umdcp/detail.action?docID=932777

Marsh, K. (1999) *Mediated orality: The role of popular music in the changing tradition of children's musical play*. (n.d.). https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X9901300102

Mason, E. (2010). "Multicultural music represented in current elementary music textbooks: A comparative study of two published music series." *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 28(2), 29–41. https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123310361767.

McLucas, A.D. (2013). "Oral tradition." *Grove Music Online.* https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2292603

Millican, J. S. (2013). Describing instrumental music teachers' thinking: Implications for understanding pedagogical content knowledge. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, *31*(2), 45–53. https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123312473761

Musikgarten (n.d.) *Our history.* https://www.musikgarten.org/our-history

Nielsen, S. G., Jordhus-Lier, A., & Karlsen, S. (2023). Selecting repertoire for music teaching: Findings from Norwegian schools of music and arts. *Research Studies in Music Education*, *45*(1), 94–111. https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X221099436

Prickett, C.A., and Bridges, M.S. (2000). "A comparison of the basic song repertoire of vocal/choral and instrumental music education majors." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 48(1), 5–9. https://doi.org/10.2307/3345452.

Quaver (2018). *Quaver song list.* https://www.quavered.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Quaver-Curriculum-Song-List-for-Print_2018v19-1.pdf

Reynolds, H. R. (2000). Repertoire is the curriculum: Repertoire selection has a major impact on what students will and will not learn, and it should help their musical understanding and appreciation. *Music Educators Journal*, *87*(1), 31–33. https://doi.org/10.2307/3399675

Rotjan, M. (2018). What's your rep? Integrative approaches and perspectives to repertoire selection. *American String Teacher*, *68*(1), 38–42. https://doi.org/10.1177/0003131317743170

Shulman L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher*, 15(2), 4–14.

Sindberg, L.K. (2016). "Elements of a successful professional learning community for music teachers using comprehensive musicianship through performance." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 64(2). 202–19. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429416648945.

Stanley, A.M., Snell, A., and Edgar, S. (2014). "Collaboration as effective music professional development: Success stories from the Field." *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 2 (1). 76–88. https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083713502731.

Style, E. (1988). *Curriculum as mirror and window.* National SEED Project.

https://nationalseedproject.org/Key-SEED-Texts/curriculum-as-window-and-mirror

Vaillancourt, J. (2009). Music teaching at the elementary level: Selecting a song repertoire. *The Phenomenon of Singing*, *7*, 131–138.

Wang, C.C., and Sogin, D.W. (1997). “Self-reported versus observed classroom activities in elementary general music.” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 45(3) 444–56. https://doi.org/10.2307/3345538.