FROM THE NIGHTLIFE TO THE SCHOOL DAY: A SURVEY OF INFORMAL MUSIC LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES AMONG MUSIC EDUCATORS

by

WILSON REESE FLORY
B.M., Longwood University, 2006

A REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MUSIC

Department of Music
College of Arts and Sciences

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2014

Approved by:

Major Professor
Phillip D. Payne, PhD

Copyright

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if music educators who have had experiences with informal music are more likely to employ informal learning within their classroom. Secondary research objectives included a comparison of survey results against specific demographics of the survey participants, an examination of the types of informal learning that the participants experienced and facilitated, and a look at the perceived barriers and benefits of informal music learning from the viewpoints of the participants.

Participants (N=25) were practicing music educators pursuing graduate music studies. The participants were enrolled in a summer Master of Music program at a university in the Midwest. Data was collected by employing a pen and paper survey that provided a demographic description and informal music learning questionnaire. The participants were asked to indicate the frequency of participation in informal music activities prior to becoming a music educator. They further reported what informal music learning activities they facilitate within their school music curriculum. Finally, the participants responded to two short answer questions where they identified barriers and benefits they perceive with the implementation of informal music practices within their music programs.

Results from a Pearson correlation showed a moderately strong relationship ($p = 0.43$) between participants who had informal music experiences (E) and who employed informal music learning within their music curriculum (C). There were no significant differences observed in the results between participants of different gender or school division. Of the short answer responses catalogued, participants cited a lack of experience with informal music and difficulty of connecting informal music learning to the formal music curriculum as the barriers to employing informal music learning in the classroom. The participants discussed the increase in student

motivation, expanding musicality, and real-world relevance as the benefits of informal music learning. Knowledge gained from this study may be useful to individuals facilitating informal music learning within music education programs at the primary, secondary, or collegiate levels.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Acknowledgements

As I conclude this report with the last few strokes of the keyboard, I think about the many folks who have positively impacted me and assisted me in the undertaking of this project. I would be remiss to not give credit where it is due.

Thank you to Dr. Phillip Payne, whose passionate teaching and insightful guidance has helped me to hone my own direction and interests as a musician and educator. Thank you for your assistance as my major professor and the challenges you presented through the courses you taught. Much of my professional growth over the past three years can be attributed to your tutelage and direction.

Thank you to the rest of my committee and the professors I've worked with through this program: Dr. Julie Yu, Dr. Frederick Burrack, Dr. Joshua Oppenheim, and Dr. Frank Tracz. Because of your flexibility and encouragement, I was able to complete a master's degree while working a full-time job – one that required a deployment to a combat zone. Without your caring support and creative solutions, I would not have been able to reach my goal of graduate education.

A special thanks goes to my former unit commanders, Chief Warrant Officers Jeremiah Keillor and Jeffrey Price, for supporting my educational goals by providing me the necessary time away from the office and the parade field to complete my master's degree. Thank you for taking the interest in my personal dreams and providing rare opportunities for a "green" army musician. I hope to be able to provide similar support to my soldiers as I rise through the ranks.

I must thank the music educators who have impacted me over the course of my life: Ms. Betsy Hermann, Mr. Milton Rodgers, Dr. Charles and Lisa Kinzer, Mrs. Trish Johnson, Dr.

Dennis Malfatti, and Mrs. Pam Cordle. My life is filled with so many pleasant memories of time with each of you as a mentor.

Thank you to my colleagues in the music program for your friendship and willingness to participate in this study. This project could not have happened without your support.

Thank you to my brother Chip, and to our many friends who we shared our early musical experiences. From our first chords on the keyboard, to singing together in choir, to entertaining friends and family around the piano and guitar, thank you for helping to keep music fun.

I would like to thank my parents, Will and DiAnn Flory. Words cannot express how much your love and dedication over the years mean to me. I will never forget the interest and support that you have so freely given to me personally and as a musician. It is so important to encourage a child's positive interests, I hope to do the same for my own daughter as she grows into her own person.

Lastly and most importantly, I must thank my girls. Delilah, you just have that knack for knowing the right time to walk into a room and yell "WHEE!" or "WOW!". Thank you for keeping your old man on his toes and giving him a chuckle once in a while. To my wife and best friend, Meredith - You have been my constant champion, motivator, and example of academic diligence. From late night proofreading of bits and pieces of this work and other assignments through my degree, to your understanding and encouragement of the amount of hours put towards this work, to your genuine interest in this study – I could not have done this without you. Thank you for loving me through the long hours away at the library or in the home office. I'm proud to soon be able to join you as the second "Master Flory" of our generation, and I can't wait to see what our next chapter together in life holds.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

The YouTube artist singing her favorite pop song on camera for thousands of viewers, the banjo player picking with a bluegrass band at a community event, and the guitar player playing a solo riff in a local tribute band all have something in common – it is likely that these musicians gained their musical skills and experience by informal learning. Informal music learning is not a new concept. It is the acquisition of new information in a haphazard manner without an instructor (Green, 2005). One can easily argue that this manner of learning takes place of the time. However, only recently have we seen serious consideration of informal learning practices used within a formal music setting (Cayari, 2014; Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2005, 2008). Informal Learning is a difficult term to label because by its very nature, informal learning cannot take place within established formal institutions without careful structure to the lesson or module. Some educators mistake that informal music learning is teaching what the students want to learn, but that is not the entire case. Researchers have found (Folkestad, 2006; Gower, 2012; Green, 2005; Jaffurs, 2004; Wright, 2010) that the inclusion of popular music in the classroom without modifying the learning process does not constitute informal learning. What can be agreed upon is that informal music learning occurs when the knowledge gained is directed by oneself or a peer group, integrating separate skillsets, such as listening and arranging in a combined manner, choosing the music to work with, and utilizing improvisation and composition (Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2005; Mak, 2007).

Like many of its sister arts, music learning can be accomplished with formal or informal learning methods (Folkestad, 2006; Mak, 2007). Formal learning is the most prevalent in Western music classrooms or private lessons; involving the transfer of knowledge from a

teacher, often steeped in pedagogical concepts, to a student through well established rehearsal techniques. These techniques convey instruction on music literacy, tone production, and playing technique. The music is typically prepared through instructor led drill and rehearsal during lessons and private practice at home. Some pieces studied may actually be an etude written for the purpose of teaching a specific skill or technique, with little relevance to and is unlikely to ever be performed. The issue with a strict formal music setting is that many students will not acquire the skills necessary to pursue music as a lifelong endeavor or for commercial success (Feichas, 2010; Vitale, 2011; Wright, 2010). John Kratus in his 2007 article claims that music education is at a critical "tipping point" because of its loss of relevance and connectivity to how students experience music naturally and how music is taught in the classroom. One of the answers to this problem the inclusion of informal music techniques within the classroom to help students discover how to experience, listen to, and create music (Cayari, 2014; Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2005, 2008; Jaffurs, 2004; Kratus, 2007; Mak, 2007).

Problem

As a response to the need for a shift in music curricula, many researchers have investigated informal music making, both in and out of the classroom, over the past few years (Cayari, 2014; Folkestad, 2006; Gower, 2012; Green, 2005, 2008; Jaffurs, 2004; Wright, 2010). A majority of these studies were qualitative in nature, including ethnographies, narratives, and case studies. Most of those studies have been directed at teachers and how they implement informal learning practices. It has been determined that music teachers are employing informal learning techniques within their classrooms at a rate that is greater than had previously been observed.

Of the quantitative studies explored for this project, nearly all were focused on music students and their experiences and perceptions with informal music learning (Blom, 2012; Feichas, 2010; Springer, 2013; Wang, 2009). An interesting study was conducted by John Vitale (2011), surveying non-music teachers for their perspectives and attitudes toward formally and informally trained musicians. His findings aligned with other readings for this current study (Kratus, 2007; Wright, 2010), showing a positive view toward informal learning and supporting a need for inclusion on informal learning practices within the classroom. Of particular interest and relevance to this current study was Feichas' 2010 study where he sampled students' musical backgrounds and whether they were informal, formal, or a mix of the two, and what issues they faced in the music conservatory environment.

Despite the wealth of research on informal music learning, an investigation of music educators' and their experience with informal music learning has yet to be executed. Furthermore, no studies have examined if there is a link between an informal learning background and implementation of informal techniques within a curriculum. As school music programs adapt to the changing paradigms to meet today's educational needs, it is necessary to have an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses that music educators possess so they may be adequately equipped to meet these challenges. The purpose of this study is to determine if music educators who have had experiences with informal music are more likely to employ informal learning within their classroom.

Research Questions

Does a relationship exist between the pre-service informal music experiences of teachers and the informal music employed by teachers within their school curriculum?

Secondary Research Questions

1. Is there a difference in implementation of informal music based upon specific demographics of those surveyed?
    a. Gender
    b. Grade level
    c. Type of school district (rural, suburban, urban)
2. What specific types of informal music experiences have occurred within the surveyed population?
3. What types of informal learning are taking place within the classrooms of surveyed teachers?
4. Why do teachers employ/ not employ informal learning techniques within their curricula?

Null Hypothesis

1. There are no statistically significant relationships between informal learning experiences and implementing informal strategies in the music classroom.
2. There are no statistically significant differences of employment of informal learning based on teacher demographics.

Definitions

Informal Music Learning

According to researchers (Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2005; Mak, 2007), there are five main characteristics of informal music learning.

1. Informal learners choose the music themselves.
2. Informal learning is done primarily by ear.

3. Informal learning is self-taught and takes place in groups, typically by imitation.
4. Informal learning takes place in a personal manner according to personal tastes with no limit on choice or progression.
5. There is an integration of listening, performing, improvising, and composing with an emphasis on creativity.

Therefore, informal learning is exemplified by participation in music-making without a director, in a small group of peers, use of music improvisation, or otherwise practicing or acquiring skill outside of a traditional academic, curricular, or pedagogical manner.

Teacher experiences in informal music (E)

This study will examine and quantify participants' pre-service occurrences with informal music learning.

Curricular involvement of informal music (C)

For the purpose of this study C includes non-formal and informal musical activities facilitated by the teacher within their music program.

Assumptions

In this study, teachers will report their instances of personal informal learning and informal methodology in their classrooms. The participants are acknowledged as a representation of music educators in a state in Midwest and not representative of a larger demographic. The results could drastically change based upon who is selected and who responds to the survey.

Limitations and Delimitations

This research is limited on the size and location of this sample, as the survey opportunity will be presented in person to graduate-level music education students at a university in the Midwest. The questionnaire will be administered by paper, in person only. Only currently practicing music educators will be surveyed.

Chapter 2 - Review of Literature

Overview

The purpose of this study is to determine if music educators who have had experiences with informal music are more likely to employ informal learning within their classroom. Secondary research objectives included a comparison of specific demographics of the participants, an examination of the types of informal learning that the participants experienced and facilitated, and a look at the perceived barriers and benefits of informal music learning from the viewpoints of the participants.

The participants were practicing music educators pursuing graduate music studies. The data, collected by employing a pen and paper survey provided a demographic description, information about the frequency of informal music activities prior to becoming a music educator, reports on informal music learning facilitated within the participants' school music curricula, and perceived barriers and benefits with the utilization of informal music practices the participants' music programs. Knowledge gained from this study may be useful to individuals facilitating informal music learning within music education programs at the primary, secondary, or collegiate levels.

The Need for Informal Music Learning

Informal music learning, while not a new concept, has been found to be a necessity for a comprehensive music education program. Researchers have found that the inclusion of informal music learning within the curriculum increases the student's musical awareness, aural skills, and capability as an independent musician (Feichas, 2010; Green, 2005, 2008; Mak, 2007; Wright, 2010), as well as the promotion of lifelong musical pursuit and enjoyment (Cayari, 2014; Gower,

2012; Mak, 2007; Waldron, 2011). Furthermore, a key ingredient to comprehensive music education that is discussed is musical relevance (Cayari, 2014; Green, 2005, 2008; Kratus, 2007). By exploring informal learning techniques, researchers have shown that there is a greater likelihood for students to appreciate traditional music when it is done within the natural learning process of peer groups (Green, 2008; Jaffurs, 2004). Rather than supplanting formal and traditional music within the school, studies show that introducing informal music processes allows a dichotomy of music learning (Folkestad, 2006), allowing for the greatest breadth in reaching students in the music classroom.

Kratus (2007) discussed the importance of relevancy in the music education curriculum in his article *Music Education at the Tipping Point*. His opening point in the article was that music educators have had the most success when their curriculum aligns with the musical needs of the society. As the musical tastes and needs of society change, so must music education. The author cited a study headed by the *Music for All Foundation* that found a sharp decrease in student enrollment in music classes between 1999 and 2004. A similar study in Canada showed declining enrollment and lowered standards for employed music educators. Despite the political and economic conditions, music should still be thriving in the schools as other arts programs are, argued Kratus. The author further stated that a separation between the way students interact with music and the way music is presented in the school is the primary reason that programs are suffering. Music programs are clinging to models that have been unchanged for decades or centuries, while other education models are shifting to accommodate the needs of our mobile, technology-laden society. His solution to this lack of relevancy shows music programs that connect student composers to collegiate and professional composers via computer software, unique ensembles, including ukulele and popular music ensembles, and technological

classrooms. All of these innovations are led by "mavens" – teachers with a vision and passion for connecting music to today's students and societal needs.

Green (2008) discussed how formal music education can complicate the music learning process. She posited that educators have fundamentally neglected the fact that students do not emotionally and culturally connect to music that they listen to in the classroom. Interestingly, this includes music that is considered popular by the establishment. The author asserted that students are unable to relate because the formal process of learning muddies the internalization and expression of said music. Green stated that an informal learning process is needed to effectively transfer the meaning and the learning of popular music. She cited her own 2006 study with Walmsley where students were directed to copy and perform music from a CD of their choice. After the students successfully completed the project, they were given a CD of classical music to follow the same procedure with over a longer period of time. Green and Walmsley found that students garnered positive views for classical music when an informal learning process was facilitated with said music. Green closed by stating that allowing students "personal autonomy" to listen to music, be it popular or not, that students will have more authentic experiences and may allow them to create a greater understanding of the "social, cultural, political and ideological meanings that music carries."

Wright and Kanellopoulos (2010) linked improvisation as a form of informal music learning, and as a necessary skill for educators. The authors ran a qualitative study, asking music education students (N=91) to keep diaries over the course of their participation in a class on improvisation. As part of the class, the students were involved in small and large group improvisation sections, and discussion was generated based on the subject. They found almost universally, that students had at one point improvised and unabashedly expressed themselves

through music to a great degree while younger. Over the course of their formal education, these skills have fallen to the wayside in pursuit of technical excellence and note-reading skills. As the diaries were explored, the themes of musical autonomy, the musical self, and a more open attitude towards children and their music developed and were explored, showing a transformation amongst the participants. The students expressed an initial unwillingness or hesitation with exploring improvisational skills, but many found a sense of being enmeshed with their music by the end of the module. The author posited that if improvisation and informal techniques were included in the formal aspects of teacher education, better connections will be made with teachers and students as they explore the expressive elements of music.

Wang and Humphreys (2009) conducted a study concerned with the quantity of popular music within an undergraduate music program. Wang and Humphries tallied the percentage of time throughout full school year that students were exposed or worked with each of 13 different styles of music, including popular music. Undergraduate music education students at a Midwestern University were surveyed for this study (N=80). The authors examined all music courses taken by the students as part of their music program. The study showed that of the total 3,600 hours over four years spent on the study of music, only an average of 0.5% of the time was spent on popular music, or 19.4 hours. The authors explained that there may be similar results from other university music programs because this school was fully accredited by NASM. Despite the goals for music education discussed and brought to the forefront at the 1967 *Tanglewood Symposium*, it can be surmised from this study that many schools fall short in teaching music genres outside of Western art music. Education in popular genres of music has been shown to successfully contribute to other musical goals within the music program (Blom, 2012; Cayari, 2014; Green, 2008; Springer, 2013). As a result of this study, the university made

minor adjustments its curriculum to compensate, making small progress to correct the deficiency. However, the degree of informal learning techniques added were unknown and not discussed.

Mak (2007) expanded the discussion of music learning to include the necessity for formal, non-formal, and informal music training for a well-rounded professional musician. He cited the unpredictable nature and issues surrounding the music profession today, charging that the best one can do to prepare is to adapt their skills to their situation and in many cases "acquire the skills to find out the answer for [oneself]." He stated that the ultimate goal of education is to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and achievement. His answer to these needs lie in the deliberate inclusion and encouragement of non-formal and informal music learning experiences within the formal learning environment. He outlined the differences between the learning types, similar comparisons are found within other articles reviewed for this current study (Green, 2005; Folkestad, 2006; Gower, 2012; Feichas, 2010). He closed with the importance of reflection within the learning process, as it is necessary for lifelong adaptation and ultimate success for the professional musician.

Folkestad's 2006 study samples much of the current research on informal learning and how it can be implemented into formal learning structures. By reviewing material on the subject, the researcher is able to clearly distinguish the difference between formal and informal learning lessons based on the situation, learning style, ownership of the activity, and the intention. The author further asserts that "formal – informal should not be regarded as a dichotomy, but rather as the two poles of a continuum; in most learning situations, both these aspects of learning are in various degrees present and interacting." The author states an interesting point in that the world is a pool in information and knowledge, and that students gain familiarity with these forms of knowledge before they arrive in the classroom. He further concludes that to get at the very

essence of defining and experiencing informal learning, one must examine the methods with which to gather data. Informal interviews or "conversations" may be the better method to gather authentic experiences outside of the more rigid structure of a formal research interview process.

The literature above reveals informal music as a necessary piece of thorough music schooling. With music education paradigms and career fields and in a state of flux, informal music learning has been shown to develop adaptive attitudes and skills and activate aspects and understandings of music that would be neglected in a strictly formal music setting. This research formed the backbone and starting point of this current study, as well as some hard definitions for informal versus formal learning and the continuum in between the two types of knowledge acquisition.

Perspectives of Informal Music Learning

With the benefits of informal music learning having been discussed, it is necessary to examine the current perspectives of teachers and students in order to design programs that meet the needs of today's students. These viewpoints form a foundation that can be compared with the perspectives and experiences of the participants for this current study.

Folkestad (2006) distinguished the difference between formal and informal learning lessons based on the situation, learning style, ownership of the activity, and the intention. The author further asserts that "formal – informal should not be regarded as a dichotomy, but rather as the two poles of a continuum; in most learning situations, both these aspects of learning are in various degrees present and interacting." The author states that the world is "a pool in information and knowledge", and that students gain familiarity with these forms of knowledge before they arrive in the classroom. This means that students may have difficulty accessing knowledge in a strict formal manner because they have become accustomed to pursuing answers

in a haphazard manner. He concluded by acknowledging that one must examine the methods with which to gather data on informal learning. To get at the very essence of defining and experiencing informal learning, interviews or conversations may be the better method to gather authentic experiences outside of the more rigid structure of a formal research interview process.

In a 2010 study, Feichas conducted a qualitative study examining music students' values, behaviors, performance, and attitudes towards music learning processes and their experiences of music education. This study was conducted at the Music School of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (EMUFRJ) and compared students with a mostly informal music background to students with formal or mixed backgrounds. The findings were broad and showed different weaknesses in the types of students: classical students felt they lacked aural, improvisatory, and compositional skills. Students with a background in popular music had no such issues, but felt that they lacked note-reading, technical, and analytical ability. The authors asserted that pedagogy in music schools may be inadequate for offering a breadth of musical skills, including those typically learned informally. Feichas cites another study (Green, 2008) to show further that informal music techniques can be used in formal setting and to build greater knowledge of classical music. The author concluded by stating that students of differing backgrounds recognized the benefits they brought to each other. He suggested that a teacher facilitating collaborative student-centered learning "gives students autonomy rather than a passive attitude and encourages them to make choices and take responsibility [for their learning]." The results will yield an increase in student motivation, and open up venues for seeing value in music outside of western genres.

Vitale (2011) surveyed non-music teachers in his study to see what views they held of formal and informally trained musicians. A group of 41 public school teachers were surveyed via

a closed questionnaire. The questions were scalar, respondents would rate formal musicians with a "1" and informal musicians with "10" on the other end, regarding which type of musician was more likely to experience success with the specific question. The questions regarded the musician's value to society, creativity, career success, and music knowledge. The author followed the survey with a focus group discussion with several participants. From the focus group, three themes developed. The first was that the participants felt that informal musicians provided more worth to society because of their personal drive they demonstrate to pursue music without assistance. It was found that the participants viewed informal musicians as being more creative because less boundaries are introduced in their musical training. The final theme that developed from the focus group was that of non-conformity and resulting satisfaction in informal musicians. Because informal musicians choose what they want to play, the participants believed that they achieve greater satisfaction in the pursuit of music. The author found that the subject's views of informal musicians were positive and favorable. Based on these views and the themes that developed, the author suggests that more informal music learning opportunities should be available in the schools. The author suggested that a shift in music education is necessary to reflect the current needs of students and desires of the education community. With such support from the non-music community, one can see inroads ahead for positive change in the way informal music learning is approached in the schools.

Springer and Gooding (2013) conducted a study to determine how music education students viewed the employment of popular music in the classroom. The 82 participants rated the effectiveness in achieving National Standards, differences in use between student age-groups, and attitudes and preparation toward teaching popular music. The authors discussed the history of the debate over whether popular music should be included, beginning with the initial call for

education of all different musical styles in the *Tanglewood Symposium* in the late 60s, through some studies in the 2000s discussing the trials and observations of popular music education and the effectiveness of informal learning practices to teach popular music. The study showed that students viewed popular music as most effective at developing listening and singing skills, and was most appropriate for grades 9-12. Overall, the participants had mixed results for attitudes toward the inclusion of popular music in the classroom, and they indicated a low preparedness toward teaching popular music.

While the literature sampled for this current study showed a favorable view of informal music learning, no studies have been found that examine the perspectives of practicing music teachers. Since research (Springer, 2013) shows that pre-service music educators feel generally unprepared to teach popular music in an informal learning context, it is likely that no such study has been attempted.

Current Practices in Informal Music Learning

With an increasing amount of research in informal music learning emerging over the past decade, many music educators have taken the steps to facilitate informal learning within their curriculum. These studies here serve as a framework with which to base the survey instrument for this current study. The authors discuss the barriers presented as they incorporated informal learning within their classrooms.

Gower (2012) addressed the important issue of marrying target-based formal learning with informal learning techniques. While her study was focused on the implementation of new standards for secondary music education in England, the matter of teachers fighting the clock to meet student testing standards is common. Gower explained that informal learning techniques can fall by the wayside as a result of test-based learning. Informal learning, with its often

haphazard process generally takes more time to see measurable results. Gower addressed important issues: administrator observations for informal learning (asking evaluators to "shadow" the teacher for a set amount of time, rather than statically observe), and suggestions for include written reflections from students as they work independently toward their musical goals. The researcher concluded by emphasizing the necessity for informal learning within the classroom as an innovative practice that is especially relevant to music learners, "as for many, their curriculum music experience will be their only musical experience."

Green (2005) described the gap between students' experiences with music inside and outside the classroom. Green suggested the inclusion of informal music practices within the classroom to establish a connection between these seemingly disparate worlds. She discussed the teaching and learning processes necessary in order to facilitate informal music learning: to include learning based on choice, by ear from a recording, learning alone or with the help of peers, and utilizing all facets of musicality, musical skills, and preference to lead to the end product. The author cited her own study in progress as an example of the informal music process at work. Students were assigned to form peer groups and learn music of their choice from a recording, without guidance from the teacher. The students found the activity challenging but were ultimately successful, and found the process to be rewarding and enriching. The author asserted that if informal music learning processes were used in the classroom, it would enhance the music learning experience, and allow the students to access the more intangible and freeing aspects of music.

Blom and Encarnacao (2012) assessed the "hard and soft skills" student rock performers consider to be most important in rehearsal and performance. The authors defined hard skills as technical and musical skills, while soft skills are the interpersonal and organizational are the non-

musical skillsets needed for rehearsal and performance. The authors compiled an exhaustive list of hard and soft skills for the participants, and conducted the study with students (N=15) in a popular music class with four rock performing groups, and asked them to identify three criteria to self-assess and peer assess other groups. They were then asked to provide three criteria for other groups to assess them. The results and justifications were collected and synthesized, identifying "soft skills" as the most important aspect for a rehearsal, but assessed "hard skills" the most important for the performance outcome. Implications are made about increased student ownership of rehearsals in music classes. Based on this report, teachers can better facilitate a student-centered lesson or curriculum that is honed in on what students find valuable within their own education.

Jaffurs (2004) conducted an ethnographic study to investigate the sort of setting students work in when they create music on their own, with the ultimate goal of fostering greater achievement for her own music students. Her study was focused on music students as they rehearsed their peer-formed "garage" rock band. She attended several rehearsals, interviewed the musicians, and recorded the performance, asking for reflection and feedback from the band members as they listened. The author compared her observations with observations from previous studies on rock musicians, drawing a set of themes from the research with the group. Of note, the participants discussed the importance of formal music education, where the guitarist learns songs from his band class on his guitar if he likes it. Other themes of democratic leadership and peer learning and critique. The study changed her perceptions of student music preferences and pedagogy. Impressed with what the students were able to accomplish on their own in peer groups, she began to shift her methodology for teaching. The author suggested more class discussion, student reflection, student ownership and involvement in lesson-planning,

appreciation for student's taste in music, and recognition of student independence in music making. This article provides a strong example in the garage band musicians and their rehearsal practices for informal music making.

Cayari (2014) implemented informal learning principles by designing and facilitating a music video project to that was completed using YouTube by his students. The students were given a broad task to "create a music video" with no further direction from the teacher. The author described how he assisted and troubleshot student development of the projects, but did not dictate how the project would be completed. Cayari offered four vignettes that showcased the achievements, effort, and musical development of the students as their projects were presented, attainments that would not have been likely without the facilitation of this project. In the last section of this article, the author offered procedures for facilitation and assessment of this assignment for those readers who would wish to use the same project within their own classroom.

Waldron (2011) focused on a relatively new method of sharing musical ideas – online communities. The author describes a "Banjo Hangout" (BH), where veteran banjo players give video and chat-based lessons to beginners, developing techniques spanning the basics through experimenting, soloing, and improvisation. Via Skype and e-mail interviews, the author got a sense of the participants' musical backgrounds and what musical practices they use. According to the study, the BH is a mecca for informal music learning practices such as imitation and learning songs by choice. It is volunteer-led and managed by individuals passionate about music as their chosen hobby or avocation. While this study did not take place in an educational setting, the procedures and use of technology are examples that can be followed within the classroom as informal music becomes more widespread within the curriculum. Thanks to on-line communities

such as the Banjo Hangout, individuals are pursuing their passion for music and growing as musicians long after they have left the music classroom.

The studies reviewed show strong examples on informal music at work in the classroom. Though these studies provide direction and inspiration for those who wish to employ informal learning within their music classrooms, the majority of these studies are qualitative and do not provide a view of what educators on a larger scale are employing. Furthermore, no connections are attempted between an educator's musical upbringing and what is utilized within the curriculum. This current study was designed to examine if a relationship exists between these two elements, and to provide a snapshot of what informal learning is taking place within the local region.

Chapter 3 - Procedures

Overview

The purpose of this study is to determine if music educators who have had experiences with informal music are more likely to employ informal learning within their classroom. Secondary research objectives included a comparison of specific demographics of the participants, an examination of the types of informal learning that the participants experienced and facilitated, and a look at the perceived barriers and benefits of informal music learning from the viewpoints of the participants.

Researchers have found that the inclusion of informal music learning within the curriculum increases the student's aural skills, independence as a musician, and awareness of other musical and interpersonal capabilities traditionally neglected in a formal learning environment (Feichas, 2010; Green, 2005, 2008; Mak, 2007; Wright, 2010). Informal music promotes lifelong enjoyment and is relevant to current public music consumption (Cayari, 2014; Green, 2005, 2008; Gower, 2012; Kratus, 2007; Mak, 2007; Waldron, 2011).

Studies reviewed for this current study exemplify informal music techniques as approached in a music classroom. However, the majority of these studies are qualitative and do not provide a view of what educators on a larger scale are employing. As of yet, no link has been explored between a music educator's informal musical experiences and whether they employ informal music in their classroom.

Instrumentation

Initial Construction

A survey draft was constructed by the researcher after review of the literature in Chapter 2 and identification of information to gather within a potential survey population. A Likert-type survey was decided upon as the instrument for this current study because the researcher came across few quantitative studies exploring informal music, and none that focused on currently practicing educators as the survey population. The survey was initially designed with three sections: demographics, informal music experiences, and informal music practices. An electronic copy was e-mailed to professors in the music department at a large university in the Midwest as a pilot test of the survey for validity. Survey results and feedback indicated a need for additional clarity on questions involving informal music, as the pilot participants conveyed an overabundance of technical terms that may have been misconstrued by the survey population. Furthermore, short answer questions were added to the third section to qualify survey responses on the final instrument. After revisions were applied, the survey was submitted to the university Institutional Review Board and was determined to be in compliance with policies and procedures established by the university.

Assessment Instrument

The survey questionnaire was used to collect relevant information for this current study. The instrument was formed into three sections: Demographic Information, Pre-Service Informal Learning Events, and Informal Music Employment in the Student Curriculum.

Questions 1-4 collected the gender, grade levels taught, number of years employed as a teacher, and the school district type of the participant, and were multiple choice or short answer questions to provide the relevant demographic information for the study.

What followed were 7 Likert-type questions for questions 5 – 12. The subject earned a set amount of points dependent upon how frequently they indicated they engaged in the specific informal music activity prior to becoming a music teacher. Points ranged from 1 (Never) to 5 (Frequently) for each question, with a total of 35 points available within this section.

Questions 13-24 were concerned with the frequency of implementation of informal learning techniques within the teacher's curriculum. As before, the questions solicited Likert-type responses ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Frequently), with a total of 55 points available in this section. 2 short-answer questions ended this section, and asked for the teacher's feedback regarding the perceived barriers and benefits to implementing informal music techniques in the classroom. Since these questions were not quantifiable, they were not tallied with the Likert-type questions and used solely to qualify the data gathered by the researcher.

Scores were tallied under both sections for each subject. See Appendix A for an example of the survey.

Procedures

Approval was sought by the researcher to conduct this current study within the guidelines set forth by university research guidelines. After the university Institutional Review Board approved this current study, permission was sought by the researcher from professors to solicit students participating courses with the researcher for survey responses in class. The study took place during the summer semester of 2014. While undertaking these courses, participants were verbally notified by the researcher that a study on informal music was being undertaken as part

of the requirements for obtaining a master's degree. The survey instruments were physically handed to participants to complete on their own during breaks in the instruction. The survey required an average of 15 minutes to complete depending on the response rate of the participants. After completion, participants returned the completed surveys to the researcher, where the data was recorded, processed, and analyzed for this current study.

Participants

Participants ($N = 25$) in this study were practicing music educators at the K-12 level pursuing graduate studies in music education at a large university in the Midwest. The participants were all students completing classes toward their degree of Master of Music in a summer degree program.

Data Analysis

Since this study will examine two separate variables, a Pearson correlation ($p \leq 0.5$) was used to determine the relationship between the factors of "experiences" and "curriculum". Additionally, averages, medians, modes and standard deviations (stdev) will be obtained on each question to provide a greater view of the scope of the participants. Data will be inputted, calculated, and compared in Microsoft Excel. Results obtained from the data collection process are detailed in Chapter 4. Conclusions, a discussion of results, and implications for music education are presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4 - Results

Overview

In the current study, the researcher examined if a relationship exists between pre-service informal music experiences and the employment of informal music techniques in the classroom curriculum. Furthermore, this study sought to catalog differences in implementation of informal music based upon the demographics of gender, grade level, and school district type. Finally, this study examined the perceived barriers and benefits of informal music learning from the viewpoints of the participants.

Much research has been conducted to find that the inclusion of informal music learning within the curriculum increases the student's aural skills, independence as a musician, and interpersonal abilities, aspects which can often be ignored in a traditional formal music learning environment (Feichas, 2010; Green, 2005, 2008; Mak, 2007; Wright, 2010). Informal music promotes lifelong enjoyment and is relevant to current public music consumption (Cayari, 2014; Green, 2005, 2008; Gower, 2012; Kratus, 2007; Mak, 2007; Waldron, 2011).

The majority of studies reviewed for this current study are qualitative and do not provide a show what music teachers have experienced or are facilitating within their classrooms. This is the only study known to the researcher to examine these factors in a quantitative manner. Obtaining this information will help music educators plan curriculum that includes informal music learning, and provide a way ahead for investigation of these factors in studies that survey different or larger populations.

The researcher collected and analyzed data using the following questions:

Primary Research Question

1. Is there a difference in implementation of informal music based upon specific demographics of those surveyed?

Secondary Research Questions

1. Is there a difference in implementation of informal music based upon specific demographics of those surveyed?
    a. Gender
    b. Grade level
    c. Type of school district (rural, suburban, urban)
2. What specific types of informal music experiences have occurred within the surveyed population?
3. What types of informal learning are taking place within the classrooms of surveyed teachers?
4. Why do teachers employ/ not employ informal learning techniques within their curricula?

Assessment Instrument

The survey questionnaire was used to collect relevant information for this current study. The instrument was formed into three sections: Demographic Information, Pre-Service Informal Learning Events (E), and Informal Music Employment in the Student Curriculum (C).

Questions 1-4 collected demographic data of the participant, and were short answer questions that provided relevant information for the study.

What followed were 7 Likert-type questions for questions 5 – 12. The subject earned a set amount of points dependent upon how frequently they indicated they engaged in the specific

informal music activity prior to becoming a music teacher. Points ranged from 1 (Never) to 5 (Frequently) for each question, with a total of 35 points available for E.

Questions 13-24 were concerned with the frequency of implementation of informal learning techniques within the teacher's curriculum. As before, the questions solicited Likert-type responses ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Frequently), with a total of 55 points available for C. 2 short-answer questions ended this section, and asked for the teacher's feedback regarding the perceived barriers and benefits to implementing informal music techniques in the classroom. Since these questions were not quantifiable, they were not tallied with the Likert-type questions and used solely to qualify the data gathered by the researcher.

Scores were tallied under both sections for each subject. See Appendix A for an example of the survey.

Results

Demographics

Participants (N = 25) surveyed in this study were all pursuing graduate studies in music education at a large university in the Midwest, completing classes toward their degree of Master of Music in a summer degree program. In addition to being students, the participants were practicing music educators with a majority (N = 22) teaching within the K-12 levels. Of this, a significant portion of the participants (N = 10) taught at multiple grade levels, with 3 teaching at the middle and high school level, and 7 teaching all grades within K=12. The remaining 3 participants taught music at the post-secondary level. 10 of the respondents were male, and 15 were female. The range of teaching experience ran from 2 years to 27 years, with an average of

9.08 years of teaching experience. Note that this average is skewed by the few teachers who had 20 or more years of experience, the majority of teachers within the program had 7 or less years of experience. The survey data recorded a mix of teaching locations from the participants, including urban (N=7), rural (N=11), or suburban (N=6) school divisions.

Table 4.1: Demographic Data Results

GENDER		GRADE LEVEL		YEARS OF TEACHING		DISTRICT TYPE	
Male	10	E	6	Mean	9.08	Urban	7
Female	15	M	1	Median	7	Rural	11
		H	5	Mode	3	Suburban	6
		MH	3			NR	1
		EMH	7				
		P	3				

Primary Research Question

A Pearson correlation was initiated between the participants' totals for responses for pre-service informal learning events (E) and informal music employment in the student curriculum (C) ($p \leq 0.5$). A coefficient of $r = 0.43$ was calculated, meaning there is a *moderately strong* positive relationship between E and C. This result is significant, and shows that teachers who have exposure to informal music learning experiences are more likely to employ informal music in their classroom.

Result Differences Between Demographics

There were no observed differences in experience and employment of informal music when compared between gender or school division. A comparison of results to grade level was not completed due to the high number of respondents (N = 10) who taught at multiple grade levels.

Pre-Service Experiences in Informal Music

Each participant self-identified their informal music experiences (E) in their responses to the questionnaire. From the information they identified, each were scored accordingly with a total of 35 points available. The participants reported a reasonably high level of informal music experiences in their pre-service years. The activity with the highest reported occurrence was "8. How often have you learned a piece of music based on personal taste (ie. I like this song, so I am going to learn it") (M=4). The lowest reported informal music activity was "11. How often did you participate in Informal Learning or Non-Traditional techniques while in a music class" (M=2.2).

Table 4.2: Results from Pre-Service Informal Music Learning Events

Question	Mean	Median	Mode	Stdev
5. How often have you learned a piece of music, song, etc. by imitating a peer?	3.16	3	4	0.987
6. How often did you improvise in a performance?	2.4	2	2	1.080
7. How often have you learned a piece of music on your own, with no instruction from anyone else?	3.92	4	4	0.812
8. How often have you learned a piece of music based on personal taste (ie: "I like this song, so I am going to learn it.")?	4	4	5	1.000
9. How often have you learned a piece of music by ear?	2.96	3	2	1.172

10. How often have you chosen how to learn a piece of music, as opposed to following directions from an instructor?	2.96	3	3	1.020
11. How often did you participate in Informal Learning or Non-Traditional techniques while in a music class?	2.2	2	2	0.645
12. If you have had prior experiences with Informal Music, what was your reaction to them?	3.56	3	3	0.768
INFORMAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES	25.16	24	24	4.714

Curricular Implementation of Informal Music

Each participant self-identified the informal music experiences they facilitate in their curriculum (C) in the third section of the questionnaire. The surveyed teachers reported a comparatively lower amount of C versus E. The highest responses came on questions 23 and 24 where the participants were asked to rate their reaction (M=3.54) and their students' reactions (M=3.57) to informal music implementation, respectively. Following those questions, the participants responded most favorably to question 17, "how often have you facilitated students to practice music of their choosing?" (M=3.40)

Table 4.3: Results from Curricular Implementation of Informal Music Learning

Question	Mean	Median	Mode	Stdev
13. How often have you facilitated students to learn music by imitating their peers?	3.17	3	3	0.868
14. How often have you facilitated students to set musical goals of their choosing?	3.28	3	4	0.891
15. How often so you direct students to learn music on their own?	3.21	3	3	0.721
16. How often do you direct students to improvise in a performance?	2.20	2	2	0.957
17. How often have you facilitated students to practice music of their choosing?	3.40	3	3	0.816

18. How often have you facilitated students to compose music of their choosing?	2.56	2	2	0.768
19. How often have you facilitated students performing music of their choosing?	3.32	3	4	0.802
20. How often have you encouraged students to learn music by ear?	3.08	3	3	0.759
21. How often have you integrated two or more of the following skills into a single lesson or unit: learning by ear, performing, improvising, or composing?	2.92	3	3	0.954
22. How often have you observed or learned how to use or employ Informal Learning or Non-Traditional techniques in a music class?	2.48	2	2	0.653
23. If you have observed Informal Music in a classroom setting, what was your reaction to it?	3.54	3	3	0.658
24. If you have employed Informal Music within your curriculum, what was your students' reaction to its implementation?	3.57	4	4	0.843
INFORMAL LEARNING IN CURRICULUM	36.04	36	36	5.646

Questions 25 and 26 required a short answer response and were utilized to put some amount of reasoning behind the quantitative data obtained from the survey. The participants were given an opportunity to provide insight and reflect upon their curriculum and how informal music could fit within it. By examining the answers from the participants, several themes developed.

Barriers to Informal Learning

Because the inclusion of informal music is not often addressed in many music teacher preparation courses (Kratus, 2007; Mak, 2007; Springer, 2013; Wright, 2010) one would posit that a lack of experience with informal music is an obstruction to implementation of informal processes. However, results from the survey show there are other barriers to be considered.

Question 25 asked "what weaknesses or barriers do you perceive/ observe to employing Informal music learning in your curriculum." The most common response from the participants (N=5) cited a lack of experience. One respondent wrote "Lack of experience directly – no improvisation experience and rare focus on learning by ear." Another wrote "My own letting go of inhibitions and just doing it and allowing them to do it…no restrictions." The results paint a picture of another common barrier to informal learning, as other participants (N=4) cited a lack of connection to the music curriculum as a barrier to informal music learning. "Sometimes it can seem like an activity for activity's sake instead of a sequential, intentional component" one respondent wrote. This sentiment was echoed by another: "finding a balance between [informal learning] and making sure students are getting to all of the content (sometimes [informal learning] takes its own direction.)" From these responses, it can be ascertained that teachers most commonly find a lack of experience as the greatest barrier to implementing informal music learning within their classroom, but consideration of how informal music can fit into a music curriculum is a concern for teachers as well.

Benefits of Informal Learning

It is unlikely that informal music learning would have as much interest in the music education community if there were not significant benefits to implementation. Of the benefits discussed by the surveyed population, student motivation/ relevance (N=10) was cited most often. Respondents wrote "students are more interested and intrinsically motivated. Students approach learning music with a more positive attitude." "[Informal music] creates a lot more personal interest for the students, perhaps sparking the need to learn more and to continue their music education after my class." "Student interest and motivation increases [with] the more input [the students] have as informal music is far more applicable to their lives…" Another benefit of

informal music learning discussed by researchers (Cayari, 2014; Green 2005, 2008; Jaffurs, 2004; Mak, 2007; Waldron, 2011; Wright, 2010) is a growth of personal musicality; these sentiments are reflected in the responses (N=4) from the participants. Participants wrote "Getting students away from the music gives them the ability to focus on other skills [such as] posture, tone, intonation, [and] articulation." "[Students pay] more attention to what they are actually doing, they can 'hear' themselves better when not looking at music." One other participant contributed with "Students learn music faster and with more freedom" for their response. One can see from these results that the benefits of relevance and musicality are motivators for music educators to innovate and employ informal music within their curriculum.

Summary

The primary research question was concerned with a relationship between pre-service informal music experiences and the employment of informal music techniques in the classroom curriculum, which was significantly established with a Pearson correlation ($P = 0.43$). The survey found no significant differentiation based on the demographics examined for this study. The most interesting correlation of the results found that teachers' most common informal learning experience was to learn music by personal preference. Conversely, this was the most common informal music experience facilitated for students within their classrooms. Further negating the null hypothesis for this current study, the participants cited a lack of experience with informal learning, compounding with a lack of connection to the music curriculum as the greatest barriers to employing informal music. Of the benefits of informal music learning discussed by the surveyed population, student motivation/ relevance and musicality were cited most often. Further discussion of these results will be found in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 - Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine if music educators who have had experiences with informal music are more likely to employ informal learning within their classroom. Secondary research objectives included a comparison of survey results against specific demographics of the survey participants, an examination of the types of informal learning that the participants experienced and facilitated, and a look at the perceived barriers and benefits of informal music learning from the viewpoints of the participants.

Participants (N=25) were practicing music educators pursuing graduate music studies. The participants were enrolled in a summer Master of Music program at a university in the Midwest. Data was collected by employing a pen and paper survey that provided a demographic description and informal music learning questionnaire. The participants were asked to indicate the frequency of participation in informal music activities prior to becoming a music educator. They further reported what informal music learning activities they facilitate within their school music curriculum. Finally, the participants responded to two short answer questions where they identified barriers and benefits they perceive with the implementation of informal music practices within their music programs.

Results from a Pearson correlation showed a moderately strong relationship ($r = 0.43$) between participants who had informal music experiences (E) and who employed informal music learning within their music curriculum (C). There were no significant differences observed in the results between participants of different gender or school division. Of the short answer responses catalogued, participants cited a lack of experience with informal music and difficulty of connecting informal music learning to the formal music curriculum as the barriers to employing

informal music learning in the classroom. The participants discussed the increase in student motivation, expanding musicality, and real-world relevance as the benefits of informal music learning. Knowledge gained from this study may be useful to individuals facilitating informal music learning within music education programs at the primary, secondary, or collegiate levels.

Treatment of the Results

The first null hypothesis was expressed:

H_O: There are no statistically significant relationships between informal learning experiences and implementing informal strategies in the music classroom.

A Pearson correlation was tabulated to determine if a relationship between these two variables existed. Results from the current study support a significant relationship between pre-service informal learning events (E) and a likelihood to employ informal music employment in the student curriculum (C); therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The second null hypothesis was expressed:

H_O: There are no statistically significant differences of employment of informal learning based on teacher demographics.

A t-test was employed between the data sets for gender and school district type. No significant difference was found; therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Discussion

Quantitative studies have been conducted by researchers in informal music (Blom, 2012; Springer, 2013; Wang, 2009), however no study known to the researcher has gathered data on practicing educators, nor attempted to draw a link between the informal music experiences and the techniques employed in the classroom. It was the objective of the researcher through this

current study to not only examine these factors, but to obtain at the very least a limited vantage of the informal music practices facilitated by educators across the state.

Primary Question

The primary question was stated: Does a relationship exist between the pre-service informal music experiences of teachers and the informal music employed by teachers within their school curriculum? Results of the study indicated a moderately strong positive correlation between the factors of experiences (E) and curriculum (C). Stated plainly while solely examining the data from this current study, teachers who have experienced informal music in their pre-service years are more likely to employ informal music within their classroom. That is a simplistic answer, however as there are other factors that must be considered for this study.

Participants of this study were all students pursuing a master of music education degree in a summer graduate program at a university in the Midwest. One can infer that these individuals are more likely to utilize new strategies and concepts within their classrooms because they are immersed in these models as part of their advanced coursework. While the participants' informal music learning experiences may play a role in what they use in the classroom, one cannot discount the practices they are being exposed to as part of their coursework, of which contains informal learning practices. Further studies could include a wider array of practicing teachers that may or may not be pursing advanced studies in music education.

One must also consider the location and size of the study (N=25). This current study was kept at a local level, surveying music educators who worked within a reasonably drivable distance to the university. In addition, statistics on school locations were not obtained for this study, no examination of this factor beyond speculation is possible for this study. Due to the small, localized sample size, it is possible for the data to have been skewed in one way or

another. Results may have been distributed differently had there been a larger, more diverse population to sample.

Limitations aside, the results of this study enhance current literature because the quantifiable viewpoints of currently practicing music educators can now be considered for curriculum planning at the primary, secondary, or collegiate level of education. Likewise, this current study contributes to the body of literature and provides a foundation for further research in informal music learning amongst music educators.

Secondary Question 1

Secondary Question 1 was stated: "Is there a difference in implementation of informal music based upon specific demographics of those surveyed?" Through the utilization of these questions, the researcher sough to identify demographic characteristics of informal learners in order to account for a full picture of the relationship between teachers' experiences and curriculum implementation. There were no significant differences discerned within the demographics of gender or school district as a result of this study. Furthermore, comparisons between school levels taught by the participants (elementary, middle, high, and post-secondary) were not completed due to the high number of participants that taught at multiple grade levels. Should a larger sample be obtained for a similar study, observable variances could be established as the result. However, due to the lack of findings, demographics will not be considered as a part of this current study

Secondary Question 2

Secondary Question 2 was stated: "What specific types of informal music experiences have occurred within the surveyed population?" The results of this question provide a snapshot

of music teachers' informal learning experiences on a local scale and could further show trends of these experiences on a larger, possibly national scale. As established by the data, participants recorded learning a piece of music based on personal taste with the highest frequency (M=4, SD=1). High occurrences of the participants learning music on their own (M=3.92, SD=0.812), and responding in a positive manner to informal music activities (M=3.56, SD=0.768), were also recorded. While these activities are all are identified as informal processes (Green, 2005; Folkestad, 2006), the data does not support a high frequency of some of the more advanced informal music activities (Feichas, 2010; Mak, 2007), such as improvising (M=2.4, SD=1.080) or learning music by ear (M=2.96, SD=1.172). Extrapolation of this data leads the researcher to believe that these participants executed personal choice to select their literature, but applied formal learning processes as they learned the music; However, further studies should be attempted to broaden informal music experience findings in an effort to enable college music programs to tailor informal music experiences for pre-service music educators.

Secondary Question 3

Secondary Question 3 was stated: "What types of informal learning are taking place within the classrooms of surveyed teachers?" Like the previous secondary question, this question was examined to provide a view of informal practices employed locally, which may describe the quantity of these processes on a regional or national scale. Survey participants reported a high instance of allowing students to practice music of their choosing (M=3.40, SD=0.816). When this statistic is compared with the recorded frequencies of facilitating students learning music by imitation, setting their own musical goals, learning music on their own, performing music of their choosing, and learning music by ear (note that each of these responses report a $M>3.07$ and $SD<7.20$), results suggest that informal music activities are occurring at a moderate rate. Since

these activities generally have the support of the teacher (M=3.54, SD=0.658) and students (M=3.57, SD=0.843), the data suggests potential for further innovation amongst the participants as the music education field continues to evolve. Qualitative or ethnographic studies are required to observe the extent and procedures of the informal music activities offered within the classrooms to catalog and assist other educators in offering the best practices for informal music learning.

Secondary Question 4

Secondary Question 4 was stated: Why do teachers employ/ not employ informal learning techniques within their curricula? Responses from the participants show student motivation/ relevance, followed by increasing student musicality as the top reasons they employ informal music techniques. To contrast, the participants noted a lack of experience with informal music and difficulties with applying activities to their curricula as the largest setbacks to innovation. These results, when applied to literature (Kratus, 2007; Springer, 2013) may suggest an awareness from the participants that remaining relevant in the face of a changing educational atmosphere is a key to recruiting and retaining students within music programs. Additionally, Green (2005, 2008) attributes informal learning as an inroad to improving aural skills and musical awareness, which can account for utilization towards increased musicianship. However, these attributes are complicated by the perceived inadequacy to facilitate activities in the classroom and incorporate lessons into the curriculum of an informal nature. This general lack of experience comes as no surprise because according to literature (Jaffurs, 2004; Kratus, 2007; Springer, 2013; Wang, 2009, Wright, 2010) many college music programs do not offer much outside of the established Western music canon. Further qualitative research is required to fortify this claim and to link these concerns with their root issues, perhaps following Folkestad's (2006)

suggestion of informal "spontaneous" conversation and dialogue to avoid any preconceived bias for or against informal or formal learning.

Conclusion

Overall, a relationship between pre-service informal pre-service informal music learning experiences and subsequent employment of informal learning activities within a curriculum was observed, demonstrating the importance of training future music educators in a variety of learning techniques. As Kratus (2007) observed, the field of music education is at a "tipping point" between relevancy and obscurity. Research supports the belief that training music educators to capitalize on their own "best" informal learning experiences as ways to reach new audiences in the classroom can help create connections between important historical musical content and current skill needs for students. Prior research supports the use of informal learning in the classroom by demonstrating that informal learning techniques follow a natural pattern of understanding applicable to daily consumption and analysis of music. However, further connections must be made between this study, the perceptions and experiences of music teachers as a whole, and the ongoing research of informal learning in order for educators to have the confidence and proficiency to offer a truly comprehensive music program to their students. Those students in turn, will be equipped with competitive skillsets to bring to the music field, be they an amateur musician, professional performer, confident music educator, or simply an attentive listener of the musical world surrounding them.

References

Blom, D. and Encarnacao, J. (2012). Student-chosen criteria for peer assessment of tertiary rock groups in rehearsal and performance: what's important? *British Journal of Music Education*, 29:1, 25-43.

Cayari, C. (2014). Using informal education through music video creation. *General Music Today,* 27:17, 17-22.

Feichas, H. (2010). Bridging the gap: Informal learning practices as a pedagogy of integration. *British Journal of Music Education,* 27:1, 47-58.

Folkestad, G. (2006). Formal and informal learning situations or practices vs. formal and informal ways of learning. *British Journal of Music Education*, 23:2, 135-145.

Gower, A. (2012). Integrating informal learning approaches into the formal learning environment of mainstream secondary schools in England. *British Journal of Music Education*, 29:1, 13-18.

Green, L. (2005) The music curriculum as lived experience: Children's 'natural' music learning processes. *Music Educator's Journal,* 94:4, 27-32.

Green, L. (2008) Popular Music Education in and for itself, and for 'Other' Music: Current Research in the Classroom. *International Journal of Music Education,* 24-2, 101-118.

Jaffurs, S. (2004). The impact of informal music learning practices in the classroom, or how I learned how to teach from a garage band. *International Journal of Music Education,* 22, 189-200.

Kratus, J. (2007). Music education at the tipping point. *Music Educator's Journal,* 94:2, 42-48

Mak, P. (2007). Learning music in formal, non-formal and informal contexts. *Lectoraat Lifelong Learning in Music.* Retrieved from: http://www.emc-emc.org/fileadmin/EFMET/article_Mak.pdf

Springer, D. and Gooding, L. (2013). Preservice music teachers' attitudes toward popular music in the music classroom. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education,* 32:25, 25-33.

Vitale, J. (2011). Formal and informal music learning: Attitudes and perspectives of secondary school non-music teachers. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1:5, 1-14.

Waldron, J. (2011). Locating narratives in postmodern spaces: A cyber ethnographic field study of informal music learning in online community. *Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education,* 10:2, 32-60.

Wang, J. and Humphreys, J. (2009). Multicultural and popular music content in an American music teacher education program. *International Journal of Music Education* 27: 19-36.

Wright, R. and Kanellopoulos, P. (2010) Informal music learning, improvisation, and teacher education. *British Journal of Music Education*, 27:1, 71-87

Appendix A

A Survey of Informal Music

This survey you will complete contributes to research in music education. The purpose of this research is to see if a relationship exists between informal music learning experiences prior to employment as a music teacher, and the use of informal music learning techniques in the classroom curriculum. Your duration of participation in this study is limited to the time needed to complete the survey provided. It is estimated that the survey will be completed within 15 – 30 minutes.

To participate in this study, click the link provided to begin the survey. Answer the questions provided to the best of your knowledge and ability. Your answers will be uploaded and recorded anonymously and used for correlational purposes of this particular study only.

There are no known risks to participation in this research study. While there are no tangible benefits to participation in this study, the data collected will be used to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on informal music education research.

The information collected from you as a subject within this research will not be linked to your e-mail address. You will not be asked to record any personally identifiable information over the course of this study.

For answers to pertinent questions about this research, your rights as a subject in this research, and in the unlikely event of a research-related injury, please contact Reese Flory at reese.flory@gmail.com.

Participation in this research is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits, to which you are otherwise entitled.

A Survey of Informal Music Learning Experiences and Curriculum Application

Section I: Demographic Information

1. Gender

Male Female

2. What grade level(s) do you teach? Select all that apply.

Elementary Middle High Post-Secondary

3. How many years have you taught music?

___

4. What type of school district do you teach in?

Rural Suburban Urban

Section II: Pre-Service Informal Learning Events

Please base your answers on your experiences prior to being employed as a music teacher as a reference for the following questions, and select the answer that most closely coincides with your experiences.

5. How often have you learned a piece of music, song, etc. by imitating a peer?

Never Rarely Moderately Often Frequently

6. How often did you improvise in a performance?

Never Rarely Moderately Often Frequently

7. How often have you learned a piece of music on your own, with no instruction from anyone else?

Never Rarely Moderately Often Frequently

8. How often have you learned a piece of music based on personal taste (ie: "I like this song, so I am going to learn it.")?

Never Rarely Moderately Often Frequently

9. How often have you learned a piece of music by ear?

Never Rarely Moderately Often Frequently

10. How often have you chosen how to learn a piece of music, as opposed to following directions from an instructor?

Never Rarely Moderately Often Frequently

11. How often did you participate in Informal Learning or Non-Traditional techniques while in a music class?

Never Rarely Moderately Often Frequently

12. If you have had prior experiences with Informal Music, what was your reaction to them?

Very Negative Negative Neutral Positive Very Positive

Section III: Informal Music Employment in Student Curriculum

Please use your years as a professional music educator as reference for the following questions, and select the answer that best describes your teaching practices in the classroom.

13. How often have you facilitated students to learn music by imitating their peers?

Never Rarely Moderately Often Frequently

14. How often have you facilitated students to set musical goals of their choosing?

Never Rarely Moderately Often Frequently

15. How often so you direct students to learn music on their own?

Never Rarely Moderately Often Frequently

16. How often do you direct students to improvise in a performance?

Never Rarely Moderately Often Frequently

17. How often have you facilitated students to practice music of their choosing?

Never Rarely Moderately Often Frequently

18. How often have you facilitated students to compose music of their choosing?

Never Rarely Moderately Often Frequently

19. How often have you facilitated students performing music of their choosing?

Never Rarely Moderately Often Frequently

20. How often have you encouraged students to learn music by ear?

Never Rarely Moderately Often Frequently

21. How often have you integrated two or more of the following skills into a single lesson or unit: learning by ear, performing, improvising, or composing?

Never Rarely Moderately Often Frequently

22. How often have you observed or learned how to use or employ Informal Learning or Non-Traditional techniques in a music class?

Never Rarely Moderately Often Frequently

23. If you have observed Informal Music in a classroom setting, what was your reaction to it?

Very Negative Negative Neutral Positive Very Positive

24. If you have employed Informal Music within your curriculum, what was your students' reaction to its implementation?

Very Negative Negative Neutral Positive Very Positive

25. What weaknesses or barriers do you perceive/ observe to employing Informal Music Learning in your curriculum?

26. What benefits have you observed as a result of employing Informal Music Learning in your curriculum?