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# A cross-generational examination of learner engagement and agency in non-traditional music education programs

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Music

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# A CROSS-GENERATIONAL EXAMINATION OF LEARNER ENGAGEMENT AND AGENCY IN NON-TRADITIONAL MUSIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Thesis format: Monograph

by

Jennifer M. J. Lang

Graduate Program in Music Education

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Music

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#### Abstract

This study utilizes a collective case study methodology to investigate the relationship between agency and engagement in three non-traditional music education programs in Ontario: an informal music learning course in the secondary school music class; an improvising and composing undergraduate music education course, and an intergenerational singing program for secondary school students and persons with Alzheimer's Disease.

The study employs a dual theoretical framework comprising Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (1985), and Karlsen's (2011) exploration of musical agency to examine the role the constructs of engagement and agency might serve in the pedagogical practices accompanying successful music programs that involve participants at various life stages.

While SDT highlights the psychological commonalities of autonomy, relatedness, and competence required to facilitate optimal learning environments across all programs, each cohort in this investigation revealed specific factors that facilitated rewarding learning experiences. Analysis revealed emergent themes pertaining to programmatic and environmental needs that nurtured optimal musical engagement. Accompanied by an underlying temporal field of continuity and reinforcement these fundamentals were then successful in affording learner agency through developing the participants' will, ability, and power to act in musical situations. Their demonstration of agency was identified as enacted through motivation, continued engagement, mobility of learning, ownership of the learning process, and ownership of the learning objectives. The research findings contribute to knowledge in this area through an examination of engagement and agency that crosses the temporal plane and links distinct generational age cohorts to one another. The research offers insights into the relationship between pedagogies and specific engagement and agentic

needs of varying generational cohorts. It is this iterative relationship between engagement and agency and its fundamental importance to ongoing engagement in musicking that the current study has illuminated. A series of models has been developed that illustrate the relationship between engagement and agency and their connections to multi-generational cohorts that give rise to generation-specific pedagogies.

## Keywords

Optimal musical engagement, affordances for agency, development of agency, enactment of agency, informal music learning, undergraduate improvisation and composition, intergenerational singing programs, generational pedagogies.

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### Chapter 1

#### Introduction

#### **Chapter Overview**

This introductory chapter outlines the research questions, describes the context in which this investigation was embedded, and provides the rationale for embarking on this study. In addition to situating the research within the current literature relative to music, engagement and agency, central research questions and sub-questions will be presented. The relationship between the constructs will be examined and the underlying motivation for the research is discussed. The significance of this investigation in advancing understandings of engagement and agency within musical contexts is also examined.

#### **Research Statement**

This research utilizes a collective case study methodology to investigate the relationship between agency and engagement in three non-traditional music education programs and the role these constructs might serve in the pedagogical practices that accompany successful music programs that involve participants at various life stages.

#### Rationale

The sociological perspective that will be used to inform this study takes as a starting point Christopher Small's (1998) term *musicking* as a means of referring to the process by which humans participate in all forms of music related activities. Small's term and its focus on human relationships, both internal and external, is particularly apposite to this study. To Small (2010) musicking functions as an "instrument of socialization" (p. 283)

exploring, affirming, and celebrating our sense of ourselves and negotiated relationships through the processes of learning and experiencing. This brings to the forefront the sociological concept of agency – the will, the ability, and the power to act. The study begins from the premise therefore that music education is a human experience that endures throughout the life span and is one in which humans, to a certain extent, are able to exercise agency. When such agency is exercised in a musical setting, Karlsen (2011) defines this as musical agency. This research, therefore, investigates experiences of participants of different age groups involved in three diverse non-traditional music programs. The objective is to discover whether and, if so, how these programs provide the affordances required for Small's (1998) notion of lifelong musicking. Particular attention will be paid to the relationship between engagement and agency within the case study programs and the pedagogical implications for participants at various life stages.

To inform this investigation, therefore, key concepts are those of engagement and agency, how they inform each other, and the relationship that exists between them in a musically educative environment. Appreciating the role that these constructs serve in attracting and retaining participants in musical programming<sup>1</sup> and in turn, how music programs influence engagement and agency, may serve to develop a new framework for understanding the requirements for effective lifelong musicking.

Of concern to many researchers who investigate the nature of lifelong participation in music is the reported decline in musicking upon the completion of formal schooling. Green (2001) set out to research this precise occurrence, noting the pattern of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Programming refers to any series of lessons or units developed with an explicit instructional intent.

decreased music making and increased passive music listening. Her research revealed many people in the UK no longer committed to formal music education because they either found it irrelevant or had identified themselves as unmusical (Green, 2001). While some people find their way into music through other routes, or what Green refers to as informal music learning, others are not engaging in music at all under the assumption that they are not musical or that their intention to learn and engage in music is incompatible with traditional modes of learning music. Green's study took place in the UK, but the Canadian context also reports a similar trend and advocates for quality music education programs to combat this decline:

Over the past several years, we have witnessed a material erosion in the respect accorded the creative process by society at large. We believe gaps in music education have contributed to this and that plugging those gaps and restoring music education to its former pride of place will also play a role in restoring respect for creators and their creations. (Music Canada, 2013, p.2)

For these reasons, participation in musicking later in life is less probable for many people. This research problem motivated this investigation, in that the identification of factors of musical agency and engagement that might serve different generational cohorts could assist in the development of quality programming to sustain participation in musical activities throughout the lifecourse.

The importance of sustaining musical participation can be seen through the multiple benefits of involvement in lifelong musical learning and have been well documented (Colwell & Davidson, 1996; Glenn, 1992) and advocated for by many, including the Canadian Coalition for Music Education and its equivalent organization,

The National Association for Music Education in the United States. Authors suggest that musical participation throughout the lifespan brings with it wide ranging cognitive, social, emotional and physical benefits (Hallam, Creech, Gaunt, Pincas, Varvarigou & McQueen, 2012). The positive effects of participation in music education have also been associated with overall academic and social development for learners of all ages (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Fitzpatrick, 2006; Miksza, 2007). Despite the proven benefits of engagement and music education a current issue facing educators, however, is that of engaging students with music in school and inspiring their sustained engagement with active music making as they continue through life.

As discussed above, encouraging participation in music activities throughout the lifecourse might bring many benefits to society, however, as noted in Green's (2001) research, levels of active music making rather than passive consumption of music in society appear to be declining (Green, 2001). In a similar vein the status of creative activity in Canada also appears to be waning (Music Canada, 2013). Alongside this, music enrolment in school is following a similar downward trend in many countries, including Canada. Reportedly, 25% of secondary school students enroll in grade 9 Ontario music classes, however, 25% of those students drop music after one year of instruction (Vince, 2007) so that formal school music education might be said to be serving only 10-12% of secondary school students in many Ontario music courses (Willingham & Cutler, 2007). More recently a report by Music Canada (2013) confirmed that the gaps in music education appear to leave gaps in the musical and creative skillsets of young people entering society. The report suggests that this is due to the erosion of music within the curriculum. These findings exist even in spite of our awareness of

music's many benefits. It could be argued that an understanding of how to identify and facilitate optimal engagement of musical learners could be one factor leading to increased participation in music programs and in music in society across all levels of expertise and ages. Furthermore, identifying and developing programs whereby positive outcomes related to learner engagement are demonstrated will complement and positively impact existing music programming for all ages.

Previous research investigating the role of democracy and music education (Green, 2008; Small, 1998; Woodford, 2005; Wright, 2010) recognizes that a democratic society is one in which all participants have equal access to provisions that benefit all members of such a society. These scholars are likewise concerned with the rights of all participants to have equal access to beneficial social programs. Such provisions include music education, as elementary music education is a mandatory Canada curricular component of a child's formal education (Bolden, 2012). While middle school students are often provided with the option of choosing music courses in secondary school, music education at this level is strictly optional (Bolden, 2012). If we claim that indeed we are a democratic society and all people should have the right to access society's benefits (Green, 2001; Small, 1998, Woodford, 2005; Wright, 2010), then the situation whereby so few engage in school music programming and the reported low levels of lifelong music making suggest many are deprived of this particular benefit. This should be of concern to society.

Canada has witnessed a significant increase in the percentage of the population classified as seniors, (65 years and older), now totaling 5.0 million. This rise is a dramatic increase whereby seniors who represented 8% of the total population in 1971

now represent 14% (Statistics Canada, 2011). Furthermore, Statistics Canada projects that the proportion of seniors is expected to increase rapidly until 2031 as baby boomers enter their senior years. It is anticipated that by 2036 the proportion of seniors will represent one quarter of the nation's population or, between 9.9 and 10.9 million (Statistics Canada, 2011). As society prepares to witness the largest populace ever within the senior cohort, it is in the interest of all members and the national infrastructure to consider bridging student engagement in educational programming into later life as this holds significant health, social and economic benefits. These social, health, cognitive, and emotional benefits such as Hallam, Creech, Gaunt, Pincas, Varvarigou and McQueen (2012) found to be experienced in music programs often result in personal fulfillment, connection to humanity, and personal wholeness (Thornton, 2011; Whitney, 2009). Such outcomes represent important engagement for seniors especially, and provide a substantiated agenda for educational research to improve the quality of engagement in learning programs that benefits participants of all ages.

#### **Research Questions**

The central research questions addressed are:

- What are the roles of engagement and agency in facilitating lifelong musicking within non-traditional music programming?
- Within such provision, what are the differences with respect to pedagogical strategies in different generational cohorts?
- What might a pedagogical model that enables, develops, and inspires lifelong musicking throughout the generations look like?

The following sub-questions have been formulated to support the central research questions above:

- Is there evidence that participants are engaged in the music program in each case study? If so, what does engagement in music look and feel like for the participants of different ages?
- What are the conditions that enhance or foster musical engagement among participants of varying ages within each investigated music program?
- What are the conditions that deter or inhibit musical engagement among participants of varying ages within each investigated music program?
- Is there evidence of participant agency in the music program in each case study? If so, what data are there that indicate participants were experiencing musical agency?

#### **Operational Definitions**

**Engagement.** While it will be explored in further detail in relation to the literature in chapter two, for the purposes of this research the concept of engagement is defined as the level of expressed interest, time, and energy that both participants and program facilitators devote to educative activities. Experiences that are enhanced by the presence of autonomy, relatedness, and competence as outlined in Deci and Ryan (1985) Self-Determination Theory are foundational requirements that serve to explain the presence of or lack of engagement.

**Agency.** In this thesis agency is defined using Willis' (1978) theory that agency represents an individual's capacity to act under one's own volition. Thus, this research investigation will clarify the distinction between autonomy as the source of one's power to act, while agency is the ability to enact that power.

**Non-traditional music educational programs.** While the concept of educational programming will be discussed in a subsequent section, I use the term non-traditional in relation to programming as any student-centered program whereby the

traditional teacher-directed, didactic approach that has been traditionally reified in the North American system is not the dominant pedagogical approach examined.

#### Context

An understanding of the literature that surrounds the construct of engagement allows musical engagement to be situated within existing models, influences, outcomes and implications. The results of previous studies indicate the significance of learning environments and conditions in optimizing learner engagement in educational programming. The outcomes of learning engagement research assist educators and scholars in understanding why engagement is important and serve as a rationale for encouraging engaging learning communities.

A prevalent theme from the literature focuses on how classroom factors such as instructional method and school subject matter influence student engagement. This information can be utilized in this study to illustrate how music facilitators can recognize musical engagement in the learners to effectively optimize musical learning environments. Within the educational engagement domain, specific reports account for the antecedents and outcomes of engagement for certain age groups, but a crossgenerational comparison and analysis has not yet been provided. Studies tend to examine age cohorts in isolation, although Mahatmya, Lohman, Matjasko and Farb (2012) provided a cohesive developmental framework to understand student engagement across early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence. This foundation invites an extension to make comparisons into later stages of life. Furthermore, this research was not music-related. Therefore, there is a need to expand the study into later developmental

stages and provide a comparative investigation that examines musical engagement throughout a larger age range.

The student engagement literature indicates that engagement changes as students progress through school (Finn, 1989) because of different opportunities for engagement in varied contexts; however, the literature does not address how these circumstances translate, relate and correspond to musical engagement. In addition, one can extrapolate that these conditions and opportunities will continue to change throughout one's life into senior adulthood necessitating a comparative model of learner engagement in music throughout the generations.

Of great relevance to this research study is the added dimension of agentic engagement. In combination with a constructivist perspective, it would be significant to gain insight into how learners demonstrate proactive engagement in the learning process. Furthermore, the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) proclaims that if the basic needs of competency, relatedness, and autonomy are not met then disengagement is likely to be higher. In relation to music programs, a study that identifies the factors that are associated with the three processes would be most useful to advance music education in general. While SDT is often examined in relation to students in school, it is important that the factors autonomy, competence and relatedness, and possibly others found through this investigation, are studied in relation to multiple generations in educational music programs that may also reside outside of the school context. As scholars expand the extant literature, contributing in such as a way as to recognize the relationship of engagement with agency (O'Neill, 2012, 2014) it is significant to provide the added dimension of a cross-generational perspective.

**Programming.** The use of the word "programming" refers to a series of structured activities with an educative purpose. Rather than a single occurrence or a number of disparate events, that may appear disjointed and disconnected to a larger purpose in educational terms it refers to the development of curriculum and the process by which the curriculum is presented. The idea of programming suggests that the opportunity is provided to explore a theme, concept, or unit that is developed over an extended period of time. The benefits of programming, as distinct from single activities or sole events, in an intergenerational environment is crucial to providing a means by which experiences and interactions become significant to one's life (Friedman, 1997). The importance of programming is that it allows progress and development to be determined and observed by the program facilitator and the participants themselves, whereas in a single occurrence of a meeting or activity, this observable trajectory is not always apparent or possible. While this term has been applied to contexts where seniors specifically benefit from prolonged opportunities of involvement in programs, the significance of participation in such experiences and interactions has the potential to benefit other age groups. Further essential criteria for successful intergenerational programming outline that it should benefit all participants, allow for the establishment of relationships throughout a significant amount of time, be community-serving, and include a curricular emphasis (Beynon, Heydon, O'Neill, Zhang, & Crocker, 2013). A program leader as a facilitator or a co-ordinator of a sequence of learning events, however, must recognize that the participants in the program will act as curricular informants who, in turn, will influence the direction and design of the content learned and experienced.

It could be argued that music education has traditionally been associated with school programming and student populations because of its explicit curricular designation. A deeper examination of the literature regarding adult-based music education programs, however, also stresses the importance of including a curricular component. Although many intergenerational projects focus on the culmination of a final performance, such presentation is not substantiated evidence of musical learning.

Friedman (1997) asserts that the significance of establishing a program, as opposed to a series of sequential activities, is key to the experience of deep learning for participants. These benefits of intergenerational programming, as distinguished from intergenerational activities, are crucial to providing the opportunity through which experiences and interactions become significant to one's life and therefore impact lifelong learning (Friedman, 1997).

Curricular informants. The notion of "curricular informants" (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984) has been utilized in relation to intergenerational programming to suggest that successful implementation of such programming encourages participants to become active curricular contributors within the educational milieu. The premise that learners will shape the curriculum design suggests that participants will be more invested in their learning outcomes.

The role of "curricular informants" values the contributions that the learners themselves bring to the educative process. This alternative approach to existing teaching models that equate teaching and learning recognizes the learners as both potential learners and teachers. When subject matter is situated within the context of the learners' previously acquired knowledge and experiences, then they become the vehicle for their

own learning and the subject material that is explored by program leaders. As such, it is a priority for intergenerational singing programs in particular to establish an environment in which the learners themselves "can experience and come to value" (Harste et al., 1984, p. xii) the music that is significant for them and the role that it plays within their varying individual development stages. While its application has been used specifically with respect to intergenerational programs, the idea of learners contributing to the direction and design of the curriculum and its contents, is also to be found within the case studies of informal learning at the secondary level and the composing and improvising process within the undergraduate music education course. As such, each case study examined in this research investigation values the learner as a curricular informant in sustained educational programming.

#### **Motivation for the Research**

My interest in the topic of musical participation or musicking stems from many years of practical experience in the music classroom as a teacher, providing opportunities to participate in formation and implementation of pedagogic strategies. Some of these positively or negatively influenced student engagement and continued participation in music, whether in or out of school. Furthermore, my involvement in various research initiatives that focus on alternative forms of and approaches to music pedagogy has raised questions concerning a link between pedagogic strategies and musical engagement that span all ages of learners and music participants. This pedagogical content knowledge has provided me with the foundation to embark on research initiatives that seek to engage learners cross-generationally in school and community-based music education curricula.

#### **Theoretical Framework**

The study employs an interdisciplinary theoretical framework drawn from psychology of education and sociology. Engagement theory springs from the discipline of psychology whereas the concepts of agency and related theories originate from the field of sociology, specifically that of musical agency from the sociology of music education (Karlsen, 2011). The combination of these two disciplinary outlooks provides a powerful theoretical framework through which to interrogate the data, and leads to a more nuanced and discipline relevant understanding of the issues affecting music programs across the lifespan. Using complimentary frameworks of Self Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan, 1985) and musical agency (Karlsen, 2011) to investigate the sociological pattern of decreased music making has the potential to shed light on how people of all ages can access and develop the skills and motivation to enjoy the benefits of active musical participation throughout the lifespan. The constructs of engagement and agency are examined in relation with and to one another as they potentially work in tandem to influence lifelong participation in musicking.

In consideration of Canada's increasingly diverse populace, understanding inclusive, alternative pedagogical practices and facilitating musical discourse across, between and within generational cohorts is important. The commonality across the generations resides in the intent to re-engage those who may otherwise find themselves disconnected from learning, disconnected from others, and even disconnected from life. The programs in this study focus on facilitating engaging learning environments that contribute to deep, personal learning and meaningful experiences, regardless of age, ability, or expertise.

Fostering musical agency, whether individual or collective, requires acknowledgement of the centrality of the learner's perspective and recognition of one's ideal experiential conditions (Karlsen, 2011). The idea of student-centered learning is not new to researchers or practitioners in the field of music education. However, little research has been conducted into the interface between musical agency and engagement in this field. Such research may allow better understanding of how music programs can enhance engagement in musicking for learners of all ages, in addition to developing agentic learners who feel empowered and motivated to continue their involvement in music education programs.

Many theories and models have been developed surrounding the issue of engagement, yet there have been none proposed that cross the temporal plane and link distinct generational age cohorts to one another; nor have there been any that illustrate the relationship between the roles of musical engagement and agency as experienced in relation to educational programming utilizing a cross-generational perspective. The literature on agency as applied to musical contexts has been a comparatively recent development. A perspective yet to be examined in this emergent literature field is the potential relationship between engagement and agency as significant indicants and precursors of a heightened learning experience. This research investigation aims to contribute to the literature in this respect.

Considered in conjunction with engagement the construct of agency will serve to broaden the investigation into why people participate in musical activities and what keeps them committed as full citizens in such activities. Within Deci and Ryan's Self Determination Theory (1985) its sub-theory, the Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET),

emphasizes the vital role autonomy serves with respect to intrinsic motivation.

Autonomy is referred to as the perceived level of control and choice one has over one's learning, which has been linked to higher levels of intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). As intrinsic motivation is linked to the concept of "free choice" (Ryan & Deci, 2000a) the concepts of agency and autonomy in their aligned terms of "capacity", "power", and "action" can often be used interchangeably. While the parallel definitions of these terms justify their relevance to this study, it is important to note the differences between the theoretical paradigms from which they originate. Autonomy is used in this thesis as one of the elements of Deci and Ryan's theories and thus originates from a psychological perspective. The construct of agency however originates from a sociological perspective. Investigating the relationship between engagement and agency, and how participants experience and negotiate these concepts in their lived experiences of music programming lies at the heart of this research investigation. This partnership can be demonstrated in Willis' (1978) definition of human agency as "the ability to act and make decisions autonomously" (p. 14). Inevitably, it is advantageous to examine the issue of engagement in relation to program requirements specific to varying age cohorts from multiple perspectives.

In examining the question of how to make learning engaging, O'Neill (2014) refers to activities that are "goal-oriented, contextual, interesting, challenging, relevant (or related to real-world experiences) and social or interactive" (p. 19). Furthermore, contexts which promote "learner autonomy or choice, agency or voice, and personalized instruction" (p. 19) are conducive to creating engaging experiences and environments.

O'Neill's research extends this notion to suggest that the conditions necessary to

ultimately experience transformative music engagement are those afforded by approaches that are learner centered and foster agency and empowerment.

One of the greatest challenges presented in this investigation is accurately representing these large, ideological constructs such as engagement and agency, which are not often easily discernible or observable. Both terms invite the question of "can engagement and agency be seen or heard by an observer?" which in turn prompts the question of "can engagement and agency be seen or heard at all?" Both terms invite the question of whether it is possible to identify these concepts in action through sensory means, or, if this is possible, whether these constructs are present and evidenced in these particular data? Such educational discourse has become increasingly popular on social media sites, including blog posts that monitor and advertise research and practitioner observations and thoughts on the topic of student engagement. Informal posts and blog entries gather a lot of data about student engagement and permit its immediate dissemination. David Price (2014), who is an active writer, speaker, and leader in innovative education programmes designed to promote higher engagement, writes that a dominant myth regarding engagement is that it in fact is a construct that can be seen. The challenge in this notion is that often people mistake compliance for engagement. Similarly, indicants of high achievement and compliant behaviour are taken to mean that students are engaged in lessons and classes. Many practitioners believe that engagement is evident if learners appear "not bored" with the ensuing activity. What is at issue here is how to measure or identify a response that is occurring in the affective domain since these feelings are subjective and can often be misinterpreted and misconstrued by observers looking for indicants of behaviour. In this study an attempt to address this

problem is made by using as data sources the narrative accounts of participants, program facilitators, and in some cases caregivers, that invite discourse analysis to interpret the meanings and intentions behind these conveyed experiences.

#### **Methodology Overview**

It can be difficult to examine these concepts under forced circumstances of enrolment. However, examining elective music programs of sustained length can provide more useful insight into the roles of engagement and agency in initial enrolment and continued participation. The programs investigated in this study were i) an informal music learning unit in one urban secondary school in Ontario, part of the Musical Futures Canada informal learning project, ii) a course in composing and improvising at the undergraduate level in an Ontario university, and iii) an afterschool intergenerational singing program involving secondary school students and persons with Alzheimer's Disease (AD) offered at an Ontario community facility connected with the local Alzheimer's Society. Each case functioned as an alternative platform for meeting curriculum expectations or completing diploma/degree requirements for many of the participants.

The research uses a collective case study methodology (Stake, 1995) to investigate the relationship between agency and engagement in non-traditional music education programs and the role these constructs serve in the pedagogical practices that accompany successful music programs which engage participants at various life stages. A qualitative methodology was used particularly as it allows for researcher interpretation to make visible constructs that may otherwise appear invisible (Creswell, 2013). Human experiences that lend themselves to qualitative interpretation, rather than a reduction to quantifiable results speak to the experiential aspects of engagement and agency. Case

ongoing research (Creswell, 2013), as has been identified as a distinct feature in educational programming as compared to activities. Its strength in focusing on issues, rather than individuals (Creswell, Hanson, Plano, & Morales, 2007) lends itself to the investigation of the issues of engagement and agency. Because the central focus of this investigation resides in an understanding of how musical agency and engagement may be related, nurtured, and connected to continued participation in musicking throughout the lifespan, a broad investigation of musical programming that transcends a generational span is required. As such, three research initiatives were examined with the premise that participation within each program was on a voluntary basis. Although all of the programs were structured with a curricular component, the contexts varied in that two were situated within a formal educational setting and one was a shared school/community music initiative.

This work has been stimulated by my participation as research assistant in research projects that investigate the following: informal music learning in formal teaching environments in Canadian schools; composition and improvisation in the undergraduate music classroom; and learning outcomes in intergenerational singing programs including persons with Alzheimer's Disease. A qualitative research study was thus designed to capture the attitudinal and behavioural observations of participants involved in music education programs, along with their narrative accounts of their experiences. Each project was structured in two phases, the first of which was to acclimate the researcher and the participants to the process of research observation and data collection. After ethical permission was granted for research, I attended the

educational sessions where field notes were made, data from video and/or audio recording was collected, and informal dialogue occurred between myself and the participants. At the conclusion of each project, participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview protocol.

Ethics. In any research study there are ethical factors that the researcher must consider before, during, and after the study's implementation. The specific focus of this research investigation as it pertains to several generations of music learners invites an examination of cross-generational music education in varied contexts inside and outside of formal schooling. Therefore, the specificities of these details must be pre-determined by careful selection of programs and participants. The sensitive nature of utilizing vulnerable people, namely students under the age of 18 and persons with AD are critical to address in order to obtain a wide perspective of various age ranges. Ethical approval was received from the University ethics board, as well as the various school districts, institutions, agencies, and participants affiliated with each project. Ethical considerations are addressed in more detail in the methodology chapter.

#### **Research Implications**

Contributions to knowledge. While the topics of how students engage with their studies and what they, institutions, and educators can do to improve engagement has been well researched since the 1990s (Zepke & Leach, 2010), this research project examines the issues from a new angle, focusing on how engagement and agency are perceived by participants and leaders in music across the lifecourse. In addition, this investigation utilizes a dual theoretical framework drawn from Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000; Reeve, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b, 2002), and

Karlsen's (2011) concept of musical agency. SDT is based on the principle that all learners possess the inherent growth tendencies of autonomy, relatedness and competence that serve as a foundation to achieve optimal engagement. In relation to music programs, this study attempts to identify the factors that are associated with these processes within music programs to improve educational programming and learner engagement. This lens will be combined with the sociological concept of agency and in particular the construct of musical agency (Karlsen, 2011).

Perhaps a key factor underlying the issue of an individual's involvement and continuity in musical settings is an acknowledgement of one's perception of agency, understood as the capacity for willful action. Recognizing the factors that are connected to one's sense of agency may contribute to the field an understanding of the conditions that positively or negatively correspond to one's engagement within music programming, thereby addressing the issue of decreased musicking upon completion of required musical programming in formal contexts. In a similar manner to the investigation of engagement factors described above, the study identifies the factors that are associated with experiences of agency in the music programs investigated.

Significance of Research. While the topic of how students engage with their studies and what they, institutions and educators can do to improve engagement has been well researched since the 1990s (Zepke & Leach, 2010), this research project focuses intentionally on how engagement and agency are perceived by learners and leaders in music making. If it is recommended that teachers become more attuned to their learner's engagement (Reeve, 2012), then it is important to discover what that looks like at various stages of life and what programs and pedagogical strategies are effective in optimizing

that for learners. Educators are advised that a large proportion of their attention during instruction should be devoted to monitoring and enhancing learner engagement (Reeve, 2012), which implies that they should be in a continuous state of metacognition and reflection to analyze their teaching strategies and effectiveness. If future implications of improved practice advocate that program leaders intentionally monitor and enhance learner engagement then the leaders need to know for what they are looking and listening.

A common assumption is that behavioural observations are sufficient in assessing whether students are engaged in musical environments; however, examining the factors of relatedness, competency and autonomy as facilitated by non-traditional music education programs may shed a new light on agency and engagement in musical learning environments. If agentic engagement attempts to understand the process of how learners are able to enrich their own learning environments (Reeve, 2012), then having an understanding of how individuals across all ages demonstrate optimal engagement in musical education programs can allow educators to provide learners with the tools to actively construct their experiences into optimally engaging ones.

A review of the literature reveals that theories and models are always in a state of continual development and only are true for a transient period of time. When researchers utilize one theory or model they often find that their study results in a new perspective or angle that builds upon the existing one (English, 1994). In this respect, using the SDT model as a basis to then develop a comparative generational study, rather than a microcosmic examination of one age group, will build upon this existing research. An examination of competence, relatedness and autonomy in the Self-Determination Theory

as an initial framework among each of the three cases in this study reveals and highlights both the commonalities and differences among generations in music education settings, which advances the application of the SDT model. Furthermore, as autonomy is conceptualized as a feeling of self-determination in one's learning (Skinner, Chi, & The Learning-Gardens Educational Assessment Group, 2012) then the related construct of agency should be examined as a complimentary concept as it examines one's voluntary capacity in the power to act.

Benefits of the research. Research reveals that teachers who provide deep learning experiences promote student engagement (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006, as cited in Zepke & Leach, 2010). The advantage of conducting research pertaining to education across the lifespan is that its benefits are far-reaching. It is anticipated that the implications of this research may impact several age-groups of people within school settings and beyond into the wider community. While this study provides information about the nature of music education engagement as it relates crossgenerationally, its practical applications will also reach practitioners. An understanding of learning environments in music that facilitate optimal engagement may assist early years centers, elementary and secondary school music classrooms, teacher education institutions, community music organizations and seniors' organizations and community residences.

Ames' (1992) claim that problems of engagement are often related to problems of instruction advocates the need for identifying and improving upon pedagogical approaches and strategies that may profoundly affect learner engagement in music educational programming. A target group that is at the grassroots of pedagogical change

is that of pre-service teachers who become a direct audience for improved knowledge related to pedagogical practices. Teacher professional development has the potential for enhancing the educational outcomes of learners and assisting educators to operate more effectively in the classroom (Martin & Dowson, 2009). In light of recent reviews indicating the need for teacher professional development to assist disengaged and disadvantaged students (Martin & Dowson, 2009) there is a need for further research in this area.

#### Thesis Overview

Within the introductory chapter, the research interests, rationale, context, and key concepts of engagement, agency, and programming have been identified and explained. Relevant terminology and how terms are used throughout the investigation are explored in relation to the significance of the study.

Chapter Two provides an exploration of the literature on engagement and agency, while Chapter Three outlines the method and methodology which describe the research design and data collection procedures through which the research investigation was conducted and analyzed.

The next three chapters describe in detail the background and context of each case study including details about data collection, and analysis of the i) Musical Futures

Canada informal learning project; ii) the improvising and composing in the classroom undergraduate classroom course, and iii) the intergenerational singing community-based program involving high school students and persons with Alzheimer's Disease. The final chapter provides the analysis and a discussion of the results and conclusions, limitations

of the study, implications of the research, and recommendations for further investigations.

## Chapter 2

### A Review of the Literature on Engagement and Agency

#### **Engagement**

Engagement in education is a burgeoning field of research and as such, has resulted in numerous definitions and applications to varying contexts. Newswander and Borrego (2009) admit that in studies of education, engagement can be a "troublesome term" (p. 552) because of its broad scope. Macey and Schneider (2008) report that researchers define the core nature of the engagement construct in many ways, varying from covert attitudinal terms to more overt behavioural terms. The depth or degree of engagement can also be challenging to define, as Reeve (2012) claims that engagement is "the extent of a student's active involvement in a learning activity" (p.150). Engagement itself can be placed on a spectrum ranging from apathy, disaffection or disengagement to the other polarity of active engagement.

The description of engagement as a task, domain-specific event or construct (Reeve, 2012) can be categorized into behavioural, emotional, cognitive, or agentic engagement. Conversely, disaffection can be a behavioural construct that assumes the form of passivity, inattention, lack of effort and persistence, or an emotional construct that is manifested as boredom, frustration, or dissatisfaction during academic activities (Skinner et al., 2012). These aforementioned aspects all create differing views on how engagement should be categorized and defined.

The need to define engagement is a crucial step when identifying its direct or indirect influences (London, Downey, & Mace, 2007). In its most basic form, engagement is described as the connection between an individual and an activity of interest (Russell, Ainley, & Frydenberg, 2005) and reflects the individual's active involvement or participation in the activity (Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon, & Barch, 2004). When an educational component is added, the definition expands to "the extent to which students participate in academic and nonacademic school activities and identify with and value school outcomes" (Davison & Hawe, 2012, p. 65). Chapman's (2003) definition as cited by Zepke and Leach (2010) emphasizes that the onus of student engagement is on the student: "Students' cognitive investment in, active participation in and emotional commitment to their learning" (p. 168). London, Downey and Mace (2007), however, elaborate by adding that engagement may also be defined as the "psychological connection, comfort, and sense of belonging that students feel toward their institution, their peers, professors and administrators. Engagement encompasses the institutional, situational, and individual factors that may impact any given student" (p. 456). For example, when applying the term "engagement" to seniors specifically, the revelation of its antithetic term "apathy" is posited, as it refers to the act of being occupied or involved with an external stimulus (Cohen-Mansfield, Marx, Freedman, Murad, Regier, Thein, & Dakheel-Ali, 2011).

For the purposes of this study, I have elected to use an all-encompassing definition of engagement provided by the United States National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, 2007), specifically because it recognizes the investment of both the participants and the educational institution in creating engaging learning

environments. The NSSE definition states that student engagement is "the time and energy students devote to educationally sound activities inside and outside the classroom, and the policies and practices that institutions use to induce students to take part in these activities" (p. 3). If one adapts this definition to account for the multi-generational cohort for the purposes of this study, then the following paraphrased quotation recognizes engagement as "the time and energy learners devote to musically educative activities inside and outside the classroom, and the policies and practices that institutions use to induce learners to take part in these activities." This definition is crucial in understanding that the program or institution is seen as playing a reciprocal role in promoting and fostering engagement in the participants. While many existing definitions focus on student engagement in the classroom, in light of the expansive age range examined in this study, I have elected to use the term "learner engagement." All participants, whether school-aged students, program leaders, school or university educators, administrative personnel, undergraduate students, or senior participants, can be considered as learners throughout this educational process and can be considered equally involved in the learning process within these alternate music programs. For the purposes of data presentation and analysis within the three case studies, the term learner will be used in reference to the adolescent students, the undergraduate students, and persons with AD.

**Background.** Engagement in relation to educational programming is exceptionally significant "because it (engagement) makes learning possible" (Reeve, 2012, p. 162). High engagement during tasks in secondary school classrooms has been a significant predictor of continuing motivation and commitment, as well as overall performance in post-secondary schooling (Shernoff & Hoogstra, 2001). Ultimately, its

importance resides in the prediction of educational outcomes, including academic progress (Ladd & Dinella, 2009). Yet even in light of this understood relationship between engagement and academic success, educational reports are still troubling. In 2001 the Canadian national dropout rate was 10.1% (Bolby, 2001) and a result of student disengagement and alienation is theorized to be associated with the gradual process of dropping out of school (Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider, & Shernoff, 2003). Even when students do finish school they report high rates of boredom, alienation and disconnection with schooling (Larson & Richards, 1991). The Radwanski report (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1987), Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education, and the Issue of Dropouts, identified the irrelevance of education in general in students' lives and the connection to students' subsequent disinterest in school (Ministry of Education, 1994). Since student engagement is associated positively with academic achievement and declining school drop-out rates (Fullarton, 2002; Gill & Rickard, 2012; Keltikankas-Jarvinen, 1992; Marsh, 1990) it is of prime importance to consider and implement effective intervention strategies to enhance educational engagement (Gill & Rickard, 2012).

While student engagement in curricular programs is a significant educational objective with respect to school music programs, numerous reports have identified decreasing engagement of students, particularly adolescents in transition to secondary school (Green, 2001, 2008; Hunter, 2005; Mills, 1997; Music Manifesto, 2004; O'Neill, 2005; Rusinek, 2008).

It would be naïve to assume that the implications related to this specific age group occur in isolation. An understanding of why students appear disengaged from music

classrooms during grades 7 through 12 cannot be explained through a narrow examination of that cohort. In order to understand the contextual circumstances in relation to lifelong musical engagement, a holistic picture of engagement consequently investigating how engagement or disaffection may influence musical engagement in later life is essential.

While previous studies suggest that high school students in particular are disengaged from the learning process (Goodlad, 1984), seniors are also at risk not only from disengagement in learning activities, but also a potential disconnection from various facets of life. Atchley's (1989) continuity theory of normal aging posits that aging persons will adjust better to the process by maintaining their respective internal and external lifestyle and habits (Whitney, 2009). Successful aging, therefore, is best facilitated through maintaining the level of intensity in previously experienced activities.

The aforementioned relationship between high levels of engagement and student achievement in formal schooling can be equated to the health benefits experienced by seniors involved in active opportunities of engagement. The reported feelings of positive self-esteem, feelings of competence and independence, avoidance of loneliness, and isolation (Hays & Minichello, 2005), in addition to the stabilization or building of cognitive skills (Prickett, 1998) reinforces the benefits of optimal engagement opportunities in music programming for aging participants. Assessing senior perception of engagement levels related to the preceding outcomes can serve as indicators of how to sustain lifelong engagement in musical programs.

The literature examines the antecedents and consequents of engagement, yet they are not necessarily compared across the generations in order to identify common or distinct elements that relate to different age groups. Furthermore, "research focusing on intergenerational music experiences is limited" (de Vries, 2012, p. 340) and Hallam, Creech, Gaunt, Pincas, Varvarigou, and McQueen (2012) state that there has been little attention paid with respect to the potential for music-making's contribution to the quality of life in seniors. Expanding on this topic includes examining the developmental precursors of student engagement and how student engagement may manifest itself across developmental periods, which is also a lacuna in the literature. As a result, there appear to be discontinuous developmental transitions into adult roles (Mahatmya et al., 2012; Sherrod & Lauckhardt, 2009), which is why the research questions include consideration as to whether the scope of music education can "expand further to enhance the connection of school music engagement with music engagement in life during and after the schooling years" (Thornton, 2011). Thornton suggests that future research should investigate the potential that intergenerational connections have in engaging all participants, however, in order to facilitate this partnership, more research into engagement to contrast and compare cross-generationally is needed to ensure that each group benefits positively from such an experience.

In summary, the breadth of the engagement construct and the importance of it in relation to musical engagement invite a plethora of approaches, angles and researcher perspectives when investigating the topic. As such, the remainder of this chapter presents research literature organized according to the various models and questionnaires that have been identified. For the purposes of this investigation, it is important to examine the

previous research in relation to learning environments, influential factors, outcomes, and educational implications that contribute to optimally engaging learning experiences.

**Engagement studies.** After reviewing the literature on engagement, it became apparent that there were several categories that emerged from the research; the various studies that have used engagement as a focus are as diverse as its definitions. Examinations of recent engagement studies to demonstrate the construct's breadth include: empowering community engagement in youth (Hastings, Leverne, Barbuto, & Bell, 2011); student engagement in online education (Hoskins, 2012); engagement in bioethics (London, 2001); gender engagement in law school (London et al., 2007); adolescent engagement and flow in secondary school classrooms (Shernoff et al., 2003); institutional-stakeholder engagement theories (Swanson, 2009); social class and value systems on student engagement (Kelly, 2009); engagement in garden-based education (Skinner et al., 2012); personality characteristics and student engagement in higher education (Roscheck & Schweinle, 2012); student engagement in community college (Shuetz, 2008); engagement within interdisciplinary programs (Newswander & Borrego, 2009); engagement in leisure activities (Arai & Pedlar, 2003); Aboriginal educational disengagement (Davison & Hawe, 2012); engagement and dementia (Cohen-Mansfield et al., 2011); engagement and video games (Whitton, 2011); and meaningful engagement of seniors in community service (Whitney, 2009).

There are studies pertaining to musical engagement that focus on learner engagement in ensemble rehearsals (Scruggs, 2009); family experiences with musical engagement in daily life (Barrett, 2009); youth music engagement in contemporary society (O'Neill, 2005); boys' engagement in gender contrasted musical activities

(Harrison, 2010); musical engagement of music researchers (Wöllner, Ginsborg, & Williamon, 2011); flow and musical engagement (Custodero, 2005; Sloboda, O'Neill, & Ivaldi, 2001); and older Australians' engagement in musicking with children (de Vries, 2012).

Identifying existing studies allows a comparison that shows a greater number of investigations devoted to school-aged musical engagement, rather than musical engagement with senior learners; considerably less are studies focused on intergenerational musical engagement. These studies, although varying in focus and application, provide insight into the nature of engagement. Furthermore, one is able to see how research studies of engagement in other practices can be transferred into a music education context.

Engagement models. Results from these studies often culminate in a model that can be used for research development and practical applications. Hoskins (2012) explains that "a model of engaged learning is a complex process with many variables" (p. 52). An original measure of engagement was the Classroom Engagement model that included teacher and student-report items examining student participation in academic activities through behavioural and emotional engagement, and behavioural and emotional disaffection (Skinner, Kindermann, & Furrer, 2009).

Recent developments include Atkinson's (2011) Student-Owned Learning-Engagement Model (SOLE) which emphasizes student consciousness within learning engagement opportunities; Zepke and Leach's (2010) conceptual organizer which includes motivation, transactional engagement, institutional support, active citizenship and non-institutional support; the Observational Measurement of Engagement developed to assess levels of engagement of persons with intellectual disabilities and measure engagement variables including duration, attention, attitude and refusal (Cohen-Mansfield et al., 2011). Furthermore, a theory that combines motivation and engagement is explored by Martin (2008) in the Motivation and Engagement Wheel and Motivation and Engagement Scale in application to music and sport. The scale measures adaptive cognitive dimensions, adaptive behavioural dimensions, impeding/maladaptive cognitive dimensions and maladaptive behavioural dimensions.

Likewise, the Comprehensive Process Model of Engagement, which states that personal attributes, environmental factors and stimulus characteristics are contributing factors concerning the nature and level of engagement is particularly effective (Cohen-Mansfield et al., 2011). Similarly, Haworth and Conrad's engagement theory (1997) is useful in suggesting that quality programs are those in which all members of a learning program mutually support the process of teaching and learning.

Engagement instruments. Several questionnaires investigate the factors surrounding the nature and optimal conditions for active learning engagement. Engagement can be measured in covert attitudinal terms and in behavioural observations (Chin & Rickard, 2012). While the most common methods employed to evaluate engagement in educational settings are the use of self-assessment questionnaires and measurements such as attendance rates (Chapman, 2003), behavioural techniques including the analysis of facial expressions and body language (Hughey, 2002 as cited in Whitton, 2011) are also used.

Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider, and Shernoff (2003) utilized an Experience Sampling Form designed to measure engagement through the assessment of concentration, interest, and enjoyment in an activity; however, one of the most familiar current questionnaires is The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which reports on college student engagement. Questions are related to participation within the classroom, coursework, institutional support, non-academic involvement and future plans. An additional template is the Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS) questionnaire which specifically examines areas of active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction and strategies of enriching educational experiences (Porter, 2006).

In relation to music, engagement questionnaires are scarce. In conducting two studies, Chin and Rickard (2012) used a Music USE (MUSE) questionnaire, which is grounded in theoretical understanding concerning the ways in which individuals use music in their daily lives. Furthermore, it allows researchers to explore the benefits of music engagement by encompassing the qualitative and quantifiable dimensions of music's use (Chin & Rickard, 2012).

The results from all of these questionnaires attempt to provide information regarding attitudinal and behavioural engagement responses that offer insight into the learning environments, influences and outcomes pertaining to engagement.

The Importance of the learning environment in engagement research. The importance of a quality learning environment cannot be underestimated in facilitating learner engagement. Conventionally, a program facilitator is integrated into the learning environment and as such, plays a critical role in creating the context for student engagement (London et al., 2007) because learning environments infused with quality

interaction strategies are associated with increased levels of student satisfaction and retention (Hoskins, 2012).

Of particular interest were the increased engagement levels reported in secondary school classrooms when the instruction was relevant, the learning environment was under students' control, and they were involved in group work and individual work rather than lectures, watching videos and writing tests (Shernoff et al., 2003). In addition, "both academic intensity and a positive emotional response appear to be integral parts of optimal engagement in classrooms" (p. 172). The recognition that teaching and teachers are central to engagement is a conclusion proferred by Bryson and Hand (2007) stating that students are more likely to engage if they are supported by teachers who establish inviting learning environments, demand high standards, challenge their learners, and make themselves freely available to discuss academic progress. One can extrapolate that while these findings are related specifically to students in a secondary classroom, the importance of a learning environment that is conducive to engagement can transfer to learners of all ages in a range of music education contexts. This work, however, has not yet been conducted and is one of the reasons for the current research.

Contributing factors and influences of engagement. While the learning environment is a contextual variable, a constructivist approach to education presupposes that the learner also has individual prerequisites to optimize engagement. Deci & Ryan (1987) assert that interest provides the basis for becoming engaged in an activity, while Whitton (2011) aligns engagement to a motivational state related to involvement and absorption of attention. If being engaged is to be involved, occupied, and interested in something" (Higgins, 2006, p. 442) then it presumes that participation and interest are

key elements to engagement. Expanding on this factor is research indicating that the increased complexity of interaction strategies in combination with increased student ownership of the learning process increases the chance of achieving high levels of engagement (Hoskins, 2012).

An emergent theme from the literature on engagement connects learner perception across several areas to one's level of engagement in the learning activity. Reports from Shernoff et al. (2003) indicate that student engagement is influenced by phenomenological factors that include individual factors of learner perception of relevance and control over the learning; instructional and pedagogical factors including context, instructional format and subject material; demographic factors; and learning history. Furthermore, student engagement was an outcome when the precursors of concentration, interest, enjoyment and flow were present.

The concept of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) has been reported to occur in many highly creative artists and scholars when they are engaged in their best work (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Custodero's (2005) findings in relation to flow indicate that musical engagement is influenced by developmental trends, environmental conditions and individual temperament. Flow theory advances the notion that certain factors add to the enjoyment of an experience, and the more of these elements that are present, the more engaging the experience (Whitton, 2011).

Decades of research have shown that perceptions of self-efficacy, ability, academic competence, and control are consistent predictors of school engagement, learning, academic performance, and achievement (Bandura, 1997; Dweck, 1999, Skinner, 1995, Skinner et al., 2012). Bandura's (1997) work on self-efficacy is

particularly relevant to the issue of engagement, as one's own perception in the ability to perform tasks successfully and achieve educational outcomes is linked to motivation, interest and engagement. Furthermore, students' perception that an activity was challenging, that their skill level was high, and that they were in an experience of flow, were all associated with reports of higher engagement (Shernoff et al., 2003). Finally, students with a greater perception of autonomy in school achieve higher quality outcomes of classroom engagement, enjoyment, persistence, and learning (Skinner et al., 2012).

There is often confusion surrounding the co-existence of motivation and engagement, however the distinction resides in the observation that motivation is a private and unobservable construct, whereas engagement is a publicly observable behaviour (Reeve, 2012). Although each construct influences the other, motivation serves as a biological process that is an antecedent cause to engagement (Reeve, 2012). Extensive research has found that flow (O'Neill, 1999; Sloboda, 2005), participation (Adderley, Kennedy, & Berz, 2003), enjoyment (Sloboda, 2005), positive intentions (Sloboda, 2005) and resilience (Atlas, Taggart, & Goodell, 2004) are meaningfully associated with engagement and motivation (Martin, 2008), while Lepper and Malone (1987) provide evidence of a link between intrinsic motivation to learn, engagement, and instructional effectiveness (Whitton, 2011).

One of the key models that has successfully explained the influence and outcomes of engagement is Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (1985). This model assists practitioners and researchers in understanding and fostering learner engagement that is a product of motivation. It assumes that all learners possess inherent growth tendencies that serve as a foundation to achieve optimal engagement (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000;

Reeve, 2012; Reeve, Deci, & Ryan, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b, 2002; Vansteenkiste, Niemiece, & Soenens, 2010) and it places engagement at the center (Skinner et al., 2012). Many researchers have successfully used Self-Determination Theory as a model in explaining engagement in their fields, including its use in both clinical practice (Kosmala-Anderson, Wallace, & Turner, 2010) and academic work (Skinner et al., 2012).

The importance of using this model is that it identifies the three basic needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy that, if not met, increase the risk of disengagement (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Examining how SDT may be related and applied to alternative programs of music education designed to increase student engagement is relevant considering the extensive use of the model in other fields and will be examined in more depth in this thesis.

Outcomes related to engagement. While engagement is often seen as the outcome of positive learning environments and student motivation, the construct can also be seen as the precursor for further outcomes. Within the SDT framework, engagement mediates the relationship between motivation and achievement, which then serves as a bridge to highly valued outcomes (Reeve, 2012). These outcomes of achievement, learning and skill development make engagement a significant educational construct. Research consistently shows that student engagement plays a critical role in the development of positive outcomes in children and adolescents, including an increase in academic achievement (Carbonaro, 1998; Eccles, 2004; Mahatmya et al., 2012; Manke, McGuire, Reiss, Hetherington, & Plomin, 1995; Portes, 2000). Of greatest concern to educators is that "several decades of research have demonstrated that students'

engagement predicts their learning, grades, achievement, retention, and graduation" (Skinner et al., 2012, p. 17).

Since education is not solely concerned with educating the mind, the positive benefits of engagement are also manifested in personal well-being. Findings suggest that students report feeling significantly more engaged in conjunction with higher feelings of self-esteem when they are in control of their learning environments (Shernoff et al., 2003). Furthermore, when one is highly engaged in academic work the results are constructive, they are enthusiastic, emotionally positive and cognitively focused in their participation in learning activities (Skinner et al., 2012). The findings of Newswander and Borrego (2009) note that indicators for engagement include increased student participation, an increased level of personal attachment and ownership of an educational program and higher reports of personal satisfaction.

Outside of the classroom, results from Hastings, Leverne, Barbuto, and Bell (2011) reveal that community engagement allowed youth to gain a sense of ownership, responsibility, empowerment and confidence. With specific reference to the outcomes of seniors' engagement with music-making, findings reveal the social, health, cognitive and emotional benefits (Hallam et al., 2012) that often result in personal fulfillment (Thornton, 2011; Whitney, 2009), connection to humanity (Thornton, 2011) and personal wholeness (Whitney, 2009). Therefore, the results of studies pertaining to engagement outcomes provide substantiated purpose for educational research to improve the quality of engagement in learning programs in order to benefit participants of all ages.

**Implications of engagement research.** The recommendations for fostering educational engagement can be just as varied as its influences (London et al.,

2007). Research studies highlight certain practical implications for educators including a focus on learning activities that support students' autonomy (Zepke & Leach, 2010); enhancing student self-belief (Zepke & Leach, 2010) and self-efficacy (Martin, 2008); developing learner self-regulatory skills (Martin, 2008); providing challenge-appropriate levels for students (Shernoff et al., 2003); offering relevant and authentic academic work (Newmann, Wehledge, & Lamborn, 1992); creating a learning atmosphere that is active, collaborative and fosters learning relationships (Zepke & Leach, 2010); enabling students to become active citizens and to develop their social and cultural capital (Zepke & Leach, 2010); and facilitating the perception of student control over their learning activities (Deci, Nezlek, & Sheinman, 1981; Martin, 2008).

The implication is that educators must construct environments that encourage active learning, since learners are the least engaged in traditional, Socratic models of education (London et al., 2007). In such a situation, a hierarchy of power exists that is centred on the instructor, while the students are lacking agency, power, authority or control over their learning and learning outcomes (2007). If educators are able to support the learners' sense of competency and autonomy by providing activities that offer choice connected to personal goals and opportunities for success, then engagement can be enhanced (Reeve et al., 2004; Shernoff et al., 2003; Skinner et al., 2012). In conjunction with my intent to identify and compare behavioural engagement criteria across the generations, the learners' attitudinal perceptions will therefore be approached from the understanding that engaged participants experience the fundamentals of competence, relatedness, and autonomy as outlined in framework of the Self-Determination Theory.

The valuing of choice among participants is also evident from literature concerning seniors (de Vries, 2012). The importance of learner input regarding repertoire selection, personal agency in the nature of music-making and when and where the music-making occurred were all valued results of de Vries' research into active music engagement between seniors and children. An abundance of engagement literature relating to learning environments that specifically encourage the importance of learner agency and perception of control over the learning process (Freer, 2006; Grannis, 1978; Newswander & Borrego, 2009; Stodolsky, 1988) emphasizes the importance of relinquishing control of teacher-authoritative classrooms. The influence of program facilitators is significant as evidence indicates that the more autonomy-supportive they are, the higher quality of engagement their learners experience (Reeve, 2012). Educational leaders who advocate for connective instruction aimed at facilitating substantive, interpersonal and instructional relationships foster increasingly motivated, engaged and achieving individuals (Martin & Dowson, 2009).

The Psychological Perspective. Of the theories described in the literature, one stands out that seems to best account for the sociological influences of educational engagement, that being Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory. The connection of the proposed research to Self-Determination Theory is not to provide a theoretical framework in which music engagement is embedded in its theoretical application and practice; rather it is to use SDT as a lens in understanding whether and if so, why these music curricula programs are successful in engaging learners. Ultimately, the significance of the model was to investigate the commonalities and differences perceived by learners of varying ages. Recognizing that underlying these programs might have

been pedagogical practices that nurture the psychological nutriments of autonomy, competence and relatedness, served to situate the research from a psychological theoretical perspective within music education programming. These psychological elements were used as a springboard to discover if other fundamentals are involved in establishing engaging learning environments, and potentially how these conditions are related to the sociological perspective involving development of learner agency.

Support for SDT's application in an educational setting is articulated in that "SDT is well supported by large-scale empirical studies and seems well suited to explain the motivation and agency needed for engagement" (Zepke & Leach, 2010, p. 170). The importance of this theory is that it integrates personal and social factors that shape learner engagement and development (Skinner et al., 2012). It proposes that for one to be motivated and to function at optimal level, the psychological needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy must be supported (Martin & Dowson, 2009). Competence is defined as perceived control (Skinner et al., 2012), relatedness is the connection, and sense of belonging with others (Martin & Dowson, 2009), and autonomy is a feeling of self-determination in one's learning (Skinner et al., 2012). The model accounts for the interaction between a learner's "inner resources" and the situated learning environment, both of which are contiguous factors in learner engagement (Reeve, 2012).

The interpersonal components of the model are therefore relevant to this study because the process of relatedness is an instructional need and when it is met in the learning environment learners are more likely to be engaged (Martin & Dowson, 2009). Meeting these relatedness needs potentially enables students to negotiate the affective and social world of the classroom and school as it considers aspects of practice

at the student level, program facilitator level and institutional level (Martin & Dowson, 2009). The individual's position in engagement, as explained by SDT's needs of autonomy and competence, a significant element as self-perceptions can influence engagement (Skinner et al., 2012) and a sense of control allows learners to function as "architects of their own motivation and course-related behavioural, emotional, cognitive, and agentic engagement" (p. 166).

The SDT dialectical framework is unique in that it provides an additional component of agentic engagement to models that predominantly contain behavioural, emotional, and cognitive lenses (Reeve, 2012). This concept seeks to understand how learners themselves are able to enrich their own learning opportunities and activities (2012). It is the proactive, intentional and constructive input into the learner's experience of flow from received instruction (Reeve, 2012) that truly distinguishes agentic engagement from the other related engagement constructs. This process may take the form of creating, enhancing and personalizing the learning circumstances and conditions (Reeve, 2012). Bandura (2006) makes the distinction that while behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement consider the various reactions of students toward learning activities that are typically teacher provided and directed, agentic engagement considers that learners initially react to these situations, but then are proactive in personalizing and enriching these experiences.

This theory has been particularly beneficial to researchers and practitioners in developing their understanding of how student engagement can be enhanced by student motivation (Reeve, 2012) or in this case, learner engagement and learner motivation. The presupposition of SDT is that learners already possess these inner motivational resources

and it is the role of the facilitator to create the environment and instructional process that will nurture optimal learner engagement (Reeve, 2012). Thus, it is important as educators to recognize that classroom conditions play a role in thwarting student engagement or allowing it to flourish.

If the ultimate aim is to facilitate lifelong participation and optimal engagement in music because of its benefits, then tending to the motivating factors that will endure and sustain prolonged involvement must be examined. As such, nurturing self-determined learners as early as possible offers the best chance of maintaining intrinsic motivation and internalization. Creating an autonomous-supportive program has the potential to improve motivation as it facilitates self-determination which "has more staying power than other behavioral regulators" (Perlman & Webster, 2011, p. 46). Autonomy support as outlined and discussed in SDT is therefore, critical to understanding and promoting lifelong engagement with music.

The Sociological Perspective. Vygotsky (1978) believed that all human learning is formed within a social context. SDT is a known psychological theoretical framework, and as such provides one very useful perspective on engagement. However because the learning process by its very nature is social, it is necessary to look at engagement from a sociological perspective. A focus on agency as a component of engagement may help to understand the importance of providing learners with opportunities to construct their learning environments.

Many definitions of engagement emphasize the importance of the world outside of the classroom in allowing us to situate musical engagement within a context.

Recognizing that people are products of their environment and are socialized into a

cultural environment as constructed beings provides a sociological perspective on engagement. A pervasive theme concerning learner motivation in engagement is the constructivist view that education relates to students constructing their own knowledge (Krause and Coates, 2008) with the underlying assumption that learners bring their own knowledge to the classroom (Richardson, 1997; Scruggs, 2009).

Symbolic interactionism recognizes that an understanding of symbols and constructs is approached and interpreted through the lens of individual experience and background. Since self-perception, self-efficacy, self-confidence, self-motivation, and self-esteem may play a role in engagement, our personal backgrounds and belief systems therefore, have the ability to influence our engagement experiences. The individual who constructs her own learning experience is an integral component in agentic engagement. As students enter new environments they bring with them pre-existing frameworks and belief systems that influence their sense of belonging, competence, abilities and future success. How one reconciles these concerns might predict and influence the extent and maintenance of healthy engagement in such experiences (London et al., 2007).

While few definitions describe engagement as "the individual's involvement and satisfaction with" (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002, p. 269) an activity, the majority of perspectives on engagement recognize institutional and situational factors (London et al., 2007). Furthermore, several relevant models posit that student outcomes such as engagement are affected by "human, social and cultural capital" (Porter, 2006, p. 524). Haworth & Conrad's (1997) theory of engagement emphasizes the dual role that all participants play in constructing and maintaining programs of quality

engagement. This implication is significant in that program facilitators are integral to learner engagement. It is not solely reliant on the individual's internal processes.

The acknowledgement of context is crucial when students or learners are situated in a classroom or learning environment (Reeve, 2012). Essentially, the classroom can be seen as a microcosm of the social world at large, which potentially renders the term "student engagement" irrelevant as it "cannot be separated or disentangled from the social context in which it occurs" (Reeve, 2012). In a musical context, children are socialized into a musical culture as "they engage in musical activities that are part of the institutions and traditions of their sociocultural environments (O'Neill, 2005, p. 264). Many findings state that in relation to children and adolescents particularly, familial and school environments are central developmental contexts that are significantly related to student engagement (Lohman, Kaura, & Newman, 2007; Mahatmya et al., 2012; Roeser & Eccles, 1998; Steinberg, Bradford, & Dornbusch, 1996) and can strongly influence engagement quality in a positive or adverse way (Cohen-Mansfield et al., 2011).

Context, therefore, cannot be detached from relationships within a learning environment. A sociological framework enables the researcher to investigate and account for the quality of interpersonal relationships in learners' lives that contribute to engagement (Martin & Dowson, 2009). These relationships are critical in affecting youth engagement and motivation in school (Ainley, 1995; Battistich & Hom, 1997; Hargreaves, Earl, & Ryan, 1996; Martin & Dowson, 2009; Pianta, 1998).

The facilitator-learner relationship also factors into learner engagement, which is malleable and receptive to constructive influences such as teacher support (Birch & Ladd,

1997). Research indicates that the teacher-learner relationship has the ability to shape motivation and engagement in the classroom (Murray & Greenberg, 2000; Pianta, 1999; Reeve, 2012; Ryan & Stiller, 1991; Skinner et al., 2012; Stipek, 2002; Wentzel, 1998; Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Roeser, & Davis-Kean, 2006). A sociological perspective also recognizes that teachers in turn, respond to the learners' demonstrated engagement. Studies show that teachers generally react to student displays of high-quality engagement with a more autonomy-supportive motivating style, while they react to student displays of disengagement with a more controlling style (Pelletier, Seguin-Levesque, & Legault, 2002; Reeve, 2012; Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

The knowledge advanced from others with respect to the Self-Determination

Theory in relation to the construction of the learning experience by the learners

themselves offers a wealth of opportunity to apply this understanding to music education
programming.

#### **Agency**

A key sociological concept to consider in relation to engagement is that of agency. Several definitions have been posited with respect to agency and the nature of being an agent. In its simplest form, agency is the power to act (Laurence, 2010). Scott and Marshall (2009) provide an added dimension of agency as requiring a capacity for willed action or action that is voluntary, so that when applied in a musical context the concept focuses on "individuals' capacity for action in relation to music or in a music-related setting," (Karlsen, 2011, p. 110).

Agency itself is a construct embedded within a sociological foundation. Small (2010) presents two definitions of socialization to illustrate the symbiotic relationship

between society and the individual. "To give someone the skills required to enable someone to function successfully in society" (p. 283) leads toward an individualized focus of his or her development within a social context. Conversely, "to convert or adapt someone to the needs of society" (p. 284) implies that the needs of the society take precedence over the needs of the individuals for the greater good.

Humans are unique in the sense that we are free agents and able to make choices (Barnes, 2000). The connection of engagement to agency is that by the very nature of being human and social agents (Barnes, 2000) we are thus afforded the provision of making choices; the choice to participate or not participate; the choice to engage or not to engage; the choice to be engaged or not engaged; the choice to re-engage or not to reengage. While the elements of autonomy, relatedness, and competence are the psychological nutriments in Deci and Ryan's Cognitive Evaluation Theory within the overarching framework of Self-Determination Theory, used to account for engagement or disengagement, the construct of responsibility plays a significant role as a potential 'nutriment' in the sociological explanation of agency as it has "psychological internal capacities and sociological liability and answerability" (Barnes, 2000, p. 2). Barnes reminds us that the role of choice and agency in our daily lives is understood in terms of responsibility. This idea of responsibility is central to understanding agency from a new perspective, as it has "not been a central element in the building of any major form of social theory" (Barnes, 2000, p. 2). To relate this notion of responsibility to the current research then makes specific the generic concept of autonomy as one's choice to be responsible and invest in one's learning; whether it be a feeling of responsibility towards

the process or the recognition of one's role in the learning process, thus connecting sociological and psychological factors of engagement.

For Giddens (1991), a central component of agency is not only that humans have "reflexive awareness" which means humans not only have the ability to choose, but that they know what they are doing and why they are doing it. Reflexive awareness is "characteristic of all human action....Agents are normally able, if asked to provide discursive interpretations of the nature of, and the reasons for, the behavior in which they engage" (p. 35). The idea of ability with respect to constraints in engaging in activities is an enabling feature for agency. In addition, one's recognition and articulation of the rationale for engaging in activities is critical in understanding the motivation underlying behaviour.

A key difference, however, between Giddens' definition of agency and Barnes' definition is that for Barnes the living conditions of humans within social units are fostered not by individual agency, but through their collective agency (Barnes, 2000). It is humans' effects on each other through social interactions that constitute their role as social agents. Batt-Rawden and DeNora (2005) connect the individual and collective dimensions of agency to Small's concept of musicking (1998) in that music's meaning on a collective level may be far more significant than that of the individual level. Small's (1998) explanation that musicking is exploring, celebrating, and affirming one's experiences with music and with others emphasizes the collective and personal experiential process involved in musical participation, rather than the reification of a work or product. In relation, Karlsen's (2010) work wherein agency recognizes the experiences of discovering, rediscovering, and learning about oneself in and through

music highlights the experiential and active domains that encompass musical participation. This supports Blaukopf's (1992) belief that the glorification of a work of art ignores the expansive and diverse range that musical activities afford, thereby focusing on the inclusive concept of musical practice.

While Merriam (1964) listed ten different functions of music from an anthropological perspective, Karlsen (2011) thoughtfully reduces and explores the individual dimension of musical agency through the main types of musical use for self-regulation, the shaping of self-identity, self-protection, thinking, matters of 'being', and developing music-related skills. In application to the collective dimension, five musical actions are explained through its use for regulation and structuring social encounters, coordinating bodily action, affirming and exploring collective identity, 'knowing the world', and establishing a basis for collaborative musical action (2011). Stressing the importance of music as a collective and social practice signifies the important role music education holds in maintaining a social responsibility that is central to its mandate (Regelski, 2008).

Structure versus agency. The evolution of sociological thought with respect to understanding the relationship between structure and agency demonstrates the struggle that has existed between these two constructs. Durkheim's concept of sociology contributed largely to the theoretical framework of structural functionalism, whereby the existence of social structures acted as an influence, albeit an often unconscious one, on an individual's actions. Leading this movement was Talcott Parsons who made significant contributions to our understanding and explanation of agency today: actors, ends, means, conditions, and norms (Wright, 2010). This framework of structural functionalism

dominated the sociological scene following WWII until the late 1960s, paving the way for structuralism in the 1960s and 1970s. With Saussure's structural linguistics strongly influencing this theoretical framework, an emphasis was placed on structure over action. While the dualisms of individual and society, action and structure, and social integration and system integration embedded in sociological theory are outlined as opposing forces (Craib, 1997; Wright, 2010), Giddens' (1984) work outlined in his theory of structuration however, suggested viewing the conceived dualism of structure and agency as "two sides of the same coin" (cited in Craib, 1997). The relevance of agency as a central theoretical construct in this day and age however is apparent as we are living in a state of late modernity in which Karlsen (2010) refers to Giddens' notion that the instability that accompanies an onslaught of new information and the diversification and dissolution of norms and standards which enables "personal freedom and many possibilities of choice" (p. 195).

Musical agency in music education. Fostering student agency in music education has been brought to the foreground of the North-American-dominated debate with respect to music education and democracy (Karlsen & Westerlund, 2010). A significant movement toward multicultural and pluralistic societies calls for greater recognition and attention to students' experiential conditions (Karlsen & Westerlund, 2010).

Willis (1978) has defined the concept of human agency as "the ability to act and make decisions autonomously" (p. 14). As this definition is impactful in an educational sense in terms of educational objectives and outcomes for learners through critical thinking and control over one's learning trajectory, the term "agency" is widely used in

the context of educational discourse. Its use can vary in applications ranging from the notion of agency as action-oriented in one's ability to make "a difference" (Davis, 2012) to a state of personal affirmation or declaration that "I matter" (Davis, 2012, p. 23). The commonly accepted use surrounding the term agency in the educational sense tends to refer to it as the ability to exercise or utilize one's voice and certainly this idea of learner agency and encouraging students to be active participants in the learning process is not a new vision in the educational world.

Investigations of agency specifically in musical contexts have been documented in the following: Karlsen's work on musical learning in informal fields (2010); Laurence's research of voice, agency, and ownership in school musicking (2010); studies of the development of musical agency in immigrant students (Karlsen, 2012; Karlsen & Westerlund, 2010); DeNora's (2000; 2001) examination of aesthetic agency and the process by which children use their own music as an agentic device to explore feelings, thoughts, and memories. There is increasing recognition of the importance of affording music participants a personal voice in the learning process, as it reinforces the sense of agency when participants realize they have the ability to act, express their own voice, have their voice recognized, and then celebrate the ownership of their learning (Laurence, 2010).

Karlsen's extensive work examining the relationship of agency and musical agency within the field of music education has been critical in organizing the various psychological, philosophical, and sociological perspectives and applications that have been offered to the field. In addition to synthesizing this collective discourse, she has contributed significantly to the existing corpus of work on agency through the added

dimension of explaining agency as related to music and may be used as a lens in understanding performance, transformation, identity, ability to access learning experiences, and empowerment. Her contribution is grounded in an understanding of the philosophical, sociological, psychological discourses offered by these various perspectives.

The philosophical perspective espouses that musical agency is physically embodied in and through performance. Specifically, Godlovitch (1998), Reimer (2003), and Elliott (1995) relate the musical agent to the act of music-making. The concept of the musical agent is further developed in the work of Westerlund (2002) whereby transformational agency is enacted through individuals' abilities to shape and alter their own musical experiences and social environments (Karlsen, 2011). The potential of music education to encourage participants, particularly youth, to act as agents of change within a social context of liberation and justice is highlighted in the work of Jorgensen (2007).

For psychologists in particular, the concept of musical agency is related to the area of identity formation as explored in the work of Sloboda and O'Neill (2001). Unlike the philosophical stance, the association is not necessarily tied solely to musical performance, but production and access in various forms (Karlsen, 2011).

The literature offering a sociological perspective with respect to musical agency concentrates on the pedagogical practices and the significant role music serves in education. In this manner, agency can be viewed in the following contexts: its connection to student co-constructed learning (Green, 2008); the ability to connect musical experiences and learning in formal and informal contexts (Green, 2001; Karlsen,

2010); heightening student empowerment and musical skills to prepare for lifelong involvement in musical practices whereby they influence and direct their own personal musical narratives (Regelski, 2008). Music's influence extends into the political realm if viewed from the perspective of its social capital and power. As DeNora (2000) states, "if music can affect the shape of social agency, then control over music in social settings is a source of social power; it is an opportunity to structure the parameters of action" (p. 21). Musical agency can therefore be used as a sociological lens in order to frame an understanding of how individually and collectively humans experience and learn music, and how personal and societal conditions can influence this experience (Karlsen, 2011).

The common thread underlying the musical subfields of musical psychology, philosophy and sociology is that musical agency in "one way or the other, has to do with individuals' *capacity for action* in relation to music or in a music-related setting," (Karlsen, 2011, p. 110). The focus on agency as an action coincides with Small's reconceptualization that music is not solely a noun, rather a verb that carries an implicit understanding that 'musicking' is indeed action (1998). The importance that many scholars place on the relationship between the individual and the music in terms of learning about music and experiencing music (Small, 1998) calls attention to examining the experiential conditions that enhance this relationship. Westerlund (2008) reminds educators of our responsibility in recognizing the learner's experience, which has often been neglected through the valuing of musical outcomes and products over experiential conditions and formative process (Karlsen, 2011).

The recommendation for successful music education programs is designed around students' experiential outcomes (Karlsen, 2011). It is the hope that this future direction

would lend itself to students embracing their musical identity in the pursuit of lifelong musical involvement and interest, rather than discarding their previous musical education (Karlsen, 2011). Regelski (2008) concurs that students seeing themselves as musicians is integral to them 'buying into' their musical identity and investing personally in their music education.

#### **Summary**

The exploration of this literature was critical in providing both psychological and sociological frameworks required to analyze the data from the three case studies. Furthermore, extensive literature that surrounded the topics of engagement and agency demonstrated the significance of these constructs in educational contexts and the need to further explore these specifically in the realm of music education. The void in the discussion of how these constructs relate to each other and the implications of how this relationship can enhance music education programs that span generational cohorts warranted further exploration. Therefore, in accordance with Burnard and Spruce's (2010) call for continued investigation into developing learner agency and its importance within the field of music education this investigation was designed with the intention to contribute to the extant literature in this field.

## Chapter 3

# METHODOLOGY FOR A COLLECTIVE CASE STUDY OF ENGAGEMENT AND AGENCY IN MUSIC PROGRAMS

#### Ontological and epistemological decisions

Before researchers set out to establish a methodological approach, they must consider their ontological and epistemological assumptions that "give rise to methodological considerations; and these in turn give rise to issues of instrumentation and data collection" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 3). Ontological assumptions call us to question whether social reality is the "product of individual consciousness" (Cohen et. al, 2000, p. 5) and subjective in nature, or whether it consists of an external force or objective existence. Epistemological assumptions call us to question the tangibility of knowledge transmission through acquisition or first-hand experience (Cohen et al., 2000).

The options presented to any researcher upon beginning a research project are whether the situation is most accurately explored using quantitative, qualitative or a mixed methods research design. These decisions stem from ontological and epistemological decisions concerning the researcher's position on the nature of reality and the nature of knowledge. If one considers that research itself is considered a mode of interrogation (Brown & Dowling, 1998) then it is appropriate to examine how one primarily acquires knowledge and accesses information. This information is critical not only in understanding the process in which the participants in the research project will experience learning, but also in acknowledging the researcher's background in learning and how she comes to acquire knowledge.

This grounding in ontology and epistemology acknowledges the personal assumptions that we bring to the research and the perspectives that subsequently shape our understanding of the research findings. Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (2002) categorize the process of acquiring knowledge as deriving from the following: experience, authority, inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning, and scientific approach. These then lead to certain methods such as narrative, ethnography, experimental design, and so forth.

Deductive reasoning describes the thinking process that proceeds from general to specific statements using prescribed rules of logic (Ary, 2002) while, Baconian inductive reasoning establishes general conclusions on the basis of facts gathered through direct observation. Through observation, facts are gathered, and generalizations can be formulated from the findings in the quest to obtain knowledge (Ary et al., 2002).

In such interrogations, imperfect induction is often the basis of knowledge acquisition since one is unable to examine every example of a phenomenon, known as perfect induction. Imperfect induction implies the observation of a group sample in order to infer general characteristics of the entire group. On their own, deductive and inductive reasoning describe two perspectives arriving from different directions or vantage points. The scientific approach, or inductive-deductive method, combines the two to arrive at a hypothesis and then make observations in an effort to confirm or not confirm your generated hypothesis (Ary et al., 2002).

The interpretive approach posits that how we come to terms with truth is through experience, either from common sense or deference to authority; reasoning, through means of induction, deduction, or a combination of the two; and research, a combination of both experience and reasoning (Cohen et al., 2000). While these are modes of

acquiring knowledge, we must recognize that this knowledge is then "filtered through the knowers' frames of reference" (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 68). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) define qualitative research as a "situated activity that locates the observer in the world" (Creswell, 2013, p.3). This type of research consists of a set of interpretive practices that make the world visible and ultimately seek to transform it.

The following characteristics are common to qualitative research methods: a naturalistic setting whereby the researcher functions as the key instrument in designing data collection questions; multiple methods of data collection are used to gather rich, detailed information; complex reasoning to formulate conclusions is achieved through the continual negotiation of both inductive and deductive logic; the focus of the data collection and analysis resides in the participants' perspectives, which may present multiple perspectives and diverse views that should be reflected; the research design remains emergent and flexible; and the researcher must consider reflexivity in how her positioning and background may inform the interpretation (Creswell, 2013).

Methodological decisions governing the methodology of this study. With the understanding that the intent of this research is to provide insight into human behaviour as in the traditional social science perspective, an interpretive view was adopted as allowing personalized interpretations of experiences of engagement and agency. This research investigation is based on the assumptions that musicking is indeed a human experience, engagement in music is a human phenomenon, and finally agency is a uniquely human capacity for willed action. These dimensions coincide with the interpretive view that "people differ from inanimate natural phenomena" (Cohen et al., 2000, p.5). Furthermore, the research questions designed to generate a comparative

model of engagement and agency across generations meet the criteria of an interpretive view in explaining how people differ from each other.

The educational contexts explored in this thesis explore how the participants access knowledge. Karlsen and Väkevä (2012) remind us "that the meanings given to educational content are always based on the learner's pre-existing knowledge and experiences, and that learning is an active process of constructing experience" (p. xii). The naturalistic approach to this investigation, as opposed to the positivistic view of social science, acknowledges individual uniqueness and difference. Human behaviour is not meant to be "governed by general, universal laws" (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 19); rather, the perspective of the individual is crucial in a naturalistic approach, and has therefore, guided the direction of the data collection to focus on personal interviews to gain insight into interviewees' perceptions. A naturalist approach also rejects the idea of the researcher as a "detached, objective observer" (p. 19) in favour of one who shares and understands the participants' "frame of reference" (p. 20). In this particular investigation and its focus on agency, the idea of social structures acting on human actions, attitudes, and beliefs are indeed recognized as external pressures and factors in terms of influencing accepted social norms and expected human behaviours. That being said, "understanding of individuals' interpretations of the world around them has to come from the inside, not the outside" (p. 20).

**Situating myself with respect to the research methodologies.** With respect to the three case studies under investigation I have not been involved in the capacity as a secondary student in an informal music learning class; I have never registered for an undergraduate course in improvising and composing; nor was I ever a participant in an

intergenerational singing program. My position in the field of music education respectfully assumes that of a music educator who has taught a myriad of music courses in three different secondary schools and a university instructor of music education, curriculum and pedagogy, and choral conducting courses. As such, students' rationales in enrolling in courses, was of great concern to me as a teacher who sought to have a thriving program and to encourage students in their musical endeavours. As a graduate student researcher, this interest then extended to an understanding of why people of all ages participate in music programs after they are no longer required to participate by the school system. Recognizing that enrolment in music programs and their subsequent enjoyment can be attributed to many factors (e.g., personality of the teacher, timetabling accommodations) I was aware also of the additional features that lead to a sense of the participants' interest, engagement and enjoyment of their musical experiences. These three desired outcomes are likely those that will lower attrition rates and encourage participants to return in the future.

My experience as an educator led me to an understanding that a connection to a music program is composed of connections *within* that educational program: the connection that learners foster with the program facilitator (teacher personality), the connection that learners maintain with music itself (identification and relevance), and the connection that learners establish in their ability to access the music (pedagogical and environmental factors). It is the desire to understand the latter two relationships that underlines the investigation of situational factors which may lead to pedagogies that encourage heightened levels of engagement and agency in their participants. My concern regarding learners' potential disengagement or disaffection in relationship to musical

relevance and musical pedagogy served as the research problem and an integral part of the conceptual framework and research design (Maxwell, 2005).

### **Research Design**

Rationale. The selection of a qualitative approach is justified in Creswell's (2013) statement that "there are parts of the human system that are not amenable to quantitative measurement and need another form of scientific inquiry" (p. 52). This type of research is concerned with understanding human and social issues and the issues of musical engagement and agency are both human and social phenomena. Creswell (2013) supports the use of qualitative research when one needs to provide a complex, detailed understanding of an issue, in this case two issues of musical engagement and agency, which can only be established by talking directly with people to uncover their experiences and stories. Finally, qualitative investigation is preferred when attempting to identify variables that cannot easily be measured, as is the case in engagement and agency. As Maxwell (2005) notes, the strengths of qualitative research are derived primarily from its inductive approach, its focus on specific contexts or participants and its emphasis on descriptive text rather than statistics.

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study therefore because of my belief that the demonstration of engagement and agency with music is one that participants experience qualitatively, rather than quantitatively. To reduce participant experience to numbers does not adequately portray the narratives explaining their behaviour or attitudes.

**Case study.** Qualitative research is an interpretive and subjective approach that "seeks to understand and interpret the world in terms of its actors" (Cohen et al., 2000, p.

181). This paradigm is a natural umbrella to case study research. Denzin and Lincoln (2005), Merriam (1998), and Yin (2009) are among those who present case study as a "strategy of inquiry, a methodology, or a comprehensive research strategy" (Creswell, 2013, p. 97).

Of great significance to conducting a research study is the consideration of the goals of one's study, which ultimately can determine the research design (Maxwell, 2005). The current research questions that focus on how and under what circumstances musical engagement and agency are experienced and demonstrated prompts the use of a case study approach, particularly when Yin (1994) suggests using the case study inquiry in the attempt to answer "how" and "why" questions. Furthermore Yin (1994) advocates for the use of case study when the focus is on contemporary events. This study investigates three current educational programs that describe themselves as using innovative pedagogical approaches. In these situations, the case study method places an appropriate emphasis on contemporary events. I find it particularly appropriate that case study is described as "the study of an instance in action" (Adelman & Jenkins, 1980 as cited in Cohen et al., 2000, p.181) as action is a key component of agency; a focus of this investigation.

The multiple nature of the programs being studied prompted the use of a collective case study (Stake, 1995). Stake (1995) outlines the three types of categories into which a case study may fall: instrumental, intrinsic, and collective case studies. Collective case studies are thus defined as "groups of individual studies that are undertaken to gain a fuller picture" (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 183). While some fields consider multiple-case studies to be a "different methodology" than single-case studies

(Yin, 1994, p. 45), Yin opts for the perspective of containing them within the same methodological framework. Therefore, the characteristics of a single case study can be applied.

Creswell (2013) aligns the case study with qualitative research in that the investigator "explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system or multiple bounded systems over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, and reports a case description and case themes" (p. 97). To transfer this definition onto a multiple or collective case study involves the investigation of additional settings or programs and the specification that the case studies maintain an intrinsic or instrumental focus. Defining features of a multiple or collective case study are that the researcher must begin with the identification of specific cases that may already be in progress in order to gather accurate, current information which are deliberately chosen to help illustrate the issue (Creswell, 2013). This collective case study is grounded in research questions that involve descriptive questions aimed to develop a detailed understanding regarding how different cases provide insight into the issues of musical engagement and musical agency (Creswell et al., 2007).

Creswell et al. (2007) state that the focus in case study research is not predominantly on the individual, but on the issue with the individual case selected to understand the issue. In this respect, since this project is concerned with the issues of engagement and agency, rather than a particular person or group of people, then the case study design is appropriate to revealing general themes about music engagement.

In an examination of the strengths of the case study as a research instrument the benefits are numerous. Considering music education's diverse audience base in relation to

educators, practitioners and researchers, case studies are able to reach a large audience and "have a more diverse set of possible audiences than do most other types of research" (Yin, 1994, p. 129), which is significant in contributing to one's field.

The decision to use a collective case study in this situation was justified by the regard shown for its compelling and robust data collection and yield of results (Yin, 1994). In accomplishing this feat, a major strength of case study data collection allows for the opportunity to use many different sources to provide evidence, which is not always a feature of other approaches (Yin, 1994). The case study allows the researcher to focus solely on the topic at hand while providing insight through the perception of causal inferences (Yin, 1994). Most importantly, it accurately reflects the contexts while retaining the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events (Yin, 1994).

Case selection. The three music education initiatives examined in this research process involve musical learning for 14 year olds to approximately 80 year olds in three different curricular locations. Such programming is designed around specific learning objectives and educational outcomes that can be assessed, either informally or formally. While there is an abundance of research focusing on musical engagement with respect to students in schools, the literature is not as plentiful surrounding musical engagement upon the completion of formal secondary schooling.

The first case study investigates student engagement and agency through a program of informal music learning in a secondary school located in an underserved community in an urban setting. Research consistently shows that student engagement plays a critical role in the development of positive outcomes in children and adolescents, including an increase in academic achievement (Carbonaro, 1998; Eccles, 2004;

Mahatmya et al., 2012; Portes, 2000). Conversely, student disengagement is associated with tardiness, absenteeism, failing classes, suspension and the gradual dropping out of school (Cooper, 2011; Finn, 1989). Although research reveals secondary school students in particular are disengaged from the learning process (Goodlad, 1984), they do not experience alienation and disconnection during all encounters with learning, which is why it is important to understand the conditions that may promote a stimulating and engaging learning environment. Cooper (2011) cites results from the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities (PCAH), Re-Investing in Arts Education: Winning America's Future indicating that students who have regular access to arts programming develop skills of innovative thinking, creativity, and collaborative strategies that put them at an increased advantage over others as they enter higher education and the workforce. Since students report higher engagement with "nonacademic" subjects, including art, computer science and vocational education (Shernoff et al., 2003), the subject of music education is a potential vehicle in captivating and retaining adolescent learners in educational programming.

The statistics of educational disengagement are of concern considering what is known about schooling and its link to health. Alienation from school is a significant predictor of negative health behaviours among students (Davison & Hawe, 2012) and reports state that people with more education have higher levels of self-reported overall health and lower levels of morbidity, disability, and early mortality. For these reasons a secondary school site was considered important as one of the case studies.

The second case study investigated undergraduate music education students in an elective improvising and composing in the classroom course in university. Of particular

relevance to this study is the examination of undergraduate music education students as they prepare to enter pre-service education programs. Examining engagement factors in this particular cohort of musicians may shed light into undergraduate student retention and combating high attrition rates of new teachers. It is also of significance to focus on this particular cohort of pre-service teachers in order to understand how undergraduate students might influence engagement in future music teaching in schools by embracing and becoming more comfortable with creative approaches to music education.

The connection of education to achievement outcomes for students in formal schooling should not be considered solely in relation to younger members of society, as they are translatable into positive outcomes of similar health benefits and feelings of personal well-being for an aging population. Since education should not be concerned exclusively with educating the mind, the positive benefits of optimal educational engagement can be manifested in personal development and fulfillment for all populations. For these reasons, an undergraduate course in improvising and composing, a new element in music curriculum at this university, was chosen for this investigation.

In the third case study, factors of engagement and agency were investigated as they related to aging adults with Alzheimer's Disease and secondary students in an intergenerational singing program that was established in Ontario. Participation in such choral programs is not a new phenomenon as previous scholars have recognized the importance of such provisions for improving the quality of life in later years (de Vries, 2012; Freund, 2003; Hallam et al., 2012; Hays & Minichello, 2005; Hoffman, 1981; Lamont, 2011; Mahatmya et al., 2012; Meredith, 2007; Nazareth, 1998; Prickett, 1998; Rickard & McFerran, 2012; Thibeault, 2013; Thornton, 2011; Whitney, 2009).

According to Nazareth (1998) participating in music programs can fulfill the needs of adults seeking lifelong learning, providing such programs offer opportunities for self-directed, experiential, and educationally-rich learning. Adults in particular believe the arts are invaluable to lifelong learning as they "contribute to quality of life and are essential to the developing person" (Boswell, 1992, p. 38). If one concurs with Carlsen (1988) that the basic human needs for adult development include identity needs, participation needs, and partnership and intimacy needs, then the extrinsic benefits of musical participation are worthy avenues of exploration concerning how adults may achieve these needs. Furthermore, Erikson's (1982) positive stages of generativity and integrity suggest the necessity for adults to be involved with creative activities as imperative to personal vitality and successful negotiation of development tasks.

Considering the phenomenon of increased life expectancy and discretionary time (Chapman & Aspin, 1997) it is imperative that "adults need to be engaged in meaningful and enriching activity" (Nazareth, 1998, p. 21). The desire to fill the increasing number of leisure hours with "meaningful personal and intellectual creative activity" (Hoffman, 1981, p. 5) provides an impetus for developing these opportunities for lifelong learning in the arts. These enriching activities that adults seek in later life can only be realized successfully if provisions are made for them to engage in learning experiences throughout their lives (Nazareth, 1998). As Myers (2005) states, "were it not for the lifelong human need for music, there would be little reason for the school-based professional enterprise known today as music education" (p.7). This need suggests that music education programming should extend beyond graduation in order to serve all populations that

benefit from its provision. As such, a case study in intergenerational singing with a curricular component and a focus on senior musicians was undertaken.

These shall be classified as an instrumental collective case study because the cases act as a vehicle to better understand the issues of engagement and agency (Stake, 1995) and they meet the qualification whereby each case contains separate geographical, temporal, organizational, and institutional boundaries or contexts (Cohen et al., 2000). Each case is presented in detail in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 respectively, and features a description of the setting, the rationale provided by learners for participating in the program, followed by narrative accounts organized into themes of both their positive perceptions of engagement and their barriers to optimal engagement. Finally, the presentation of these themes is compared and analyzed across the three case studies to ultimately demonstrate the relationship between engagement and agency in a cross-generational context.

I selected these specific case studies to examine as I was included in the research investigations in which my committee members and professors served as the primary investigators. From my involvement in these three projects, I saw a link between the programs in that they were all designed to engage learners and were succeeding in encouraging and maintaining enrolment. All of these programs were elective, meaning they were non-compulsory, and were all offered to age groups whereby mandatory involvement in music education programs was no longer in effect in the Ontario formal educational system.

#### Methods

Each case was observed by the researcher between September 2011 and June 2012 for purposes of habituation, and then observation was subsequently repeated in September 2012 for Case One, February 2013 for Case Two, and March 2013 for Case Three for re-observation and collection of data focused on evidence of musical engagement and agency. The decision to complete a first phase of entry into the locations and then follow through with a second phase of research and data collection was instrumental in developing rapport with the participants and site managers (Creswell, 2013), and allowed me to become acclimatized to the physical environment and reciprocally, allowed the program leaders to understand my position and intentions with regards to the future study. It also served as habituation for participants.

Instruments for Data Collection. The goal of qualitative research is for the researcher to turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, and recordings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, as cited in Creswell, 2013). The instruments I used in this investigation were designed to gather the data necessary to draw appropriate conclusions on the issues under investigation.

Experts in qualitative research advocate for the use of multiple sources of evidence (Creswell et al., 2007; Yin, 1994). The intent of using rigorous data collection develops insightful and detailed understanding of the context in each case, which allows the investigator to address a broad range of attitudinal and behavioural issues (Yin, 1994), and gather rich descriptions of the programs and participants' lives (Creswell et al., 2007). Additionally, an abundance of sources was used to triangulate the results (Yin, 1994). Triangulation is using two or more methods of data collection to study some aspect of human behaviour (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 112).

Creswell (2013) proposes a circle of data collection that begins with locating the site, gaining access and making rapport, purposefully sampling, collecting data, recording information, resolving field issues and storing data. Each case in this collective case study has been selected for its appropriateness in revealing issues of musical engagement and agency. For collecting data within each site, Yin (2003) recommends six types of information for case study practices that include documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations, and physical artifacts.

There were common data collection instruments used across the three cases. My presence at the site of each case study allowed for the use of an observation protocol, field notes, photographs, and video or audio recording.

Direct observation was important because the context of the classroom or shared musicking (Small, 1998) space is integral to understanding relationships with people and the music itself. Bailey (1978) described the benefits of participant observation by way of its collection of data with respect to non-verbal behaviour; monitoring ongoing behaviour in relation to its salient features; and the development of meaningful relationships between the researcher and the participant. In consideration that engagement and agency can often be demonstrated in behaviours that are "non-verbal", direct observational methods allowed me to document and monitor behaviour over an extended period of time. Finally, establishing relationships between myself and the participants was an asset in their willingness to reflect and share their recollections in the culminating interviews.

Since Yin (1994) asserts that one of the most important sources of case study information is the interview, interviews were conducted in each of the three case studies.

Cohen and Manion (1994) outline the three purposes in using interviews as a distinctive research technique: that it serves as a principal means of gathering information that can relate direct to the research questions; to test or suggest new hypotheses; and to confirm findings whilst using other methods. In consideration of using the interview process the opportunities for the personalization of the responses and the opportunity for asking and probing from the interviewer perspective (Cohen & Manion, 1994) were definite advantages in this data collection instrument. Within the interview selection process any participant involved in the three programs was invited to participate in the interview process as I attempted to obtain a wide variety of perspectives. I hoped to talk with a variety of learners across the spectrum of achievement and attendance within the first two cases and in the third case, it was my intention to obtain perspectives from not only the persons with Alzheimer's Disease, but those who had the opportunity for close interactions with them throughout the program.

The interviews themselves were based on flexible semi-structured interview protocols which are included in Appendix A. Group interviews were conducted in the informal music learning case in order to honour the existing working friendship groups that the students formed. The literature supports the concept of group interviews when people have been working together for an extended period of time in the pursuit of a common purpose or goal (Watts & Ebbutt, 1987), such as the case within the Musical Futures friendship groups. Also, in the interest of time it was important to have students in attendance have their voices heard. For those students who may have been timid, often the presence of their friends would encourage and prompt them to respond or build upon others' statements. The advantages to group interviews include that they encourage the

development of discussions and the possibility of a wide range of responses (Cohen & Manion, 1994). In the case of the improvising and composing in the classroom course, six students volunteered to complete the personal interview and each one was interviewed separately. Finally, in the intergenerational singing case I spoke with persons with AD on their own or in the presence of their caregiver. Due to the nature of AD, other perspectives from the caregivers, students, music leaders, and program coordinators proved to be valuable and these interviews were often conducted on a one-on-one basis.

While consistent questions were prepared in advance they were used as prompts and conversations often were led down new and relevant directions. The questions asked in the interviews related to participants' musical backgrounds, their rationale for enrolling in the program, their reflections on what they learned in the program, their favourite and least favourite musical experiences in the program, their perceptions of heightened engagement within themselves and in others, and their views of engagement barriers. These questions were intended to draw information identifying the presence of engagement and agency and the conditions for their existence and development, which served to answer the research questions for this investigation.

Finally, specific physical artifacts were collected from each site, including weekly chart reflections documented by the students in the informal learning project, and music booklets representing the repertoire selected by the program leaders in the IG choir. These artifacts were intended as informative documents to assist in thick description of the program. Polkinghorne (2005) advocates for the use of document and artifact collection to augment the "character of the experience being explored" and to provide a "refined and rich description of the experience under study," (p. 142). Using

diverse and extensive data collection instruments to collect a wealth of information is important in portraying an accurate description of the participants' experiences with musical engagement and agency in the finalized report.

Validity and Reliability. In qualitative data, validity is "addressed through honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher" (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 105). To achieve greater validity, one must minimize bias (Cohen et al., 2000). Measures to achieve this include identifying the characteristics of the interviewer, the respondent, and the content of the questions. I acknowledge that there could have been a tendency to seek answers that support any preconceived notions that I may have had about heightened levels of engagement and agency within these musical programs. Furthermore, interviewers are always subject to misperceptions regarding what the respondent was saying, and misunderstandings on the part of the respondent of what was being asked. While it might seem to have been more objective to have another researcher ask the questions in the interview so as to avoid leading questions, semi-structured interviews can result in prompting questions that venture off-script that can lead to richer and deeper information. I did conduct all of the interviews, except for a few in the intergenerational singing study, and this does ensure consistency of approach. Bell (2010) maintains however that a consistent bias may go unnoticed if conducted by the same researcher across the board. Since my research investigations were completed with the principal investigators as members of my dissertation committee, consistent dialogue and their knowledge of the research projects provided insights and confirmation of my findings and interpretation.

When the results of a qualitative study are judged and compared to the validity and reliability of a quantitative study, the researcher is obligated to relay credible and authentic conclusions. The value and accuracy of a qualitative study is enhanced by the time devoted to the specific context, the detailed description provided in the report and the relationship formed between the researcher and the participants (Creswell, 2013). Not only is it in the researcher's best interests to extricate all possible conclusions from the data, but she is also responsible for reporting the data that does not fit into the emergent themes or codes through a negative case analysis in order to provide an authentic assessment of the investigated issues (Creswell, 2013). Ultimately, the primary criteria posited by Whittemore, Chase and Mandle (2001) outline the necessity for credibility or an accurate interpretation of the participants' meaning, authenticity in having different voices heard, criticality in that a critical appraisal of all aspects of the research has been accounted for and integrity in that the investigator is self-critical (Creswell, 2013). For many authors, validity is an ethical relationship with research participants through standards of positioning themselves, participatory discourse, encouraging voices and engaging in self-reflection (Creswell, 2013). The aforementioned characteristics of a qualitative study impinge on ethical considerations to respect the participants, the researcher and the research in a qualitative study.

The data collection instrument of observation also presents an area of consideration for bias. Creswell (2013) refers to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) in stating that observation is a special skill whereby the researcher addresses issues including the potential deception of the people being interviewed, impression management and the potential marginality of the researcher in a strange setting.

Furthermore, with observational data there are challenges associated with accurately remembering information, recording the data precisely as they occurred for field notes, avoiding becoming overwhelmed at the site with information overload and finally narrowing the focus of observations from the broad picture to specific themes (Creswell, 2013). In an effort to overcome this bias, I used the video footage to corroborate the information that I wrote in my field notes. In addition, my field notes were shared with the research team of the projects to ensure that their accounts were similar to mine. The exception to this process was in the case of the professor in the undergraduate music course in the second case study as this information might have compromised her objectivity when assigning final marks to the students in the course.

An effort was also made to account for the observer effect, whereby people being observed behave differently because they are being observed. I attempted to minimize these effects by introducing myself to the educational environments in the program phases before the collection of data, and therefore, previous participants may have been used to my presence.

## **Analysis of Data**

The goal in a collective case study is to achieve what Morse and Richards (2002) describe as methodological congruence where the purposes, questions and methods of research are interrelated so the entire study is cohesive. Following an in-depth understanding of the cases through extensive data collection and data analysis in subsequent chapters, the findings and conclusions are discussed through the themes and issues that I uncovered and connected from the investigation (Creswell, 2013). The presentation of themes from each case is then compared across the three cases in order to

draw conclusions in the analysis. Finally, an interpretation of conclusions, which Stake (1995) terms "assertions" are provided regarding the overall meaning derived from the cases.

Creswell (2013) notes that the amount of data collected in qualitative research can often be overwhelming, however, the analytic process can be broken down into several manageable steps. In general, qualitative research involves preparing and organizing the data for analysis, reducing the data into themes through coding and then representing the data in figures, tables or discussion. Data analysis has been described as an ongoing spiral alongside data collection and report writing, whereby the three steps occur simultaneously. The circular level of analysis, rather than a fixed linear approach requires inductive reasoning to build themes from the bottom up, while simultaneously engaging in deductive thinking in checking the formulated themes against the data (Creswell, 2013). The analysis is layered into increasing levels of abstraction from codes to themes to the interrelationship of themes between cases to a conceptual model of engagement and agency that will transcend the generations.

Firstly, reading and memo-ing require the reading through of data while making margin notes and forming initial codes. While watching the video footage in each case study I observed signs of engagement or disengagement in the musical activity. This process was intended to confirm or disconfirm responses that arose from participant interviews. After transcribing the interviews, I assembled the transcripts, field notes, collected reflections and journals, and proceeded to ascribe the data to codes and themes and classify the data using categorical aggregation to establish themes and patterns.

When coding, it was important for me to consider the meaning underlying the words, not necessarily the words themselves (Bell, 2010; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Therefore, while I did not necessarily need to hear certain words that related to engagement or agency, it was important to be receptive to the intent or message underlying the words as related to the constructs when generating descriptive codes. Ultimately, the key strategy for analysis was to identify the issues within each of the three cases and then to examine the common emergent themes that connected to the issue (Yin, 2003).

Creswell (2013) recommends that data analysis be initiated with a description of the history or chronological events of the case. Each case is therefore discussed in order of its context, demographic information and chronological procedures. In terms of analysis, when I approached the data I thought that perhaps I would initially begin by looking for categories that fell within the Self-Determination Theory factors of autonomy, relatedness, and competence. I soon realized that these axial codes (Charmaz, 2006) would form the basis of themes to look for in the data; however, open code classification would ensure that any themes that fell outside of the classifications of autonomy, relatedness, and competence would be discovered and recognized.

Therefore, for a thorough analysis the following analytic strategies were used: sketching ideas, taking notes, summarizing field notes, identifying codes, reducing codes to themes, relating categories to each other and then to previous frameworks discussed in literature, creating a point of view and then displaying and communicating the data (Creswell, 2013). I actually adopted an analysis process that is recommended for a phenomenological approach; thus I describe the suggested outline for phenomenological

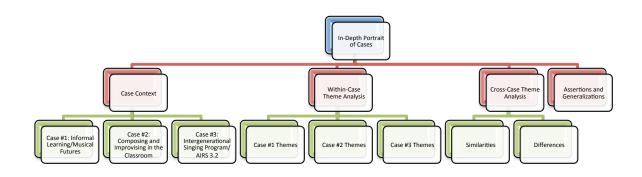
data analysis: Firstly, a holistic reading of the transcriptions familiarizes the researcher with the content. This procedure involves reading through the text, while making margin notes and forming initial codes (Creswell et al., 2007). Surveying the interview transcriptions and highlighting significant statements, sentences and quotes or horizontalization (Moustakas, 1994) provides an understanding of the overall experience of engagement and how the participants experienced the phenomenon. These texts are then arranged visually on paper and collapsed into meaningful units or broader themes. A review of the transcripts again with these themes in mind allows the researcher to specify the contexts in which these themes appeared.

The process of coding in qualitative research is integral to extracting relevant data to form conclusions. The data are to be reduced into meaningful segments and assigned names to be combined into broader categories or themes for comparison. The process of "lean coding" or formulating five or six tentative categories with shorthand labels (Creswell, 2013) that match segments of text was completed for each case study, thereby resulting in different thematic codes for each case.

After coding, the next step is classifying, which takes the qualitative text apart and searches for themes. Typically it involves identifying five to seven general themes that are broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea (Creswell, 2013). Finally interpreting the data in qualitative research involves abstracting beyond the codes and themes to the larger meaning of the data. To ensure an in-depth portrait of the cases a detailed description of the context is provided in the presentation of each case study. Within each case, the themes describing heightened engagement and the presence of agency are presented unique to that case study. At the

conclusion of each individual case analysis, a cross-cases analysis of these themes is conducted to analyze the similarities and differences that have surfaced. At this point, cross-case assertions and generalizations can then be made. A visual representation of this analytical model can be found in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Template for Coding a Case Study (Creswell, 2013)



Additional provisions must be addressed to allow for a cross case analysis as a cross-comparison analysis of the emergent themes presented in each individual case is required. Presenting information from each case in a visual representation allows others to make naturalistic generalizations (Creswell, 2013). In the situation of multiple cases an intracase analysis provides a detailed description for each case and themes. This intracase analysis incorporates all of the data collection instruments together to generate themes within each case study (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Intracase Analysis



This intracase process is then followed by an intercase analysis in which all of the themes from the individual case studies are compared in a thematic analysis across the cases (Creswell, 2013) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Intercase Analysis



This process is supported by Yin (2009) who proposes a cross-case synthesis as an analytic technique where there are two or more cases involved. Thus, an inter-case analysis was completed in order to compare and contrast emergent themes of music engagement and agency among different generations. It is this insight into the constructs of engagement and agency that demonstrate the relationship between the two.

## **Limitations of the Method**

Basically, the strengths of qualitative research can also be viewed as weaknesses. The scientific community has previously frowned on qualitative research because of its inability to test whether people can and have conducted a good study (Yin, 1994).

LeCompte & Goetz (1982) revealed that qualitative research was criticized because it failed to "adhere to canons of reliability and validation" (p. 31). While the quantitative

world uses terms such as internal validation, external validation, reliability and objectivity, Lincoln and Guba (1985) used credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability and confirmability as the qualitative researcher's equivalents. In terms of reliability, this is quite difficult to achieve in qualitative research because it implies replicability and rarely are these exact situations duplicated in order to test and achieve reliability (Cohen et al., 2000). Regarding the case study specifically, it has been stereotyped in the past as "a weak sibling among social science methods" (Yin, 1994, xiii) as it was viewed as less academic, with insufficient precision, objectivity and rigor often attributed to biased views that have influenced the conclusions (Yin, 1994).

Creswell and Miller (2000) posit eight validation strategies to increase the authority of qualitative research with Creswell's (2013) recommendation of using at least two in a study: prolonged engagement and persistent observation, triangulation, peer review, negative case analysis, clarifying researcher bias, member checking, rich and thick description and external audits.

My participation in the preliminary phases of each case, followed by my presence in all sessions from the beginning until the conclusion of the research phase within each project meet the criteria of prolonged engagement in the field. The use of a variety of instruments to collect data qualifies as a strong attempt to triangulate the sources to match what was said in the interviews to what was viewed and interpreted through field notes and through direct observation of the sessions. Finally, the presence of other researchers at each site throughout the research phases enabled the corroboration of findings. Rigor is seen in qualitative research when extensive data collection occurs or when multiple levels of data analysis proceed from narrow to broad interrelated themes (Creswell,

2013). The amount of data collected from each case study is abundant and enables thematic analysis to move from specific to broad thematic connections. This amount of detailed description is crucial to ensuring that the findings are transferable from one isolated case to other similar settings. While many qualitative researchers utilizing a case study approach may justify the credibility of its use based on the amount of data collected, Creswell (2013) cautions the qualitative researcher using case study to be aware of the danger of overweighting the amount of description to the detriment of detailed analysis and interpretation. Every effort has been made in the current study to balance the data collected in all three cases with thoughtful analysis and interpretation.

#### **Ethical Issues**

A thorough grounding in the philosophical foundations of the qualitative research paradigm generates the following ethical considerations in a qualitative study: What is our role as insiders or outsiders to the context? (Creswell, 2013). I recognize that the interpretation of results has been filtered through my lens as a researcher and not as a participant in the projects themselves. The degree of structure imposed by the observer rests on a continuum between structured and unstructured in settings also on a continuum of natural and artificial. The context of a secondary school classroom, an undergraduate university classroom, and an extended community outreach program all fall into natural educational environments. In terms of structure, although I was not classified as a participant in the learning, as a secondary school student, university student, or senior singer, I rarely sat on the periphery while teaching or rehearsal sessions were conducted. While I was not a program leader, in the case studies within the secondary school and university I often circulated and facilitated the learning process through listening and

offering ideas and suggestions. In the case of the intergenerational case study I would balance my time between sitting in front of the choir to observe the behaviours with singing in the choir ensemble as a participant observer. Situating myself in these various involved positions facilitated the development of an emic perspective to the analysis, which is key to gaining an insider's perspective of reality (Fetterman, 2008). While I was not attempting to become an insider, the established pattern of trust through familiarity enabled me to ask questions at various points throughout the process that provided glimpses into how the participants were viewing their experiences in the programs.

In any research study there are many ethical factors that the researcher must consider before, during, and after the study's implementation. Lipson (1994) groups ethical issues into informed consent procedures, deception or covert activities, confidentiality toward others, benefits of research to participants over risks, and participant requests that go beyond social norms. These considerations are aligned with the Tri-Council Statement outlining the ethical conduct for research involving humans (CIHR, 2014).

Ethical issues were considered surrounding the selection of programs and sites to be included in the study. Before selecting each case to be investigated, I questioned and reflected upon why the site was chosen for the study, what would be done at the site during the research study, how my presence might be disruptive, and how the nature of reciprocity or gain for the site and participants would be addressed (Creswell, 2013). The benefits of implementing current and innovative pedagogical practices as well as the physiological and psychological benefits of musicking for seniors suggest that participation in each study would be beneficial to all participants and leaders.

Before any research was conducted, permission was sought from the university's ethical review board. Permission to proceed was granted (Appendix B). Letters of information informing leaders and participants of the nature and purpose of the study were distributed and permission to conduct research on the premises, including photographs, audio and video recordings were collected. Finally, consent forms were distributed to all participants at each of the research sites. Since two of the case studies involved vulnerable persons of minority age, parental consent was also obtained. In the case of persons with AD in the intergenerational singing program, consent from those holding designated powers of attorney was obtained (Appendix C).

Personal involvement. With respect to the written report, it is important at the outset of the study to clarify any researcher bias so that the reader understands the researcher's position and assumptions that may impact the inquiry (Merriam, 1988). This may take the form of personal comments on past experiences, biases, prejudices and orientations that may have shaped the interpretation and approach (Creswell, 2013). I recognize that my prior involvement in the secondary school classroom has not only resulted in a vested interest in discovering the outcomes of musical engagement and factors contributing to musical agency, but it may potentially influence the construction of questions, interpretation of the data and formulation of conclusions.

In terms of data collection, harmful information can be disclosed by all parties during this process. Since I have chosen to conduct interviews in each case study, additional written consent forms for those participants chosen to be interviewed were obtained. Creswell (2013) cautions researchers to consider the extent of sharing personal experiences with participants in interviews while bearing in mind the ethical code for

researchers to protect the privacy of the participants (Creswell, 2003). The researcher must also consider in interviews the potential for response bias from the participants, reporting inaccuracies due to poor recall, and reflexivity where interviewees give the answer they believe the researcher wants (Yin, 1994). Furthermore, the halo effect, which is the deliberate intent of respondents to report only the positive benefits of a scenario in the hopes that the program will be continued, could be a prevalent factor in the case of continuing the Musical Futures informal learning program in the secondary school or the ongoing development of the intergenerational singing program. In consideration of the improvising and composing in the classroom course, the students were aware that I was not in any position to influence their academic results at the conclusion of the course. Therefore, their decision to participate in the research project, to be interviewed, and their comments during these processes had no impact on their academic standing.

In data analysis and interpretation I protected the anonymity of individuals by using pseudonyms. As an added note, the data are kept off-site and accessible only to the researcher through password protected computer access and will be discarded five years following the completion of this study (Creswell, 2003).

Throughout the process, I was careful not to side with participants, although it was difficult to not be influenced by their enthusiasm. Being mindful of my potential in influencing their responses I asked each participant of the drawbacks of these programs and to describe instances in which they might not have experienced engagement or agency. Also being mindful of not solely reporting the positive affirmations of the participants' experiences, both sides are represented in the presentation of themes and

discussion. This openness to contrary findings is a deliberate attempt to further reduce bias (Yin, 1994).

The subjective nature of the participants' responses can jeopardize the validity attributed to the study. When the issue of validation in a qualitative research approach is so important to strengthening the use of this approach against a quantitative examination, then the trust that is required between the researcher and participants to ensure the validity of the data is of great consequence to garnering respect from the field towards one's study. Since the nature of trust is a relatively subjective interpretation of a relationship, a potential weakness in this methodology is knowing exactly when and if enough trust has been developed between the mutual parties in the research process upon disclosure of information in interviews. The researcher must also use discretion in order to decide when sufficient data has been obtained. Even still, one has to wonder what information regarding the subject has not been uncovered or discovered. When considering the issue of validation, Angen (2000) suggests ethical validation and substantive validation in qualitative research. Ethical validation requires that all researchers question their underlying moral assumptions, political and ethical implications and the equitable treatment of diverse voices. Furthermore, she maintains that research must provide some practical answers to questions, contain "generative promise" (p. 389) and that it stimulates new dialogue in the field. Thus, the transformative value of our research should lead to action and change (Creswell, 2013) and that is an ethical responsibility of qualitative research.

There are other practical factors that must be taken into consideration when conducting a case study. Firstly, the time and resources that are required for a multiple-

case study approach may be far more extensive than a single student may be able to handle (Yin, 1994). Secondly, the abundance of cases covered in a collective case study can "dilute the overall analysis" (Creswell, 2013, p. 101) and he advises that no more than four or five cases be studied in a research study to avoid a superficial examination. While one of the benefits of conducting an investigation using a case study approach is that it allows the researcher to delve in depth into a scenario or setting, in consideration that this research investigation undertakes three case studies for the purposes of crossgenerational comparison, by comparison, I may not have been able to collect and analyze the data as extensively as would perhaps have been the case had I been conducting only one case study would permit.

The fact that I had participated in the initial research phases of the project prior to each collection of data in my dissertation research phase was intended so that I could establish relationships of trust with the participants (in the event they were returning), and program facilitators and so that I would become personally familiar with the environment. This situatedness, however, can also have drawbacks in what Bell (2010) describes as a familiarity aspect that may result in overlooking behaviour, which would be apparent immediately to a first time observer.

An additional challenge that faces qualitative research methodology revolves around the selection and justification of a sample that is the focus of the research and then justifying the conclusions as to its generalizability to other groups of people to different contexts (Daly & Lumley, 2002). The generalizability critique is often used as a limitation of case study research (Bell, 2010); however, this method allows one to gather rich data and explore the situation in greater detail than afforded by other methods. Bell

refers to Bassey's preference for using the word "relatability" as opposed to 'generalizability" in the way that the program leaders in future case studies could identify with the specific details of the case studies investigated in this research project. These cases are not so rare that they are confined to any specific institution and location. As the popularity of programs that focus on informal learning practices in schools, improvisation and composition in university music education settings, and intergenerational singing programs with persons with AD continue to grow in terms of enrolment and geographical expansion, it is not uncommon to witness these programs in action. By transference, music program leaders are quite likely to find themselves in situations resembling the three case studies explored in this paper. Noting that Bassey (Bell, 2010) considers case studies "valid forms of educational research" (Bell, 2010, p. 10) if they 'are carried out systematically and critically, if they are aimed at the improvement of education, if they are relatable, and if by publication of the findings they extend the boundaries of existing knowledge (Bassey, 1981, p.86) these qualifications are relatable to this investigation aimed at identifying engagement and agentic factors that will carry educational programming implications.

The literature reads that data organization involves creating and organizing files for data and strongly recommends that computer files be utilized that convert the data into appropriate text units (Creswell, 2013). These programs help to locate text or image segments associated with codes, themes and common passages. Concept-mapping features of computer programs can assist the researcher in providing a visual relationship among codes and themes, which is particularly helpful in collective case studies.

Although I had intended to analyze the results using a software program such as Atlas-TI, after completing webinars, tutorials, and the program on a trial basis, I decided that it would be better to complete the open coding task by hand in order to ensure greater familiarity with the data. Justifying this decision was supported by the software webinar instructor who stated that ultimately whichever platform is used, the researcher still has to transcribe all of the data, define the codes, and label them appropriately. As a researcher who proceeds best with tangible documents, I chose to forego using computer software to code the data.

# **Summary**

Several factors were taken into consideration when deciding on the methodology for this research investigation. With respect to personalized interpretations of experiential encounters with engagement and agency, the human experience of musicking, and the phenomena of engagement and agency as human characteristics, a qualitative method was deemed most appropriate to investigate these constructs. The nature of the narrative accounts and personal reflections from the participants in the three case studies, the research questions which prompted "how" questions into the relationship between engagement and agency in music education programs and how this understanding can serve to enhance educational programming, lent itself to the use of a case study. Finally, Stake's (1995) use of collective case studies to gain a holistic picture and understanding of a phenomenon or experience aligned with the intention of this investigation to gain a broad and detailed description of constructs across a generational span. The following three chapters will illustrate the portraits of three distinct case studies. Through a detailed description of their case context, participant enrolment rationale, and their

perceptions of conditions that serve to foster and challenge optimal engagement and agency, each case provides a significant contribution to the overall portrait of the roles of engagement and agency across the lifespan.

# Chapter 4

Case Study One: Informal Music Learning in a Secondary School Music Program

## **Background Information**

This case study focuses on examining how the constructs of engagement and agency are perceived and demonstrated by adolescents and their teachers within one secondary school context as they embark upon an innovative music education program. The informal learning approach in practice in the school, known through the program Musical Futures, was based on research out of the United Kingdom by Lucy Green (2001, 2008), and had been reported as successful in its mission and ability to engage students at an age where disengagement in schooling is high (Hallam et al., 2012). Green examined and outlined the principles of informal learning that underlie the work of popular musicians outside of the formal schooling community. Her work in introducing these principles within a formal music classroom reported an estimated increase in music enrolment in participating schools from 10% to 40% within the UK between 2003 and 2008 (Hallam, Creech, Sandford, Rinta, & Shave, 2008). In accordance with an overall goal of investigating perceived fundamentals required to enable, develop, and inspire lifelong musicking within non-traditional music programming, this program designed to engage adolescent students appeared to be a program that could provide useful data relevant to the current study. Therefore, as a means of investigating music education principles and practices that might engage and empower students, I conducted a research study in one Ontario secondary school between the months of February and June in 2013.

This investigation focused on the school music teachers' work in complementing

existing curricula with principles of informal learning as described by Green (2001, 2008) and using the Musical Futures informal learning approach. Principles of informal learning outlined in Green's research include the following: i) students learn music that they choose, like, and with which they identify; ii) students learn by listening and copying (recordings); iii) students learn with and alongside friends of their choosing; iv) students learn music in personal ways; and v) learning is haphazard and non-linear as integration of listening, performing, composing, and improvising are experienced simultaneously and as needed.

As reported in the introductory chapter, the Ontario provincial statistics regarding secondary school student enrolment in formal music education classes indicate that approximately 10-12% of grade 9 students choose to enroll in music education programs once music becomes an elective subject (Willingham & Cutler, 2007). This number can be indicative of many factors such as student timetabling conflicts, existing participation in private music instruction, or the need to pursue other required courses. As Willingham & Cutler (2007) outline, another possibility could be a lack of engagement of adolescents in school-based music programs as a result of a disconnect between young people and the musical content studied in these classes. An alternative factor could be a disconnect between students and the pedagogical approach through which the music is introduced and studied. Green's (2008) study embarked on research examining the effectiveness of informal learning principles in terms of the content offered and pedagogical approaches utilized in addressing student engagement against the background of a similar trend of adolescent disengagement from music education in the United Kingdom.

Research supports the observable trend that secondary school students are particularly disengaged from schooling in general (Balfanz, Herzog, & Mac Iver, 2007). A more positive research perspective for arts educators, however, is the discovery that this specific cohort does not experience alienation and disconnection from all learning encounters and reports higher engagement with "non-academic" subjects including the arts (Shernoff et al., 2003). This suggests that music education, therefore, can be a potential vehicle for engaging adolescent learners in educational programming.

**Context.** The first phase of research occurred between the months of February and June 2012 when my supervisory committee introduced the Musical Futures program to the school and I was engaged as their research assistant. Initially the primary investigators examined the factors of engagement, achievement, behavior, and motivation as experienced and demonstrated by secondary school students in a southwestern Ontario high school when using informal music learning principles outlined in Lucy Green's (2008) research. At the conclusion of this study, in February 2013, I decided to continue the investigation in this setting focusing specifically on the presence (or lack thereof) of engagement and agency as pertaining to my dissertation. The research phase of this project lasted 13 weeks until the middle of June 2013. Two classes, which constituted a grade 9-12 vocal course (n=16) and a grade 10-11 guitar course (n=20), were held one day a week, although bonus days of Musical Futures were usually offered as rewards. Of the 20 students in the guitar class, 11 were male and 9 were female, ranging in age from 14 to 18. In the vocal class, students were 14 to 18 years old, and 5 were male and 11 female. Two classes, each lasting 75 minutes, included a grade 9-12 vocal course and a grade 10-11guitar course. I was present at each scheduled Musical Futures class on

Wednesdays in which I videotaped various groups at work and in performance, documented observations in field notes, reported on attendance for each scheduled Musical Futures class, collected reflections at the end of each instructional period, and recorded informal conversations within field notes. At this time the program leader, who was a full-time teacher, was on maternity leave and so the teacher I observed was one of the other music teachers in the school who was instructing both music classes between February and June 2013. This particular teacher had received overseas training in the Musical Futures approach and had also instructed a few classes implementing the Musical Futures program in her music courses prior to this investigation.

The teacher was interviewed throughout the project to comment on her observations regarding the process of using informal learning as a curricular component to enhance learner engagement. At the conclusion of the semester, scheduling conflicts prohibited the ability to have a formal interview with the teacher but she was able to provide written responses via email to questions I had regarding reflection on her experiences and observations of her students. The students were interviewed individually and in groups to reflect upon their levels of engagement in the Musical Futures program.

School Context. The school participating in the investigation is located in an Ontario city and has a reputation for being a high needs school due to its diverse representation of English Language Learners and special needs students. The population of the school at the time of this study was approximately 740 students, 25% of whom did not speak English as their first language and 14% of whom were identified with special needs. To accommodate the diverse population a wide range of academic, developmental education, Hearing Impaired programming, and technological studies was offered by the

school. Approximately 66% of the student population were enrolled in non-university bound, applied level courses.

The school demographics indicate that a large majority of students were socioeconomically disadvantaged as evidenced by the number of students who took advantage of the free breakfast program. The average total family income was slightly under \$50,000 per annum (Davidson, 2014) which impacted the music program in terms of the students' inability to afford private instruction, their inability to purchase instruments, and the difficulty in generating supplementary income for the department through fundraising initiatives.

The music department consisted of three music teachers, one taught a full course load of six sections and the other two teachers cover the remaining sections. The full-time music teacher was the program leader and arrived assuming this position four years ago when her school was closed. She observed that the music program consisted of traditional music courses focusing on guitar, vocal, concert band, and repertoire courses. Upon her arrival at the school, some sections of music were provided to the secondary school by the local elementary feeder school that would "buy" 2-3 lines from them<sup>2</sup>. Since elementary students are no longer allowed to be taught by secondary school teachers those lines no longer exist; however, the program leader stated that they currently have the same number of sections as before because the numbers taking music have grown as a result of the Musical Futures classes and the Developmentally

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> A line refers to a 75 minute section or period within the timetable. The phrase referring to "buying" a line would mean that the elementary school panel would provide the budgetary support for the teacher to teach out of the secondary school panel.

Challenged music classes offered at the school. The school is now considered a "technology emphasis school" which impacts the music program in that students have a plethora of new course options and offerings to choose from including health care, green industries, photography, and hairstyling which could possibly detract from enrolment in the music courses. Contrarily, the program leaders state that the numbers in the music department were consistent and although once faced with disconcerting decreasing numbers in the overall student population, the school is currently growing in enrollment against a background of declining enrollment within the board. In terms of a supportive extra-curricular musical culture at the school, a number of ensembles are offered to the students including a concert band (which is offered as a repertoire course)<sup>3</sup>, choir, a Musical Futures club, a drum club, and sometimes a guitar ensemble depending on the course offerings each semester.

At the conclusion of the first phase of research, the two music teachers at the school produced a Musical Futures story for promotional purposes and had this to say about the impact of the program on the school's music department:

Because we found that students' learning outcomes were increased through selecting their music, their own instrument, and those peers with whom they could work, we increased the MF presence in all aspects of our traditional music classes, including wind, vocal, guitar and Developmental Education courses. This process has allowed for lessons to be highly differentiated and self-directed while meeting

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> A repertoire course is one in which students can enroll in addition to a core music course in guitar, instruments, voice. A repertoire course focuses primarily on performance and can be completed outside of the regular school programming (i.e. before or after school hours).

curriculum expectations at higher levels. The emphasis on informal learning in Musical Futures provided some variety in pedagogical approaches which was refreshing for students and teachers, and gave students a chance to take ownership of their music making, encouraging them to work collaboratively as they worked in small groups.

Musical Futures has created an excitement around the school among students, teachers and parents. Students quickly started coming into the music room at lunch and after school to work on their projects; they invited their friends to see what we were doing in class; we even had students who were in other classes wander over to the music room on their way through the hall. This renewed excitement for music has helped increase student enrolment in music courses, such that only 18 months ago, we had a split grade 10/11/12 instrumental class cancelled due to low enrolment. This year we will be offering a grade 10 instrumental course that is full and has a waiting list.

In terms of outcomes of the program the teachers observed from the students:

We have witnessed tremendous growth in our students; and as lifelong learners, we have grown as teachers and musicians. This differentiated approach has helped to develop stronger students, looking for enrichment opportunities, to select songs that would challenge them, while at the same time, the approach has enabled weaker students to select songs that were challenging but manageable. We have observed as our students have eschewed working in friendship groups to choosing their groups by style of music they wish to perform or compose. We have watched attendance patterns change positively as each member of a group feels a

responsibility to others in the group. Attendance on MF days is usually 100% and students ensure they are prompt for class. And, we have observed students who have skills in one area conscientiously mentoring those who don't have such skills.

Through Musical Futures projects, everyone's ability to listen and play by ear has significantly improved, including teachers and students. Students are able to pick out and reproduce more complex melodic and harmonic patterns, and are better able to improvise and compose their own music. (Davidson, 2014)

It is clear that after the initial phase of the research study in the school the teachers noted an improvement through the program in the engagement, achievement, behaviour and attendance of the students involved.

As I began my investigation of the role of engagement and agency in the Musical Futures program for secondary school students, it was important to hear the underlying motivation for students to enroll in an elective music course. In Ontario, students are required to take one arts credit to obtain their Secondary School diploma, however, this credit does not need to be a music course, and could include visual art, drama, or dance.

## **Enrolment Rationale**

The following comments were provided by the students as to their rationale for signing up for the Musical Futures elective music courses: "Musical Futures and music class is kind of a way to destress and it makes me feel good"; "I took music because I really like music"; "I like music"; "I love music. It's really, it inspires you to do a lot"; "I just need a credit"; "I really want to be a rock star"; "I took music because I want to become famous"; "I couldn't afford lessons as a kid so it's nice to be able to go to school and get

a free guitar and things like that"; "It's the only class that..., it's the only class,.... I... it was the only one that was left"; "and like when you grow up with music, that's all you really know if that's what got you by through like a lot of hard things and like the more it helped you the more you're going to get into it and the more you're going to want to be a part of it to like make it a part of you forever"; "I took music because I took it last year and I enjoyed it a lot"; "I took vocals last year and I liked it, so..."; "[My friends] told me about Musical Futures and it sounded pretty cool so I took it"; "to further my guitar skills, cause I know I'm going to be playing guitar when I leave high school"; "Yeah, I'd love to do something with a musical background when I leave high school and I already played a musical instrument when I came into this class so, to be able to work in a band and to work with other people and get new ideas is awesome"; "I just wanted to learn to play guitar better."

From these responses, the general reasons that emerged from students' decisions to enroll in the course include: positive affective responses to music itself; affinity for music, aspirations of fame, financial reasons, positive previous relationships with music and music education, positive reputation of the course, advancement of musical learning and skills, and logistical purposes for graduation (lack of options in course schedule, diploma requirements). This information also indicates that some students were there because they wanted to be there for personal and musical enrichment reasons while others were enrolled in the course because they had to be there in order to fulfill school requirements.

## **Elements of Engagement**

After obtaining a sense of why students enrolled in the program it was important to see if

there were indications of engagement with music focusing on the days when the Musical Futures program was offered in the class. Where individual student names are given in the following sections, pseudonyms have been used. In relation to the operational definition of engagement given in chapter two and used in this investigation, comments from the students that related to their level of energy, interest, and time devoted to musical activities include the following statements:

Just like I actually want to do the stuff we're doing. We get put into our separate groups I'm not off task; I'm not just talking about my weekend; I'm actually trying to get stuff done. Like I actually want to work on it.

You have this urge to like continue to do it. So like when it comes to everything else you're like 'okay,' but when it comes to something you like, like MuFu, you just have this huge urge to do it. It's all you want to do.

I feel sad if I miss a musical futures day. I remember I missed three musical futures days in a row because I was sick and like I had an engagement I had to do sort of thing, and I was like physically sad I had to miss those days.

These comments spoke to the motivational drive that students demonstrated towards participating in the program and the regret experienced at the prospect of not participating in it. Amelia and Brian provided further commentary on their engagement with the program:

Yeah, if they're committed [...] and your commitment to it. Whether you keep practicing, keep practicing it over and over again until

you get it right (yeah) and if you're not enthusiastic about it you'll practice it once and, so you just kind of sit there [...] You can really tell by someone's commitment level. (Amelia)

They're not just sitting there and letting it all pass by and maybe not trying it themselves, cause if you say something and they don't take it into consideration, they're like, actually listen to what you're saying then you know later on they're not going to have learned anything. But if you see them practicing what you're saying and asking questions about making it easier then you can for sure tell that they care and want to make a difference in the song or their own lives or whatever. (Brian)

From the student testimonials, engagement appeared to be presented by a number of characteristics such as motivation to participate because students were interested in the outcome and the rewarding result of their work. For some it was seeing signs of participation as a personal investment not only in their musical development but in their personal lives as well. In addition, the themes of productivity, a desire not to waste time, a physical desire and need to participate in the program, providing input, generating ideas, repeatedly practicing and refining skills, and an overall commitment to the process of learning the music arose. Furthermore, the discussion of focus on the task at hand displacing notice of the passage of time hinted at the presence of Csíkszentmihályi's (1990) concept of flow. Of particular interest is a comment made by a student who had been in the Musical Futures program since its introduction into the school, "I think you can tell by how fast they learn." Here the student identified engagement as being evidenced by the rate of learning.

Conversely, when students were asked to articulate some signs that their friends were not engaged in the musical learning process the following responses were made: "If people tried not being productive. Like if they just sit around and don't want to do anything then that's how you know they're not engaged in wanting to do things."

"They're not taking advantage of the instruments that are in front of them."

I think it's just like when someone has a reluctance to try something new, you know I've seen a lot of people just go up to the drums and then like 'Oh I can't play like right now so I'm just going to give up now,' but you know you got to kind of have to take everything with a grain of salt and realize you're not going to be the best in the world right away. And uh, you can't just be so demotivated like that.

No one was awesome at any instrument when they just picked it up."

These comments appeared to revolve around the theme of deliberate reluctance on the part of the student; for example, the idea of not seizing opportunities, being deliberately unproductive, laziness, giving up, and attitudes of apathy. It should be noted that these comments were made by students who expressed heightened signs of engagement in the program and perhaps did not account for the fact that students who might appear to be disengaged might do so out of fear of judgment or fear of failure.

From the student testimonials, it was apparent that they focused largely on behavioural indicants of engagement that could be observed in themselves and their peers. While educators have access to these observations, they might also be acutely aware of other factors including achievement, progress, compliance, attendance, and individualized learning needs, not only within their class but in other academic areas as

well. This information could provide another lens through which we could view physical indicators and cues of students' engagement or lack of engagement with the content and process. As stated in the opening chapters, we often interpret compliance, high academic achievement and advanced performance quality with elevated engagement by students. The music teacher in this study reported that she recognized engagement in her students in the following ways. They:

...attend class more regularly and focus better on tasks. They participate in class and even spend their extra time such as lunch time or after school to practice and work with their groups. Students were also constantly asking what would come next in regards to assignments and what courses they could take next year that would include MuFu.

Conversely when asked what student disengagement looked like with the Musical Futures project the teacher remarked:

If I gave too many rules or limitations, I noticed that some of my senior students didn't appreciate this. They tended to drift off and do something different. I found that if these students didn't feel challenged enough they would start composing which oddly enough was the next upcoming assignment. Students would start to challenge themselves.

Furthermore, she commented on observable behaviour and attendance issues in that:

I suppose the odd student would leave during class but these students usually had behaviour problems within all of their classes. During MuFu classes, this was unusual to see because 99% of my students were engaged the majority of the time.

It is obvious that this teacher perceived student engagement as reflected in their

work ethic, participation, and their expressions of keen interest in upcoming activities related to the program. The initiative they assumed in participating in musical activities on their own time seemed to be a significant indicator to her that students are engaged in the program as they were seeking musical enrichment voluntarily. Her mention of the role of structure and limitations placed on the senior students spoke especially to the level of awareness the teacher had in organizing and presenting educative activities that allowed for creative freedom and exploration. This "reflexive awareness" of what the teacher is considering in her accommodations and why she is doing this speaks to Giddens' (1991) concept of agency, not just for the students in the course, but also as exercised by the teacher. Furthermore, providing insufficient challenges was a signal to the teacher that students would venture off-course and become disengaged in the learning trajectory that she had established in order to follow a more engaging path.

This investigation seeks to determine the conditions students feel are necessary to experience engagement, in terms of time, interest, energy, and agency, in terms of voluntary action, in the classroom. In addition the study investigates how program facilitators can create these affordances for engagement and agency. These programming fundamentals were revealed in the testimonials of the students in which they identified why they felt engaged and why they particularly enjoyed the musical experiences afforded to them by the Musical Futures program. The process of coding and analysing the data collected in this case study revealed themes that related either to students being involved in an engaging experience or experiencing challenges associated with the program. The following themes are attributed to reported experiences and comments referring to heightened experiences of engagement.

The element of enjoyment. As educators, we are often under the impression that the presence of enjoyment (or to use the students' vernacular: fun) must indicate an absence of learning, however participants' enthusiasm may serve as a gateway for their motivation to access this learning. Tara stated "I try to never miss Musical Futures days [...] because it's fun and I get to jam with friends." In another student statement, Brian expressed that "taking the class was kind of more just to have a fun class too. I knew this class could be fun as it was last year." The presence of "fun" or the element of enjoyment and anticipation of the class as enjoyable was sufficient to encourage students to devote time to enrolling in the course and attending classes on the Musical Futures days. Even though the element of fun was integral to the program's success, the development of themes within this chapter will indicate that there was, in fact, significant depth of learning about themselves, others, and the advancement of their musical skills that was observed by the teacher and self-professed by the students.

The element of choice. An integral component of the Musical Futures ethos is the provision for student choice including choice regarding the formation of musical groups and selection of songs that they will work on and perform. The following comments from students spoke to the appreciation of having input into the content of the material studied in class, the type of instrument they were allowed to choose to play, and the people with whom they performed: "I like it because you can pick music of your choice. You're not stuck just playing classical music all the time"; "Like this specifically we get to make our own song and put our own feelings into it which is cool. And before when we got to choose a song it was more fun than just doing something that

someone else wanted." When I asked Briar what she liked about choosing her own songs, she replied:

...cause in that way it's our choice, it's not like a boring song, like 1980s. [...] It's nice to have, we can choose and the teacher doesn't put us in a group. It's fun to choose our own groups.

Briar's comment hinted at the personalization and ownership of the song because of the student's role in choosing that particular song. The following conversation with one friendship group involved choice in relation to the logistics of working with people who are trustworthy and dependable:

Andy: Choosing who you work with is (Amelia–key) really important. [...] Like extremely important."

Unidentified Student: Yeah

JL: Why is that?

Warren: Because if you're forced to work with someone that you don't get along with it just doesn't make the experience any fun, it just kind of sucks.

Unidentified Student: And not only that but if they don't work hard and if they skip class and stuff then you just have nothing to go off of and you're stuck.

Another student recalled the overwhelming experience of choosing a song, but was able to relate this process to one's ability to succeed with the song and the discretion required in choosing a suitable selection:

Choosing a song, was like 'Yay I get to do my favourite song, but it's like the hardest thing in the world, so I don't know where to begin.' And then we have to

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shuffle through all these different songs until we get to one that's actually easy

enough to have and play it and even then it wasn't that successful.

When I asked Trevor what he did not enjoy about the experience of the informal

learning program his response was directed to a time when the groups did not have

choice in the song selection:

JL: what's an experience that you didn't like from this or any hesitation about

anything? Anything you didn't like? Any reservations you had about doing

anything?

Trevor: like the first song

Unidentified Student: yeah

Trevor: They picked it for us

JL: which one was that?

Trevor: Chasing Cars

JL: Chasing Cars. Okay so you didn't like that it was chosen for you.

Trevor: yeah

Other comments were directed to the choice in instruments which they were

allowed to explore. The following conversation with Jacob highlighted the enthusiasm

he felt in performing for peers on instruments of his choice:

JL: What does choice of instrument give to you?

Jacob: I think it was just awesome playing on stage in front of our friends and

stuff and getting to show what we can do and rocking out and stuff, super fun.

That was definitely a highlight for me, was performing, one of the pieces.

JL: okay good. And that's funny because some people don't like the performing part of it.

Jeff: yeah

JL: but you really thrive on it

Jacob: I used to hate performing stuff live cause I used to play piano so I had to do recitals in front of all these people that I didn't know and I hated it, but...

JL: what changed for you?

Jacob: yeah, just the instrument I think maybe

It was clear that the students appreciated the element of choice in the Musical Futures classes. The presence of the key word 'choice' and statements referring to making contributions towards the type of music performed, the instruments that were played, and the people with whom to engage in music, speaks to the affordance of agency. On the surface, this choice allowed them to choose the songs they performed, the instruments they played, and the people with whom they played. The following comments, however, speak to implications on a deeper level of what that choice actually meant in terms of students' learning and desire to learn. For one student, having choice "makes you more interested, more excited to come to class because you get to play your favourite Johnny Cash song, or I don't know...you're more motivated." For the students, having choice meant that they were personalizing and owning the experience of music-making and in some cases they actually turned an anxiety-ridden performance event into a highlight of learning because they were able to choose an instrument on which they wanted to perform. The content of the learning was not the only feature of the

curriculum in which they felt they were given choice. This provision of choice actually translated further into the learning process as Andy noted that "you have choice on how you want to learn." Andy's comment speaks to having input and insight into how one learns most effectively. This awareness can therefore, influence one's course of action towards modes and methods of learning that are personalized and demonstrative of being an agentic learner. It was the choice in approach of how one accesses the content or knowledge that appeared to resonate with this student in particular.

The teacher's reflection on the program also referred to the importance of choice:

One strategy that worked effectively was to let students choose their own friendship groups. Most often students enjoyed working with friends and eventually the groups would evolve into skill based groups creating new friendships along the road. Students also enjoy picking their own music. The moment a student realizes that they can perform their favourite song their motivation to succeed spikes.

The teacher connected the provision of choice in selecting music and working groups to the increase in student motivation to achieve success. This motivation was initiated by the students' realization that they had this choice and input into their content.

Furthermore, she identified the evolution of students' thought processes in selecting friendship groups, suggesting that initially the rationale might be to honour existing friendships, but as the program progressed the criteria of skill-based partnerships seemed to be a stronger priority.

The element of freedom. When students were granted the ability to make choices that affected the content of musical programming and how they were to arrive at that final product, it appeared to afford the feeling of freedom as indicated by the

following comments: "I like the creative freedom. I can do any genre I want. I don't have to like stick to one"; "Yeah, creative freedom. Like music is an art form. You can't really tell somebody how to express their art, so, I just think it's not good to tell kids how to do it."

These students have associated their ability to choose their preferred music and their ownership over the artistic decision-making process with creative freedom. Other students spoke to the role of freedom in relation to structure, rules, limitations, and boundaries. When I asked what students liked about this way of learning music, the following responses were given: "With Musical Futures you can do more of what you want than like, there's less rules and all that kind of stuff, so it's easier to expand."

Unidentified student: It's just a lot more freedom and a lot less structure. Like you're not, as much pressure on learning the song, whereas you can learn it at your own pace and you can work on it outside of school. Just kind of how like this whole range of freedom where you get to do and learn however you please, whereas when you're stuck in a class you have to do what everyone else is doing beside you and learn the same way as everyone else.

Andy: Yeah it's just the lack of structure that's really nice. Well in most other subjects structure might be more important, but in music it's good to sometimes just let go of structure and go clearly with the flow. [...] It's been, like, I've spent a lot of time trying to memorize different stuff and then even learn solos and stuff like that I never really had the opportunities to get into the structure of learning, how to create a song, um, I think figuring that out, with the

way the program works, you know type thing, where there's no real guidance and that, happened to be able to, actually fully created ourselves, we didn't have a template or anything, we just created.

Kristine: With vocals she chooses your song and you can't do anything about it.

She's the teacher, well this is the song we have to sing and you're stuck singing it.

And for Musical Futures we get to do what we want.

These comments alluded to the feeling of expansion caused by the provision of freedom and choice. Whereas too much structure and too many limitations placed on the learning and content were considered to cause personal lack of growth and restricted creative opportunities. Essentially for Ryan, the program was "to see how much freedom we have; see where we can go with opportunities." In further comments, students also spoke to the impact of freedom on their level of interest, excitement and motivation in them and in their peers:

Kristine: Okay we actually have freedom to do like drums and guitar that's not acoustic and we can also do like bass. It's not just classical instruments. So like after all of middle school doing that you get so bored of it. So like, it's a good difference.

Collette: I find people are more motivated to come to class and that, um more people are excited for music, whereas if it's all just structure-based and you're stuck doing the same thing everyday, a lot of people get bored and they stop

coming to class. So if you incorporate more freedom into learning through music, I think a lot more people will be encouraged to play.

The broad topics that were generated from the various student perspectives included creative and artistic freedom that was afforded by flexible boundaries. Students also viewed the program as granting them permission to experiment with musical styles, instruments, and compositional elements. As with the element of choice, the process of experimentation leant itself to action or the demonstration of agency. Fundamentally, students were beginning to see that they should be granted this right routinely, as this comment demonstrates "we should be able to have more freedom in what we want to do."

The element of variety. Reported benefits of having choice and freedom were demonstrated in the students' attempts to learn and master new instruments and musical styles. These provisions enabled them to experiment in a variety of ways. Their accounts of the different ways they were able to experience variety were as follows: "You kind of get more variety of different instruments you can play as well as you can learn from tab or you can play sheet music, however, you want to learn." "You get to play more instruments, expand as a musician or something." "By doing this we're able to expand and do different types of music other than, kind of like experimenting with genres." "I played an instrument I never played before." "Like I got to touch instruments I never got to touch before, so that's always a plus."

These comments reflected on the purpose that experimenting with novel instruments, styles, and modes of learning served in advancing their skills and expanding their musicianship. Other comments that referred to the element of variety suggested the acknowledgement of the different roles that people could hold within a group that

contributed to the overall dynamic and function of the musical ensemble. For example, Collette described her role as "taking charge and kind of directing everyone how to go. Trying to keep tempo and the bass, keep everyone on task." Within her group, however, Tara was content to "just kind of like following along, like, letting them." Brian also saw himself as a motivator and as a contributor of ideas as he stated that his role was "motivating people to try things because I'm like always just putting stupid ideas out there so I feel like other people do that too, not stupid ideas, but ideas."

It appeared that the students valued variety according to their responses which consequently opened new doors to see where that exploration might take them musically, in addition to the recognition, encouragement, and appreciation of the roles they held and others experienced within those opportunities. As in the previous discussion of themes related to choice and freedom, the students saw the element of the offering of variety in their musical programming as an opportunity for musical growth.

The element of social togetherness and camaraderie. The elements of choice and freedom also allowed the students to determine who would be involved in their performing groups. The act of simply being together established relationships and nurtured feelings of camaraderie and connection between and among peers, as well as between students with whom they might not normally associate. It was a highlight for many students to have the opportunity to work not just in groups, but in groups of their choosing. Kat stated that her favourite part of the experience was "actually being able to do something cool with cool instruments, with friends. Perfection." The following statements revealed the importance of establishing and negotiating relationships within the Musical Futures program: "Lots of my friends don't have instruments at home, so I

don't know, it's nice to get together with musically minded people." "...and we never really talked really before the musical futures thing started happening."

Amelia: For me personally I look forward to Musical Futures days more than normal days like I find being in the group is a lot more fun than in the class and just sitting there and like working together kind of strengthens friendships I guess.

Anna: yeah like for me by working with friends I felt like, it was better, cause if you're, for the one we're doing now, if I was to spin an idea it's not like they're going to flat out turn me down and be like really rude about it. They might just say, "oh, that's good, but, I don't think we should do that."

Andrea: After you feel more confident performing in front of, before like in vocals, like Hailey used to help my grade 8 baseball team and I didn't talk to her at all, but like now we talk I actually feel more comfortable like to talk to her and sing in front of her and play things with her.

Andy: It became more instead of music being more personal thing, became more of a group thing, and more social sort of time rather than just you know sitting in your room playing your instrument. Uh, in the same way as someone sitting in the room playing trumpet wouldn't, you know, that's one thing, but if you put it with a whole band it sounds a lot better. Same with you're just playing your instrument, sounds much better and it's a better experience if you put it with more people.

For some students it was establishing friendships that had not existed before the course that was important to them. Andy extended the benefits of the community aspect by speaking to the overall group process as moving from the individual experience to the collective dimension. The teacher also noticed that her students "had built friendships and relationships through participating in MuFu that meant they would easily take advice from their peers. They were comfortable learning together instead of individually."

The opportunity to work in groups enabled students to identify their differences and similarities with their classmates and to assess whether these were factors that should be considered when working together. For Collette and Cory, it was important for them to see commonalities in their peer groups.

Collette: When you pick your first groups, sometimes there's a lot of clashing heads because everyone has their own way of how they want things to go and when things just start colliding sometimes you just have to leave and spread to a diverse thing, so it's more like having things in common.

Cory: Well I guess when you're in a group with new people you learn, like that, I don't know you could say that, "oh this person is like really good at drums and want them to be in your group, but then after you could be like "I don't really want to be in a group with this person or something like that, cuz don't have any similarities."

A final topic that is explored in the theme of camaraderie is the benefit of group work in providing opportunities for peer mentorship and teaching. Amelia reflected that "I think it's fun to learn with like your peers, like have everyone teach each other. It's

kind of better than just sitting in front of a teacher and letting xx talk." She expanded later in the interview that "It's easier than learning from a teacher I think because they understand what it's like to [...] yeah they're also way less busy." While her comment indicated that her peers have more time to assist, she also hinted at another reason, which can be extrapolated as meaning that students might be easier to relate to because they're all in the same position.

Not only did students enjoy the social element of peer-formed groups, they recognized that there was a heightened connection between colleagues who ascribed to the same musical aspirations and investment within this art form. They saw the group aspect as key to building on ideas and articulating how to respond to their friends' contributions. Furthermore, the idea of peer mentorship facilitated their role as active agents in the learning process, rather than passive participants.

The peer-to-peer relationship was not the only social dynamic in the music classroom. The teacher also observed a change in the teacher-student relationship as she became a facilitator and also a perceived colleague on the journey of musical discovery. "I feel like MuFu has bonded me and my students more than any other classes that I have taught."

The element of safe risk. In addition to commenting on her observations of the changed relationships as a result of the provisions afforded by the Musical Futures program, the teacher also reported a noticeable change in student motivation as related to the fact that "students were more willing to step outside of their comfort zones. They were more motivated to try new things such as composing and performing in front of others." Often students would speak to the fear that they experienced with others and

be willing to venture out of their comfort zones. One student advised "yeah, like the more you do it the more you get comfortable performing in front of others." This comment spoke to repetition. Hannah commented "yeah, I think that if I wasn't in a group with like people like I didn't really speak to on a regular basis I wouldn't really want to speak up and like say "we should do this" or "we should do that." Feeling comfortable among one's peers was important for summoning the courage to volunteer

one's answers and contributing one's voice to the group. For others, the opportunity to

play the music one wanted resonated even more strongly and became the impetus to

performing in front of others, however, if approached in a certain way students seem to

Unidentified student: If you get into a group with somebody cause they're friends, but they don't want to do the same kind of music as you do, you kind of have to, maybe go out of your comfort zone and join a different group that is doing a song that you like.

Andy and Amelia provided commentary about the delicate balance between the safety in one's comfort zone against feeling too far outside of this safe space:

Andy: When you're forced, getting out of your comfort zone is one thing, but going into a place...

Amelia: you're completely uncomfortable...

move out of one's comfort zone to other groups:

Andy: you know you're not going to be comfortable at all

JL: right

Andy: is not, I don't see that as a personal learning space, I just find that more...

Amelia: aggravating

Andy: yeah more aggravating and just sort of a hindrance on what a good program this is.

The idea of sacrificing working with close friends in order to feel comfortable performing songs that are more appropriately suited to personal musical preference is a motivating factor in leaving one's place of comfort for one student; however Hailey appreciates that she can choose to work with people who make her feel sufficiently comfortable to offer contributions to the music-making process. The third comment speaks to the opportunity of repetition in performance to be coaxed into a place of comfort, and the final conversation strongly advocates for student voice in determining what learning space is appropriate for various levels of comfort and ease.

The element of control of learning. Many previous comments related to the active participation and input students felt when they were given choice and options in the classroom. In addition, several responses related to the transfer of control or power from teacher to student when the provision of choice was afforded to them. The element of choice provided students with options in what was learned and options in the process of how they could approach learning. When the students were asked questions regarding who they perceived as having control over their learning or who was in charge of their learning during the Musical Futures classes the following responses were provided: "I feel like I had control over it." "I think we all were in charge of it." "I think we all like, learning our own parts, but we were in charge of ourselves." "I think everyone actually was."

Whereas the previous statements referred to the participants' position of power within the learning process, the following statement from Richard spoke to the amount or

level of control the students felt that they had with respect to the learning process in the class:

Most of it, almost all of it. Because whatever control we don't have is basically just because we haven't learned it yet. So if Alexander doesn't have enough time he doesn't have enough time, so if he doesn't learn it he doesn't learn it completely at least we can get where we can get.

As a follow up to a conversation with Jacob about the role of choice and control he assumed in this program, I asked him "how much control do you think you have in this program over your success and over your learning?" and he responded, "yeah, quite a lot."

These statements suggested that students recognized that they were responsible for their successes and their failures. While some students might have felt intimidated by the amount of control they had in this process, Emily indicated "it's kind of nice having more control over what we do."

The element of accomplishment. Ultimately there were considerable reports from the students that the program instilled pride, confidence and a sense of accomplishment in the participant. One student was cognizant of the progress she is making in confidence: "confidence, I guess, a little bit. I'm getting there." Other students specifically commented on the difference in their comfort level in performance: "I never have ever played anything in front of anybody so I just made myself do it and I felt way better about myself after." This reflected how the student felt after the first opportunity to get in front of the class and perform, however, Kristine commented on the repeated opportunity for performance as a contributing factor to her increased confidence:

After a while you feel more confident in how you do. The first time you're like 'I don't want to do this. I don't know anyone,' but after a while you're like 'okay, whatever. It's happened before'.

While the previous comments spoke to the realization of the students' ability to do something that she never thought was possible and the ease that accompanied repeated performance opportunities, Collette's comment described how the feeling of acceptance, praise, and suggestions for improvement impacted her self-perception:

Even though some people may be afraid to perform in front of other people you're kind of accepted and you get constructive criticism afterwards and a lot of compliments and you just kind of feel a lot better about yourself after.

Briar realized that her pride came from learning instruments that were previously unfamiliar to her:

Briar: learning new instruments or like the bass guitar or the guitar.

JL: so that's something you're proud of?

Briar: yup, learn a new instrument

For Anna, this increased confidence in music class has transferred into her classroom behaviour in other classes: "And like participation. It's made me be more confident in participating in class. Where before if a teacher picked on me I'd be like (choking noise), now I never shut up. Honestly, ask my teachers. I never stop talking."

An overall assessment of the program's success from Brian and Jacob was made in relation to the opportunities provided in gaining experience and confidence in performing:

JL: what do you feel you're gaining from this program?

Brian: confidence in performing.

Jacob: Yeah. Main thing is confidence I guess.

It appeared that the themes of choice, freedom, variety, and camaraderie led to the ability for students to take a comfortable risk which ultimately led many students to feeling a sense of confidence in how they were able to perform and what they were able to accomplish. The students were not the only ones who articulated their increased levels of confidence. With respect to achievement, the teacher noticed that "instead of giving up easily and saying 'I can't do this', I had more students challenging themselves to learn things they normally would not have liked or understood." Additionally, the following statement addressed a prevalent theme in how the program provided opportunities for the students to experience the chance of success:

In an IMP (informal music pedagogy) program, more students have a chance to succeed. Although this can be a challenge for the teacher, it is giving students more freedom to learn in their own way and with music that they can identify with...I think it gives everyone a chance to succeed no matter what your experience, background, nationality, social status, etc.

The element of context. The fact that this program was offered weekly allowed for consistent rehearsal, skill development, and ongoing discussion and reflection about ideas and concepts. Hannah's involvement in the music program for her entire high

school career shed insight into the importance of seeing how the skills and knowledge acquired in the Musical Futures program related to other "things" and applications:

Well like, with just our plain vocal class, we basically stick to like a certain kind of stuff, and like I've been in music class here at Midland for like 4 years so it's like built up and built up so I know all of this stuff about it, but like maybe it wasn't continued on, so with Musical Futures, like it just, I don't know, but, um, no with Musical Futures cause we tended to expand what we were doing, it kind of, more of my knowledge about other things.

Jacob also spoke to the separation of what is learned in "regular" music class and then the application of that material to the days in which Musical Futures is experienced:

Yeah I think it's a good mix cause there's more like actual work towards being a better musician during the regular days and then musical futures is kind of like putting what you learn to the test with other people.

The practical application of "hands on" learning, as opposed to passivity established the importance of learning in the manner in which one will learn outside the context of school. Hannah elaborated that "I think it's kind of better too because with the vocal class you're just looking at a piece of paper and reading it and singing it, but this is more like hands on."

Andy has also been involved in the music program for an extended period of time and has taken several courses throughout his career. His comment reflected the sequential development of skill building in traditional music classes, however, with the informal music learning program, he acknowledged that learning is acquired on a "need"

to learn" basis. In other words, the context or situation demands learning in a haphazard, non-linear fashion.

Something to add for everyone that's started a new instrument, which is like everyone here, except for Erica and myself, learning a new instrument is difficult as it is, but if I'm going to start, say you go for guitar lessons, first thing they're going to show you is a one line. I'm teaching Alexander full chords, and full things he wouldn't have started to learn for a year. So, he's starting up there. So that's already a lot more difficult.

The previous comments referred to the importance of continuity in enabling the students to see their learning embedded and applied in various learning environments. The following comment from Trevor expressed the idea of context in reference to the musical genres and how that affects learning and the desire to learn: "I just think it's more fun to play a rock song than a classical song. I just find it easier to learn, cause I like it better."

Although this comment appeared simple and obvious, it spoke poignantly to the ease with which one learns when it is related to what one wants to learn. Ultimately, the result is increased enjoyment in learning the music. Additional comments referred to the elements of the program's practical nature and the relevance of the material to the students' lives that appealed in particular to the students. Furthermore, the ability to apply skills in an authentic, relevant manner and to learn what one needed when one needed it related to the importance of contextualized learning for students.

## **Awareness and Realization of Learning**

The metacognitive process of how one learns and how one comes to learn is a concept that relies significantly on awareness. The realization of learning, therefore, requires the acknowledgement of learning and becoming aware of that process. Several facets of the concept of realization surfaced throughout student testimonials. While students' heightened engagement in the Musical Futures sessions has already been discussed, their personal realizations arising from these experiences were indicative of agentic principles of awareness either as a result of their actions or as a precursor for future action. One element of realization was in the personal revelation of their own learning, which was accomplished through overcoming challenges, perseverance, working through tasks, and accepting the reality of their skill level and development. Often students reported their newfound enjoyment or ability to now play an instrument that they were not able to play before the course. For example, Anna recognized that "I really love to play the piano," and Hannah identified that "I'm a very good vibraphone player." Warren viewed his learning from the perspective that he could not play an instrument before the course to the level he achieved at the end of the course: "Well, I can play the drums now." Brian also reflected on his performance ability that "just being able to play drums better with the group cause that's usually what I play in Musical Futures and uh, you know like learning a few chords in songs here and there." Brian's comment also speaks to the acquisition of musical content knowledge in learning chords and several students also mentioned the skills that they learned, including song-writing techniques and strategies. For example, Jacob wrote that he learned "songwriting and technical skill I guess."

Learning how to interact with each other in a band in a good way, and being able to jam freely in the right keys and stuff so it sounds good."

In a conversation with Jane, a student who struggled with attendance and achievement in all classes, she commented on her learning in the course:

JL: What about musical futures specifically?

Jane: more interesting than doing work.

JL: So do you not think you're doing work with Musical Futures?

Jane: Well yeah you are but, it's kind of better to do Musical Futures to learn new things.

JL: To learn new things? In what way are you learning new things?

Jane: Trying to write a song and stuff.

Other students demonstrated their realization of learning by the knowledge that they acquired in terms of how they listened and what they listened for in the music. Cory commented that:

You're learning more about, just like sure you know how the song sounds, but you don't really know each part about it, so when you're listening to a song before you did Musical Futures you're just 'oh that sounds good' but after then you can pick out different beats and stuff.

Andy's reflection on Musical Futures spoke to the transformational perspective that has occurred in how he now approaches music and musical experiences:

I think you look at music in an entirely different way. Not just the social aspect but not only that when I'm listening to music, "The boys are back in town" I just couldn't get it out of my head because I kept thinking I can hear the different parts of the song, I really like to get this song, I like to hear myself and my friends play this song. You have to hear music a different way and you have to listen and see it more interactive. This is some crazy thing that takes and some amount of time to produce. It's not something I could do, now I can.

Amelia, who was a bandmate of Andy in numerous Musical Futures projects, expanded on the notion that this program was about recognizing the deeper aspects of music listening:

You kind of appreciate the music more too, like the different parts of it. When I was learning bass I started listening to music and actually hearing the bass in the songs. And wow that sounds hard. And like the effort people put into making music you appreciate it a lot more.

Some students were able to take the knowledge they acquired in the music course and recognize the potential the principles might have in other classroom settings. Anna stated "if they did, like, not just Musical Futures to get more music students in, but if they did more stuff like this with other classes maybe kids would show up to other classes." Still others realized its application to other genres and learning situations. Brian found the experience of Musical Futures to be:

...an eye opener too because when you realize that you have to be able to play a whole song to make the performance good, back when you're in music class you're thinking, this classical piece how am I gonna work out these bits so the whole thing sounds like a composed song or sounds like it could actually be put

together, so it kind of changes your mindset on how you go about practicing maybe, how you go about learning things, you'll maybe take more initiative to learn the notes as in just sitting there and looking at the pages so it may change your look on like formal learning too.

Awareness of student learning assumed various forms. For Briar and Jane, they recognized and realized that their sense of responsibility that accompanied their participation in Musical Futures projects contributed to what they learned and their success in the course:

Briar: It's our responsibility.

Jane: Yeah.

Briar: Cause like they only plan the lessons, but it's our responsibility if we're here or not. So, if we're not here we apparently don't get the lessons. It's kind of our responsibility to be here on time.

Personal responsibility not only related to attendance, but it also applied to initiative. Brian noted that "self-initiative has to do a lot with Musical Futures. Whereas if you're in a classroom if you want to learn those specific things the teacher has to say it's also self-initiative, but you aren't, you don't have so much power." His reflection continued to speak on the subject of agency as the will to act, in that Musical Futures is about "trying it yourself and experimenting if you want to learn."

For others, they learned how to realize their limitations and capabilities as indicated through the comment, "even though we were given a choice, we had to recognize our limits to know what we were actually capable of doing." Adam learned

how to be flexible and negotiate these limitations: "We learned how to change things, we learned how to not get too set in the way it is, because music changes and we change with it"

While the aforementioned comments spoke to the knowledge students gained about themselves, many reflections referred to their realizations of what it was like to work with others. They learned that Musical Futures was about "working as a team with other people," learning "how to cooperate with people you don't really know"; and "working sometimes with people you don't really want to work with." The negotiations of compromise and commitment were addressed in the following comments: "We learned how to work with other people and compromise. And patience." Andy noted:

We're a lot more understanding too if something goes wrong. And I say this with almost complete irony because if someone doesn't show up for Musical Futures I get angry until I know there's a reason.

Several students recognized that the students are going to have to negotiate and cooperate in the real world:

Unidentified student: It's not the biggest thing in the world to be stuck with somebody who you're not totally comfortable with cause it happens all the time and you have to learn how to deal with it as soon as possible in situations.

Jacob: You have to learn how to deal with real life situations and stuff like that. You can't always work with who you want. Of course like we'd all prefer as we're high school students to work with our friends, but like, yeah, of course it'd be good to work with other people.

Briar: Well yeah you can't really pick who you work with in the workplace. You can't pick who comes to your school or anything, so I guess it's just a natural thing that you have to get along with everyone.

The opportunity to work with new people may work to one's advantage in learning new things. According to Brian:

Sometimes like it doesn't always happen that way, but, sometimes someone, you'll have more of a worker in your group who you wouldn't be so used to working with, but you might have learned more things from them as opposed to just hanging out with your friends in some cases, like depending on the day.

In working with others, students were able to recognize the learning that also took place in their friends' growth and development. Ryan commented "you can see some people have no musical talent when they come in, and think they don't really have talent, they learn quickly and say find out when they leave that they really enjoy it." This awareness of other people's learning was identified in Abby's statement about learning styles: "A lot of people learn differently, so you kind of have to accommodate to them." Finally, the group-learning environment allowed students to see the benefits of peer mentorship. Adam commented that "when you're peer teaching you learn faster" and Emily noted that "the upside down thing with the strings does not help. Okay put your hand here, here, and here, and then play it. It's a lot easier than having to figure it out on your own."

The students' awareness and acknowledgement of the learning that occurred in terms of the relationship between themselves and the music, themselves and others, and

their intrapersonal reflection regarding their personal sense of responsibility and power suggested the metacognitive process involved in the agentic principle of reflexive awareness (Giddens, 1991). Students appeared to be aware not only of their actions, but also why they were doing what they were doing and how the Musical Futures program facilitated their agency.

## **Challenges to Engagement**

While the elements of enjoyment, choice, freedom, variety, comfortable risk, contextualized learning, and confidence were indicative of experiences of heightened engagement in the Musical Futures program, there were also expressions of challenges that the students encountered.

Logistical considerations. Issues of group attendance, time management, and compromising and collaborating among bandmates were at the forefront of many students' frustrations. Comments such as "my problem was, my group was never here and that's terrible because I was pretty much the only one"; and "I just think having to practice in your groups when you only have one or two group members there out of four or five, so it's kind of like what do I do right?" spoke to the concern over progress when members were absent.

Other comments related to the requirement of groups to collaborate and use their rehearsal time effectively: "Oh, some of the hardest part is when you and your friends are in a group, you have different tastes in music so you can't really choose a song because of how different musics are"; "not having enough time to get ready for performing, performing in front of people you don't really talk to."

Some participants also described the physical challenges of learning new instruments, which could be perceived as barriers to engagement. Richard stated that:

It's kind of discouraging when you don't know the parts and you're trying really hard and you can't do it. I know Alexander, Alexander, can't stretch his fingers completely and he had to do it constantly everyday in order to get that developed. It was just really upsetting.

Amelia agreed that the physical pain was often off-putting:

When I started playing the bass, I had to play everyday and relearn it and make sure I had it in my head. Um, I started, my fingers were hurting, my hand would cramp up and that was really annoying, but you still had to play through it, but it hurt.

**Fear.** Other comments from students were directed around the anxiety some of them felt towards performing for others. Several students admitted to experiencing "stage fright", or in Briar's case, "I'm not a very big performer. I don't like center stage. I like to kick back and stay quiet."

Anna's insights into obstacles people faced and the judgment from others demonstrated how repeated practice encouraged breaking free from these anxiety barriers:

I think it's hard performing in front of people, like Kat said that you're not talking to, but kind of like you think may be judgmental and they will judge you for it.

[...] I think it's like one of the challenges was everybody was probably like in their shell and too scared to perform, but it kind of helped you break from it.

This idea of judgment was also a factor in Tara's comment which described how her perceived level of inadequacy was intimidating: "My first friendship group everyone else was way better their instrument than me, so I just felt intimidated and I didn't really want to jam, so I just kind of watched them and enjoyed them playing."

The teacher also noted hesitation in some of her students: "I found that when I added MuFu to a course that was already established there were a few students who hesitated in the beginning. For example, a vocal student may not want to play the drums but instead only wants to sing. Groups had to balance every student's wants and needs to the best of their ability."

These comments can be categorized into the following themes: stage fright; needing to compromise between differing musical tastes; absenteeism of group members; physical challenges of learning a new instrument; lack of preparation time required to perform successfully, initial intimidation in completing the task; and resistance. These expressed themes are however not uncommon to students who are involved in other performance-based music programs.

# **Summary**

Despite reported challenges, students largely focused on discussing their experiences of heightened engagement in relation to the elements of enjoyment, choice, freedom, variety, social connections, contextualized learning, and developing confidence that encouraged them to devote time, energy and interest to their Musical Futures programming. Specifically, the action elements of choice and freedom for risk-taking in their musical endeavours made reference to the presence of agency exercised in the program by the students.

# Chapter 5

Case Study Two: Improvising and Composing in an Undergraduate Music Program

### **Background Information**

The second case study in this research focuses on university students enrolled in an elective course for the completion of their undergraduate degree in music education. The rationale for examining this project was twofold. Firstly, there were consistently high enrolment rates reported for this elective course at an Ontario university. Secondly, the course focused on the areas of musical improvisation and composition, which is a non-traditional component of many North American music education programs, including that offered at this particular university. Many music programs in North American schools emphasize traditional theoretical, historical, and performance practices that are grounded in western art music. As such, experimentation with improvisation, informal, and aural modes of musical invention and transmission are often introduced or explored sparingly. The fear that most educators experiences towards improvisation and composition in the classroom as a result of not having been enculturated into these musical processes could be attributed to this fact. The notion of fear is presented and discussed by the professor in her course syllabus (Appendix D).

Twenty-eight students in total were registered for the class during the third, and fourth year of their undergraduate studies; 11 students were male and 17 female. The course took place between September to December 2012 for 3 hours per week and the curriculum was designed to allow learners to experience firsthand effective and diverse uses of improvisation and composition in the classroom (Appendix D). This course was

unique in that it provided the university students (i.e., prospective teachers) with the opportunity to reflect upon innovative music education practices in improvisation and composition from the perspective that students in their classes might have. Video and audio recordings documented the music making activities throughout the term to ensure that accurate description of the course could be provided and to give perspective to six follow-up interviews that were conducted with students interested in sharing their experiences about the course.

#### Context

There are several factors linked to student retention at the undergraduate university level, including student involvement and engagement, academic abilities, financial constraints, sense of belonging, educational degree and aspirations, race/ethnicity, gender, and residency/local student status (Campbell & Mislevy, 2012-2013). Porter (2006) reports that there is, in fact, only limited research on factors affecting post-secondary institutions' student engagement. In addition to "peer effects" (p. 528) impacting student engagement, Porter posits that institutional size, selectivity, and research emphasis potentially affect undergraduate student engagement outcomes. Furthermore, increased attention to actively retaining undergraduate students, rather than recruiting them, should be a priority (Wilson, Coulter, Lunnen, Mallory, & Williams, 1999). An article released in Maclean's magazine on September 27, 2010 reporting on Canadian universities' aims to improve retention rates, stated that while "retention rates are steadily improving for many universities – there are still a small number of students deciding to pack it all in." Information regarding retention rates in this country is scarce, as the Canadian Federation of Students confirms in the 2010 article "there is a patchwork of information regarding

retention rates across the county, but nothing on a national scope." Statistics from 2008 suggest that retention rates are quite high in most Ontario universities, as is evidenced through 90.3% of first year students continuing into their second year at the St. George campus at the University of Toronto, 89% at Ryerson University in Toronto, 86.2% at McMaster University in Hamilton, and 80.1% at the University of Windsor (Maclean's, 2010). Discussions with a senior administrator at the university in which this study was conducted indicated that the retention rates for this university are in the top two of the country. Reports from the United States, however, reveal a slightly more worrisome picture, as one third of undergraduate students across colleges in the United States will not graduate from their institutions of initial entry (Wilson et al., 1999). This trend of disengagement from the learning process at the post-secondary level carries implications for developing and sustaining lifelong learning education programs.

## **School Context**

The university, founded in 1878, is in Ontario and during the academic year of 2013/2014 had 28, 386 registered students. It boasts a large international population with students travelling from over 100 countries to access education. Within the music population, 512 undergraduate music students, and 132 graduate students were enrolled in music programs housed in a faculty of music. Departments include music research and composition, music performance, music education, and a collaborative program of popular music and culture. Within the music education department there are 12 full time faculty members with research interests ranging from music philosophy, sociology, cultural perspectives, jazz pedagogy, composition and improvisation, and elementary music education. The instructor of the course in question has been at the university since

2009 and has served as Department Chair and Assistant Dean of Research. At the time of this publication she has instructed an undergraduate course related to improvisation, composition, and creativity in the classroom at this university for five years. Her course consistently attracts high enrolment with very few students dropping the course once it has commenced. The course description aims to alleviate some of the fear associated with experiencing and consequently teaching improvisation and composition activities in the music classroom. In achieving this, the units of content involve rhythmic exploration, curriculum connections, modes, melodic composition, graphic notation, blues composition, inspiration by imagery, chord progressions, riffs, songwriting, jazz standards, music technology and composing, and informal learning utilizing Musical Futures (<a href="www.musicalfutures.org/www.musicalfuturescanada.ca">www.musicalfutures.org/www.musicalfuturescanada.ca</a>) units. It is anticipated that the learning outcomes for this course lead students to explore musical ideas through creation, revising as required, developing teaching and learning strategies and reflecting upon their effectiveness.

Background of participants. At the conclusion of the research project, five female students and one male student (n=6) agreed to participate in a follow-up interview to reflect upon their experiences in the course. Of the six students, one envisioned a career as a music therapist, one as a children's choral conductor, and the other four as music educators in either the elementary or secondary school system. All students' names have been replaced with pseudonyms, except for Michael who requested that his own name be used. Connie came from a musical family and was involved in musical

activities such as Music for Young Children, <sup>4</sup> and school choirs. She taught herself guitar in grade 4 or 5 and that "really started to develop my ear." Connie recognized that learning to play the guitar by ear helped her when it came to improvising. Melanie and Heather were also involved in the Music for Young Children program and Melanie drew attention to a strong supportive network at home in terms of her music education. She was also involved in choirs at an early age reflecting "I think that really helped developing my ear." Whereas Melanie had limited band experience, Heather took piano lessons at the age of four and admitted that in high school she was fortunate to have had a lot of instrumental experience that she didn't receive in her earlier years at a Montessori school. Anne sang in the Bach Children's Chorus and had a strong musical upbringing in piano and theory from private lessons and her education at an arts high school.<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth was raised by a choral director and grew up in choirs, including the Canadian Children's opera chorus. Like Anne, Elizabeth benefitted from a very strong arts program in high school, but had limited instrumental band experience and limited experience in classical music. While classical "wasn't my thing" Elizabeth thrived in the styles of musical theatre and pop. Finally, Michael was introduced to formal Royal

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The official website for Music for Young Children describes their program as one that "provides the structure for learning to take place while allowing children the freedom to think. Children are empowered to set goals in their music learning while experiencing a playful, positive environment." Solfege is used to develop ear-training and sight-singing skills, and musical literacy is supported through a range of listening activities. <a href="http://www.myc.com/Teachers/MYC-Programs.htm">http://www.myc.com/Teachers/MYC-Programs.htm</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> There are several arts schools in Ontario boasting this designation as they feature specialized arts courses that are unique to that particular school.

Conservatory of music training at the age of four years on the piano and then switched to trumpet in Grade 7 when he benefitted from private lessons.

The data obtained from student interviews will be presented under thematic headings derived from the coding of the interview transcripts.

#### **Enrolment Rationale**

As with the first case study, it was important to understand the motivation underlying the university students' enrolment in this elective course. This information can provide insight into whether students felt obligated to participate in the course's activities or whether they were there on their own volition. Connie said:

I was recommended to take the course from a friend who had taken it in the past and she said 'you have to take that course.' There was just no, no other choice. Not that she was controlling me, but she was just really, strongly recommended taking that course because she had so much fun in it.

# For Melanie:

I took this class because, well number one it's with the head of music education and I've taken her courses before and I know how knowledgeable she is. Um, just in new techniques that maybe we wouldn't necessarily think of as traditional music teachers and um, I wanted to know a little bit more about improv. because I didn't want to be put in a classroom situation where the kids maybe knew more than I did, so I wanted to get as well-rounded as I possibly could.

Anne enrolled in the course because:

...it seemed interesting. I, when I was picking my courses I was looking for something that would fit in my schedule. I had no interest in taking instruments<sup>6</sup>. I don't want to pursue music education in like a high school setting after this, so I didn't think that instruments was something I wanted to take and I knew it was something I was not good at and had no experience in and thought would be a skill to learn.

While Anne was considering the course for both the logistics of her schedule and the skill development, Elizabeth was deliberate in choosing the course for her own musical and educational journey:

So I chose it on purpose. Like I chose it to get out of my comfort zone because I think it's a really important skill to have. I just hadn't embarked on that journey yet so I had never done band or string, like I said, so all the instrumental stuff, like the blues scale and all that stuff, I was like "Okay", like but it was good because it forced me to learn it and have fun with it and Dr. Z was great with that.

The previous comments can be categorized as follows: the desire to develop and acquire new skills to become an effective, balanced educator; recognition of the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> As part of the music education program in this university, music education students are able to enroll in a selection of secondary instrument pedagogy courses, which are not considered their major instrument. These courses provide the foundations of successful technique and pedagogical strategies for teaching these instruments in the classroom.

experience and value in learning the skills of improvisation and composing; an interest in improvisation and learning more so that the students felt prepared to teach in this area; scheduling within their course timetable; the positive reputation of the professor and/or the course and to fulfill an elective credit for the music education degree.

**Motivation and connections.** Further conversations with the participants elicited comments regarding why they believed improvisation and composition in the classroom were important for various reasons. All involved making connections. One connection was to future careers as musicians. Heather remarked that:

I think as a musician in general it's really important because it requires you to stretch some muscles that you don't normally use when you're playing, um, I think it's sort of, improv. is like a different way of looking at the same material. So I mean if you take a history class you're normally learning events consecutively and everything's very structured, but that's really not how history works. If you really want to get into history you have to sort of approach it from a more haphazard point of view. It has to be a lot more about connections. And that's sort of what improv. does for music, right? Instead of it being this linear, sequential, here's how you learn this and then you have to apply it here, you just sort of learn as you go from what you need.

The following comments made by Elizabeth made the connection between the importance of learning these skills and how she anticipated they would apply to her future career as a music therapist:

I think it's really important I think at any level, like with younger kids it gets them thinking more about music in a way that isn't "okay this is the rhythm and this is a quarter note and this is an eighth rest." They kind of just do it. Um, and at the older level I think in my experience like I said it pushes you out of your comfort zone and it makes you more comfortable to try new things in many areas in your life, not only in music, but even in my private voice lessons I found that I was more open to try new things and not just like in a little box, so I think it helps a lot and I think in your everyday life too. Like you can think on the spot and be more confident about it. [...] Right now it's music therapy is the main one so, think on your feet a little bit and cater to what the client or patient needs you to cater to so I think it's important because you get stuck in this little box of like what you know and you're comfortable with it's really hard to break out of the older you get, so I'm happy I have that chance.

These comments speak to the importance of improvisation and composition as not only skills that assist in the music classroom, but that also transfer to other contexts. For participants, the processes of improvising and composing lead one to approach learning from different angles by making connections, opening up areas previously unexplored, and possibly uncovering information through less conventional methods of learning.

Heather made connections to her other courses at university:

As I said, I really wish I had taken this course in first year, um, I learned a lot about connections to my other courses at Western. Actually, I learned a lot about student-centered learning which as a teacher I'm really gonna take away,

right? Cause it was really cool to see how Dr. Z created this atmosphere where it was safe to experiment and make mistakes.

Finally, Elizabeth made connections to her own learning experience about music and the nervousness of her fellow students:

I've really learned that music is not about black and white. Like there's a totally grey area and I think that grey area is where the most juice is, the most learning. And it was a very eye-opening experience and even as an audience member watching other groups you realize, you watch people get out of their comfort zones from an audience point, so imagine what they're feeling inside of them if you're seeing that, it's just so eye-opening and I found it a really great course.

The previous comments focused on the importance of these processes in learning to facilitate creativity as a teacher and of a positive learning environment that is conducive to learning. Student respondents also acknowledged and accepted the departure from traditional methods of teaching, incorporating a more student-centered focus. Many of these themes will be explored in further detail throughout this chapter as they relate to students' reports of heightened engagement as participants in this course.

#### **Indicators of Engagement**

A critical feature of this case study rested in remarks identifying that these students were engaged in the course. Video and audio data confirmed my personal observations that engagement during the course was high. This was confirmed by interview data. Melanie stated that "I think what stuck out the most was that we were always engaged somehow,

it was like magic [...] It's extremely different than any class I've ever taken." The students' reports of engagement are organized below into specific categories.

Active learning, pace and performance. It was important to take into consideration that these students came from strong musical backgrounds and had succeeded thus far in a post-secondary degree, and agreed to share their experiences with me after the course was completed. It is possible to assume that these are naturally high-achieving, motivated, and generally highly engaged people. Heather acknowledged her positive attitude toward education however and compared her 'baseline' engagement to the heightened level she experienced in this course:

Yeah, um, cause I really do like school. That's the weird thing. I love learning and even in a traditional classroom where it's the teacher is talking I am engaged about half the time at least, usually a little more. Uh, but in these classrooms it was a hundred per cent the entire time. I was never like bored, checking my email, going off to do something else, trying to find something else to occupy my mind with. I was fully occupied with what I was doing. I didn't have time to check my phone. I didn't have time. [...] I always felt like we were presenting projects in progress when it got to presentation. I sort of like that fast pace in a classroom. I felt like the pacing was perfect because it really required you to stay in it the whole time.

It appeared therefore that, for Heather, reasons for this heightened engagement were the active learning involved, the fast pace of the class and the requirement to present on work in progress regularly throughout the class.

Connie also recognized that the performance aspect among a group of musicians might have contributed to a dedicated work ethic:

We were never off topic! We were just like 'what are we going to do?' Kay 'what are we going to do?' Especially because we were going back and we were going to show our peers and there's a lot of musical ability and I think at that like we all have pressure to perform.

Engagement extended beyond the class. When I asked the participants to describe signs of their engagement in the course, observable behaviour indicants were described by Heather "just by how they were looking at you, right? If you were making eye contact, if they were speaking up." For Connie, engagement was not only manifested in the present moments however, but also in the moments afterward:

Okay, well after the class I think everyone went out of that class just pumped. Like we were so excited. We'd all go out humming a tune and just big smiles, and was just so funny to see all of that as opposed to leaving from a more theoretical class where it's just you just sort of feel bogged down. ... Also, we, I would be thinking about that class quite often and I'd share with my family, with my friends what we'd been doing. I'd go home and really think about what song are we going to do. How are we going to implement that, really cool ideas, just brainstorm ideas by myself which in another situation I probably wouldn't care too much until the class came around again ... Um, hmm, yeah, we would rehearse outside of class.

Connie's response concerning engagement speaks to excitement and the continuity of learning, thinking, sharing, and rehearsing after the class has ended.

**Flow.** The following account also spoke to the importance to engagement of what Csikszentmihalyi termed 'flow':

I think how we worked with one another. I found, some groups, when we were working in small groups, sometimes it was just jiving. Everyone was doing their thing and contributing, and the song was happening, or the exercise was happening. So I think having that sort of cohesion with one another and flow was a sign that it was really working...

Michael made a connection between what he identified as flow experiences combined with judgment and critical reflection:

I think when I was engaged I was always having fun. It was always an enjoyable experience and I think it was always, I'm writing a paper on flow right now [...] But I don't know if it was 100% like that. I don't think it was really a flow experience it was, there was a lot of give and take and I was, when I was engaged I was much more, I almost feel like judgmental. I guess I was critically thinking a lot more. Um, just judging the ideas, "was that a good idea? No? Yes? What did I like? What didn't I like? And when I wasn't engaged it was like "okay, that sounds fine."

**Attendance.** Students also saw engagement in the high attendance at the classes for this course:

... they always came to class. That's something I don't often see especially in lectures. There was, class attendance was extremely high and we kind of held

each other accountable for that cause we were saying 'Well, you're missing out on all these great teaching opportunities. This is exactly what we're going to be doing in this setting with younger kids so why would you miss class?' (Melanie)

**Idea generation.** Another aspect of engagement was perceived by students in the widespread and frequent generation of ideas in group work. Connie stated that "people were really motivated like there was just ideas, ideas bouncing off of each other," and Melanie noted "they were offering ideas when we were in groups and they wanted to spend time working on our compositions if we needed extra time then they were willing to schedule that and they always came to class."

Openness to experimentation and trying something new were also seen as evidence of engagement by Elizabeth:

I think it was just an overall involvement, like, actually participating in the group discussions, like what we think we should do and providing our own ideas and using our own voice and not being scared to speak up and trying new instruments being eager to try new things is the main thing.

Several abstract concepts such as motivation, group cohesion, flow, and expressions of agency through being allowed to use one's voice surfaced from these comments.

**Desire to keep working, taking initiative, effort.** Observable behaviours were yet another example of how people could recognize engagement in themselves and others. Anne noted the observation of "how much fun people were having and I could tell too when we would be called back to come back to do, the groups that would just

want to keep working, doing their own thing," were visual signs of engagement in her peers. For Connie it was "taking initiative, I think you can measure engagement by the joy someone is feeling, um, and then effort shows engagement."

**Student and teacher roles.** The mention of "doing things" also speaks to the topic of roles and Michael's ability to create and assume roles within groups contributed to his perception of engagement or lack thereof with certain tasks:

I would say the parts when I wasn't engaged I didn't have a role. Um, I just didn't know what to do. I was just floating by without any... So yeah, if I was really engaged, the times when I was really engaged in the process I can definitely pinpoint myself I was definitely being a mediator among the group or I was definitely being very creative or trying to encourage other people to be creative...

While some participants attributed engagement to internal constructs of initiative and personal responsibility, Melanie recognized the external factors such as capabilities of the teacher and programming as sources for heightened engagement:

Well I wasn't falling asleep. I was really listening to what she would say and it's almost, uh, it's like that moment when you're put on the spot and you have to say something right away, it's like that but all the time. She kept us on our toes so, to the point where if we weren't engaged let's say, or we weren't, if there was a possibility that we weren't thinking about what she was saying and we were drifting off she would pull in a clapping game and you would have to think of something creative quickly before it came around to you in the circle. So, it's that kind of engagement that I think is missing.

Based on the previous comments, the participants associated heightened levels of engagement in the class with continued learning and discussion after the class had ended, positive work ethic including accountability and attendance, enjoyment, enthusiastic involvement, a sense of urgency and purpose in accomplishing tasks, group cohesion and 'jiving' or flow, contribution and the flow of ideas, critically thinking about these ideas, a desire to improve, and finding a role to be purposeful.

## **Elements of Engagement**

Why then did these students think they were so engaged in the course?

The elements of enjoyment and comfortable environment. The following testimonials speak to the participants' enjoyment of the course in terms of its concentration of fun in a safe atmosphere: Michael stated "I really enjoyed the course. I thought it was a lot of fun," and Connie recognizes that "because it (improvisation) was in such a fun environment, and a comfortable environment I think everyone really grew a lot."

The foundation for successful improvisation and composition rests in the establishment of a comfortable environment for Connie: "As long as you can create an atmosphere where you start from the basics and no matter what a student does it will probably sound good and then, and then move on from there."

Expanding on this identification is the recognition that this type of environment will consequently set their future students up for success. Melanie admits that "we had fun doing it and I felt even I as a university student absorbed more in that class having fun and that's what I'm going to take from improv. and apply to classes I have," and Heather reflects that "it was really cool to see how Dr. Z created this atmosphere where it was

safe to experiment and make mistakes. And I really hope I can create that kind of environment for my students, where they feel that they can contribute." Melanie also envisions using what she has learned in this class as a way to engage her students: "We had fun doing it and I felt even I as a university student absorbed more in that class having fun and that's what I'm going to take from improve. and apply to classes I have."

The element of choice. When I asked how the element of choice and their ability to choose what they wanted to do affected their level of engagement or enjoyment within an activity the following responses were provided:

Even from, probably especially in the fact that we got to choose our own groups which is really surprising to me because I thought that that if students were to choose their own groups it'd become very cliquey. [...] But I thought through choosing our own groups we were able to feel more comfortable and then to take leadership and even people that were a little bit more shy would come up with ideas for themselves to do and it was just well supported by the groups that they were in. (Connie)

Connie was initially surprised that this provision would be afforded to the students and realized the leadership skills that came from this opportunity. The choice of instruments led to personal realization and discovery for Elizabeth that she was able to explore the manner in which she used her own voice:

Well first we were, we had decided which instruments you were going to use, so at first it was all on instrumental, ... and then by the end of it we realized we could use our voices, so that was like a huge, a big new thing, ... cause you could

like play around with your own voice and that is my instrument so it was kind of cool to like realize that I could use it.

Choice for some students was not always ideal, however. Although Anne admitted that the ability to choose "made it more enjoyable" having some element of structure, which exposed students to every instrument was favourably regarded:

I think if I had been told, and [...] there were classes where we did group-going-around and everyone learn how to play the guitar or the keyboard part of a song. There was some structure of you had to go and learn this instrument. Cause if I was sitting in a class and there was no sort of structure as to 'you needed to learn this instrument or we're going to look at this' I would have probably kept picking the easiest instrument just cause it's what I felt most comfortable with. [...] Having those experiences where you do go and learn about this instrument made it less intimidating I found and more, more enjoyable, like it was a push. I didn't want to do it, but I did it and it was fun.

Anne appreciated being forced out of her comfort zone or else she would have always chosen the easiest route. Other participants, including Elizabeth, would have preferred assigned groups in order to mix up the group dynamic and be forced to work with others "so you're not always bouncing around the same ideas and brainstorming in the same kind of ways that you want to go." While there was a strategy in choosing groups so that students could optimize their learning, a balance of gentle guidance and structure combined with the freedom to choose forced students out of their comfort zones and challenged them to take comfortable risks.

**The element of safe risk.** The provision of choice appeared to relieve pressure in order for students to experiment and take risks in their learning. Anne recalled:

I know I've been in classes where I've been told I have to do this and you need to play this for this to be your mark and I think having the pressure where you need and have to play another instrument or do something outside your comfort zone can have a negative effect. In this class being told to just pick an instrument [...] There was more, you could pick, and pick a comfortable situation.

Anne recognized that forcing people out of their comfort zones can be detrimental and might actually achieve the opposite in trying to engage students. If educators approach tasks with sensitivity to choice and a variety of offerings, then the desired effect of engaging students through a 'happy medium' of structure and freedom could be described as 'comfortable risk'.

The element of variety. An earlier comment by Melanie spoke to the manner in which programming a variety of learning activities in the class contributed to an engaging experience. Anne appreciated the variety of musical styles that were available for exploration in the course:

I thought looking at the different styles of music and incorporating different types of music in the classroom was fabulous, um, all of my experiences in high school was pretty much strictly classical music, so, seeing now you, there are people and teachers who are incorporating different kinds of music into the classroom I think is great. [...] Coming to class and knowing we're going to be working on a different style of music today. There was sort of no, like we're going to be doing

the exact same thing for six weeks straight, the same style of music. Having the variety I think made it really engaging.

The variety of instruments available to learn and play allowed Heather to not only experiment with new instruments, but also new ways of listening, learning, and creating:

And in improv., I mean I'm not a bass player, but I learned to play the bass like, the electric bass and it was really cool and I learned to make music with my colleagues and it was creating music based on listening and it was exercising some stuff that I hadn't really done before.

Programming the element of variety in instruments and musical styles to explore encouraged engagement by allowing the students to discover personal interests and the learning needs of themselves and others.

The element of social camaraderie. The course was designed to incorporate several group activities so that students could learn from each other and see the benefits in peer mentorship. Michael related his sense of belonging to a group as a catalyst for involvement and engagement: "if I didn't feel like part of the group I didn't want to contribute to the group." On a surface level, many participants expressed enjoyment in the opportunity to work with their friends and to get to know new peers from different years. According to Anne:

I think a combination of getting to know the people in your class, cause at this point I'm finding there are people in all different years in these music education classes so they may not be the people you've lived in residence with and spent

hours with in lectures. ... So getting to know the people in the class makes it a much more comfortable setting..... And I also found that, um, the exercises where we broke off into groups and learned instruments with other student leaders, instead of just having a teacher teach the class, made it much more comfortable among students. [...] Not that there was the pressure when a teacher is teaching you in front of the class but, having those smaller, intimate settings like I've never played the bass before and I'm sitting there with Mark or whoever's teaching and I felt comfortable because it was just him.

Anne viewed the social aspect of the course as an opportunity to increase her comfort level, which is important as one ventures into new learning horizons. Her comment also made reference to social groups functioning as peer teachers and for Connie, group relationships and sharing enabled students to expand upon existing ideas and notions of creativity:

A big thing was, and Dr. Z mentioned this a couple of times, was coming back and meeting and just sharing ideas and then it was like 'oh I like that. I could build on that' and then going back and just sharing is very important. You can't, it's hard to be creative without being in relationship with other people and seeing what they're doing.

Heather believed that this group dynamic positively facilitated the rate at which she learned:

I learned stuff really fast just because there was someone with me you know, I could draw on their experience, I could draw on the experience of other students. It was a really good atmosphere for learning because it wasn't just we were all

sitting in one room being quiet while someone talked. Everyone was talking, right?

A potential danger in having students choose the groups is the tendency for formations to become what Elizabeth describes as "a little bit cliquey." Michael had hoped for the opportunity to rearrange groups for the purposes of redefining and exploring different roles:

I wish I switched up my group more often I think. I wish I had opportunities to work with other people. Um, I did work with quite a few, but there was definitely people I didn't work with who sometimes "man I wish I had had been in that group with those people," wish I would have heard what they had to say, cause there was definitely people I didn't have the opportunity to work with. [...] And I felt maybe later on through the program once everyone was going at the same pace it would have been better to break away from friendship groups. Cause once the friendship groups started, the roles started to become a little too definite...

Even though Emily agreed and found that "there was sort of a limited variety in terms of the changing of people in groups and different groups," she used this to her advantage. "I know I stuck together with someone. And um, being more comfortable. I just think having a friend, someone who knows your skills and your experiences or someone who has similar experiences to you made things more comfortable." Similarly, although Michael desired to switch up the groups on a continual basis, he did acknowledge the benefit of working with similar people throughout in order to develop a

rapport and knowledge of each other's skills, which enabled them to work more efficiently after a while.

I think at the beginning people whose groups had skills right off the bat. Some people were very, very strong at picking up melodies, or just playing something "this is how it goes" here it is, and doing a lot of lifting and then later on you put less importance on that person because that was step one. Now we need to go beyond that and I think he relied on that right off the bat he knew all this, uh oh, we need to go deeper. And I think a lot of people figured, oh it's not just notes and rhythms anymore. It's so much more we have to do. And I think the group aspect got better and better the more we worked together. The first time was a lot of individuals with a lot of different ideas and then slowly we started to get to know each other better as a group and musically we knew each other's abilities better and we were able to put things together much quicker.

Not only did the participants value the group aspect for the opportunity to socialize with their friends, but they analyzed the relationship of social camaraderie with respect to learning: a desire to work with others; a desire to learn from others; the rate of learning; the process of peer-learning; and peer-teaching. These processes were accelerated and heightened through the building of relationships.

The element of control over learning. In an earlier comment Michael reflected on engaging opportunities as those that required active learning, rather than positions of passivity. Enactment of active learning can take the form of active participation and hands-on activities, but is also evident in the perceived control one has over one's

learning. When I asked Michael if he enjoyed the experience more when he had more control over their learning activities he replied:

Oh for sure, yeah, definitely, when I was like 'these are my ideas and this is what I want to do' I was like 'this is great. I'm awesome. This is awesome.' And that at times when I wasn't in control or didn't feel like I could get control at all, it was, yeah this sucks.

This active control translated into a different conceptualization for musicianship as experienced by Heather:

I felt more like a musician in this course than I sometimes felt like in most of my other courses at (the university) because I was actually having to rely on some skills or I was having to actually learn things on my own. I felt like I was in charge of creating the skill instead of just sitting there and passively absorbing information.

Having the opportunity to actively formulate and experience the knowledge, skills, and learning strategies that they will need in their future careers, rather than passively accepting this information was clearly valued by the participants as a factor in their engagement.

The elements of success and accomplishment. Michael's previous comment alluded to the feeling of accomplishment and achievement he had when he was able to experience control and own the ideas that he contributed. Anne identifies the skill level of herself and her peers and how the playing field was varied at the beginning of the course:

Some of the people in the class I felt were very skilled from the beginning, so I didn't necessarily see a major progression because being in jazz band this person does this all the time. It's what they're used to. But definitely in other people in the class and my friends that were in the class, especially the vocalists I found there was a lot of new experiences and, yeah, definitely there was progression.

Michael felt very confident in the class because the access to a variety of instruments, musical styles, and group members provided a comfortable learning environment:

I felt really confident in that class I think. Just cause I wasn't so worried about a lot of things when I was playing. Everyone was improvising and even though I didn't feel I had a lot of background I knew enough to be like 'I'm not just stuck out in the water here' like I did know I can do this and I think the class made it very accessible cause we did it on so many different instruments and on so many different genres, it was like, well I think it improved my self-efficacy in all of those areas...

Other comments by participants spoke to the rate of progression in relation to their successes:

I always felt a sense of accomplishment because I was really happy with what our groups did. Like I always had a great time. At the same time, I always wish, not wish, but afterwards I always reflected on it and I was like 'ah man I could have done more. I could have done more with that. I wish I had a little bit more time.' But I think all that is, that was because I was so into the project. (Connie)

I think the way the course was structured, starting really easy, just four bars of rhythmic dictation or whatever, rhythmic exercise, or and then moving slightly to keyboard or whatever and by the end we're just making our own pieces. Like that slow progression made it a lot easier. I think walking in the first day and being told 'oh by the last week of this course you'll be writing your own song' I probably would have walked out, like, so I think the way it was structured made it better, easier, more, like I could handle it, um but it definitely wasn't easy. (Anne)

Connie's comment of being "so into the project" speaks to her personal level of commitment and investment in the activities and her desire to be able to improve upon the presentation of these tasks. Anne recognized the importance of programming and the manner in which activities are introduced that will contribute to a sense of achievement in students. When I asked Elizabeth if there was anything that worried her about what she's learned in the course or the skills she learned, her response speaks to her sense of being prepared in how to teach these skills and the confidence that arises from that understanding:

I feel that this course teaches you that there's, you can improvise in any way. So like giving a group of kids a picture or whatever they can improvise, there's no right or wrong. So to go into a class and you don't know everything, like I don't know a lot about band or strings at all even after this course, but I do know how to get kids to like be inspired by what they see on a page or get their brains kind of thinking and motivate their brains to do their own thing. So I think as a teacher,

don't have to know everything they do about their own instrument. I just have to get them to see what they can do on their own instrument, which is a bit different.

These testimonials demonstrate that it is important for participants to not only feel a sense of accomplishment in their own musical skills, but it is important to have the confidence in learning how to teach these skills effectively as future teachers. This reflective aspect revealed a thinking of how and why people are successful. As such, their elicited responses described the need not to feel overwhelmed by future expectations and recognizing that sequential planning, gradual progression and scaffolding skill development could be advantageous for students. Not only do the participants need to feel successful, but they are also looking to the future and shifting their thinking about setting their students up for success.

This transfer from needing to have those skills as a student or performer to needing to have them to be able to inspire and teach students demonstrates a shift in thinking from that of a student to that of a teacher.

The element of context. Many comments made by the students identified this course as one that is unique in their undergraduate career. Often expressions of regret surfaced in having taken the course later on in their studies. For example, Heather states "I really wish they'd done this course early on in my learning at Western cause stuff would have been, would have meant more to me. Keyboard harmony would have been more important to me than it was." Further inquiry into this rationale revealed "I really wish I had taken this course in first year, um, I learned a lot about connections to my

other courses at (the university)." Michael agrees that taking the course later on in his career prevented him from realizing key areas in which his knowledge was lacking:

I think I gained a lot. I really, really enjoyed this course. I think it's, it was a pinnacle course in my degree I think. And I was kind of upset it took me to fourth year to take it cause I learned so much and so many things that were just, they were like holes in my learning that just weren't filled.

Melanie would have liked the course to be offered repeatedly at different levels in order to build upon existing skills and to become more advanced:

Um, I would just say that I think this course should be around forever and I almost wish I could take it again but in different contexts. Like I wish it was a third year or fourth year, whatever, different levels of it so that we could have more experience with it because there's nothing else like it that I've seen so far.

This comment speaking to the uniqueness of the course can be distressing as it suggests that students do not perceive having the opportunity to experience music in this way or to apply this knowledge to their future career pursuits. When I inquired about their perception of the skills required in earlier dictation classes compared to the skills they required for this particular class, Michael said:

I think I put more importance on it. I wanted to do it. I wanted to lift the melody of the song so I could play it and it was cool because I had the time to lift it. I didn't feel pressured that like you have 30 seconds to lift this as quick as you can and I was lifting different things which was really difficult. I wasn't just listening

to a piano and doing solfege and then write it down, it was like "listen to a singer of a band sing it' and there's other things happening in the background and a lot of the pop singers are like 'it's not just straight notes all the time or straight rhythms' it was completely different because you had to get the style to get the melody. You couldn't just be 'I have all the notes,' no it was like you need to pick up the style and the rhythm and the inflection and the words and the line and it was different. I don't know it was different. It was a lot different and I wasn't strong in dictation as well. I didn't practice very much. And I think that was the reason I should have practiced dictation and when I did dictation back in second year I was like 'I don't need this. This is a stupid skill.'

This comment stresses the importance students place on the course skills and the motivation or desire to "do it." There appears to be holistic awareness of several skills, rather than just a skill learned in isolation. In summary, these particular students require opportunities to recognize the need to learn the skills, the ability to see the relevance of the skills in application to their career endeavours and to see how they can be translated into different contexts. Expressions relating to continued development and reinforcement of these skills involve continuity and contextualization of this learning.

#### **Negative Indicators of Engagement**

By contrast, I asked the participants to identify signs by which people appeared disengaged from the learning environment. Many of these comments spoke to the opposite behavioural signs to those people were demonstrating in heightened levels of engagement.

**Passivity.** Since engagement to Michael was nurtured through active learning activities in that "we weren't just talking about how to improvise on these things we actually were doing it. I feel like it was very hands on and I learned a lot that way," he recognized passivity as a sign of disengagement:

In my own groups, body language was a big one. You could tell when people felt that other people were being overbearing and that they weren't involved in the group. It was obvious... how they would stand, and I know, they would look uninvolved and you'd be like 'that person is not doing anything.' You haven't heard them contribute in a while.... Very, very passive I found.'

**Distraction.** Connie identified "being distracted with other things" and being "off topic" as signs of disengagement and elaborated that:

For me I think, I guess there were a couple of instances that I wondered if some of my friends weren't engaged and I kind of, I had a feeling that they weren't.

And that was when um, say we were to get instruments and they would just dawdle and take a long time getting the instruments.'

**Apathy.** Anne's perception of disengaged peers related to a general sense of apathy towards the process or product:

People that didn't contribute at all when working together. The group members that just didn't seem to care if they were, what instrument they were playing, or if, they had any sort of contribution to the piece at all. Just sort of people without an opinion...

The critical thinking element of the course in which students were encouraged to reflect on why students experiencing these activities might find themselves disengaged became apparent in the comments of Elizabeth, Michael and Heather:

I think that if a student is always like kind of sitting out in a group and not really participating, and even if they are participating with their idea getting shut down all the time, that's another huge indicator. [...] I think it's just if they're not eager to participate or if they're held back and the last one to be chosen in a group and they're not really enjoying it is the main thing. (Elizabeth)

... there was a point when I stopped caring and I feel like that came with the group activities, where if I came in with a lot of ideas and then a group would shoot down a couple of them I would just stop. It was like alright they don't like what I have to say. And maybe they would have liked the next thing, but I was just, I was out of it by that point that I wasn't thinking, yeah, I wasn't engaged anymore, I was like whatever, let's just do what other people want [...] And there was definitely some times, and I've noticed other people that they were out of place and they were definitely not engaged. When we did the jazz assignment, [...] there was definitely a few people in that group who were like "this is out of my league. It's not really my comfort zone." So even though we were friends still, they weren't willing to, they thought we had this knowledge up here and they couldn't measure up to it anymore. Um, and so they didn't bother contributing at that point cause they're, felt like we would probably judge them even though we were friends. (Michael)

Sometimes my friend Heather is pretty shy, um, and she would just sort of, she wouldn't be shut down, she would still be listening you know sort of passively to what we were saying, but she wouldn't be offering her own ideas. [...] Um, cause she felt like maybe she didn't have anything exciting to offer in a room where she was in a room full of people who she knew were very experienced with improv. (Heather)

These comments recognized that disaffection might occur as a result of participants' ideas not being valued, venturing too far out of one's comfort zone, and the possible perception that they were at an inferior level to their peers. As such, disengagement in the learning activities related to time-on-task and lack of focus, failure to contribute, limited appearance of investment in the process or product, unwillingness to express an opinion, and general apathy and lack of agency, being unable to have their voice heard. An interesting aspect to their comments, however, was not only the identification of circumstances in which people weren't engaged, but their reasoning to account for this detachment from the learning process.

# **Defining Musical Engagement**

Recognizing that it might be important for these participants to articulate their understanding of engagement if they were to recognize it within themselves, their peers, and eventually their students, I asked participants for their ideas of defining musical engagement specifically. Many struggled to provide an answer, reflecting the broadness of scope at arriving at a universal definition. Melanie would define it "as a dialogue where you're offering ideas, creative ideas, so creativity would be in there, and listening

to what someone else was offering up as well. And then responding to theirs in turn."

Other responses of musical engagement were as follows:

...I think it's just a willingness to [...] explore the different aspects of music and then what you want, I think it's just interested in music as a whole and how it affects people. I think that's the main thing, how music affects other people. (Elizabeth)

Experience and having like genuine fun and not feeling pressure all the time. But also learning something cause we can all have fun without learning, without having any knowledge gained whatsoever. So I think it's a careful balance between having a positive influence on your education and actually learning a new skill or working on a skill and having fun without the pressure of a mark or scariness, I don't know. (Anne)

In a conversation with Heather, she made reference to the concept of flow as Michael had in an earlier comment:

Um, there are different levels of engagement. Um, there's this great book by this guy with an unpronounceable last name called Flow [...] Um it's about optimal experience right? You become so engrossed in what you're doing that everything else sort of drops away and I haven't had that experience too frequently, um I had it more often this term than I have then before when I've had my musical experiences.

In their definitions of musical engagement, the participants identified the elements of flow, time, interest, exploration, comfort zones and enjoyment accompanied by learning.

# **Challenges to Engagement**

Despite the numerous comments regarding participants' perceptions of heightened engagement, there were occasions where they experienced challenges to their overall engagement in the course.

Fear. The feelings of fear, discomfort, vulnerability, and uncertainty also surfaced as challenges in the recollection of participant experiences that were generated in the previous case study. These elements are certainly present in Anne's comment that "I was terrified at the beginning. I didn't think I could do it and especially not having any sort of skills on other instruments made it a challenge for me to get comfortable playing something back on the xylophone even or on the piano or drum." Fear and insecurity were echoed by other interview respondents. At the outset of the course, the instructor recognized that fear appears to be inherently linked to composing and improvising in the music classroom. A full description of the course description is outlined in the course syllabus (Appendix D), but I thought it useful to include the instructor's remarks acknowledging these fears and plans to alleviate them:

Improvising and composing are often surrounded by an air of mystery and fear!

For many classically trained musicians, the most frightening thing one can do is to take away their music and ask them to play (I know, I've been one of those musicians). In fact, I originally thought of calling this course 'improvising and composing for the terrified'. Many other genres of music however, rely almost

entirely on spontaneous music making-improvising-that solidifies into accepted versions of a piece-composing - and these musicians do not experience fear at such ways of working. This course will involve exploring some ways of introducing the skills of improvising and composing in the music class and then developing these skills so that they may be acquired by students before the fear sets in. We will look at some of the literature that has been produced discussing the role of creative activity in the classroom alongside workshops where we try out a range of musical activities ourselves. You will learn how to plan for creative music making in the classroom and other educational contexts. The emphasis will be on exploring and experimenting and on reflecting on the learning process itself not on the polished quality of the final products of our music making. A safe space will be created in which you can experiment with and enjoy creativity in a music education context without fear of judgment or failure.

Even though such comments spoke to the initial fear they experienced around the subject, the participants were able to acknowledge their progression and the development that they experienced as a result of taking the course.

Oh yeah, I've grown, I find it's almost easier to play when I improvise on trumpet especially, like I forget the technique that I need to worry about and it's like I'm not so focused on 'Oh do I have good tone, great fingers all the time.' It's like 'Let's just think of a melody or something to do.' And I don't worry about range as much. I feel I can play so high when I'm improvising, cause I'm not so much like, is this a D? I'm not really sure, but it sounds pretty cool.' (Michael)

For Michael, his growth is acknowledged by his abandonment of that fear, which he found very freeing as a performer.

## **Recognizing Insecurities**

Another challenge to engagement in the course was seen in the ways in which the course caused students to confront their insecurities. This recognition assumed a variety of forms including performance anxiety as expressed by Anne: "I personally struggle with performance anxiety singing, so singing in front of other people is scary but having to go and do something else in front of people that's not singing is even scarier." When I asked the students if there was anything that worried them about having to teach improvisation and composition Connie responded that "if I were to teach music in general, learning all the instruments. That's an insecurity that I have right now cause I still feel like I have a lot to learn if I were to teach different instruments."

For Melanie it was not only venturing into the instrumental world that was a source of concern, but also the variety of musical styles she would be required to offer:

I think what would worry me the most is feeling confident enough to know about every single style that I was teaching especially coming from a background where I didn't, I was never in a jazz band I was only ever in choirs I've only ever seen people improv, I've never actually improv.'d on an instrument before this class so I think my biggest worry is not having the skills myself and trying to encourage them.

Further comments from the participants revealed feelings and explanations of their nervousness and vulnerability:

Um, I actually get very nervous, but I think I feel more nervous because I'm tapping into who I am as an individual and when, as the course progressed I felt more comfortable because I was already with people that I knew and I was able to choose groups on my own and to be with people that I knew a little bit more. I knew they understood me. (Melanie)

Melanie's comment began from the feeling of nervousness, but through the provision of choosing groups, a comfortable environment, she grew more confident and recognized the sense of accomplishment that resulted from this process.

In deepening the conversation, I asked some participants why they believed people are afraid to improvise and Anne responded as follows:

Um, I think it's, um, as a musician I think or someone like me maybe, who is so used to reading music it's such a departure from what I'm used to. And it's something you're on the spot. I don't think anyone really likes to be put on the spot ever, so, um, being put on the spot and I think it really shows the skills you have and puts you in the position where yeah, the person next to you could do a way better job than you just did and there is a variety of skills and skill levels in one classroom.

JL: Okay. So do you think people feel vulnerable and that might be a reason why they're frightened to do it?

A: Yeah, I think so. I know I was, so.

JL: And then do you think people, your last comment implied maybe that there's an element of competition and comparison among people?

A: I think, yeah, maybe not so much competition, but even in our classroom I felt like there was some comparison. Certain groups in an exercise, just the combination of the people in that group and the experiences they've had made their piece a lot stronger than maybe another group.

These conversations generated insight into the ways in which participants experience insecurity with performing, creating, improvising and composing including: vulnerability; lack of preparation; fear of comparison; departure from the known into the unfamiliar; departure from what is traditionally expected of them; and feelings of nervousness because of the personal nature of improvisation. Although these feelings and insecurities created potentially uncomfortable situations for the participants, their ability to recognize their own insecurities was important for the eventual realization that they had gained confidence and created opportunities for their voices to be heard.

#### Assessment

Student responses to interviews indicated that they were critically thinking about how their experiences could be transferred to their future educational contexts as teachers. Not only did they reflect on what these opportunities meant for them in the moment but what it would be like in their future classrooms as teachers themselves. This process seemed to involve for these participants a baseline assessment of their existing skills and insecurities at the outset of the course.

**Self-Assessment.** In response to the question of participants' experience with improvisation before this class, Melanie replied:

Nothing, other than singing along with the radio and maybe improving on some chords that I heard or, um sitting down at the piano and playing along with other music that I really liked, other CDs and singing along. I wouldn't really improv. and I never had experience doing that in a classical setting or in a group setting ever.

Heather responded that she had "only a little," and Anne remarked "not a whole lot. In my high school music class one of my teachers did a bit." Elizabeth stated that for her "it was brand new." Finally, Michael replied that "when I was in high school I had taken, I did two years in the jazz course that we did which was basically focused on combo playing and improvising, so I had done improvisation, like jazz improvisation um, using scales and basic blues forms and, so I was pretty confident there, but not, classically I can't improv. to save my life."

In general, many of the respondents felt that they had not had a lot of experience in the areas of improvisation and composition. This assessment was important to then recognize what students have learned throughout their educational journey. Melanie responded:

I learned how important improv. is. I learned how nerve-wracking it can be, being put in that situation and I also learned how to aid students being creative in a classroom setting and that it doesn't have to be the traditional lecture style or reproduction of music.

The participants' abilities to assess their own insecurities played a critical role in their identification of their assets and limitations as future teachers of these skills. This

meant recognizing their strengths and acknowledging their shortcomings. For example, Connie identified that learning to play the guitar by ear at an early age helped her when it came to improvising. Even though she recognized she had the ability to do it, the idea of nerves and fear crept into the performance aspect of creating in the classroom:

Again I knew I had the ability to do it but still when you're put on the spot, it's, it's always a nerve-wracking experience for me, but once I can come out of my shell and actually do it and become comfortable in that it changes things.

Anne assessed her potential in these areas by acknowledging that the process by which she learns music is not the process that would be necessarily emphasized in this course. When I asked her what was her feeling was about improvisation before she took this course:

Um, something I would not be good at, uh, fear, I've just in my musical skills, I'm much, I'm a reader, a huge reader, like I don't learn, I don't have great audio skills, I don't learn by listening, I learn by reading the notes. When I'm learning a piece it's very attached to my music and fairly strong sight-singing skills.

Michael also assessed his own musical skills prior to entry into the course and was able to use that information to learn his limitations and determine what he still needed to learn.

Oh I learned there's a lot of holes in my own teaching. Within my ear training I lack in that department a lot. And that was really revealing because I needed that skill in that course and it was like "uh oh" I can't lift this like these guys can.

That was something, I need to fix that.

In assessing their existing knowledge they were able to analyze their strengths and weaknesses and carve out educational pathways that would cater to and develop these areas. Assessment of their current position in relation to educational experiences then allowed participants to determine their course of action, enabling them to be agentic learners.

Personal recognition and identification. Throughout the interviews, participants reflected on certain aspects of their identities as they recognized themselves as musicians, composers, and improvisers as a result of the course. Heather commented that: "I really think, as I said before, I felt like a musician in this course more than I have in any other course in my undergraduate degree. And my degree's in music education right? I mean, even in my lessons sometimes, I didn't feel like a very good tuba player."

While Heather compared the musician identity she discovered in this course to other courses she had taken, Michael compared identity roles in terms of seeing himself as a teacher and his growing confidence in claiming an identity as a composer:

And I'm watching the problems as they go and I can totally see them happening in a high school. Sometimes I feel when we get in those groups it just drops to that level where we're like 'let's just make lots of sound' and it's like that's what they're going to do and it was like 'no we're all musicians, we can take this up a notch' but I totally see how high school kids can handle that freedom as well and uh, yeah, I learned all the different strategies, the importance of I think of the composition aspect because I've never considered myself anywhere near a composer, but being in that opportunity, like you need to compose, you need to teach kids how to compose, I guess I can do this and I put composers on a

pedestal and it was like I don't think they're up there, now that I've had an opportunity to do that.

## **Role Negotiation**

Many participants observed the importance of role association within the classroom activities. Working with groups allowed them to see the shift in group dynamics as many students negotiated how they would demonstrate or, in some cases, not dominate with their leadership skills. In consideration that 28 students with diverse backgrounds and varying levels of expertise related to improvising and composing were invited to work together, participants had to assess their own skills in relation to each other while also analysing the skill set of their peers. Evidence of these thought processes was reflected in comments such as:

I had to prove myself in some way and like fit in, which that only lasted like the first few classes, and then after that you realize that everyone's kind of in the same boat, [...] So that made everyone kind of I think come up to the challenge and realize that you have to make a mistake in order to learn about it and there's no right or wrong answer. (Elizabeth)

I also kind of had a view that it might turn out that a few people who are really good at improvisation might be kind of like leading the class and would always be the best group, and other people wouldn't, it'd be harder for them to catch on, not that I thought that was going to be me. I thought I might be one of the people that was like kind of taking steps back, but going into the class it became quite clear that improvisation is something for everyone which was cool. (Connie)

There were times when some of the personalities were very, very reserved and I didn't want to overtake them because I knew that they had good things to contribute as well, so I had to just to step back and even though at times it was awkward or it was silent I would just bring up a question to kind of lead them and then they would get an idea and start. And I saw new leaders actually that I'd never seen before in that group of students. (Melanie)

In a discussion with participants regarding the process one considers when presenting ideas and accepting other people's ideas, Heather and Elizabeth provided the following perspective:

That was an interesting process. It depended on the group dynamic, right? So, some cases we'd have a group where nobody's feelings would get hurt, if we're like 'No Michael, that's a stupid idea. We're not doing it.' Um, cause he's just the kind of guy who will not have hurt feelings if someone says that. Whereas there were [...] some shy kids in that class and [...] I was impressed that they could step out of their shell [...[and so in a group with people who are shyer, or who are very, very quiet, I would try to speak less because my tendency is to want to talk, and to throw things out there and fill awkward silences. Um and I was very conscious of that when I was in groups with people I knew were shy or who looked a little scared. I just sort of backed off and waited and let there be a silence because eventually they'd fill it. (Heather)

I think sometimes people's ideas if they were shot down they were offended which is not the point at all of brainstorming, but I think people because it's music and since you're so vulnerable, and you're like so connected to it when an idea's shot down you take it personally and it's not meant to be that way at all but I think sometimes it can feel like that. So I sometimes I found that, cause I, usually take on a leadership role, that's my personality, and so I think sometimes people felt that it was offensive if their idea wasn't taken to course or whatever to the performance, so that was challenging I think for a lot of people. (Elizabeth)

These comments reflected the participants' recognition of their own leadership style in addition to their attempts at nurturing the leadership skills in others. Ever conscious of not wanting to hurt others' feelings, they knew these issues would surface when they were leaders in their own classrooms. It became apparent that they recognized the importance of leveling out the playing field for the participants or allowing others space for agency. They viewed this task as a challenge and considered the value in learning from others and their own mistakes. As emerging educational leaders they began to consider how not to take over group situations, rather allowing others to exercise their own agency, discover the answers themselves or contribute their ideas.

Role negotiation from student to teacher. The first step in negotiating the role between moving from student to teacher and the change in agentic power is recognizing that this was being modeled to them by their teacher. Several participants recognized the teacher as an effective model in how they would envision their teaching role. Anne

recalled that the professor was "very much a facilitator" and explained the role as follows:

Explaining what the task had to be, not necessarily 'these are my skills as a teacher and you need to learn them.' There was 'this is the exercise we're going to do. Break off into small groups, or figure it out on your own, or I'll be here to help if you need help.'

This active learning strategy was important for Michael as well who recognized that he learned best through experiential, authentic learning and was able to empathize with his future students:

Yeah, I need to take the time, like someone could tell me something and it means nothing until I go and do it and then I'm like 'that's why this is important' and I feel like I can even draw upon those and be like 'what did I do when I did this' and 'what were my problems? What would students' problems be?' As opposed to 'just do it like this. Oh okay, like you said it works so I guess it works.'

For Melanie agency was crucial to engagement: "there was a good balance between her telling us things versus us learning on our own with experience." Her observation of the professor demonstrating this role effectively elicited this response as to why she felt engaged in the course:

It's not a teacher leading us but a teacher facilitating our creativity to further the course. And um, the only time I've ever really felt that in other courses is through my instrument courses because we're able to do a little bit more creatively as we

learn the new instrument, it's very hands on but other than that I've never experienced that especially in lecture settings.

Michael reflected on this teacher modeling as a highlight of what he learned in the course. He spoke to the effectiveness of learning models through a comparison of other courses he had experienced:

Um and even in just like a teaching role, what you have to do as a teacher in this situation. And like, I think Dr. Z demonstrates a lot of the ideas that are like 'that's what I should do when I'm out there.' Um, I really, it felt like she encompasses what she tries to teach in her teaching methods, um, which I felt like especially outside this department. When I go to chemistry it's like 'here's all the knowledge you need. Write it down. Go and regurgitate it on a test so you can get a mark.' And I felt like the information we needed wasn't just being taught to us, it was being shown, it was demonstrated.

This position often places future educators as students in the classroom so that they can experience the challenges that their students might experience. This perspective places student teachers as the learners to better understand the position their students will occupy. In this way they directly experience the shift in agentic power from a passive to an active learner. Melanie contributed the following perspective:

We weren't, like I said, as nervous to use improvisation and I think putting ourselves on the spot equipped us to one day to know how the students will feel if we were to do an exercise like that. Um, yeah I think, almost every, if you went

outlooks. And it actually encouraged a lot of conversations that I had never had with some of those music education students. Ones that hadn't really thought about what it's actually going to be like to be in a classroom and to have everything musically that those kids are going to learn come from you. So it really has to be someone who's thought about it for a long time.

In deepening the conversation on how this course compared to other courses they have experienced, many students spoke to this class in particular as providing the opportunity to view themselves as teachers. Heather remarked "I think the most important thing that I learned is definitely that, how to be a facilitator more than a teacher in a classroom." Connie commented:

I think this class was extremely different from anything else that we've done throughout our degree. Um I think one of the big differences is that through this class I began to really actually think about teaching myself, because in our lessons and in our um theory, history, GIM [musicianship] classes we're gaining information and it's all information to better ourselves as musicians, which is a great thing, awesome. Then this class also took bettering ourselves as musicians with how we would teach that and how we would give that back, so the musical concepts of it could be as easy or as difficult as we wanted it to be in that class, but the concept of how we would teach it that was really core material that I think was new and exciting for a lot of people to learn.

In their reflections of the professor as a model of facilitated learning and in comparison of the effectiveness of this role from other classes, one can view their thought process evolving as they develop agency as they move from a student who gains information to a teacher who considers how to teach that information.

**Transfer of learning ownership.** As students who eventually envision themselves as classroom leaders, their role identification is an important one for teacher education candidates to negotiate. The following conversation reveals Connie's thought process in her role during certain situations:

JL: It sounds sort of like your role then would change in...

C: from like a dictator to...

JL: Yeah, so how do you see your role in improvising in the classroom?

C: Yeah, well I'd create the structure, which would have, wouldn't be set in stone but would have specific boundaries, especially time boundaries, um, and then it was just kind of the same way as how Dr. Z and you would go from group to group, like often times we were, someone was just watching

J: right

C: and no one really took notice, and um, but I think if it was in an elementary school situation you'd want somehow to have volunteers or someone so they're being watched over a little bit. I forget the word, but...

JL: supervised

C: supervised, exactly, yeah so like a supervisor and then when you're asked you can state your opinion or if they're just kind of looking lost you can get them going

JL: sure, yeah

C: a little bit, or if you're just really excited and have an idea to tell them then you can share, but not to, that they're waiting for you to come in to get things going or they won't do anything unless they have permission I think is what I mean.

This idea of the student seeking permission to "get things going" or to exercise agency through action indicates a transfer of ownership from the teacher to that of the student. When I asked Heather and Melanie how they believed the activities of improvisation and composition can engage students of any age in learning she provided the following response:

Well it's just a different kind of classroom, right? Because all of a sudden it's on the kid to do the learning and to do the teaching, some of it too. [...] And when you, you really open up the pool of experience there right when you say okay well the teacher is the oldest person in the room usually and the most experienced therefore, but the breadth of experience is way bigger when you let the students take over teaching too. So I don't know if you necessarily learn more in a classroom where the students are in charge of the teaching and the learning, but you definitely engage with what you're doing more because it's you, it's your peers, um, it requires a lot more from the student I think than your usual passive 'teacher knows everything, passes it on' kind of structure. (Heather)

They're being creative, they're, they're that part that they offer up, whatever it is, is going to be representing them and that's how they stay engaged because it's of them.. and your name's on it. Your name's on it. Yeah. Why did

you make that choice? That represents who you are and people see that and you've put it out there. You can't change it afterwards. (Melanie)

Connie contributed to the discussion of this theme through the notion that student ownership of the process transfers to their internal constructs of motivation, success, and accomplishment:

I think the main thing is that it actually becomes their project and not something it's not your project. Um, it's not your own accomplishment when you're when you see the end product, it's their accomplishment, so therefore it was their motivation, their creativity and if it doesn't work out for them well then they can think about what could they do next time as opposed to 'well I didn't feel like doing that anyways and the teacher pretty much forced that upon me so why would I want to do something that I don't want to do, like if the teacher assigned the music, assigned the parts, everything, I don't think, in the improvisation setting, I don't think that's appropriate.

For Connie, improvisation activities in the classroom have the potential to foster conditions for student-centered learning. This transfer of ownership has the potential to lead to engaging experiences for students and to nurture agency as the creators, managers, developers, and demonstrators of their learning.

### Value Identification

In order to consider whether the participants would incorporate improvisation and compositional tools in their classrooms, they initially had to assert the value that they saw in these skills. When asked if these students would use improvisation and composition in

their future music education paths Michael responded, "Oh 100 per cent. All the time, especially because I took, I'm taking the jazz pedagogy course right now. We do even more improvisation and a lot of focus on it because it's jazz. So, yeah, I learned how important it is in that setting." Anne agrees and adds, "Yeah, definitely. I've done some composing on my own outside of this class and definitely learning the skills that we learned within the class, how to come up with rhythms and that kind of thing helps for sure." According to Connie:

I think if I were to ever teach that as one of the key things I'd love to focus on is improvisation, so that it kind of changed my outlook on it, how, the importance of it... The way I would go about teaching music has changed my philosophy toward music. It's given me a more open mind.

The participants have articulated the value, not only in taking the course for their own personal skill development, but also for the benefit of their future students. For some, this course represented a changed outlook and philosophical revelation.

# **Projection and Application of Ideas**

Several participants spent time in the interview articulating how they envisioned using these activities in their own classrooms when they become teachers. Initially they considered what they would use for their eventual music careers:

Well, icebreaker activities I think would, the musical icebreaker activities we used at the beginning really stimulated creativity. Um, I've mentioned the Musical Futures program a couple times. I would love to do that in my classroom. [...] like kids want to play something that they can relate to so learning the guitar,

learning the bass, learning to sing in the right way, like and like what I mean by in the right way is trying it out and then the teacher comes and can find an even better way. [...] would be very important I think if I were to teach. (Connie)

There's elements of improvisation and learning and whatever that I think I could definitely use some of the skills I learned. [...] Um, I think some of the skills that we learned during the course would definitely help with skills you could use in a choral setting so, like listening and understanding, like learning based on hearing, auditory learning, which is stuff we did in the class. I think that's huge in terms of creating a sound in choir. And I think knowing music and the world of music, having any sort of extra skills and tools is a good thing because you don't know where you're going to end up necessarily. (Anne)

While Anne contemplated how she would use these improvisation and composition activities in a children' choral environment, Michael projected that "I imagine at some point I'll be teaching jazz so that's a given we're going to need to use it." From this course Michael "learned a lot because I feel everything we did is an activity that you can then use and I thought that was the best part of it 'Look at this. This is why it works and this is how it works" and it was good in that way and I think the pedagogy behind it and the ideas were really important I thought."

The previous comment especially highlights that the participants were not only considering what to use, but why they would use it. In deepening the understanding of how improvisation and composing in the classroom can be engaging for students Connie explained "I think it also increases focus because we were always again like with being

engaged, you were focused on only one thing." Comments by Melanie and Elizabeth demonstrated belief that these are important skills to nurture in future students:

The reason I want to get into teaching is because I've lived those insecurities [...] Um, yeah, so I feel like that whole experience is what I want to help and I want to be able to just give them the tools to become who they want to be through music. (Melanie)

I think the main one is just pushing them out of their comfort zone. I just think it's so important especially in this day and age like everyone is so concerned about what everyone's going to think of them, [...] I think it's so important that kids are inspired and motivated to get out of their comfort zones and be proud of what they're doing cause I think that's such a rare occurrence for a kid to be just like genuinely proud on stage in an art form. Like it's not very common anymore, which is unfortunate, so I think improvising really pushes that along. (Elizabeth)

For Michael, these activities can provide his future students with opportunities to which he was not privileged: the awareness that there are different musical styles and ways to use and explore their instruments, thus expanding their previous conceptions and possibly limitations:

I feel like the Musical Futures course was like mind-blowing for me. That has become a huge part of, I guess my philosophy behind how I want to teach and what I want to teach. That was like, eye-opening to that side because I love pop music. I never learned pop music. Like the first time I played that Maroon 5 song was the first time I played a pop song. I'm a trumpet player. I don't get that

kind of rep. And if you hear a trumpet in a pop tune it's the Beatles Penny Lane. ....But in Maroon 5 I didn't have to play some crazy trumpet lick, I could play the main melody. It was like, I can just do what I want to do. We did Adele. I was doing shot notes in the background, which wasn't part of the original song but it sounded really cool and it was like "look I'm not just a classical trumpet player or a jazz player, there's other things I can do. There's other ways to teach these things.

Anne considered that the activities from the course she plans to use in the choral context can act as a way of leveling the playing field and serve as a point of departure:

I think it makes almost a level playing field for some people, cause I think if you're put in a position where you're say in a choir or a classroom setting and you're asked to read music and you have a kid sitting next to you who doesn't know how to read music or hasn't been doing it a very long time, that can be scary for them. And I think in a classroom setting like we had, where you're moving together through the different exercises and maybe an exercise is really easy for some people in that class. Maybe clapping a four bar rhythm is not, or a four beat rhythm or whatever is not difficult for one person, but you're starting there and everyone has the same starting point [...] I think it's a really great place to start to develop these skills.

Elizabeth envisioned using the activities because they can nurture self-esteem and self-confidence in her students:

So I think in the education system it's so important cause it gets kids to realize their full potential and not just be told 'that's right, that's wrong.' So I think once that starts happening it shuts you off to like new things cause you're always so scared of being wrong.

The previous comments provided very personal reasons why these soon-to-be teacher-education students would use the activities learned from their undergraduate course. They perceived them as effective ways of maintaining student focus, offering fairness in an equal vantage point, and exploring music possibilities in other contexts and sonic landscapes.

Finally, several testimonies were made regarding how they would implement and introduce these activities. Michael recognized the preconceived notions students may have towards improvising and composing and discussed how these topics can be introduced in order to engage students:

I think given the right medium and like setting the challenges at an appropriate level and definitely weaning them onto it because I feel kids already have a stigma against or with composing cause they're always given the music and they're like 'this person wrote this and this is what it is. That's what Kiwanis wants' or something. 'I'm not Vaughan Williams. I cannot create.' So definitely tiering things and using topics that they're interested in. Like the Harry Potter one was, we were all over that and we're all university students and it was like we were so engaged in like 'we're making a song on Harry Potter.' And we all knew Harry Potter so well that we were like 'what crazy way can we make this better

based on our knowledge of Harry Potter?' And we definitely, connecting it to other knowledge. Other things I already knew and was comfortable with.

Many comments focused on the consideration of how to facilitate the activities learned in the course. For Connie, these activities can be very useful "if it's facilitated in the right way." Melanie notes that modifying the activities to represent her personality and her students' needs would be most effective: "I think it was an invaluable course and I'll use probably mostly her teaching strategies when I'm starting out and then tailor them according to my personality and my students in the future." Melanie also recognizes the need to tailor the activities to her teaching situation and how that will be enacted:

I tried to think about how um like logistically I'm going to organize activities like that and fit it into the curriculum having Dr. Z go over the curriculum and then associate what we've done with different parts of the curriculum I think has really helped. So on like a grounds basis I think I'm going to take some of the exercises that she has done in order to aid that creativity, um, I think instead of focusing on 'Okay guys we're going to play this piece' we'll also have times where I say 'Okay, let's learn the basics of, I don't know, Latin music' and then kind of try and get people to learn that creatively or like if I had a jazz band, I know that the jazz band director here has done that recently. Start from the bottom up. So assume that they have absolutely no improv. skills at all and give them those basics so that they feel comfortable with the basics and then start building it up and maybe give them more difficult repertoire, but also opportunities to solo small opportunities so they don't get scared at first.

Michael also described a scenario in which he would use the activities to alleviate pressure and immediately have the students feeling successful:

I think I would use it a lot more in a classical setting as well and almost in the sense of the call and response, the callback ideas, to give people just a musical ability to be like 'yeah here is what I created off the bat' and I think the improvisation if you're going composition-wise, improvisation's a really strong place to start, [...] And I think, and I'd definitely do it on the instruments. So many times when I've composed I've done it away from the instrument and it's not helpful at all.

These comments demonstrated the thought process of transferring the curriculum and content from the course into the pedagogy or process of teaching that content. For these participants, if improvisation, composing and creating are facilitated in the right way then it can have success in fostering students' perception of their own musicality.

## **Consideration of Potential Challenges**

In considering how they would facilitate these activities, the participants did recognize the challenges associated with the implementation of these tasks. When I asked if they foresaw any problems in using improvisation and composition in music education environments, they provided the following responses:

The only problem I could see is if a kid is really feeling uncomfortable and they're pushed too far it could also um prevent them from going any further with it. They could just drop out and quit and that's it. And they won't touch an instrument again, guaranteed [...] if they're pushed too far out of their comfort

zone. So I think as a teacher it's your job to kind of monitor where everyone's at and move at their pace including yourself and not to push them along too far.

(Elizabeth)

I think the problem could be if you didn't present it properly or if you tried to throw something too big at them. Like how Dr. Z started with just a couple notes, [...] versus saying 'these are all the notes that you can use" because they get lost and they get scared and they feel like they can't do it. So I feel like if it's not presented properly then it could be very intimidating and they'll be less willing to want to do it in the future. (Melanie)

Well I guess having a clear rubric or understanding of the skills you want your students to develop and I think improvisation is hard cause It's not like writing a paper, and like proper grammar or something check, [...] there's a huge variety of like skill level within one classroom so I think it's difficult on a like broad scale to determine rules, or a rubric that applies to everyone [...]So I think knowing your students and the skill level they start with and monitoring that would make a difference. It would be still difficult though. (Anne)

Elizabeth identified the concern of pushing students out of their comfort zones, which could be a deterrent for students' continued musical participation and Anne viewed the challenge of assessment with different learning styles, diverse skills, and different levels of expertise that enter the classroom. While Melanie saw proper facilitation as a challenge, the topic of compromising surfaced from many participants. The first area in which the students felt the need to compromise was in their reconciliation of departing

first needed to assess their own previous background and experiences with music. In discussing previous improvisatory experiences in her high school band situation Heather admits that she didn't consider exploring sounds in a soundscape project as improvisation because it wasn't part of the jazz tradition. For her she was accustomed to associating certain activities to certain styles. Connie related this course to a departure from the classical tradition and what is expected from students in conforming to the traditions of their teachers:

In the context of [this] university it was the best thing because we're so, um, we do so much reading, our own, reading music, finding trying to find the best interpretation, trying to conform to what all of our teachers are telling us, which is a good thing, um, and, but it kind of does stifle creativity in some ways [...] and this was just a completely new area that hasn't been explored I don't think by a lot of us classically trained people.

Melanie also spoke to the notion of conformity and creativity and how exposure to several different musical styles could nurture a well-rounded musician:

That's hard because we are, as musicians, we're so programmed to produce the exact same result every single time, and me personally, I've never been good at that. I've never been good at performance because I feel the heaviness of 'I have to conform to this and this and this and this' but then I've seen some of my friends who are very able to do that who were very insecure in this course because they had, they weren't used to tapping into that creativity.[...] So I think that

creativity is extremely important and it transfers over to when we are doing more classical stuff, but without it I think an artist is kind of void. [...] You can play the instrument, you can play the piece, but if you're not putting in those little things then that's what makes them different. That's what makes the piece different.

From Connie and Melanie's perspectives this traditional connection could interfere with stimulating creativity, however, it also affected the manner in which people were able to view their musicality:

The thing about probably the North American culture when people say they're not musical and I really have thought a lot about why people say they're not musical [...] I think a huge part of it comes down to the way that we were educated in music and how we were told that "oh because you can't read this or because you don't have good technique or good sound, you're not musical". Um, but this class just completely reversed that and I think that the Musical Futures program completely reverses that. (Connie)

When Connie reflected on how she observed a Musical Futures program used in a grade 7 and 8 elementary music classroom she commented on the impact programs can have on students' senses of efficacy:

Seeing all of the motivation and the excitement and just how happy the kids were with music is completely opposite from my experience in elementary school, where people were saying 'Oh I'm not musical. I can't do this. This sucks.'

Heather connected learning music by ear, a key principle in the Musical Futures program, to her previous musical training and her concept of musicianship:

You know cause I've always used my ear and in piano when I was a kid I was told 'You lean on your ear. Like you need to learn to read,' because I would just memorize stuff.[...]Um, but yeah, I always felt that relying on my ear was a bad thing or it wasn't something that real musicians do and this course really changed how I feel about that. [...]I think this kind of education, this kind of stuff that you're doing by ear, um, is great and I wish it had started sooner for me, like when I was little. Because I automatically went to my ear and I was sort of trained away from it. [...] Um, and I'm very glad I learned to read, but at the same time, um, I think you can work to your students' strengths and that's what I'm going to take away from this course.

Heather's natural tendency to learn by ear was "trained" out of her, thus compromising her idea of her own musicianship. This experience with prior training and music education was important for the participants to consider as they all had extensive music backgrounds that include formal, private training. Anne reflects on the expectations of the Royal Conservatory of Music and the school systems in general with respect to how students demonstrate musical understanding:

I think the way our school systems are structured, elementary and high school, at least in the experiences I've had, was very much reading music and learning how to read music and not necessarily developing those skills. I guess a little bit in my choir experiences. There was identifying intervals, and like the RCM exams I've

done there is the singback exercises and playback exercises, so there is a little bit of it integrated, but if you look at an RCM exam the majority of the exam is based on your pieces.

Upon reflection of participants' backgrounds in musical training, they struggled with the ideas of conformity, mode of musical transmission and acquisition and the relationship of these to creativity and sense of musicianship.

Structure versus freedom. As the students compared their previous musical experiences with the curriculum and pedagogy of this course, they were presented with the task of compromising structure and the freedom that was afforded to the students. The participants acknowledged that they did experience a sense of freedom in this course. When I asked if they noticed a difference in the way they or their friends felt about making music this way, the responses included:

So afterwards we both kind of felt that music was a lot more free, than just like, and free is a weird word, but in our voice lessons and stuff—even it wasn't just "kay this is the right, this is the wrong," it was like there's so many different ways to do it and come about it. And even though like someone else might do it differently than you, you can still do it your own way and come to the same conclusion. So that was really cool, so even in like for example the covering of Rolling in the Deep everyone had the same chord and song to do, but everyone did it in totally a different way, which kind of showed that there's really no right or wrong in music which for me was really freeing because it kind of opened me up, and let my guard down a little bit with classical music because classical music

has all these like, 'you should do this' and 'you must do this' and that totally broke it down. (Elizabeth)

Many participants saw the value in having the freedom to explore and experiment, but Michael's comment reveals that it didn't come without its initial apprehension:

I guess the music ideas only really came in when I took the improv. course, when Dr. Z was like 'just think of a melody and shape the, your blues improvisation' and I was like 'What do you mean? I'm not just going to use a blues scale and like worry about all the chord changes? Cause I think like originally I was like chord changes, just remember what they are all the time. If you ever run into trouble just land on a root and you'll be good and then the ideas were very small and fragmented and then I was always kind of upset, that wasn't like as cool as I wanted it to be because I was very strict with stay inside the lines all the time and don't, don't really explore. And then when it became 'just come up with a melody and be musical' it was like 'Oh Okay. It was freeing and it was like, became easier and I thought it was better as well. That my improvisation just improved.

While that permission to experiment was initially quite foreign, Michael recognized that the freedom from structured guidelines was no longer prohibitive for creativity and confidence. In response to questioning what the benefits of musical improvisation are for students, he said:

Creativity. 100 per cent. Giving them that chance because a lot of them don't think, like whatever, composers write, nobody else does, I'm not creative, I'm just

an instrumentalist. You can be just as creative, if not more creative than if you're given the opportunity to. Um, I think improvisation is a huge confidence boost. Um, you're not stuck to guidelines. You do what you want to do and you can show people what you can do. You're not asked to do something and you better perform to this level. This is my level. Here's what I can do and here's what I can do with that. And I think it's very freeing in that sense as well.

Connie noted that the course was so successful because "we always had a structure and then we would create within that structure, um, I thought that was awesome for me. I really liked that." The following comment from Elizabeth suggests that there is a delicate balance between structure and freedom:

I think you need some guidelines for sure. I mean bottom line is it is a class, it is a course, for me it was a class and a course and it's for a credit and it needs to be definitely some guidelines, this part of being marked you know, you need to follow this on a rubric kind of thing, um, so for the assignment we did in class which was going around the circle and um or ones that weren't being marked it was different. It was very free and open to whatever you wanted to do and even the ones we did that were for marks technically, like the song-writing and that kind of thing, in the course, there were guidelines and everyone knew it but it was done in such a way that it wasn't obvious. There was still no right or wrong, it was 'this is the suggested area of where I think you should go' which I think is still a rule and it's still a guideline but it's not said in the same way that 'you have to do this this way.'

Heather explored this topic in her response of whether improvisation is something one is able to be taught:

Um, I don't know. It depends on how structured you want to be right? Um, cause I, in this course we did a lot of exercises that were really guided, right? We were given a lot of instruction to start with, but I don't think we were told what to improvise or how to improvise. We were just told 'here's where your boundaries are' or 'here's where you can start' and that was really helpful for actually getting started, whereas with this solo I had to do with jazz band I was just told 'Ah, come up with something that's in the key.'

For Heather, those guidelines were not limiting as barriers, but were helpful springboards of departure. She then grappled with whether something can be called improvisation and does it jeopardize creativity if there are too many rules:

That's an interesting question because really if you're being told exactly what to do is it still improvising? Is it still creative? Um, and I think what I saw in this class was even if you give everyone a fairly rigid structure, like some of the early stuff we were given a lot more structure than later on in the course, just because it made it easier to have more rules to play by and even then, we all came up our groups all came up with completely different things. Like watching these performances it was fantastic because no one did what I did or what my group did. It was really cool. There was a lot of variety there...so I don't think necessarily that having a bit of structure prevents you from being creative.

The responses indicate that participants envisioned using these activities in their classrooms as an opportunity to provide a little more freedom to what has traditionally been for them an overly structured program. Anne especially advocates for a happy medium between the two as the danger in too much freedom is "letting kids to do much on their own it could become just free for all and not learning." This revelation confronted them negotiating structure and freedom and how that affected creativity and the quantity and quality of student learning

Compromise in programming. The consideration placed on the idea of balancing structure and freedom suggested that the participants were negotiating the type of programming they would eventually offer to their students. Often when asked if they could see any challenges in using improvising and composition activities in the classroom, the subject of balance in programming arose. A conversation with Connie demonstrates what this balance entails:

C: And um I think people, I think that Musical Futures program and the impro...like these philosophies in improvisation could just completely change music in education and, but at the same time, that course, I still feel like a classical and note-based, and rhythmic and, um, is really important, but I think it has to be seriously coupled with improvisation because we were able to excel in that so much as a class because we had so much background in music. So if I were to be teaching that it would be really important to keep in mind. And I would really want for my students to still know their music, to know what a rest is, to know all the notation as well as making up their own forms of notation.

JL: Sure. So do you think that in order to be successful at improvising, you need to have the technical stuff before or can it come afterwards?

C: I think it just needs to coincide.

Her fear in using too much improvisation in the classroom is explained in the following conversation:

C: If it's used too much and by that I mean if it's the only thing you're learning um in music. Like if I were a teacher and all that I did was Musical Futures, and maybe I don't know everything about Musical Futures, actually I shouldn't use that as an example, but it, sorry, if I were to only do the improvising activities that we did in class I don't think that would be very good. I couldn't do that because we never did, really we didn't need to because we all know, but we never looked at the treble clef, the bass clef, learning music, sight-reading, cause like sight-reading is invaluable to education I think and yeah...

JL: And you made it very clear before that the two really need to co-exist, right?

C: Yeah, I'm like, I feel passionate about that. I think they have to cause I think they're both extremely important.

Anne echoed Connie's sentiments in the need for balance between classical and popular music, as well as free improvisation and notation-based systems:

I mean, I guess the only problem I can see is spending too much time on that and not on western classical reading music because it is skills I think every musician needs to have and I definitely agree. But in a society where, not necessarily a

society, in a school system where so much of it is based on your reading level, like there needs to be a balance I think.

The discussion of reading ability was also considered in Melanie's reflection, in which she contemplated the importance of acquiring notation and aural listening skills.

Before I thought that maybe being able to play exactly what's on a page to be just as important as improv., but now I think it's almost more important because I think it taps into a certain creativity that kids have and their individuality versus who can produce the exact same thing that's written down on a piece of paper. So I actually think it's more important now than any other form and I think it also taps into what Dr. Z was talking about how what kids learn more when they're having fun.

Elizabeth noted that incorporating Musical Futures projects into a program, where history and theory elements are infused on a need-to-know basis, could potentially involve and engage students who are not partial to traditional classical musical offerings:

Totally, like I think projects like the Rolling in the Deep cover that we did and Somebody that I used to know, pop stuff and jazz and musical theatre, which people tend to gravitate towards would interest so many people who aren't interested in classical or opera, that sort of thing, which music education is kind of tailored to at this point, I think. Um, and so I think having improv. as a course, people wouldn't think of it as music. They'd think of it as a fun course that they can learn in and jam, like jam session that kids talk about these days. It's not

scales and theory even though you're incorporating it self-consciously, it's not really about scales and history, and theory and all that stuff, it's just easy.

In general, participants considered balance in their programming in terms of musical styles and western classical music, technique with exploration, and aural listening to that of musical notation literacy.

## **Summary**

The participants in the improvisation and composing course echoed similar sentiments as the secondary school students in the first case as to their rationale for engagement in the music course: enjoyment, social camaraderie, provision of choice, variety, safe risk in experimenting, control over learning, contextualized learning, and a sense of success. Likewise, there were challenges to their engagement in terms of their vulnerability, performance anxiety, and fear in being compared or judged.

There were additional dimensions, however, to the fundamentals in which the undergraduate students experienced heightened levels of engagement and agency.

Heather's following comment nicely illustrates the transfer in thinking that accompanies a transition between being a student and a future teacher:

I think the connection is really important to be engaged. I think you have to communicate effectively in order to be engaged with your classmates....and um, I plan to take that into the classroom and just listen to people a little more closely. Um, and she (conference presenter) says your job as a teacher is to mold yourself to your student and figure out how you can best communicate with them. ... And I think that understanding, that effective communication is really important to

engagement. Cause if you don't understand what's going on you're going to stop caring.

These participants required the opportunity to envision themselves as leaders in their future careers. They were presented with activities in which they experienced the position of their future learners. This placement enabled them to recognize their own traditional backgrounds in music and their insecurities so that they were able to negotiate their role from student to teacher. This then drew attention to the need for the transfer of ownership in learning from the teacher to the student. They were able to then project how that would impact programming in terms of the compromise in structure and freedom, aural learning and written notation, and western art music and other musical genres. The process of becoming aware of their abilities and inabilities, demonstrating agency in how they act upon this information (to be discussed further in Chapter 7), and then reflecting on the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of their actions became a dynamic process in engaging participants in this course. The critical thinking element presented itself as participants developed a projected image of who they want to be, have to be, and need to be as teachers in order to engage their future students in music.

# Chapter 6

Case Study Three: An Intergenerational Singing Program with Persons with Alzheimer's Disease

## **Background Information**

In this final case study I investigate an intergenerational choral program that was developed in 2012 by the local Alzheimer's Society that brought people with Alzheimer's Disease and secondary school choral students together. The program was designed to provide a recreational and educational activity for people diagnosed with early to middle stages of Alzheimer's disease. At a time when the population is aging and the largest percentage is entering the seniors' cohort, (Statistics Canada, 2011) the physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental well-being of the elderly is a timely matter. The program was designed with both therapeutic and educational components in mind for people with dementia who the Alzheimer's Society<sup>7</sup> felt could benefit from musical stimulation through singing, and was offered first as a pilot project in the Fall of 2012.

According to the World Health Organization, more than 100 million people will be diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease (AD) by 2050, (World Health Organization, 2012; World Health Organization & Alzheimer's Disease International, 2012). As the search for a cure and treatments are in constant progress, non-pharmacological options and therapies are encouraging alternatives to enhancing the quality of life for people with

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> The local Alzheimer Society is part of a national organization and is a non-profit, support group that provides educational and recreational programs for persons with AD, and for their caregivers. In offering this program, the Society works closely with the local Catholic hospital that provides care for persons with dementia. The intergenerational program is offered at the home of the Sisters who work with the hospital.

AD. Considering the reciprocal benefits achieved when generations are combined and nurtured in positive fellowship and that musical involvement can provide relief and management of symptoms for persons with dementia (Cox, 2010; Cox, Nowak, & Buettner, 2011; Paul & Ramsey, 2000), an intergenerational singing program was suggested and designed by the local Alzheimer's Society.

An intergenerational program was designed because the literature confirms that significant reciprocal benefits can be achieved when generations are combined and nurtured in positive fellowship; and that musical involvement can provide relief and management of symptoms for persons with dementia (Cox, 2010; Cox et al., 2011; Paul & Ramsey, 2000). At the same time, such programs can provide students with educational opportunities to learn about working with the elderly, and specifically those with forms of dementia, as well as learning about themselves. An additional intent was to offer caregivers 90 minutes of respite while their loved ones were involved safely in this choral program; however, once the program began, most caregivers stayed onsite to either sing in the choir or to observe.

Since its inception, the program has been offered twice per year with a 7 or 8-week session in the Fall and the same in the Spring. Each session culminates in an hourlong, public concert. My involvement in the project began as a participant observer in the first session in 2012 as a research assistant for another project described later. Data for this study was collected in the Spring session of 2013 once ethical approval was received from the University and from the Alzheimer's Society, to look at engagement and agency in this music education program, specifically among persons with AD.

**Program structure.** Persons with Alzheimer's Disease are recommended to this

choral program by the Society. The sessions are offered once per week at 3:00 pm in the afternoon to accommodate the schedules of the clients and the high school students. Each session is preceded by a gathering time when students are paired with a client and interact with them prior to singing. The rehearsal occurs in an open-concept chapel and lasts for about 50 minutes; following the rehearsal, there is another opportunity for mingling and fellowship. Each week, the routine remains the same and only changes for the concert which is held in another building to accommodate the audience. In attendance at each session are about 25 to 35 elders, many caregivers, the high school students of about 25 students, one support staff member from the Alzheimer's Society (Nadine), AS volunteers, the choral conductor (Jerry) and other music teachers on the school staff, and the accompanist.

As the recreational and educational program manager for the AS, Nadine was involved in the design of the program and fully aware of the benefits of music for all people, including those with dementia and "the effect that it has and the fact that even people in a fairly advanced stage of dementia can benefit from music, from singing or certainly from listening to music." She explained how, with the help of the secondary school music teacher and conductor Jerry, and the leader of the Sisters, Sister Margaret, the intergenerational singing program was established:

I guess it initiated with a volunteer actually who was interested and I don't recall now whether she'd heard about other programs or she was interested in helping put something together [...] certainly I think we all kind of knew about the impact of music and you know it's obviously a very big part of most people's lives - many people's lives anyway with or without dementia and so we felt it was

a nice fit. And the Sisters [...] were interested and they're just up the road and so it was just [...] kind of almost happened organically in a way [...] the way we got hooked up with Jerry was [with] a former staff member who actually was [...] friends with Jerry and she'd gone to high school with him [...] so that was where that connection came from [...] often in agencies like this it is sort of organic that way; somebody knows somebody or somebody's expressed an interest so that's kind of how it developed.

As a result, the Society contacted Jerry, the music teacher and choral conductor from a school with an excellent choral program, about developing the program. An overwhelming number of student singers in the school volunteered for this co-curricular activity and by the second iteration of the project, Jerry indicated that he had had to cap the number of volunteers because so many students wanted to participate in this initiative because of the success the first time through. Thoughtful consideration was given so that approximately the same number of secondary school students, between the ages of 14 and 18 years, were involved as the number of persons with AD.

Sister Margaret, a senior administrator with the sisters and former school principal, described "jumping at it [the opportunity]" because she thought "it's [music] one of the most therapeutic and life-giving things people can do." In addition to the therapeutic element of music, the organizing committee agreed that the educational component of the program was important for the participants considering many of them had been recommended because of their past experiences in education and/or involvement in singing. Rather than the typical sing-alongs that many nursing homes and

retirement centres provide, the founders of this program believed that musical skill advancement in addition to musical enjoyment should be featured. The program manager of the AS framed it as follows:

There was a sense that we wanted it to be something more than sort of a weekly singalong thing, which the Sisters were actually already doing that [...] I think there was a sense that it would be nice if it could be something a little more structured, a little bit more, you know, I don't want to say higher caliber but something a little more — more than a weekly sing along and I think, you know, Sister Margaret was interested in doing something more because they already had a weekly singalong but there was nothing wrong with what they were doing but they wanted to do something over and above that...

The implementation of this mission took the form of extensive planning of the curricular goals and content on the part of the educational leaders, in addition to attention to knowledge acquisition, skill development, and technique refinement during the rehearsals. At its first rehearsal during the second session in March, the conductor was clear in communicating this to all members of the choir, including students, persons with AD, and caregivers, that there were three goals for this choir: to have fun; to meet new people and friends; to make new music and discover the power of music.

As noted above, the initial phase of the program ran from September through November 2012 and included 7 one-hour sessions culminating in a final concert. The second phase of the study began in March 2013 and concluded in May with a concert as well. The primary investigator in the research program was also associated with a

research project in intergenerational music curriculum that resides under the umbrella of a SSHRC Major Collaborative Research Initiative for Advancing Interdisciplinary Research in Singing (AIRS). This overarching project explores singing through the vehicles of development, education and well-being in cooperation with 70 researchers representing every province in Canada and 15 other countries on six continents. The project aims to understand individual, cultural, and universal influences on singing and the influences of singing on individuals and societies wherein one of the themes resides in intergenerational understanding. In addition to the investigation of this intergenerational singing program with people with dementia, there are several other projects examining intergenerational singing in separate locations in Ontario and British Columbia. While seniors were also involved in these projects, the identification of dementia was not a factor in their inclusion. Besides this report on engagement and agency through singing, the larger research initiative focuses on the development of singing ability, singing and learning, and the enhancement of health and well-being through singing.

The impetus for this research was that while extensive research details the mental and physical health benefits of intergenerational activities and programs, there is substantially less information with respect to intergenerational music engagement. Of these data, the prevalent model is one in which children perform for seniors, rather than on mutual participation in combined musicking. Although formal intergenerational programming in music has existed in North America since the late 1970s, many programs combining children with seniors tend to do so with the focus of a culminating public performance (Beynon et al., 2013). According to Freund (2003), the quality of

intergenerational music making could be beneficial if the emphasis is on making and enjoying music as opposed to a final performance. The program investigated in this research appears to fulfill all of these criteria and even includes documenting the benefits of a final concert; however, the emphasis was on developing relationships with other people and with music through the process of singing.

Recommendations for intergenerational exchange activities suggest the following: careful planning, systematic structures, joint planning that involves representation of various age groups, definition of clear objectives, determination of roles and responsibilities, active recruitment, orientation of participants to intergenerational learning and goals, careful management and coordination to meet participant needs and expectations, and evaluation that offers guidance for future planning (Keller & McArdle, 1985). The nature of the program as an intergenerational model required some considerations in the structure of the rehearsals. Most notably, the repertoire selection necessitated a balance between familiar and unfamiliar songs, and songs that accommodated the range limitations of the adolescent and aging voices. Freund (2003) notes that there can be issues of mixing timbres of young and old voices when working in intergenerational singing programs.

Another challenging layer was the additional factor that the seniors were diagnosed with AD. This played a role in consistency of location, rehearsal format and concert programming. The routine established by the educational leaders was reassuring to the people with dementia and was structured as described above: social time with the students and persons with AD, gathering in the rehearsal chapel, a consistent warm-up medley from week to week, a pattern of familiar song, newer song, familiar song, new

song including part-singing, consistent finale song, followed by announcements, dismissal, and fellowship with refreshments.

In discussion with the conductor, one of his biggest tasks was discovering ways in which to keep both adolescents and persons with AD feeling engaged simultaneously. For him, the aim of the rehearsals needed to be engaging, nurturing, and musically enriching, which required him to establish a safe environment, convey realistic expectations, share in the leadership responsibilities, and keep an open mind to expect the unexpected. The conductor's attempts to engage the more senior participants aligned with the recommendations of Thibeault (2013) whose work in engaging lifelong learners provided the following advice: a warning against rejecting any ideas; a recommendation to allow learners to bring life experience to the sessions in a way that allows the group to develop and explore relationships with musical learning; and providing participants with the opportunity to share their progress. Brookfield's (1987) previous work in adult learning reveals six unique dimensions of adult learning: adults are largely voluntary learners; participants must respect one another's self-worth; facilitators and learners should operate in a collaborative mode; effective learning combines reflection and action; facilitation should aim to foster a spirit of critical reflection; and the aim of facilitation is the nurturing of self-directed, empowered adults. The structure of and philosophy underlying the singing program in this case study certainly takes these suggestions into account.

The students were also volunteers in this program and many became engaged to

receive credit toward their diploma as part of their Specialist High Skills Major<sup>8</sup> program. The AS also provided a two-hour training program course to the students before the beginning of each session. Although some of the adolescent students were initially apprehensive and uncertain as to what to do or expect, largely because they had not had "that much experience working with people that are older than me" and especially those with AD. However, the comments of "I always want to come;" "it's the fastest fifty minutes of my week every week;" "I feel into it, all the time [...] I look forward to every Thursday. I'm always the first one usually, like getting ready to board a car to come here;" "I had no idea what I was getting myself into but I really ended up enjoying it and I'm loving every Thursday coming here." All of these comments suggest that the students were intrinsically motivated to attend the program. Indications that students were engaged in the process were enacted in the initiative they demonstrated in creating rapport with their senior friends, their dedicated attempts to act as mentors, the reflection of their character development in assisting others, their feeling of being valued for their involvement, and their comments of the power of music in the lives of others.

At the completion of the investigation, the researchers conducted interviews with the persons with AD, students, caregivers, music teachers, and the directors from the organizing committee. In some instances, data were extracted from interviews

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> The Specialist High Skills Major program is a recognized seal on an Ontario Secondary School Diploma for students who have completed 8-10 courses in their specialization, earn industry certification, and gain valuable job skills from employers in their chosen field. Information about this program for grades 11 and 12 students can be found at this website: <a href="http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/morestudentsuccess/SHSM.html">http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/morestudentsuccess/SHSM.html</a>

conducted by an employee of the AS for the production of a documentary <sup>9</sup>. In fact, I too was interviewed for the documentary as an observer and researcher from the University. The participants did provide consent, and if required, the consent of their powers of attorney for the seniors, or parental consent for the students, was obtained. All names that could possibly identify participants have been changed to protect the privacy of all the participants.

#### **Enrolment Rationale**

For several of the participants, singing in this choir was a continuation of their previous enjoyment of singing in a choral setting. Acknowledgement of the participants' musical backgrounds can help to understand their rationale for becoming involved in the program. Allan describes his experience in choral singing as follows:

I used to be in the school choir, ah in Sierra Leone, until, ah twenty years and then... then I came to Canada. Then ah, I – I also joined the church choir but not very much. I didn't do church choir. I've done school choir- I've done that for 26 years, in a row.

Nathan, a prominent choral conductor diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease at age 58, had an extensive musical background. He says that he sang in the church choir and recalls not having a choice to do otherwise in the 1950s. After entering university as a

the Ontario Trillium Foundation."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> A video representation of this program can be found in this link to the documentary produced by the Alzheimer Society: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5o3Nh6ydbo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5o3Nh6ydbo</a>. According to the description "This video captures the very first session of this program which is funded in part by The Jack and Barbara Hay Foundation, Dr. Jennie Wells and

French horn major he was steered in the direction of becoming a singer in the university choir and then became a well-respected secondary school music teacher and community choral conductor. Linda sang in a choir from a very early age in addition to having taken piano and singing lessons and recalls how her experience of singing was connected to the war years:

A long time ago, it's best not to ask me how long ago, for a long time, I think I started, I think I was in junior choir and then the senior choir and then, and that was during the war years when, soldiers were coming back. We had a short group and we'd go all through and sing, to those who are, were in the hospital then. This was when we were living in Hamilton. And it was a group and we did this all the time for the soldiers. (Beynon & Hutchison, under review).

Sister Theresa also recalls earlier accounts of choral singing: "well because I love music I've been singing since I was a little kid so every choir, I've been in all kinds of choirs so, so, um, I just love music." Many Sisters recalled that their lives were surrounded by music and singing. Sister Ethel, who does not have dementia, comments "we've been singing in the community, I don't know, it's been since 1954, so um, we've had a lot of practice, the girls." Sister Ruth recalls the musical presence in her life:

Well, I don't remember singing that much before I entered [...] Maybe we did but I don't remember it as much. But ah, ah, then with the [these] Sisters it's just part of our life. Ah, music, you know, which is great.

The organizers of the singing program commented on the participants' motivation for attending in the following testimonies. Sister Margaret assured that "they look forward to coming. It gives them something to look forward to every week. Those who remember enough to look forward as I said, even if you do forget; it's a delight." Nadine from the AS said the following:

I feel confident in saying [...] that some people that participated in the choir were singers, had been in choirs before. It was something that was relatively a large part of their lives; other people not so much and everything in between.

Nadine's comment spoke to the wide range of experiences the participants brought with them to the choir. For Jack, it was his first time in a choir; James had a strong interest in music and introduced his caregiver friend accompanying him to the musical scene; Carl's caregiver said that he really wanted to be in the choir and, even though he was at the early stages of the disease, this was quite a unique experience for him- to sing in a choir with his son and grandson; Karen's caregiver admitted that "she can't talk, she can't carry on a conversation, but she can sing," and Allan's caregiver stated that "I brought Allan because he does love music. He listens to a lot of music and he doesn't see very well so, it's an avenue, you know, to his senses that he can appreciate."

Whether the senior participants with AD were new to the choral scene or had been raised with a musical upbringing, they volunteered or were recommended to the program by the Alzheimer Society or a caregiver because of the benefits they believed singing would have on their well-being and quality of life. Their enjoyment of singing, past experiences in choirs, past experiences teaching children, or the sensory stimulation and

communication opportunities the choir afforded were all articulated as reasons to join the intergenerational singing program.

### **Perceptions of Engagement**

In an intergenerational singing program that was voluntary for the persons with AD, the fact that they were there of their own volition, or that of their caregivers, suggested a certain level of engagement with respect to time, interest, and energy devoted to the activity. It should be noted that during the rehearsals, participation and attendance in the singing was varied due to many extraneous factors such as issues of mobility, communication, sensory fatigue, and other medical conditions. Hutchison and Beynon (2014) developed a model from a previous iteration of the AIRS intergenerational singing program with seniors and grade two students, which categorized the range of engagement from non-engagement, observation, participation, connection, through to deep engagement, in which optimal leadership and recruitment of others to come and engage with them were exhibited. A similarity in that previous study and this one is that participants with AD were often inconsistent even within the same rehearsal or from one week to the next. Most importantly, the results of earlier findings from that study and this study suggest that even though participants may not look like they are engaged from an observational standpoint, the participant may be fully engaged emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and musically.

The perspectives of other participants, including caregivers, administrators, educational leaders, and secondary school students became important in communicating the level of engagement and demonstration of agency in this case because of the possible limitations in speech or communication ability of the respondents with Alzheimer's

Disease. For example, one gentleman with whom I spoke at the conclusion of the concert in his interview responded "yes" to every question even though it may not have been a yes or no question. Recognizing the different roles and perspectives involved in a successful intergenerational program is integral for providing a holistic picture of the needs of all participants. Thus, in order to have a comprehensive understanding of one cohort, many different views were considered.

The interviews with those with AD took a much less formal approach and were considerably shorter in length than the other case studies in consideration of the participants' comfort, as it was observed that several became more agitated and restless if the interview became too lengthy. Therefore field notes, my own involvement in conversations before, during, and after the rehearsal, and the accounts of the caregivers, students, and administrative staff who were singing alongside the seniors, became increasingly important to note instances of and investigate issues of engagement and agency.

Indicators of engagement. Recognizing engagement in this setting can be challenging for a few reasons: firstly, mobility signals often used to identify behavioural indicants can be affected, and secondly, communication measures often required to gauge attitudinal perceptions may be compromised with persons with AD. Kris, a student singing in the choir describes his observation of the persons with AD engaging with the music: "I think you can tell a person that's just sitting there, kind of putting in time and a person that really wants to be there and really is just happy and vibrant singing those songs." Unfortunately, not every participant with Alzheimer's Disease is capable of overtly demonstrating these signs by which one might identify true engagement.

Despite the challenges in identifying the engagement levels of participants, the following scenarios provided descriptions of how persons with AD appeared during sporadic singing sessions. It should be noted that these examples are not necessarily representative of the behaviour, posture, and attitudes throughout the entire program, within the same rehearsal or even within the same song. For example, on March 7, Gretha fell asleep in one song, woke up for the next song and then fell asleep again. Allan had initially desired to sit on the periphery of the choir, but after coaxing he joined the main choral seating arrangement and appeared one of the most enthusiastic and vocal of the choristers. One particular week, however, it was noted in the field notes that Allan really didn't sing at all through the rehearsals. He just stared ahead, even in his favourite song, You'll Never Walk Alone. Noted in the March 21 session, Sister Lorraine stared blankly at the green booklet, with very minimal facial expression, but occasionally mouthed some of the words. In that same session, James was not singing along to Song for the Mira, but it appeared that he was looking at the music as his student partner helped him to follow along. The student partners were instrumental in helping to inspire and involve the persons with AD. One student, Pam, had formed a very special connection with Sister Wanda and assisted her in every session throughout the year. In an interview with Pam, I asked her if she thought that, even though Sister Wanda was not singing along, she was still getting something from the experience? She emphatically states: "Absolutely. There are times where she'll just lean on her armrest and listen to me and puts her head down and sometimes she'll rest it on my shoulder and she's just listening and it's really quite cute."

Similar comments regarding the deceptive appearance of the participants' engagement are plentiful. One example included a rehearsal of *The Storm is Passing Over*, in which the choir was invited to clap on the reprise of the chorus. One woman in purple had her head down, her sunglasses on, and did not even have a music booklet in her possession; yet, she sat there and tapped the beat on her lap. One might think that she was not in a moment of musical engagement if one could not see her fingers tapping alongside the beat, yet clearly the music was eliciting a musical response from her. Sister Margaret recounted their interest in the program:

Everybody loves it. The sisters who participate and look forward to it eagerly, even in people who have severe memory loss and don't remember that it is Thursday and it's happening, as soon as you mention it, they light up and say, 'oh good.'

Interview comments and observations suggest the difficulty in identifying engagement from a behavioural perspective, as participants might not be able to demonstrate their investment in an activity in ways that other populations might. The testimonials, however, of caregivers, students, and program organizers within the choir shed perspective on the presence of engagement at a less overt level.

#### **Elements of Engagement**

A wide variety of perspectives were taken into account during the collection of data, the presentation of the themes therefore includes comments from persons with AD, students, caregivers, music directors, the accompanist, and program leaders. Recurring themes that were touched upon by the participants in various roles were as follows:

The element of enjoyment and excitement. Several comments spoke to the level of enjoyment and excitement that the participants demonstrated in response to the singing program. One of the administrators exclaimed "I can feel the excitement and energy already." In commenting on the response from the participants a program leader observed "Look how happy he is. It's a resume of joy![...] They love it so much. It's just wonderful." Linda's caregiver said "I think she likes it and enjoys it. And I do too, I, I wouldn't miss it." Field notes throughout the sessions documented the elevated level of eagerness as choristers waited to proceed into the chapel for the rehearsal. Several students mentioned their own anticipation for Thursday choir days. Pam referred to Sister Wanda thus "It's been going great. Sister Wanda and I have a great connection and we just click so well. She gets so excited whenever it's choir day. She smiles and talks the whole time." Linda's caregiver also notes "oh, yeah I think she enjoys this," a comment that was supported by my observation of her telling one of the choral conductors in the first session that "this is the best time I've had!" From the participants themselves, Daniel admitted "I feel quite good. I'm enjoying it along with the youngsters" and another lady remarked in the first session that she "had a wonderful time!"

Allan noted in his interview that he enjoyed it and was happy. Nathan, the coconductor with AD refers to his favourite song that evokes a lot of memories for him, the *Storm is Passing Over:* "Any time I hear, I'm the same as them. I'm all excited to be singing my favourite song." Nadine, the AS program leader reflected on the success of the program and its benefits in the following comment: So anywhere...where you have this type of illness, it's pervasive, it's degenerative, it's progressive over time you need to get your joy where you can get it from [...]. So if we can allow them to have a really joyful and relaxing and engaging couple of hours just once a week that's got a tremendous value I think for the participants and for their caregivers whether or not the caregivers are involved.[...] I think that it's quite clear that the people who've been in it [the choral program] have really enjoyed it. [...]. I think regardless of whether they'd had experience with singing before I think everybody certainly seemed to really enjoy it. They wouldn't have come back if they didn't enjoy it.

The choristers themselves echoed Nadine's reference to people returning because they enjoyed the program. Sister Bertha exclaimed "I just can't wait to get here!" This was not only in reference to attending the rehearsals each week, but also in her desire to return to the second iteration of the program. On March 7, I documented in the field notes that she was excited about returning after the winter break and wanting to sit beside her student friend again in the front row. Linda's caregiver said "she talks about it all the time. She loves it." He further explained that she tells their children and grandchildren about the choir even during the break between the programs: "She still brought it up. [...] She enjoys it. She was disappointed to hear that it wasn't going on in the summer." This enjoyment suggested a desire to attend the program, the ability to remember that the program was an enjoyable one, and the intent to act upon that urge to attend.

**The element of response.** Recognizing the participants' response to music was definitely a highlight of the experience for many observers and caregivers. It was clearly

evident that responding to music, either positively or negatively, was manifested during the rehearsals, which is why many of the organizers recognized the importance of music as a therapeutic benefit for the persons with AD. Sister Margaret noted the benefits of the arts as a vehicle for creating that aesthetic response:

The other thing that I think has value is that creating beauty is always a good thing, whether it's art or music or poetry, the arts, I think are humanizing for the world so to create beauty and sound is also making a contribution to the world.

Similar to the difficulty expressed in observing and tracking engagement in the participants, responses to music also could be difficult to read. For example, on March 21, I noted in my field notes that one woman simply had her head back listening and smiling to the music. In that same session, a similar response was given by James who, during *Danny Boy* closed his music and just looked around smiled. He still did not sing and even though there might not have been active participation in the examples, there was still an important nonverbal response expressed.

A critical element of the program that differentiates it from music therapy activities where participants listen in isolation to personalized song playlists, is the fact that the people can respond to each other and to the conductor as well. During one rehearsal, Jerry asked Nathan to conduct the choir in a couple of pieces that he knew Nathan would know well. Jerry observed the choir's ability to respond to his coconductor during the song *You'll Never Walk Alone*. After Nathan conducted the song, Jerry asked the singers, "Did you hear the difference between the first and second time? The second time you had your eyes up and you responded musically to what Nathan was

asking." Not only was it demonstrated that the choir members could respond to the music and the people with whom they were making that music, but it was important that participants had the opportunity to formulate an aesthetic or physical response to the music and to be able to have an outlet for expressing that response. Jerry balanced familiar and favourite songs, often requested by the participants with AD, with those that might have been unfamiliar, providing a musical challenge to learn new songs with new lyrics, melodies, and harmony parts. While many persons with AD expressed pleasant approval when the program leader announced wartime songs and classics, such as *Danny* Boy, responses varied with respect to new and unfamiliar songs. At one point, I noted that the persons with AD looked very happy in the opening medley and that Monique sat in the front row tapping her foot and looked back at her friends and smiled. This reaction was one that many participants portrayed. Other responses included cheers, clapping, murmurs of excitement, tears, and occasionally side comments made to their younger friends if the song announced was not a crowd favourite. It should be noted that not everyone, however, always expressed favourable responses to the familiar tunes and some gave negative responses to the new songs. Caroline noted that the song *Storm is* Passing Over really appealed to her senior friend, Sister Martha, even though it was a new song; at the same time, one could observe Linda showing overt agitation when this song was sung, and this occurred week after week.

The presence and assistance provided by the students was instrumental in helping their senior friends achieve a response. For example, the field notes on March 21 note how Pam singing into Sister Wanda's ear was helping her hear the song and be able to respond to the music. When Sister Wanda heard a song she liked "it's her whole body

that just perks right up. It's a physical response." Responses often presented themselves through facial expressions and emotional outpouring. Student Natalie remarked that Sister Louisa particularly got emotional during *Song for the Mira*: "She would always get teary-eyed during practice."

Responses to music were not only made in terms of emotional outpourings, but also often in the form of opinions. Pam had recognized that Sister Wanda was not going to have favourable responses to any love songs because "it's a touchy subject." Caroline stated "I sit beside a bunch of different people every time. Ah, today I sat beside Martha and she just has a comment for everything. Just something to say about everything and it's really, really fun." Similarly, in my field notes I noted that one woman was particularly excited because she saw the song in the package *Lili Marlene* and that it was in German. She was then upset that the choir did not sing it during the rehearsal. When the students and teachers were chatting after the session they said that many seniors also saw *Danny Boy* in the collection of songs and were very disappointed that they didn't sing it. For Sister Wanda, Pam noted "she has her opinions. She really likes the old war songs, but some of the new ones, not so much."

With respect to the selection of songs, Sister Margaret "wasn't aware there were some the people didn't like. I was sure there were some they liked better than others and they often did enjoy the war songs that they sang often and the very familiar ones."

While one must be cautious about eliciting overly counterproductive responses, when I asked Sister Margaret if having emotional responses was a positive or negative aspect of the program, she responded:

A very good thing but I don't think you can just leave them in it. For example, if someone is really weeping, it may be bringing up a deep grief that's never been resolved. Did that person ever talk about that pain when she was going through it? It's not finished, so if someone were handy to just sit with her and let her unpack that, as much as she wants to, if she wants to or doesn't want to and not push, not make it a project but let her be with it, that could be a healing of her life, coming at a late moment, but coming.

Their ability to respond to the music and voice their opinion suggested a sense of agency in having one's voice heard. From the point of responding to the music, the participants were then able to decide a course of action. Amelia recalled the actions of Sister Laura changing the lyrics of a song to suit her interests:

...there's this one part in 'The storm is passing over" when they sing 'Hallelu' and they don't sing 'Hallelujah.' Me and Sister Laura always go 'yah!' right at the end because she doesn't think it's right that we just sing 'Hallelu', you have to sing 'Hallelujah'. So that's kind of our little running joke that we have that I really enjoy doing that every time we sing that song.

It is significant that music was chosen with the intent to elicit a physical or emotional response from participants and that they were allowed to express and demonstrate this response in a healthy manner, in a variety of ways.

The element of choice and input. Educational responsibility rests in the decision to allow participants to provide input and encouraging them to talk about their experience with, or emotional reaction to, the repertoire. For example, in the previous section it was noted that choristers were upset about not singing *Danny Boy* in the first session. In

response, Jerry addressed the choir in the subsequent session and stated that he had heard the opinions of the choir and that he had ordered a better version of the song so that they could sing it the following week. The conductor played a key role in establishing the protocol for welcoming participant input into the rehearsal. Nadine, the AS program manager appreciated that Jerry considered provisions for participant choice:

I love the fact that the very first rehearsal Jeff brought song sheets with just the words and he brought music sheets so you can choose, and you can try both to see what works for you. So I think that was really a good thing.

Jerry continually invited opinions from the choristers to determine artistic choices. For example, he asked if anyone had any personal requests for repertoire. In fact, he offered to search songs out if the participants let him know. This validated their personal song choices. While Jerry conducted the soldier songs on March 7, he invited Nathan to take over with *It's a Grand Night for Singing* as it had been requested by a senior chorister with AD in the previous session.

Another instance of inviting input took place when he asked the choir if it might be easier to sing the *Storm is Passing Over* at a faster tempo and they agreed that it was. Therefore, in consequent sessions he took the song at a faster pace. His intention was for them to have a rewarding experience and it encouraged the choir members to approach him with suggestions of "the best way to communicate the notes to you" in order to make it easier for them to read the lyrics and music. Jerry's invitation for feedback was not only intended to make the outcome of the song more successful, but also to validate the participants' existing knowledge and contributions to the choir. During another session,

he welcomed assistance from any choir member who was able to improve his Scottish pronunciation of the words in *Loch Lomond*.

The provision of choice also took the form of freedom for musical license in order to facilitate the learning process of the participants. Jerry continually invited the persons with AD to sing any harmony they wanted to in songs that were familiar to them, such as *Silent Night*. This accommodation also served to circumvent any potential challenges in learning new pieces. On April 4, Jerry suggested "if you're in the alto or tenor section and you want to sing soprano you can." As he encouraged them to sing what they were capable of singing according to their preference. As they were learning new songs, such as *Carol of the Bells*, he said "follow along the best you can. Sing what others around you are singing or join the soprano line." In every session, he encouraged the singers to listen to others for assistance.

The elements in which participants could provide their input and the manner in which they were invited to do so was conducted in a very respectful way. The musical team had an overarching structure for rehearsal and a repertoire program, but they were invited into that process through collective decision-making and democratic choice. Group decisions emerged from the collective group and providing that choice validated their preferences and contributions to the overall outcome of the rehearsals and concert performances. While their input was valued, the provision for choice was balanced with this pre-determined structure so as not to overwhelm or confuse some members at the expense of others.

The absence of choice in some instances might have actually removed a barrier so that participants could experience engagement. In previous studies of intergenerational

choirs, Hutchison and Beynon (2014) noted that senior participants were apprehensive about sharing their song choices or making recommendations because they feared their choices would be seen as outdated or irrelevant to the younger generation. Although they were invited to make suggestions, having a pre-determined list of songs chosen with the needs and interests of the persons with AD already in mind, might have alleviated this fear.

The element of relevance. When the persons with AD were invited to make requests they frequently requested songs that were familiar to them and had special meaning. They expressed appreciation of music that was relevant to their lives as the program leader revisited war songs, songs of their era, and invited requests from the persons with AD to choose music that was important to them. While the choir performed White Cliffs of Dover, Pack Up Your Troubles, Long Way to Tipperary, Danny Boy and other well-known songs for the persons with AD, the newer songs were always explained with historical background and context so that even the youngest singers could find some relevance in the text. When Corrine, a co-conductor, introduced the song Song for the Mira, on March 21, she explained that verse 1 was about fishermen and verse 2 was about courting. Sister Louise then shared with her neighbouring choristers that she was able to relate this song to the fond memories of the East Coast and Marion Bridge, which were mentioned in the song.

The conductors also enhanced previous connections to the songs by encouraging choristers to sing past harmonies and versions of songs that were familiar to them. For example, in *Silent Night*, which was to be performed at their culminating winter concert, Jerry reminded the choir "you can sing any harmony you want." They formed their own

arrangement as a choir so that they could sing any previous harmonic part that they had ever learned.

Jerry also related current events to songs and artists that were relevant to the choristers' lives. In the second session of the first phase, he introduced the song *Moon River* to the group as a tribute to Andy Williams who had just passed away the previous week. I noted that there were many murmurs of appreciation from the choir members in singing this song. Similarly, on March 7 in the second phase, Jerry mentioned that Stompin' Tom Connors had passed away so the choir sang *The Good Ol' Hockey Game*. A lot of the singers with AD enjoyed the story of this song as they performed a rousing rendition of this song in his memory. Sister Bertha vigorously tapped her hand on her knee and gave an arm jab every time the choir sang "the good ol' hockey game" in the chorus.

Caroline, a student chorister, recognized the additional importance these wartime songs had in enriching the choral experience for all members:

The *Songs that Soldiers Sing*, like that was during their time so they have a lot more back story to give to the music, which is really cool to listen to. [...]

Because they've had those, they've been in the situation where like, they actually sang that. And the soldiers sang that. They bring another level to the music that normally, like, it would be harder for someone else to connect to, that doesn't really understand what it's about.

This recognition that the persons with AD were able to contribute their experiences with members who could benefit from this perspective was an important part of making the choristers feel valued. It appeared important that the choristers find meaning in the music

and have the opportunity to relate to the repertoire. Effective song selections were those whereby persons with AD found the connection to former experiences, relationships and interests, especially because it had affective meaning and elicited an opportunity for participants to communicate and share their experiences with others. I saw the significance of this need when participants responded favourably to music that held special meaning and attachment to their lives, such as war songs or songs that reminded them of places they had lived or travelled.

The element of comfortable environment. The mission of the program coordinators was to make this experience as comfortable as possible for the persons with AD, especially as the rehearsals were held in an unfamiliar place for several of the choristers. My field notes drew heavily on the attempts by the conductor, students, and program administrators to ensure a comfortable environment for the singers. This reassurance often came in the form of instructions and reminders from the conductors. For example, Jerry introduced the earlier sessions with these calming words: "If you do have concerns, our goal is to make music and friends. Make sure you let us know and we'll make sure you're comfortable." In the first session Jerry announced "don't be shy or be afraid to make a wrong note. Sing as loud as you want." Corrine also echoed these sentiments in her rehearsal of a new song on March 21 when she said "we never worry about wrong notes the first time through." These statements not only reinforced the goals of the program, but also provide reassurance to the choristers that making mistakes was completely acceptable. The artistic staff alleviated anxiety pertaining to making mistakes through the humorous instruction that "if you make a mistake, then blame it on the person beside you."

The conductors also recognized that it was possible that some of the choristers might get lost in the new songs, especially when there was part-singing involved. In this case, alternatives were always provided and provisions were made for the singers to opt out of embarrassing or challenging situations when they might get confused. Jerry reminded them: "when in doubt, if at all lost sing along with the person beside you or go to the soprano part which is the words written in the orange books." Jerry also made provisions for singers to experience success in spite of challenges such as pitches that might be out of the range of the singers' voices. In the third session, Jerry responded to the choir in saying that "I noticed the basses laughing when it got too high. If anyone wants to drop down because it's too high at any point they can." Similarly in the next session during the song *It's a Long Way to Tipperary* Jerry stopped the choir and reminded the singers that if it was too high at any point they were more than welcome to drop down the octave.

Establishing a safe environment to take risks enabled several of the choristers with AD to volunteer for small group performances within the rehearsals and even in the concert. Jerry initially mentioned that it would be nice to have some small groups sing during the solo sections. He restated the goals of the choir to alleviate any pressure and said: "Remember my request from last week. I had some people talk to me after. I'll ask again at the end. It doesn't have to be just one person. We could have two, three, or four people." He then suggested pairing people up with high school students: "Is there anyone thinking about giving it a shot? What if we started with Tom, Conrad and Kris?"

Arranging two students and one singer with AD was an attempt to alleviate any pressure associated with singing in the trio and Jerry reminded the choir "this is really easy, it's not

an audition. We're just having fun together." As a result, several opportunities arose in which choristers volunteered to sing in small groups. Providing a comfortable environment for singers to take safe and attainable risks contributed positively to the singers' level of confidence, success and experience of engagement in the choir.

The elements of social gathering and camaraderie. During the planning stages of the program, the need to have social time before and after the rehearsal itself was a priority. Nadine, the program manager from the AS explained why this was critical:

I think it's good also to do the social piece because I mean that's one thing when people come to our social/recreation program here[...] If you're standing and trying to run a choir rehearsal you know there can be a little bit of talking and I'm sure there is some of that but you're there to sing; and you need to be singing and so there isn't the time for the socialization or the connectedness. And also you're kind of sitting in your rows; you're sitting next to the people you're sitting next to. There's not a lot of milling around so unless you provide that opportunity there's not going to be any natural socialization that takes place so I think it's very important to provide that.

One of the most important aspects of the intergenerational choir was the combination of age groups and participants from secondary schools, the Sisters, community members with AD, caregivers, and program leaders. Allan's caregiver spoke to the benefit of this arrangement: "I think that one of the ways that it's good for us is that you know, um, some of these, ah, problems are a bit isolating and it's nice to get out, and see young people and, and the sisters and everybody that's involved." The sense of

community was important, as was the strength of togetherness along this journey of which Sister Margaret spoke:

I think the socializing time is also really important. The relaxing with the coffee or juice or cookies or whatever chance to chat with both for the intergenerational piece and for the sisters in this case who meet other people with memory issues and not feel so strange. To feel lots of people are struggling with this and it's okay [...]. You belong to a group. That's a community experience that I think that as a person with Alzheimer's goes down the road you feel more and more alone and nobody can share that journey exactly in the same way. So to feel part of a group, to feel part of something is a really beautiful gift to those people. The interaction with the young people, I think, you're not on the shelf; you're not of any use anymore. Interacting with the young people who are the future, that gives hope.

Sister Margaret's comment spoke to the importance of inclusivity and the human need for connection and belongingness. Most importantly for the seniors with AD was the need to be seen as valued and useful. Nadine noted the reciprocal benefits that both students and persons with AD received from this opportunity for interaction:

I think it was a really good experience for these kids to be exposed to seniors and to develop connections and to you know, make some nice friendships. So I think that was really an important piece for the kids to be exposed to seniors and seniors with Alzheimer's Disease [...] They're going to be exposed to that so if they have a good experience, if they have a person they can think back to, when they can personalize it, you know, it has that much more meaning to it. So that was a

really important thing. And of course for the seniors it was lovely for them to be able to share who they are and what's important to them and stuff with the young people. Um, I think young people too get a bit of a bad rap in our society, you know, and to, for the seniors involved to see that there are some really nice young people out there doing their best. It's a very challenging world for young people these days; so I think that intergenerational thing was really important.

A lot of the excitement and enjoyment that was discussed previously revolved around the opportunity for the persons with AD to engage with younger people. At the first session I observed many persons with AD commenting on how nice it was to see so many young people. Although the persons with AD appeared immediately energized, initially some of the students experienced apprehension in how to approach and connect with the senior singers with AD. Amelia admitted "well I was kind of shy at first and then I met Sister Antoinette and we sort of, developed a friendship." Wyatt agreed that "it took me a while to get used to it, at the first rehearsal I didn't really socialize with anybody but now, I'm starting to socialize with more and more people at every rehearsal, so yeah, it's pretty much bond creating." Noreen recalled "in the end I just started talking and people started interacting with me and now it's completely natural." In spite of any initial hesitation expressed, the students really appeared to develop deep bonds with their friends with AD. Sister Margaret noted that the students "right from the first they reached out to the sisters and continue to do so. [...] They bond one-on-one and take a personal interest." Noreen was able to establish bonds with several persons with AD through finding commonalities that united them:

All I do is just, you know, listen to the people talking and telling their stories and ah, telling my own stories sometimes and um, just seeing how similar even though, how similar we are even though we don't have that um, that age similarity. It's good.

Throughout the sessions, my field notes documented the strong relationships that had been formed between the persons with AD and the students. It was clear that certain students had formed affinities for certain persons with AD and vice versa. Pam really began to enjoy attending the sessions with her friend Sister Wanda and continued this friendship after the choral sessions had ended:

They are so excited when they hear that you are here for them and it's exciting. It's really exciting every time I come. I look forward; I made good connections with one of the sisters here and I look forward to seeing her every single week.

These connections were nurtured through several intimate interactions between the generations. Some of these included notes on March 7 where Sister Louisa was seen exchanging contact information and embraces with two students. In the same session Sister Bertha was teaching some male and female students how to polka. Various students recognized how importance the social aspect was for their more senior friends: "And just the relationships. They focused a lot on relationships between people, which was really cool to understand. That's something that you'll always remember." In reference to Sister Martha, Caroline disclosed that she enjoyed telling stories, the social aspect, and relating her experiences to when she was teaching.

The background of many of the persons with AD in music and teaching reinforced the need for them to have the social element present in this program. In a paraphrased conversation with Sister Bertha on May 2 she emphasized the importance of the arts' uniting qualities. She said that she used to teach dance to children and she had no discipline problems with them because they learned how to get along together through the arts. She said that machines, such as computers and cell phones, don't bring you love. You lose your friends because you don't talk to them and connect with them anymore. People are losing communication skills because you don't talk to the machine the same way you would talk to your friends, and you need your friends.

Recollections from the persons with AD suggest how important the social element was for them. Sister Bertha said that the experience was so rewarding for her "because I love singing. I love children. I just love it to be with them. I love people. All my life I've been with people." Sister Ethel was so appreciative "to be with all these young people and to hear these strong voices." Sister Margaret recalled a strong connection between another Sister and her student friend:

One sister said to me over the summer, "I made real friends with the student and now he's going away to university and I'm just really going to miss him, you know. And he has written to her and told her about moving and, "And I just think it's so tender. It's so beautiful, you know and other sisters are having the same kind of experience. Now, each one is different but I know it's just doing wonderful things for the people here.

The caregivers also noted how important it was for their loved ones with AD to experience the social aspect of the program. Linda's husband stated "I think it's social.

Getting out. Sometimes it's hard before she goes, but when she's with everybody she's great." Carl's caregiver was particularly touched by the bonds she saw students forming with their friends: "I was just amazed and I have watched one student in particular who was so connected with her patient, with her client, it's just unreal."

The variety of participant perspectives confirmed the role of music as a means to facilitate the building of relationships between the persons with AD and the students. It was clear that the social element of the program provided an opportunity for participants to establish and strengthen relationships with other choristers. There was significant value in providing an opportunity for all participants to socialize and relate to others. The fellowship especially before and after the choral rehearsal, allowed singers to form friendships, reflect on previous activities, and gain a sense of connection and belonging to each other.

The element of variety. The success of the program was in large part due to its structure and design. Several comments in the field notes referred to the element of variety as appealing to both generations of singers. Variety in programming occurred in the balance between familiar songs, which appealed to the need for relevance, and unfamiliar songs, which appealed to the goal of musical learning. Within the rehearsals, the conductor alternated between having the entire group sing together and having the students sing demonstrations on their own. Several persons with AD reportedly enjoyed having the opportunity to listen to the students and appreciate their voices and contributions. Finally, a variety of teaching methods and rehearsal strategies were utilized in order to appeal to different styles of learning. These included aural,

kinesthetic, and visual methods through the modes of rote learning, imitation, modeling and demonstration, and sight-reading.

The variety in programming was an intentional attempt to stimulate participants of varying expertise, backgrounds, and skill levels. In addition, the multifarious teaching and learning strategies employed were intended to increase the likelihood of engaging all choristers by improving their chances of experiencing success.

The elements of positive reinforcement and praise. The positive relationships that were established throughout the program and the ability to overcome appropriate challenges were made possible by the use of positive reinforcement and praise for participants from the program facilitators, peers and fellow participants. There was the need not only to receive praise, but to also have the sense of acknowledgement and validation of what participants were contributing to the overall experience. The music directors took great effort to recognize the choristers' previous musical skills and knowledge so that everyone felt valued. Their role was vital in responding to the actions of the choir and then communicating their approval. Positive comments conveyed to the choir included "in two rehearsals that piece has come a long way"; "you put the heart into this piece"; "tenors are stepping it up even though there aren't many today"; and finally, "I need to stop you. What we're doing is so lovely. You're making a beautiful song."

During one rehearsal Jack carried on singing after Jerry had stopped the choir and Jerry said "I shouldn't have stopped you because you were killing it."

Positive reinforcement was also seen in the words of encouragement from the conductors. For example, as the choir approached a higher note in the song *Danny Boy*, Jerry's voice rang out saying "Go for it!" His appreciation of their individual

contributions to their own choral arrangement was also evident. Jerry responded to the impromptu harmony at the end of the song with effusive praise stating that he loved it and that they should keep it up. And he joked that if he didn't like it, he would let them know by giving them a dirty look.

The conductors also used the singers with AD as examples of good singing for the students to emulate. For example, during *White Cliffs of Dover*, Jerry stopped the rehearsal to state:

I wish everyone could hear and see what I'm seeing from the front of the choir. The high school students are buried in their music. I see wonderful eyes from many who know the pieces. Okay to look down once in a while, but look up when you can.

The conductor identified what the students needed to do to improve so that the persons with AD did not always feel targeted as being the weakest group. Another example of showing the singers with AD as the positive role models, was during *Pack Up Your Troubles* when Jerry identified that some of the high school students were still not smiling and he wanted them to be more like the singers with AD.

Many of the students expressed praise for the contributions of the persons with AD through pride. They felt good in making others feel good. Noreen stated that her favourite experience as a student was "just having, like, people around me, just whispering to them and saying, oh that was really good." In response to their good intentions Jack recognized that when the "younger guys say oh, you're, you know, you're really good, deep down inside you know you're not as good as what they're saying."

Despite seeing through their encouraging words, the students still felt a sense of pride in

their more senior friends when they sang a solo or did a good job in singing a song. In student interviews with Caroline and Natalie they reflected on the pride they felt when Sister Martha and Sister Louisa sang in small group performances. Natalie expanded that "I felt like I had her memories. The things she was feeling, I felt them too. Like I had been there. And proud. Even though she's older than me, look at what she's done."

The positive praise that was bestowed upon the choir contributed to an overall feeling of pride and feeling valued. They felt purposeful in being there as essential contributors to the final product. While people of any age value positive reinforcement and recognition, the encouragement of the persons with AD might be especially important in order to feel comfortable and supported in taking risks.

The elements of success, accomplishment, and confidence. Although initially hesitant about what the choir would ultimately be able to achieve, the following statement from Nadine, the program manager of AS, testified to the success of the singers:

We had no idea if the caliber would be anywhere near what you'd want to have to put on a public performance. We had no idea whether our clients could tolerate that or would be interested in that you know. There are all the issues around what sort of venue and what songs could you like; or, are people even going to be able to use music [...] We really had no idea but we felt it was important to try it and we didn't really care how it ended up as long as everybody had a good time, as long as there was some sort of therapeutic value for the clients, that was really all that mattered to us. And of course it has had that and a whole bunch more besides. I think that there was real value in having that concert where we could share the efforts and it could really be celebrated.

Clearly the level of success surpassed the expectations of many and their achievements deserved to be celebrated. While Nadine did not prioritize the quality of the sound that the choir ended up achieving over the therapeutic value of the choir, their ability to experience success was important for their morale:

I think for the folks that had experience singing in choirs for some of them, I don't know this for sure but I can assume that their trajectory because they've had to pull out of choirs they've been in there's a reason why they would do that. It's not because they've stopped enjoying singing. It's because they can't memorize when they're supposed to be memorizing anymore. They get lost reading music. They can't do that anymore. And little by little and one by one it gets harder for them to keep up. And that's got to wear away at you and that's not just with your singing experience. That's also with socializing and other ways like playing cards with people or going to dinner parties and not being able to keep up with the conversation [...] I think these folks go through that process where the world around them is just making less and less sense and they're just less and less able to participate in the way they were used to doing and that's got to wear away at your soul [...] So what's really important to us was to provide an opportunity for them to experience success and to experience feeling good again about something that was maybe really important to them at one time and they used to feel really good about.

It was equally important to the artistic team to set the persons with AD up for success. The artistic team had accounted for these considerations and planned

accordingly. Several rehearsal techniques factored into building confidence and success for the singers with AD. These included programming considerations such as: routine and consistency, repetition, focusing on one concept throughout the rehearsal, anticipating problems and solving them in advance, providing clear instructions and directions, enlarging lyrics for improved visibility, altering the form of a song to avoid difficult passages, verbal cues, larger conducting gestures, demonstrations from teacher and students, word painting and imagery, sequential development, the modification of repertoire to accommodate singing range, prompting, and piano reinforcement of vocal lines.

Frequently the conductors would provide instructions at the beginning of each song that encouraged confident singing. For example, during *The Storm is Passing Over*, Jerry provided the reminder that "it's joyous; so sing powerfully and don't be afraid to sing loud and strong." The persons with AD seemed to respond favourably to these requests as one of the senior bass singers asked: "can I just belt it out if I can?" Sister Lorraine recognized that the conductor Jerry was instrumental in building confidence as "he brings out the best in everyone and ah, brings out the best in all the songs as well."

The inclusion of familiar tunes in the program order was essential in building the participants' confidence as well. Amelia commented on the change in the singing of persons with AD when they recognized a song: "...they are talking to people and they are making comments "Oh I know this song" or "I've heard this song before." "They sing really loud and they sort of take over the choir because this is their song and they feel so confident and they sort of come out of their shell."

Jerry's encouragement and establishment of a comfortable environment translated into the participants' ability to take risks and accept challenges. Caroline recalled that her more senior friend Sister Martha "liked the solo opportunity. She didn't want to sing it at first, but then got really excited. She started getting more confident with it." When I asked her how she knew she was more confident, she responded "I could hear her singing. She was really singing out. She was totally open."

Several of the participants expressed shock at the overall quality of the performance sound as they had a preconception that the persons with AD would not be competent singers. Student Wyatt professed his surprise in the following comment: "I'm not sure how they're gonna handle it. I'm not sure if they're gonna be good singers or anything, not to be like that or anything. But when I heard them sing it was really good." Linda's caregiver had this to say about the sound of the choir: "Oh, it's excellent. Really, I'm surprised, you know. I'm surprised how good the sound comes out, you know, I would never have thought so." Right from the beginning, the conductor, Jerry reflected that the initial session had gone very well. "The choir sounded good and it makes everyone feel good to have success at the beginning." Nadine indicated how impressed she was that the persons with AD were actually contributing to the aesthetically pleasing sound of the choir too:

I was pleasantly surprised, and I do have a bit of a musical background. I have sung in choirs and stuff all my life, and so I do know a little bit about this stuff and I was really quite impressed by the caliber of the singing that I saw the seniors doing as well. You know, even the ones that hadn't ever sung in choirs. So they didn't carry the whole thing, but certainly that was one of the huge

benefits to have them there, to really you know, carry the group or really help the group along in terms of the music part of it.

Moreover, comments were made suggesting that progress was being made in the choir's sound as well. Rinaldo, the accompanist who was able to be an objective observer, noted that a balance between familiar and newer songs "makes them feel like they've, not they don't accomplish things, but it makes them feel like they've accomplished something through the rehearsal." Student Wyatt reflected that "being here is, just eye-opening experience and, amazing because, coming here everyday it sounds, every single time I come here it sounds a lot better and I want to be a part of it more."

In addition to musical accomplishments, the participants were able to make achievements in other respects. The accompanist in the first phase acknowledged how heartwarming it was for him to see them "overcoming the struggles that they're facing through music." In spite of these personal challenges, one of the students, Wyatt, recognized the mentoring role the persons with AD played in the lives of the students:

It's really good because they can [...] teach you stuff that, or they can guide you or mentor you stuff, you never learned before. Or they can tell you the meaning of a song that you don't know. So they're very useful in many ways.

Ultimately, for the persons with AD to have been involved in a program where the program manager heralded it as a resounding success" could only contribute to their sense of self-satisfaction and pride:

It's just been incredibly glowing [...] I think the sort of local response has been very positive. We had over 400 people at the second concert you know [...]So there's been a tremendous positive response. I haven't heard any negative feedback about it at all. The only thing is for our end is the extent to which we have to put limits on it and we haven't actually turned anybody away. We thought we might have to last time and actually, Barbara just came to me today, our intake worker, and said I think the choir's full. And like, it doesn't even start until October so it's been tremendously successful. I would say and very popular and everybody who's participated. Now we haven't formally asked; we haven't done a formal evaluation per se but by all accounts it's certainly very popular and everybody that's been in it wants to do it again.

Nadine's comment reflected the participants' sense of agency in their course of action to return to a program that they felt was worthy of their time, energy, and interest.

The element of appropriate challenges. The element of variety in the programming also referred to balancing opportunities for immediate success and presenting attainable challenges that would develop skills. The delicate compromise between advancing participants' learning and providing tasks that were overwhelming or frustrating was a challenge for the artistic team. Some of the challenges observed by the persons with AD included reading through all of the other vocal parts to find their own vocal line, getting lost during the flipping of the scores, and the complication of the music. Student Caroline recalled her senior partner complaining "about how complicated the music was and how many pages she needed to turn throughout the music." Jerry was attuned to the persons with AD requests and reactions about all aspects of the rehearsals,

for example, by providing musical scores or just the lyrics in booklets for the pieces. And he actively responded to them to alleviate much of the frustration that surrounded these barriers. Sister Margaret, the leader of the Sisters, recognized how successful Jerry was in this endeavour:

He moves us on to newer things and teaches us newer things but it's never like hard work. It's always just enjoyable and beautiful and the students already know the pieces. There's enough strength there that we're not struggling to learn them. People who can't read the music or who have trouble remembering anything somehow pick these up. The melodies are good. The melody is easy enough that people can pick up the melody. All of those things I think count.

These challenges, of course, were often presented when new songs were introduced to the choir. To compensate, persons with AD often would listen to others around them in order to pick up the words, notes, and rhythms. They rarely used the music or lyric booklets when they sang familiar songs, however, it remained a goal of the artistic team to challenge the persons with AD to learn new things in music and in themselves.

# **Recognition and Assessment of Abilities**

Enabling the participants to experience success and potential barriers provided the persons with AD with the opportunity to recognize their current personal abilities and the challenges with which they were confronted. Again, recognizing that several of the singers with AD came from musical backgrounds was important for them to assess their progression or regression. Student Wyatt confirmed such experiences with the following comment: "Then when I get to talk to some of them and hear their stories and their

backgrounds. And their musical educations from when they were younger, it's just amazing, like to know, they know that much about music."

Periodically it was a challenge to ascertain whether participant comments were made in modesty, an attempt to avoid judgment with respect to their perceived level of ability, or if they were truly recognizing their singing and musical capabilities. Lyle admitted to a student "I haven't sang anything for over 20 years." The student responded "I'm sure you have a great voice" to which Lyle replied, "not worth a damn." Another student noted a female singer with AD who looked so happy when she sang and when she told that to her, the more senior singer replied "You know I can't sing. I try." Other comments documented in relation to their singing and musical ability were "I don't read music, but I love to sing"; "I can't sing, but I like to be here. I just like listening to all of the songs. I pick them up quickly because I think I have a good ear."

This latter comment made by Sister Theresa was a clear recognition of what she could and could not do and how she was able to compensate for her shortcomings. In the following account, Renata not only described her present challenges, but recognized how they could be improved: she said that if we met twice a week as a choir her vocal development would come along faster. The way it is right now, it takes half the rehearsal for her voice to warm up. She needs to get used to her voice every week and where the placement is because it changes as it gets older. Sister Martha made a simultaneous revelation of her abilities and inabilities. During one session she made positive acclamation after singing a song that "I sang this song really well;" yet in the same session admitted to her adolescent friend that she did not like songs with high notes because "I can never hit that note." Her student friend saw the positive in these

statements: "they realized that they can keep singing and keep having fun with it." Even when singers struggled physiologically with the occasional high notes in songs, they tried and were able to sing them. These opportunities revealed to them what they were or were not able to do.

Some participants were overcome by the new challenges to singing that were presented to them and chose not to return to the program. Field notes describe a conversation with Clara who expressed concern about her hearing. She was a music teacher and she said that she was not returning because it was too frustrating for her to know how it was supposed to sound; but because of her hearing she was unable to produce that sound. She said that it would be all right if it was just soprano and melody singing, but because there were several parts singing at once she couldn't sing her own part.

The opportunity to sing in this choir allowed many participants to evaluate their role and contribution to the choir. Gord, a former barbershop quartet singer, saw his use and role as a baritone in the choir as one in which he needed to listen to those around him and fill in the parts that were missing. Jack's testimony revealed how he was challenged and the recognition of all the mistakes that he made as a singer in the choir. When he was asked which songs he liked in the program, he said:

Oh, I don't know I think they're all pretty good, if I could keep up to 'em. You know, I don't know. I, I have trouble, you know, trying to keep up to them and trying to figure out where I am. But ah, but, that was pretty good you know, they've been telling me good, you know. I made mistakes, a lot of mistakes but anyways, I hadn't get kicked out.

Co-conductor Nathan confronted his limitations with respect to evaluating the choir's use for him, rather than his use for the choir:

Well, I, I, I'm always guilty. I feel quite a bit guilty because um, having done what Jerry is doing now obviously I know what, Corrine and Jerry are doing and everything and ah, and I so appreciate because, quite frankly, I know a lot of people would just say, go away. You know, that's the, the normal thing and they work hard to make sure that I'm not, bringing the choir down. I, I and, and, when it comes to the point where I know I'm, letting the choir down then I would step out of the way.

In spite of Nathan's honest appraisal of what eventually might come to be, he recognized his purpose to be developing agency within others; to help others find and own their voice: "that's what I'm trying to do now, is I get up every day and try and ah, get everybody to just sing their song, you know, whatever it is, sing your song," (Alzheimer Society London Middlesex, 2013).

Nathan's aim for singers to connect to their voices and songs was an overall mission for the entire artistic staff. In order to facilitate this, it was important to help the persons with AD realize that they were part of something bigger within the choir and that their positive contribution and voice to the choir mattered to the overall sound. It was important to hold all participants to high standards so that they put forth an effort to improve the song. It was important not to underestimate the singers with AD and as such, the conductors introduced them to repertoire that would sufficiently challenge them.

Setting up appropriate challenges allowed the persons with AD to assess what

they were and were not able to accomplish. This concept was significant in that choristers needed to have the opportunity to discover what they were still able to achieve, wherein rested their potential, and what activities continued to provide challenges to them. It was also very important for them to be held to high but realistic standards so that they felt valued and contributing members of the choir.

#### **Awareness**

The notion of participants' assessment of their past and current situations was key to the factor of awareness. Many interactions between students and persons with AD involved the persons with AD articulating their existing knowledge. An example of this occurred in the recollection from Pam about her favourite song, *Silent Night*, for the following reason: "As soon as you even say the words Silent Night, um, the lady that I sing with just perks right up and she's so excited and she even corrects me sometimes when I'm not singing it the way that she learned how to."

### **Evidence and Realization of Learning**

While the challenges described previously could serve as potential barriers to engagement for the singers with AD, they also often manifested themselves in the realization of learning for the persons with ADs. This element was critical to understanding that people of any age are still capable of significant learning, even though challenges to this might be greater for some than others.

While it would be ideal if persons with AD identified and articulated their awareness of their own learning, that was not always possible. Therefore, having others recognize the learning that was taking place while and after it happened was necessary. The underlying philosophy in this program was about learning about music, each other,

and oneself as much as the therapeutic element. At the first rehearsal session in March, Nadine communicated the mantra that, "We're young people and young at heart. Hopefully everyone is a music lover and we are all here to learn and grow together. We will journey and venture out together." This philosophy was enacted in practice through rehearsal elements that focused on certain musical details and elements. Goals were made, accomplished, and reviewed. Challenging songs were chosen such as Carol of the Bells in four parts, of which Jerry admitted "this is our most challenging song yet." Instead of saying, "let's get louder here," the term *crescendo* was used; instead of "loud", forte was used. Musical terms were discussed using their technical names; musical literacy skills were developed whereby everyone read each soprano, alto, tenor and bass line. Expectations were set and rehearsed until they were met. An example of this was during a May 2 rehearsal of the song You Raise Me Up. Jerry desired a different dynamic level and quality of sound and communicated that he had "one small complaint. When you sang 'come' it was a full sound, before that I could use a little bit more." Expectations were therefore established and then direction and techniques were provided to help singers achieve those goals.

This emphasis impressed upon the choristers that there were expectations for improvement and development. Many caregivers often commented on how the persons with AD liked the quality of the direction by the music directors and knew that there were competent leaders in charge of the choir with a solid understanding of quality music and sound pedagogy. They appreciated that their skills and desire to learn were not underestimated.

On a repeated basis, the persons with AD took the booklets that contained music notation instead of just the lyrics with large print. Sister Lenora asked Corrine, a co-conductor, specifically to bring her a music booklet with notes.

The students also recognized the learning that took place for their friends with AD. In an interview with Caroline and Natalie they said that they thought persons with AD learned "mainly that it's never too late to try new things," and although "it sounded like she thought that part of her life was over" in reference to singing, "they realized that they can keep singing and keep having fun with it." Caroline also noted the reciprocal learning process involved in the two parties as "it's cool knowing like, that they know some of the songs, and then I know some of the songs like better than they do which is cool; so we can both, like, give and take from each other."

In a summative interview with Nadine, I asked her if she thought that any type of learning took place for the persons with AD and her response assured me that there was:

I think there certainly would have been a potential for some of them. I don't know that they could tell you now what they learned last fall, you know. But you know we run a learning series here for people in the early stages of dementia and we often end up having the same conversation or similar conversations week by week. But I do feel that in that moment, in a 2 hour session we have in those moments where we're having that conversation that we had last week, they're still benefitting from that. They're getting their question answered in the moment. This is the question they have right now in this moment and so to have that addressed in a meaningful way I still think has some value. The fact that they won't remember it next week is neither here nor there to me [...] I'll be here again

next week and we can have the same conversation. That doesn't bother me. I don't think it's quite accurate to say that no learning took place if they did the learning and then forget what they learned. I think that they still had some learning take place and I suspect that probably for many of the folks perhaps more for the people that hadn't had experience singing in choirs they could well have learned a little bit about music. If they didn't read music they may have learned that when the notes go up the page your voice needs to go up and when it comes down the page you know it needs to go down or what have you. I suspect that there was maybe some learning that went on. But I have to say I don't really care.

To me that's not where the value lies you know.

Her response was powerful in differentiating learning in the moment and learning in the long term. Simply because the persons with AD might not remember what they have learned in the long term does not mean that learning did not occur in the instant or moment in which it was presented.

Therefore, while it was difficult to ascertain whether the persons with AD remembered what they had learned, there was evidence in their actions and changed abilities that indicated that learning had been retained. The following scenarios from my observations across the span of sessions spoke to the retention of learning from previous sessions: choir members recalled which verses had melismatic endings in *Song for the Mira;* coloured the word "hushed" in *Danny Boy* without a verbal reminder from the conductor; and consistently gave correct emphatic cutoffs on the word "night" in *It's a Grand Night for Singing.* Some of those songs might have been either familiar or unfamiliar to the choir; however, the stylistic demands from the conductor would likely

have been novel requests. One particular song that was predominantly new to most singers with AD was *The Storm is Passing Over*. Sister Lorraine, who acted as a caregiver in the sessions, identified her favourite songs as the new ones introduced to the choir:

I think *The Blessing* is my favourite. Um, because of the words and what it means to me, um, and it's one that I've never sung before. So I liked the fact that I learned something new. The other new one I learned was *The Storm is Passing* I had never heard that one before and ah, it's beautiful too.

Although not a participant with AD, I included her reflection as an indication that many of the persons with AD would have experienced these as newly learned songs. This is a particularly important song to demonstrate retention of learning for several reasons. Jerry introduced this song to the choir in the first iteration of the program and they performed it at the final concert. Throughout the rehearsals he had made a request that the word "over" be sung without the "r", as in "ovah." The choir remembered this pronunciation from week to week. The next explanation is also significant. Near the end of the second phase of the program, Jerry decided that he needed to fill out the concert program with some additional repertoire. He thoughtfully questioned what would happen if he brought back *The Storm is Passing Over*, as many of the choir members had participated in both sessions, however they hadn't sung it in four months (Beynon & Hutchison, under review). Jerry brought out the song again on May 2, and to his amazement the choristers not only remembered the song, but it was "sung at the same performance level as when they had sung it for the concert four months before."

Sister Margaret's reflection encompasses many facets of learning that occurred for persons with AD, including the realization of their own learning:

I think one of the things they are learning is that they can still learn. I think they're surprised when they learn a new piece and then remember it a week later or two weeks later. I think they're learning that other people still want to be with them; that if you have memory issues, you're not a pariah, you're not pushed away. I think that's an important learning for people, that we're okay in every stage of our lives and that we can be loved. I think that they may not be conscious of it but I think that someone told me once that music, singing in particular, is like a massage of your inner organs, that it does something physical to your inner body. And I think that they're learning that they feel better after. They might not know why. But they might just chalk it up to being with people and having fun; whatever, it doesn't matter but I think there is a learning going on. This is a good thing for me. One of the sisters when I was taking the names for the time, she said, "now my memory's lots worse than it was before. I'd really like to do what I think is good for me." So she knew it was helping her. That's learning.

Jerry acknowledged the following that "we have grown a lot in size; we've grown musically [and] in friendships as well. We've all learned a lot." The fact that the singers' learning had grown and carried over from fall, through the winter hiatus, and into the spring session was indeed very powerful.

The element of rejuvenation. Sister Margaret's analogy to singing as a "massage of your inner organs" spoke to the role that singing plays in revitalizing the participants. The following comments suggested that this might not just be a physical

occurrence, but an opportunity for rejuvenation of the spiritual, emotional, and mental self as well. Sister Bertha noted that "Singing automatically lifts you up. The older you are, the more singing there is, the better it is for you. You feel young, young again." When I asked her how she felt after singing with the students she responded, "Just great. Just on top of the world. I'm way up." Sister Ethel agreed and said that she felt "Rejuvenated! I feel that it's, ah, it's like medicine. Good music to me is like medicine and I wouldn't miss it," (Alzheimer Society London Middlesex, 2013). I specifically asked Linda how she felt differently when she came to the choir rehearsals and she replied "my spirit sings when I sing." Sister Ruth reflected that it "makes you feel good again." Sister Theresa was "just delighted. I just love music so, and grateful, you know. We do have a lot of singing here, you know, so, and it's uplifting, it gives you life and, it's enjoyable."

Many caregivers of persons with AD also reported that the choral experience seemed to reenergize the spirit of their loved one. For example, one caregiver stated "we see his spirit again. Before he was dead inside." Carl's wife noted that "he comes out very exhilarated about the music and about the excellent direction.[...] It's a very rewarding experience for him."

The artistic and organizational staff also recognized the rejuvenating effects of attending the choir. One comment made was: "I firmly believe that music awakens the spirit. It will awaken their minds and my mind. It allows for imagination."

While the singing element was partly responsible for these observations, many comments also spoke to the contribution of social element to these experiences. Rinaldo the accompanist remarked, "I think it's just, it's just the joy that they feel, when they,

especially when they are with the younger people, the high school students in this group. It's literally the cross-generational aspect I really think makes it that much more special and it brings out." Sister Ruth also noted that "I think it does your heart good, to come and, listen to, the combination of all the, sort of different ages, mainly, young." Sister Margaret related many of the sisters' backgrounds in teaching as an explanation for their heightened spirits:

Some of the Sisters, who were in some cases secondary school teachers, are just blossoming again and to interact with young people. They love it. [...]I know that the nursing staff here is thrilled with how much more alive and happy the sisters are when they come. They see a difference; they experience a joy and a vitality that has been drawn out of them by that.

The persons with AD were not the only ones who appeared reenergized by the music. Nathan, the co-conductor, continually amazed all participants involved in the choir when he stood at the podium and conducted songs so powerfully that were engrained in his musical repertoire. It appeared as though he had physically embodied these songs and that, despite his dementia, something deep inside took over as he revisited these familiar tunes. I noted in my field notes that when Nathan conducted *The Blessing* he seemed "to really come to life when he conducts pieces that he knows by heart." Comments from several persons with AD and those who had the privilege of observing these moments of rejuvenation related to feelings of excitement, energy, exhilaration, smiling, and soaring and singing spirits.

The elements of relief and respite. The reports indicating that participants felt rejuvenated through singing and the social aspect of the program also coincided with

testimonies where persons with AD experienced relief and respite. There were several comments where participants related to feeling "good". James felt "very good" "because music has always been with James." When asked how she felt at choir, Sister Theresa responded "Wonderful. Great. Oh I just love it!" Linda agreed responding, "Oh I feel great! It's wonderful. […] The music is nice. The people are nice. How could it not be?"

Linda's husband echoed these sentiments and observed physical benefits of the singing sessions: "I think she, you know, she is a little more relaxed and a little more, you know, you can see that she's enjoyed it." Allan's wife noted that these effects are not only short-term, but have longevity: "Oh, I think, I think it's a blessing for him he. He goes home and we have a good evening usually and evenings are the worst part, you know – the difficult part often....It's very nice for him. One caregiver asserted that "the more we can get people involved in music the better. It is so healing." Karen's caregiver recognized music's potential in her: "I think it does something in her mind that gives her some good thoughts. I think something comes out of it that she sort of remembers. It makes her happy." A student, Pam, saw the power of music as she recounted this of Sister Wanda: "Today she was talking about how much love she feels when she's in that room and on how good she feels on days that she sings even if it's just a little while."

A final comment by Linda, a singer with AD, spoke to the power that these positive feelings could have with respect to motivation: "I feel like I'd like to stay to keep going! I do like it and I like the people here." She was then asked if she wanted it to stop and she exclaimed: "No! I could go on and on. I look forward to coming here." The description of her desire to continue, to carry on, to keep coming back holds much promise if singing programs can be engaging opportunities whereby participants feel

empowered through agency.

The element of recognition. An important facet of this program was the continuity factor, which enabled participants to build rapport with people and demonstrate several abilities, including the ability to recognize and remember people. Several students were amazed at the ability of their senior friends with AD to recognize them on a weekly basis. Their diversity of experiences presented in the following accounts provided a picture of the various stages of AD: Amelia noted that Sister Laura "remembers me pretty well week from week. She forgets little things, you know, she'll maybe ask some repeated questions but I don't think she's very far into her dementia because she remembers things quite well and she remembers little snippets of what we've talked about before."

Caroline recalled of Nathan that "He always, um, he always remembers me. He doesn't usually remember my name but he'll always recognize me. It's like he used to know my name and then like, he'll recognize me and then like, it's getting worse but..."

Steven, a student, recalled:

He actually remembered who I was from week to week and so, yeah, I found that very surprising. But, it's, it's also really neat that I can make such an impact on someone's life they would remember me [...] It'd interest me that ah, like, through music and through and by connecting with my patient through music that um, like, I could have made such an impact that he would, despite his short term memory loss, actually, know who I was and you know, and actually be that fond of me from week to week.

Steven's account related the ability to recognize familiar faces with the opportunity to make connections. The caregivers were also very impressed with their loved ones' ability to recognize and remember people at the sessions. Karen's mother identified that Karen was "connected to Juliana. A really nice girl. My Mom likes her and recognizes her." In Pam's case, even if faces or names were not recognizable, voices certainly were. Pam recounted that her best experience as a student was "definitely making a connection with the Sister. Um, she, she doesn't remember my name, but she remembers my voice."

Aural recognition was also present in the form of song recognition; an important feature in a singing program. Several field notes documented the joy when the persons with AD took some time to peruse through the booklets to see what songs they recognized. The accompanist noted that "it's um, really neat to, just watch, the expression on their face when they are happily singing the song that they've known and loved for many years." Kris was amazed that he was able to "recognize all the songs and they recognize all the songs and you know, it's just a great opportunity to share music." The recognition of songs and the memories conjured from the melodies speaks to the joy that recognition elicited for persons with AD.

The element of connection. The opportunity to experience recognition of people and songs facilitated the connections that persons with AD were able to make. As a result of this program, Sister Margaret stated "there are connections being made in their minds that are positive and life-giving and exciting for them." There were several instances where comments were made about the connection made with others, with music, with religion, and with the self.

It has been made clear that through social interactions and singing partnerships,

the connections made between the persons with AD and the students were exceptionally strong. Natalie and Caroline recognized that Sister Martha was able to reconnect to her previous students by way of connecting with the current students in the program: "She learned that she can still connect with students. She would always talk about different relationships she had. It was really nice for her to realize that she could still connect with students."

Connections were not just made between adolescents and persons with AD, however. Linda recounted "I've made friends with one of the nuns here, who remembered our girls that went to school here' and ah, and she said, you know, she said come on up, and you know, I guess they get lonely too, like everyone else on their own." Linda's example showed that connections were not just made between persons with AD and their student partners, but between persons with AD as well. When I asked the accompanist his perspective on how the choir benefitted persons with AD he said that it "makes them, um, make that musical connection with others around them, and I think that's kind of what music is all about, is working together, to make something bigger than yourself."

This idea of the music being "bigger than yourself" is referenced in Allan's response as well. For him, it's the power of a spiritual connection and a meaning created in the sounds:

Oh for me, to just, think that I wanted, in music and the music itself, the sounds, when they come together they evoke some other understanding, about these creatures, God, Jesus Christ. When you have songs about them, and the notes used, you hear something, the note says things, that are not even written. (Beynon

& Hutchison, under review; Alzheimer Society London Middlesex, 2013).

Allan related his experience of singing certain songs to the spiritual connection that he felt through music and singing. In reference to *Silent Night*, in which many people noticed how invested he became in that song, he replied "Ah yes! Well the music, see when I go to the religious music, when everything fails, where does the time get away from me, everyone likes it, very much." Nathan, the co-conductor recalled music's magical and ethereal qualities when people sing together as he reflected on a time when his choir was singing in Carnegie Hall: "they knew something magical had happened but they didn't know how to express it and they just sat there, held hands, hugged each other. Pretty powerful."

While these comments spoke to the outward connections made possible through music, Nathan, also recognized one's body as a conduit for musical expression and transcendence. When Nathan was asked why music could be therapeutic he stated:

Why does it work? Because, because, the singers, singers, um, that are singing in a choir, regardless of their level, or whatever, they, um, connect with sound because they are the violin. Their whole body is working and when I taught all those years up at Midland, I was constantly saying your, the sound just comes out through you. You are the violin. You are the trumpet, okay, that's what, you know, except that, when you're a singer, like, it, it, it's so immediate. You, you get the sound and ah, and that's why I'll number of times I'll get up and all of a sudden half the choir's sobbing, you know, because, it's not just the beautiful music but it's also the poetry that goes with it.

The importance that so many participants placed on the ability for music to connect

people was justifiably powerful for the presence of singing programs. Kris documented this journey of connecting to others in the following comment:

With a few hours of training they all thought "oh, what are we gonna do? We don't know how we're gonna relate. And then we came here and we saw that we relate just the exact same way. You say, "How are you doing? How has your day been?" and you start to sing and, and anybody can connect if they can just get in a room singing together because, 'cause that's what singing does. It connects people.

Several participants also spoke to the emotional connection that the persons with AD made to the experience of singing and the specific songs chosen. Sister Ethel recalled:

I was thinking about ah, "You'll Never Walk Alone." It, it means more to me now that we sing it, and I'll try ah just to not get emotional about it; but um, Sister, one of the sisters has been sitting near me and I was helping her, with you know, if I were going along with the words, she was able to sing it at least, say the words. But she isn't with us today right now, because she's not well but [...] I've known her for so many years and ah, and I can't help but think of those words, how much more meaningful they are because it seems that um, she has walked into a storm and ah, and has always held her head up high, and ah, now she isn't able to have conversations. And she has diminished considerably and to see her go from her young years into this storm — aah, so it's ah, it's, has a deep meaning for me and ah, so, I think it's great to have the choir.

Students enjoyed seeing the persons with AD connect to their familiar songs and

the possibilities that it held for persons with AD. Natalie recalled that Sister Louisa "was hesitant at first, but when she thought about how much the song meant to her she just opened up." While she saw that connecting to songs increased her friend's confidence, Kris identified his favourite song as the medley *Songs the Soldiers Sing* for the following reason:

I think, with a lot of the choral pieces and the newer pieces, they've had some trouble; but you sing those songs, those are the ones they get really excited about. Because these are the ones that they sang as a kid, and these are the ones they remember, you know, hearing on the radio. And this is the song when they went to a dance and they would hear this song, you know, you know. Uncle came and sang it when he came back from the war, kind of thing. So they're the ones that they emotionally connect to and that's when I think music is the most powerful when they've made an emotional connection.

Seeing how his senior friends with AD were able to connect to those pieces was very important for Kris.

It's just a great opportunity to share music. And what is better than music for connecting people? And you know, giving a voice to people who lost theirs, of which Alzheimer's is a great example. I mean, here are valuable members of society [...] losing their voice in some ways but you know for these couple of hours they get it back and they're excited and they're happy and they're just, just so glad to be singing. And that's great, because that's why, I think I enjoy and what all the students enjoy, what everyone is really here for, it's just singing. It's

music.

Kris' final comment about the importance of shared music making and the connection that resulted spoke to the power music has in restoring one's voice and offering it to others. The processes of recalling one's voice and then contributing this voice within a collective group showcased participants' exercise of agency.

The elements of recollection and reminiscence. The link between connection, recognition, and memory is an intricate one. In response to a question directed to Pam about how she knew Sister Wanda was connecting, she answered:

Sometimes she gets really tired and if she's not connected she actually does try and fall asleep. So when she hears a song or Mr. Jerry's voice, she recognizes Mr. Jerry's voice, she'll perk up and sometimes she'll smile and she'll talk about 'Oh I love this song or I like him so much.'

The connection that many persons with AD experienced to the songs of their past indicated the importance of recollection, or memory recall, and reminiscence, which is attaching emotion to that recall. One example is Sister Ruth, who reflected that singing in this choir "brings back your own time in High School in the choir [...] I thought it was wonderful. It just kind of, brings back your own memories."

The most prevalent occurrence of persons with AD demonstrating these processes was in relation to their conjuring of memories and sharing with others. Many student participants interviewed commented that their senior friends with AD shared all kinds of stories with them. Wyatt noted that "...you get to hear the stories and you know what,

what they did and how their life progressed." Steven appreciated connecting with his senior friend with AD, Eldridge, through his past recollections:

We started connecting then more deeply about his past and how he used to be a Drill Sargent in the Military during World War 2. And, yeah I just found it, really rewarding, um, learning about his past and all the things he has done in his life.

Amelia had a similar experience connecting with Sister Laura as she reminisced about her past memories, only to find out how much they had in common:

She was telling me about her growing up with her brother, and I have a brother like she does and we reminiscing sort of about things we do; and sort of having a brother and she was telling me where she grew up and all these things. [...] so we're sharing a lot of stories about that and she was telling me about her childhood and we have a lot in common actually, and she loves to sing. [...] It was very surprising that I actually found someone who is a lot like me who is so much older, so, it was very surprising and very enjoyable and it's making my experience more amazing than it is already.

Pam never tired of hearing the same stories week after week as Sister Wanda recalled her associations to the songs:

She remembers what we do and why we do it, but there are songs that are new to her and she doesn't remember them; but she picks up on the songs that she does remember from her youth and she tells me the stories every single week, about, um, where that song is coming from for her and, about the competition she

won with that song when she was in her twenties. So it's, it's really fun.

The social camaraderie was often the catalyst for memory recollection and reminiscence. Karen's caregiver said that a student Jenny, "would sit and talk with her and bring things to her mind and she quite enjoyed it." The feelings of joy that the persons with AD expressed when reminiscing was captured in Kris' reflection:

I say 'I'm from [village nearby]' and they're 'Oh! I remember [that place]. I used to go up there when I was a kid and my uncle had a farm there' and you know. They are just so happy to tell their story [...] they have a lot of stuff to tell and they are just waiting for someone to say "what did you do when you were a kid? Where did you grow up? What has your experience been in life? And, really genuinely be interested and they just get so much joy out of that as everybody does.

Just as the telling of stories evoked joy for many participants, the music itself also had the remarkable power to stir up memories. Amelia commented:

I find it amazing to see when someone is sort of tuned out and then there's music and all of a student they remember; they recollect with something, and they sort of, and the light shines on again and they don't look, quite as, within themselves and they're more engaged.

This reengagement in the presence of music was also illustrated in Nathan's conducting of pieces. When Jerry announced that Nathan would be conducting *It's a Grand Night for Singing*, Nathan recalled doing that song in his first show. He also showed little

difficulty in remembering the words, gestures, and form of the song when he conducted *You'll Never Walk Alone* and other songs that were engrained into his mental and kinaesthetic memories. Nathan's story certainly highlighted the presence of long-term memories that are so often associated with persons with AD. Steven, however, noted that in actuality, "When you talk to them, you find that ah, they, that they can actually remember quite a bit and like some of them, of course, from recent past and of course the distant past." A very powerful example of how this choir assisted in recollection in the short-term was Linda's daughter's account of her Mother having "no recollection of anything else in her life except for this choir." This comment was an important revelation of the importance of a choir program in the lives of persons with AD. Their ability to remember when the sessions are and to want to come to the sessions highlights the desire to act upon these recollections.

The element of return. The theme of connection focused on the present relationships and bonds that were created and experienced "in the moment" during choir rehearsals. An additional layer of connection and singing, however, was its ability to delve into past relationships and bonds. The opportunity for persons with AD to recollect and reminisce about previous experiences facilitated their reconnection to their previous sense of self and relationships: in essence, their journey of return. This was evidenced by the many instances in which I noted wistful looks in the participants as they sang or listened to songs that appeared to really take them back in time. Clarity of word choice is critical in this theme because while the view might be taken that the seniors had "left" and were lost in the moment, they might just be "returning" in time to their previous sense of self; to their caregivers they could also be seen as "coming back". Likewise the

perspective that perhaps the persons with AD are "getting lost in the past" as opposed to "coming back to the present" could be confusing, but are essentially two sides of the same coin.

There were several examples of comments that suggested persons with AD were returning to a time in their past. The accompanist discussed their sense of return in relation to songs from their pasts:

I really like the medley of old songs, the *Songs Soldier Sing* that's like, ah, like *White Cliffs of Dover* and *We'll Meet Again* and all that stuff because I can't look at them all the time because I'm fiddling away on the piano. But when I look over and see them, see the patients singing, um, you can tell that they know those songs and they feel that connection to their past when they sang them; or when they heard them and it, I think it brings them back to, um, that whole feeling of being young.

Sister Margaret stated that these songs were particularly effective in "that it activates memory, that are emotionally laden and that is healing in itself. It's good and it helps a person to touch into a part of herself that she may be forgetting or may not have recently contacted." When Nathan the conductor was asked to describe the benefits of singing for persons with AD, his response referred to singing's critical power to bring people back: "Oh there's no question. That's the first thing they should be doing. Is, is singing. You know, it, it brings them back to their core."

Other comments, however, spoke to the ability of music to coax persons with AD out of a distant place, to reengage them in the present. Student Pam and Sister Wanda developed a very special relationship and Pam frequently visited her new friend on non-

choir days. When I asked Pam about Sister Wanda's behaviour outside of the choir rehearsal she replied:

Even before we come down to the room for choir she's kind of distant. She kind of listens to what I say but sometimes she doesn't, and uh, and as soon as we walk into the choir room it's instant like "where am I? Am I about to sing? I'm so excited." She talks about how she loves to sing and she tells me all of her old stories about when she was a teacher of music and she had winning choirs and she loves it. So it's just it that recognition and the connection. She really does connect when she starts to sing and she hears me sing.

For Sister Wanda just the mere suggestion of attending the choir rehearsal was sufficient to bring her back to the present. Pam's comment suggested that the anticipation of singing had the ability to let her reconnect with others and her true "singing self" again. Sister Margaret spoke about an actual place inside themselves in which the persons with AD could reside and that people could safely allow them access to that space:

For these people with Alzheimer's and dementia, we're starting with something they remember easily and those songs have a lot of emotional content for them so they fit in readily and easily. It brings them to another place in themselves, the part of their memory that's gone is not the old part. It's the present part so we tap in immediately to what they can do comfortably.

The opportunity to observe and interact with Nathan was instrumental in

understanding the relationship between singing and conducting and AD as well. Often I have discussed the sense that Nathan is returning to something deep inside him when he conducts as they are pieces he has led many times before. My field notes consistently referred to Nathan coming to life as a conductor, as did many of the singers when they were singing their favourite songs. While this reconnection was most desirable, it also presented emotional challenges for the caregivers. Every time the loved one returned to their previous self, it was inevitable that their former self would fade and disappear again. Nathan's wife gave me special permission to include a message of gratitude on a Facebook post following a tribute concert to her husband: "Now it's healing time for my family, as each time Nathan "awakens" we have to say goodbye."

Reconnecting to their relationships and previous self involved a sense of returning, however, every time the persons with AD returned the caregiver had to live through the experience of seeing them leave again.

The complexity of this theme involved the language surrounding the notion of becoming lost in the moment, but also finding oneself in the moment; being able to find oneself again and be brought back, juxtaposed against appearing lost in memories. As a further complication, these comments suggested that singing had the power to bring people back, but it also helped them to feel lost in the memories too. They found themselves but then they could be lost again in the songs or memories. In spite of the semantic challenges, the critical element was the provision for persons with AD to return to their core. The journey to get there might be longer for some and at some point with AD they might never be able to arrive at that destination, but providing the opportunity was certainly important.

# **Challenges to Engagement**

While the previous themes were associated with heightened levels of engagement for persons with AD, there were demonstrations of less desirable behavioural traits arising from the intergenerational choral experience.

**Logistical considerations.** For some participants, the logistics of the program acted as a barrier for participation and full engagement in the program. Nadine recalled:

I think both times there have been a few people for whom it, who didn't stick it out [...] I believe in most instances it was more of a logistical thing. You know, they're at day program that day and I just can't work around it; or I thought I could but I can't or you know they just get too tired. It's too late in the day, you know; they're too tired by then you can't change the time because we need the high school students, you know, and those sorts of issues that, I don't know, there might have been one or two each time where they didn't come back because it wasn't for them but no, I think for the most part, people who came, stayed and enjoyed and are interested in being involved again.

Even participants who raved about the program during rehearsal encountered barriers in getting to rehearsals. Linda's husband admitted that even though she really looked forward to coming back to the sessions, she did not want to walk in the cold. She got mad at him when he encouraged them to walk and refused to go until her daughter offered to drive her.

**Resistance and Reticence.** There were instances in which persons with AD expressed behaviours and attitudes that presented as resistance or opposition, and

reticence or reluctance. Knowing the reasons for this outward expression, however, was not always clear. In the initial sessions, several participants were hesitant to join the main choir and sat on the opposite side where a few caregivers and non-singing participants were seated. This, however, could have been because they did not know where to sit. Sister Margaret gently encouraged those who sat on the periphery to join the choir. Encouragement was also required to have the persons with AD sing solos or small group ensembles. The majority of those who eventually did participate needed to be volunteered by the conductors or their student friends.

My observations in the third session of the fall noted that even though the persons with AD demonstrated ease of singing and talking to the students during fellowship before and after the rehearsal, within the rehearsal there were still some indicants of hesitation and tentativeness in volunteering answers or volunteering to sing. Throughout the course of rehearsals, observations were noted when the persons with AD decided they were not going to sing certain songs. From an observational perspective it could have been either because they didn't like the songs or because they were too difficult. In the case of Linda, it was clear that she did not enjoy singing *The Storm is Passing Over*. During the third session in the fall program her body position spoke volumes to her displeasure over this song. She had her arms crossed and refused to sing or even look at the music. Following this display was a complete transformation at the singing of a familiar tune for her, *Loch Lomond*.

Resistance and reticent behaviours could often be a defensive stance to prevent something from happening, such as making mistakes, singing the wrong words or the wrong notes, or not being able to sing the notes at all. If people did not volunteer, then they were not in a position to be singled out and vulnerable to the judgment or criticism of others. This was evidenced by several comments admitting that they did not have good singing voices. Although Sister Theresa looked forward to coming to the first fall session because she loved to sing, she quickly identified that Marion was not a great singer and was in fact dragged here to the session. Concerns over physical challenges, such as mobility and visual impairments could be compounded by the emotional barriers of singing through emotionally-laden songs.

It was quite possible that instances of resistance could be attributed to a grumpy mood or outside influences such as weather, illness, or physiological frustrations that factored into demonstrated enjoyment in a singing session.

# **Summary**

This chapter has provided a descriptive outline of the third and final case in this collective case study. The variety of perspectives provided a comprehensive picture of opportunities for and barriers to engagement for persons with AD in the intergenerational singing program. The elements of enjoyment, response, choice/input, relevance, comfortable environment, social gathering/camaraderie, variety, positive reinforcement, success/confidence, and appropriate challenges seemed to positively nurture opportunities for heightened engagement for persons with AD. Additional requirements that appeared to resonate with this particular age cohort were opportunities for the participants to experience rejuvenation, relief and respite, recognition of people and songs, connections, recollection and reminiscence and the journey of return. While these were the positive associations that participants experienced, there were accounts that demonstrated participant resistance and reticence. Researcher observation detected

expressed hesitation as a result of social anxiety, concern over embarrassment, fear of failure, fear of judgment from their peers, and fear of being singled out or standing out.

Situations in which participants exercised agency appeared in their ability to assess their abilities, acknowledgement and realization of their learning, and act voluntarily to enhance the quality of their lives through their participation in the program.

The opportunity to revisit singing, which in large part is a familiar and favourite activity of many persons with AD, offered many physiological and cognitive benefits. The medium of music provided the opportunity to reminisce and remember past activities, relationships, and events through the songs that were chosen. Additional elements associated with feelings of rejuvenation, reminiscence and a sense of return and reconnection to music, to others, and to their pasts. Since many persons with AD had enjoyed singing and music throughout their lives, this program allowed some to revisit a pastime that was particular enjoyable and special for them. Furthermore, many participants identified the physiological and spiritual enlightenment that resulted from the sessions. This sense of allowing oneself to be lost in the music and in its associated memories, but then to return again to the present seems to be an important benefit of music education programs for those who live with AD.

# Chapter 7

### **Summary and Conclusions**

#### **Review of the Research Statement**

The purpose of this research project was to investigate the relationship between engagement and agency in facilitating lifelong musicking within non-traditional music programming through an examination of three case studies: a secondary school informal music learning program; an undergraduate course in improvising and composing; and an intergenerational singing program with high school students and persons with AD. Identifying conditions in which participants of various ages experience heightened engagement with musical learning is at the crux of developing and influencing successful music education programs at different stages of life.

# **Definitions of Engagement and Agency**

Throughout the presentation of data across the three cases the definitions of engagement and agency have been operationalized under the understanding that engagement is a reciprocal investment between participants and facilitators to dedicate interest, time, and energy to musical programs. Agency is an individual's capacity and power to act voluntarily (Willis, 1978). Thus, determining a connection between engagement and agency as a critical research mission may serve to explain not only the conditions in which musical participants reach engagement, but also those where they are then propelled to continually act and exercise agency in these settings.

#### **Research Questions**

I began this investigation focused on the following overarching central research questions:

- What are the roles of engagement and agency in facilitating lifelong musicking within non-traditional music programming?
- Within such provision, what are the differences with respect to pedagogical strategies in different generational cohorts?
- What might a pedagogical model that enables, develops, and inspires lifelong musicking throughout the generations look like?

While this is where I started and where I intended to develop the research, in order to answer these research questions, I needed to consider the following sub-questions:

- Is there evidence that participants are engaged in the music program in each case study? If so, what does engagement in music look and feel like for the participants of different ages?
- What are the conditions that enhance or foster musical engagement among participants of varying ages within each investigated music program?
- What are the conditions that deter or inhibit musical engagement among participants of varying ages within each investigated music program?
- Is there evidence of participant agency in the music program in each case study? If so, what data are there that indicate participants were experiencing musical agency?

The data were organized and presented to describe the conceptual elements of my rationale for choosing the programs, the motivation for participants enrolling in the programs, the presence and indications of engagement, fundamentals that contributed to that perception of engagement, and barriers that participants experienced that potentially inhibited engagement. I will address each sub-question in relation to each of the three case studies and then draw connections through a cross-case analysis. I will then present answers to the three main research questions based on the data generated from the sub-

questions.

**Research sub-question one.** Is there evidence that participants are engaged in the music program in each case study? If so, what does engagement in music look and feel like for the participants of different ages?

The first sub-question posits the question of whether the programs chosen were actually ones in which participants experienced or perceived engagement. In other words, did the participants perceive that they were expressing interest, investing energy, and devoting time to these programs?

In the secondary school informal music learning course, participants recognized engagement largely in relation to their peers' demonstrations of this construct. They viewed enthusiasm, commitment, active involvement, critical thinking and inquiry in relation to the topic, expressions of concern about the outcome, evidence of productivity, expedited passage of time through Flow, and the general rate of learning as indicants of engagement in the program. My field note observations confirmed that the students in this program appeared highly engaged when there were opportunities for leadership, creative expression, and challenge. They were willing to invest in a task if they knew they had flexible boundaries and even an outlet for escape if so desired. These signs of engagement were translated into demonstrable characteristics of improved attendance, accountability, and responsibility. Expressions from the students of excitement and eagerness to begin the task were clearly indicative that they were engaged in the activities. They were also more likely to experience higher levels of engagement if they felt that their investment of time, energy, and interest in the task was paying off for them. For example, if other participants were valuing the students' input and their contributions and their voices were validated, then their engagement level appeared higher. From an observational perspective I was able to see that these adolescent participants became disengaged from the process of musicking when they were at either end of the spectrum in terms of their perceived mastery; either the task was too overwhelming and they felt that they would never master it, or the task was too easy and they already felt they had mastered it. These findings are consistent with the research reports by Newswander and Borrego (2009) whereby increased student participation, personal attachment, ownership, and satisfaction were reports of indicants of higher levels of engagement.

The participants in the undergraduate course reported on their levels of engagement in relation to their rate of learning, how quickly they progressed, how their investment in the tasks carried on beyond the classroom, and the contribution of ideas. Extrinsic properties of attendance and overall participation and contribution were also mentioned as signs that people were engaged in these tasks.

In Case Three, evidence of engagement became a little more challenging to identify, since many behavioural signs were often inhibited by challenges associated with aging. Nonetheless, persons with AD, alongside their caregivers, student friends, program administrators, and researchers, noted that physical manifestations of engagement, including positive facial expressions, foot or toe tapping, and even just evidence of listening were outward behavioural signs of engagement. In this case study particularly, the signs of participant engagement in devoting time, energy, and interest in the program were their weekly return to the rehearsals and the continued discussion regarding the singing program in between sessions. Anticipation of the next rehearsal became a strong sign of engagement for persons with AD.

It was evident across the three settings that participants were in attendance because they found the programs enjoyable and rewarding. My rationale as a researcher for investigating these situations resided in the intent of the individual programs to engage these participants and their previous success in having done so. The commonalities across the cases in terms of reports of engagement did fall into categories of observable characteristics and other internal constructs. Participants in each case described participation, in terms of attendance and contribution, and progression as observable signs of engagement. Evidence that was not as easily externally detectable took the form of comments that revolved around feeling a sense of responsibility, accountability, ownership, and leadership, that was especially evident in the first two case studies. In summary, there was evidence across all cases of participants experiencing heightened levels of engagement that included a combination of both external and internal factors.

**Research sub-question two.** What are the conditions that enhance or foster musical engagement among participants of varying ages within each investigated music program?

The participants in the secondary school program identified the following aspects as those which contributed to heightened levels of engagement: enjoyment, choice, freedom, variety, social camaraderie, safe risk, control over their learning, accomplishment and success, and the ability to apply learning in their desired context (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Themes of Heightened Engagement for Adolescent Students



For the undergraduate students, the following themes were reported as ones in which heightened levels of engagement were experienced: enjoyment, choice, safe risk, variety, social camaraderie, control over learning, accomplishment and success, and the ability to apply learning in their desired context (see Figure 5). While investigating the themes emerging from the second case study that examined the experiences of undergraduate music education students in the composing and improvising in the classroom course, many reports of heightened engagement were grounded in the same conditions as the first case study.

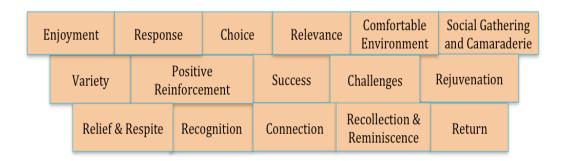
The students were presented with many of the same types of musical offerings in this case as in the first case study, and therefore they responded similarly to the desired elements of enjoyment, the importance of choice in friendship groups, variety in learning activities, opportunities for new learning, social camaraderie, and increased confidence. They did, however, require an additional element in which they were provided opportunities to negotiate their roles and traditional conceptions of music and music education with other possibilities.

Figure 5. Themes of Heightened Engagement for Undergraduate Students



The following themes were identified as ones for persons with AD to experience optimal levels of engagement: enjoyment and excitement, response, choice, relevance, comfortable environment, social gathering and camaraderie, variety, positive reinforcement and praise, appropriate challenges, rejuvenation, relief and respite, recognition, connection, recollection and reminiscence, and return. (See Figure 6).

Figure 6. Themes of Heightened Engagement for Persons with Alzheimer's Disease



Findings indicated common elements that fostered active heightened musical engagement across the three cases. Although they may have been worded slightly differently in each case, the following themes were expressed concurrently by all three generations: enjoyment, choice, variety, social camaraderie, comfortable environment to

take safe risks, and experiences of success and confidence building. Since the first two case studies involved at least some element of experimenting with informal music learning, it was to be expected that participants in both of these cases described the provision of freedom as an important characteristic of their engagement. Indeed, both age cohorts reported that the elements of control over their learning and applying their learning in their desired contexts were important. The undergraduate students, however, appeared to require the additional element of negotiation whereby they could: negotiate between their role as a student and that of becoming a teacher; compromise between structure and freedom within the parameters of the teaching/learning context; conceive of balance between aural and visual notation literacy; and consider their ideal conception of both an educator and a desired pedagogical approach to music. The persons with AD in the intergenerational singing program also expressed additional needs that highlighted their engagement in the program. These themes included response, relevance, positive reinforcement, appropriate challenges, rejuvenation, relief and respite, recognition, connection, recollection and reminiscence, and return. While the participants in the other case studies could have very easily identified the first four themes, the latter seven concepts that speak to revitalization and reconnection are particularly important for the learners with AD.

Clearly, the extensive collection of data across the three cases revealed numerous themes that related to engagement for all participants. This entire investigation, however, has been approached and grounded in the psychological framework that asserts that there are three key fundamentals to engagement; autonomy, relatedness, and competence.

These foundational requirements are integral to Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination

Theory (1985) and its sub theory, the Cognitive Evaluation Theory, which states that autonomy, relatedness, and competence can explain the presence or lack of engagement. I approached the analysis of each case study with these constructs as axial codes, recognizing that there might be open codes that surfaced outside of the scope of these three requirements. A continuation of this analytic process requires an examination of whether these discovered themes align with the three fundamentals established by Deci and Ryan.

Autonomy-supportive environments, as explained by Ryan and Deci (2000a), are those in direct contrast to those that are controlling. Skinner et al. (2012) described autonomy as a feeling of self-determination in one's learning. deCharms (1968) explained a sense of autonomy as "internal perceived locus of causality" (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Expanding on the definition that autonomy is the perceived level of control and choice one has over one's learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000a), it is also the perception that one is the source of power over one's learning process.

In an analysis of all of the open-coded themes provided by the participants, the themes of choice, variety, freedom, control over learning, context-embedded learning, and in the case of the undergraduate learners, opportunities for negotiation, can be subsumed under the category of autonomy. The elements of variety, freedom, and choice all work well together to provide the learner with options for educational pursuits, the permission to pursue these options, and then the allowance for them to decide which option is best suited to the learner's needs. The element of context was important for the secondary school and undergraduate students especially because they saw value in learning music in the way they would learn it outside of a formal school environment and

they could envision how learning music this way would be enacted in additional settings and contexts. The opportunities provided to the undergraduate students in order to negotiate their roles, consider their pedagogical approach, and compromise their traditional conception of programming with their ideal vision, are all encapsulated under the power of their thinking and actions. Finally, articulating the need for control over their learning represents their need to feel autonomous and that is best expressed if the locus of power resides within them. Reeve (2012) stated that engagement is the mediator between motivation and achievement, so if the participants feel that during the precursor stage of achievement they are in a position of power over their learning and over their success, their chances of succeeding in the desired learning outcomes and objectives are higher. Essentially these elements fall under the psychological fundamental of autonomy, as they nurture the learner's control and sense of acting as the source of one's experience.

One's sense of competence works in conjunction with autonomy. As Skinner et al. (2012) explain: competence is perceived control. To be more specific, however, competence is the perception of one's ability to achieve. Ryan and Deci (2000a) explain that, in an educational environment, learners "will more likely adopt and internalize a goal if they understand it and have the relevant skills to succeed at it," (p. 64). They refer to competence in relation to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986 as cited in Ryan and Deci, 2000a) as a concept describing one's sense of ability in achieving something.

From the themes collected by the participants I suggest that those describing enjoyment, comfortable/safe risk, success and confidence-building, positive reinforcement, and appropriate challenges fit well into this category. I believe that

enjoyment and "fun" reside in this category because environmental conditions can provide the foundation for one to believe in one's ability to succeed. Enjoyment and comfortable environment certainly contribute to a setting where safety in risk-taking is possible. Notwithstanding the proverbial colloquialism, one must take risks in order to earn rewards. Educationally speaking, this of course refers to taking some chances and pushing oneself to develop skills and acquire new knowledge. Herein lies the element of challenge that some participants required in order to feel engaged. Establishing realistic challenges that will further the participants' learning without appearing too overwhelming is an important element for a participant's sense of competence. The participants in every generation spoke to the importance of feeling success, confidence, and a sense of achievement. Michael's comment in the second case study certainly addressed his feelings of his ability to achieve:

I did know I can do this and I think the class made it very accessible cause we did it on so many different instruments and on so many different genres, it was like, well I think it improved my self-efficacy in all of those areas.

While achievement was discussed by Reeve (2012) as an outcome of engagement, feeling successful can also be considered as a state that is fostered within the educational environment. For example, participants might feel that they have been 'set up' for success later on. They might feel good about their ability to achieve before they have achieved, and this might set them up to achieve even more. Essentially, feeling successful can be a mindset and a precursor to enacting or achieving success. The positive reinforcement aspect that was so important to the persons with AD population is likely very important for any learner. Receiving praise and recognition for personal and

collective accomplishments is important in nurturing the esteem and morale of individuals and the group.

The final psychological element required for optimal engagement is relatedness. Martin and Dowson (2009) define relatedness as the connection and sense of belonging with others. Ryan and Deci (2000a) suggest that relatedness in classrooms "means that students' feeling respected and cared for by the teacher is essential for their willingness to accept the proffered classroom values." (p. 64). The themes presented in this investigation that corresponded very clearly to relatedness were those of social gathering and camaraderie, and connection. All three generations described at length and in great detail the significance of the programs' social aspects. It was important in terms of working with others, but was also valued in the opportunity to foster new relationships and deepen existing ones. This fellowship was often translated into principles of learning as it related to pace and rate.

The theme identified as connection was indeed presented in terms of a connection to other participants, but the data revealed there were also additional dimensions of connectedness: a spiritual connection and a connection to the music as well. The themes of rejuvenation and relief lend themselves to health connections in which persons with AD can feel release and in a sense a positive disconnection from any ailments they frequently experience. Furthermore, persons with AD appreciated the element of recognition, which also assumed the form of recognizing people and music and also being recognized. They also showed and valued response, which manifested itself in persons with AD formulating responses to and through other people and the music.

The explanations for the latter themes demonstrated a blurry area in which

participants who reported engaging circumstances also did so in terms of connections that extended beyond simply connecting with others. Of great significance for persons with AD was the opportunity to connect with one's past. Therefore, the themes of relevance, reminiscence, and a journey of return all connected the present to the past for learners with AD and facilitated higher levels of engagement in educational programs. Essentially, this connection was an internal one to themselves and their previous sense of self.

Where this explanation also warrants clarification is in the nature of this investigation as a study of engagement in music. This suggests that for optimal musical engagement to occur for some participants, the elements of relevance, connection, and recognition of songs or music needs to be acknowledged. One could transfer this concept into other educational subjects by virtue of the need to have relevance, connection, and recognition of the subject matter or topics reviewed and learned. This could suggest that conducive to the need for optimal educational engagement is a recognized connection to the subject matter. For musical engagement to occur therefore, relevance, connection, and recognition of music should be considerable factors.

While the themes mentioned by the participants appeared to lend themselves towards the three fundamentals of autonomy, relatedness, and competence, I found that some of the elements pertaining to rejuvenation and reminiscence required by the persons with AD cohort did not necessarily align themselves as easily. As such, I would suggest that there is a void in the definitions proffered by researchers when describing relatedness as being a connection and sense of belonging with others. Ryan and Deci (2000a) state:

The primary reason people are likely to be willing to do the behaviors is that they are valued by significant others to whom they feel (or would like to feel) connected, whether that be a family, a peer group, or a society. This suggests that the groundwork for facilitating internalization is providing a sense of belongingness and connectedness to the persons, group, or culture disseminating a goal, or what in SDT we call a sense of *relatedness* (original italics) (p. 64).

In light of the themes expressed in the case study with persons with AD, I would suggest that this definition should also include a connection to the educational subject matter. It should also factor in that participants can experience a sense of connectedness by reconnecting with one's past and one's sense of self.

**Research sub-question three.** What are the conditions that deter or inhibit musical engagement among participants of varying ages within each investigated music program?

Characteristically, signs of disengagement manifested themselves as the opposite to those of engagement. For secondary school students it was a deliberate attempt at being counterproductive, laziness, poor attendance, and giving up. The undergraduate learners associated signs of passivity, distraction, and apathy with disengagement and provided insight into these instances occurring particularly when they or their peers felt undervalued, overwhelmed, or intimidated by their perceived inferiority to their colleagues. As previously discussed, observations of senior engagement and disengagement were blurred by communicative and physical barriers to expressing or articulating these conditions.

It is important to recognize the responses suggesting observations of disengagement, so that one can attempt to understand under what conditions these signs are being experienced and presented. It is important to acknowledge that there were logistical barriers presented to participants that might have prevented them from experiencing optimal engagement in the program (e.g., scheduling conflicts), however, they were factors that were out of the control of those leading the programs. While logistical roadblocks, such as scheduling, transportation, and conflicting obligations, are always contending factors as to why people do not invest time, energy, or interest in activities, what should concern program leaders are the internal, psychological factors that might act as barriers to participant engagement. Students in the adolescent age group reported fear, frustrations in group work, performance anxiety, frustration over physical challenges, and feeling intimidated by the success of others as barriers to engagement. The participants in the undergraduate course also commented on their experiences of fear, discomfort, vulnerability, uncertainty and recognition of their insecurities as challenges to optimal engagement. Finally, the persons with AD in the intergenerational singing program expressed behaviours of resistance and reticence towards tasks related to the program. I recognize that the additional component of AD when investigating more senior learners can perhaps challenge the generalizability of the results to a senior population; however, the program was intended to involve this population in singing and to examine the perceptions of heightened engagement in this setting. Similar findings were produced in a previous iteration of this study conducted by Hutchison and Beynon (2014) with Grade Two students in an unassisted retirement residence with seniors at various ages and stages of ability.

Essentially, when participants were immersed in the program, the barriers they described for heightened engagement were explained in terms of challenges in the process (e.g., working with others) and in relation to the presentation of the product (e.g., performance anxiety). The majority of secondary students commented frequently on how difficult it was to work with others who had less than perfect attendance. Even when everyone was in attendance, the need to compromise on song selections and instrument choices proved difficult for many adolescents. The other major roadblock for them was the requirement of performance at the end of a task, which created feelings of anxiety for many students. The anxiety associated with performing was also a concern for the undergraduate students, especially if they were not performing on their instruments of strength. In addition, the personal nature of improvisation also created a culture of fear for some, as they were less secure in their ability to perform instantaneously, and without notation. The additional dimension of the undergraduates' thinking, however, involved a feeling of insecurity in envisioning their ability to teach these skills to others, and fearing they would not be successful in that. Finally, persons with AD expressions of disengagement arose out of frustration with their vocal physiology and displeasure at certain song choices.

In general, the challenges to engagement across all three generations could be reduced to the element of fear: the fear of one's inability to perform tasks and the fear of social judgment that potentially arose out of that inability. The element of fear could essentially transcend the psychological fundamentals of autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Most notably, participants' fears in not performing up to the standards they deemed acceptable and hoped to achieve resided in one's sense of competence. For

example, the comment expressed by a participant in the undergraduate course "I didn't think I could do it," was an explanation of the fear she felt towards improvising.

In terms of autonomy, fear could be presented in the following ways: when persons with AD felt that they were not in control of their learning situation, either by someone else choosing something that they did not want to do, or their physical challenges superseding their actual intentions, then they no longer recognized themselves as having power. For the undergraduate students who were grounded in strong traditions of classical music and music notation, the actual transfer of power from the page to their ability to perform in the moment could be too overwhelming. For some, it might seem that they had too much autonomy or power over the product, which could be terrifying for those not used to this type of control.

Finally, the role of fear in relatedness occurred during opposite moments of feeling 'belongingness' when instead one feels that one's abilities or inabilities can be the cause of social ridicule. The fear of being singled out or negatively contributing to the overall product of the group's efforts acted as a significant barrier to engagement.

Participants often admitted their own intimidation by the abilities of others, and also recognized in their peers these feelings of inadequacy.

In summary, the barriers to engagement could often be reduced to the element of fear of inadequacy, of being judged, of feeling intimidated, or of feeling vulnerable. Fear transcended all three generations and permeated all three psychological fundamentals of autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Fear impacts one's perception of being in control, one's sense of belongingness with others, and one's sense of ability and achievement.

**Research sub-question four.** Is there evidence of participant agency in the music program in each case study? If so, what data are there that indicate participants were experiencing musical agency?

The factors listed above in Figures 4, 5, and 6 present foundational requirements that the generations felt they needed to experience in order to be optimally engaged in their music program. There were, however, several elements that the participants described throughout their reflections on the educational music programs that lent themselves to exercising agency in addition to feeling engagement. Any opportunity in which participants were providing input or making choices and decisions, and experiencing the freedom to take risks, demonstrated the concept of them as agentic beings. Barnes' (2000) notion that humans act as free agents when they are able to make choice illustrates the agentic affordances of all three programs. While participants never identified themselves as possessing agency, or feeling agentic, or being agentic learners, the descriptions in their responses did indeed represent qualities of agency. Therefore, I, as the researcher, needed to ask the following questions in relation to the data: While these factors assuredly contributed to higher levels of engagement, what were the accounts that suggested participants were experiencing musical agency? In recognition that definitive principles of agency are the capacity to act and the volition to act, I extracted from the data comments and observations in which participants expressed their will to act, their ability to act, and their power to act.

The will to act. The will to act was demonstrated in comments that expressed a sense of urgency or desire to act. For example, with respect to the secondary school students, the following responses often related to motivation: "makes you more

interested, more excited to come to class [...] you're more motivated"; "I find people are more motivated to come to class and that, um more people are excited for music." The sense of urgency or desire is highlighted in the following responses:

Just like I actually want to do the stuff we're doing. We get put into our separate groups I'm not off task, I'm not just talking about my weekend, I'm actually trying to get stuff done. Like I actually want to work on it.

You have this urge to like continue to do it. So like when it comes to everything else you're like 'okay,' but when it comes to something you like like MuFu, you just have this huge urge to do it. It's all you want to do.

For some students their will to act assumed the form of repeated rehearsals and opportunities where they were actively learning:

Yeah, if they're committed [...] and your commitment to it. Whether you keep practicing, keep practicing it over and over again until you get it right.

For me personally I look forward to Musical Futures days more than normal days like I find being in the group is a lot more fun than in the class and just sitting there and like working together.

A willingness to act was also demonstrated in students stepping out of their comfort zones and wanting to experiment: "trying it yourself and experimenting if you want to learn." Their teacher also noted this desire through their quest for challenge: "Instead of giving up easily and saying 'I can't do this', I had more students challenging themselves to learn things they normally would not have liked or understood."

In the second case study, the will to act for undergraduate students was presented in the form of attendance, "class attendance was extremely high" and a desire to continue the tasks, either in the class or beyond the class: "I could tell too when we would be called back to come back to do, the groups that would just want to keep working." Other students identified their will to act by their incentive to learn: "I wanted to do it. I wanted to lift the melody of the song so I could play it," and some saw the willingness of people to contribute ideas and putting in the time to complete tasks as a sign of agency:

...offering ideas when we were in groups and they wanted to spend time working on our compositions if we needed extra time then they were willing to schedule that and they always came to class.

In the third case study, the will to act was demonstrated largely in the attendance patterns of persons with AD. Documented in comments such as "they look forward to coming. It gives them something to look forward to every week", "they wouldn't have come back if they didn't enjoy it," and "I just can't wait to get here," all suggest a will or desire to be participants in the music education program.

The ability to act. Another dimension of agency was the perception of participants' ability to act. This perception was revealed in comments that related to their acknowledgement of their own ability to act. This feeling was often established by the provisions of choice and freedom that program facilitators afforded to participants so that they could seek out opportunities for safe and comfortable risk-taking.

In the first case study the secondary students spoke to this actualization of ability: "I never have ever played anything in front of anybody so I just made myself do it and I felt way better about myself after"; "I think it was just awesome playing on stage in front

of our friends and stuff and getting to show what we can do"; "actually being able to do something cool with cool instruments"; "It's made me be more confident in participating in class." These comments all speak to their reflections of enacting their own ability to succeed at something musical.

In the second case study, students were also afforded similar parameters to the secondary school students in terms of experiencing informal music learning principles. Therefore, choice, freedom, and comfortable risk-taking enabled participants to feel able to act in accordance with what they wanted and needed to learn: "And even though like someone else might do it differently than you, you can still do it your own way and come to the same conclusion." Other comments that speak to this theme included:

You do what you want to do and you can show people what you can do.

You're not asked to do something and you better perform to this level. This is my level. Here's what I can do and here's what I can do with that. And I think it's very freeing in that sense as well.

It was like, I can just do what I want to do. We did Adele. I was doing shot notes in the background, which wasn't part of the original song but it sounded really cool and it was like 'look I'm not just a classical trumpet player or a jazz player, there's other things I can do.'

In addition to participants reflecting on their personal abilities with respect to action, their assessment of their abilities in direct relation to improvisation specifically was eye opening for them:

...and then by the end of it we realized we could use our voices, so that was like a huge, a big new thing, [...] cause you could like play around with your own voice and that is my instrument so it was kind of cool to like realize that I could use it.

And in improv., I mean I'm not a bass player, but I learned to play the bass like, the electric bass and it was really cool and I learned to make music with my colleagues and it was creating music based on listening and it was exercising some stuff that I hadn't really done before.

Again I knew I had the ability to do it but still when you're put on the spot, it's, it's always a nerve-wracking experience for me, but once I can come out of my shell and actually do it and become comfortable in that, it changes things.

The affordances provided to the students in this case allowed them to reflect on their abilities to act through the art of improvisation and learn what they needed to learn to eventually teach those skills to their own students.

In the third case study, again it was mainly through demonstrations of their actions that we were able to see the ability to act within the persons with AD; the demonstrated responses in listening, moving to songs, singing in songs, learning and retaining new songs and information all indicated ability to act. The conductor's comment acknowledging that they "responded musically to what Nathan was asking" indicated their responsiveness and capabilities of adapting to what was being required for learning. Furthermore, the freedom afforded to them to make decisions and contribute their ideas were all examples in which persons with AD demonstrated an ability to act. These

demonstrations align with Laurence's (2010) position that a sense of agency is reinforced when participants realize they have the ability to act.

The power to act. Finally, the power to act was demonstrated in comments pertaining to the control participants had over their learning. Students in the secondary school attributed their power to act to their increased rate of learning, and their control over their learning environment: "I feel like I had control over it"; "I think we all were in charge of it"; "I think we all like, learning our own parts, but we were in charge of ourselves"; "it's kind of nice having more control over what we do."

Students also expressed this power in terms of their roles as leaders: "taking charge and kind of directing everyone how to go." This transference of power from the teacher to student also enabled the students to have power and "choice in how you want to learn." Another student commented:

Self-initiative has to do a lot with Musical Futures. Whereas if you're in a classroom if you want to learn those specific things the teacher has to say it's also self-initiative, but you aren't, you don't have so much power.

Clearly the student recognized that the power to act and learn what he wanted to learn was within his control during the Musical Futures program.

In the second case study, the undergraduate students also saw their power to act in relation to assuming leadership roles and the active control that they had in their own learning: "there was a good balance between her telling us things versus us learning on our own with experience";

I thought through choosing our own groups we were able to feel more comfortable and then to take leadership and even people that were a little bit more shy would come up with ideas for themselves to do...

I was actually having to rely on some skills or I was having to actually learn things on my own. I felt like I was in charge of creating the skill instead of just sitting there and passively absorbing information.

Taking charge for them meant assuming a position of power. This power also manifested itself in the realization that they had the power to change what they did not think was working: "I guess I was critically thinking a lot more. Um, just judging the ideas, "was that a good idea? No? Yes? What did I like? What didn't I like?"

Finally, the undergraduate students saw power as a way of using their voices: "what we think we should do and providing our own ideas and using our own voice and not being scared to speak up and trying new instruments being eager to try new things."

The freedom afforded to the students transferred the power from the teacher to the student in bringing their successes to fruition. Being in a leadership position and "in charge" of their learning were demonstrations that students felt empowered to act.

Statements referring to the nature of control over their learning and being involved as active learners, rather than passive recipients of knowledge, suggested a strong sense of power, which is integral to developing agentic learners.

Whereas the students in the previous case studies really felt empowered to act through the control they were afforded over their own learning, this element was presented with a little more subtlety in the example of the persons with AD. Due to the nature of rehearsals with combined groups and having to prepare materials in advance, this program required a little more structure for the sake and safety of all members. They

were, however, invited to make comments, provide input, and make suggestions. The fact that they did make these contributions demonstrated their exercising of that power. Furthermore, the acts of volunteerism to stand up and sing in small groups placed the participants in a position of power over their experiences in the choral context. The following scenario in which a student singer described her senior friend with AD spoke to this power: "She didn't want to sing it at first, but then got really excited. She started getting more confident with it. [...] I could hear her singing. She was really singing out. She was totally open." Finally, and most importantly, electing to participate in a program where they were active participants involved in the process and production of singing, rather than passive consumers of music also demonstrates the participants' power to act.

Throughout all three cases, adolescents, young adults, and persons with AD demonstrated examples of the will, the ability, and the power to act. Extracting this evidence was important to highlight that participants were simultaneously experiencing heightened engagement while also exercising agency. In addition, it was important to emphasize that participants of all ages throughout the case studies, with varying physical and mental abilities and capabilities were able to exercise agency. The data show that both engagement and agency are constructs that can be experienced at the same time; however, I would argue that the internal constructs of will, ability, and power to act which are integral to the exercising of agency, do not necessarily appear as isolated incidents. They take time to develop and require repeated opportunity to present themselves. The fact that all of these cases were programs carried out over an extensive period of time permitted the presentation of agency as a construct requiring sufficient time and repeated opportunities to be developed, established, and demonstrated. The key

to researching programming instead of simply stand-alone musical activities is that participants and researchers are able to see how the passage of time, through establishing continuity and opportunities for reinforcement of these foundational conditions presented in Figures 4, 5, and 6 can translate into musical agency. Therefore, the importance of continuity as a field underlying these conditions is not only integral to providing the opportunity for participants to see skills, learning, and knowledge embedded in context, but also to them recognizing and realizing their ability, will, and power to act.

# **Returning to the Research Questions**

The information generated from the data in answer to the sub-questions now provides the foundation for answers to the central research questions.

**Research question one.** What are the roles of engagement and agency in facilitating lifelong musicking within non-traditional music programming?

The findings from all three cases lend themselves to the presence of heightened engagement and demonstration of agency across the generations investigated. As described in the previous section, the conditions under which participants expressed optimal engagement are organized in the table below (see Table 1). Similar colours are used to demonstrate theme connections across the three case studies (see thematic colour guide below table:

Table 1. Intercase Analysis of Themes Representing Heightened Engagement

Case 1	Enjoyment
Adolescent Learners	Choice
	Safe Risk

	Variety
	Social Camaraderie
	Success
	Control over Learning
	Learning in Context
	Freedom
Case 2 Undergraduate Learners	Enjoyment
	Choice
	Safe Risk
	Variety
	Social Camaraderie
	Success
	Control over Learning
	Learning in Context
	Opportunities for Negotiation
Case 3	Enjoyment
Senior Learners with	Choice
Alzheimer's Disease	Comfortable Environment
	Variety
	Social Gathering & Camaraderie

Success
Response
Positive Reinforcement
Relevance
Challenges
Rejuvenation
Relief and Respite
Recognition
Connection
Recollection & Reminiscence
Return

Thematic Colour Guide

Common Themes across Case Studies One, Two, and Three
Common Themes across Case Studies One and Two
Themes unique to Case Study One
Themes unique to Case Study Two
Themes unique to Case Study Three

As previously indicated, a number of themes may not necessarily have been mentioned by particular generations, but it does not mean that they would not benefit from these opportunities to increase their experiences of engagement. For example,

positive reinforcement is recommended for every age, however, receiving praise was not always addressed as a critical requirement for some generations. Likewise, even though the undergraduate students did discuss freedom at length, they did so mostly in the context of negotiating how they would balance freedom and structure with their students. Therefore, the theme of freedom was discussed in relation to their need for negotiation.

From there, the conditions for engagement can be condensed into the broad categories of programming factors and environmental conditions. I use programming factors to describe the structure or design of the learning program, in terms of content or curriculum and the pedagogical practices that it entails. Environmental conditions, however, incorporate the circumstances in which engagement seemed to flourish. I try to differentiate the two by asking did the participants relate it to "need for" when thinking of programming factors, or "feeling of" for environmental conditions. Arguably, some factors could be placed in either category as the program facilitator can structure the program in a way to create a certain environment or atmosphere for learning (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Themes of Programming Factors and Environmental Conditions** 

Programming Factors	Choice
	Variety
	Learning in context
	Opportunities for negotiation
	Relevance

	Appropriate challenges
	Recognition
	Connection
	Recollection & Reminiscence
Environmental Carditions	Enjoyment
Environmental Conditions	Enjoyment
	Comfortable Environment/Safe Risk
	Social Camaraderie
	Success/Confidence
	Control over learning
	Freedom
	Response
	Positive reinforcement/praise

From this analysis, I propose that the conditions in which participants reported engagement are situational factors that can create engaged learners and lead to engaging opportunities or interactions with music. It is quite possible that learners in any activity

Rejuvenation

Relief and Respite

Return

or setting can experience these conditions, feel fully engaged, and never return. These engaging events can be situations that can occur as isolated experiences and are open to varied frequency.

There was a significant theme that was presented by the participants in this study, however, suggesting that engagement can be taken to the next level when time and repeated involvement in programs, as opposed to activities, are factors. This element is the opportunity for awareness, which presented itself across all three generations in their realization of learning. This concept of learning awareness is integral to the sociological perspective provided by Karlsen (2010) whereby agency recognizes the experiences of discovering, rediscovering, and learning about oneself in and through music.

Regardless of the age, participants began from the position of assessment before they were able to comment on their learning. In the secondary school, these comments took the form of "Well, I can play the drums now" showing that before the program the student was not able to play them, and now as a result of the course, he can. Another comment that spoke to assessment of personal abilities and limits was "even though we were given a choice, we had to recognize our limits to know what we were actually capable of doing."

Realization of learning was also demonstrated in the before and after comments relating to how students listened to music:

You're learning more about, just like sure you know how the song sounds, but you don't really know each part about it, so when you're listening to a song before you did Musical Futures you're just 'oh that sounds good' but after then you can pick out different beats and stuff.

You have to hear music a different way and you have to listen and see it more interactive. This is some crazy thing that takes and some amount of time to produce. It's not something I could do, now I can.

The following student not only realized how his thinking had changed as a result of the program, but how this information would direct his future actions:

...so it kind of changes your mindset on how you go about practicing maybe, how you go about learning things, you'll maybe take more initiative to learn the notes as in just sitting there and looking at the pages so it may change your look on like formal learning too.

For the young adults in the undergraduate course, assessment of their abilities took the form of recognizing their traditional background steeped in western art music and musical notation and acknowledging the limited experience they possessed in improvisation and composition in the music classroom. This set the groundwork for verbalizing their insecurities about having to teach these skills in spite of the students' perceived shortcomings. For one student this identification led to the realization that he needed to learn more, which in turn, motivated him to act:

Oh I learned there's a lot of holes in my own teaching. Within my ear training I lack in that department a lot. And that was really revealing because I needed that skill in that course and it was like "uh oh" I can't lift this like these guys can.

That was something, I need to fix that.

Throughout the duration of the program, the students in the undergraduate course also presented moments whereby these assessed or identified the value they placed on the

skills of improvisation and composition in the classroom and realized how they might be applied in their future musical career endeavours. One student identified that he "learned a lot because I feel everything we did is an activity that you can then use." For another student, "I think it was an invaluable course and I'll use probably mostly her teaching strategies when I'm starting out and then tailor them according to my personality and my students in the future." These responses reflected that elements of the course were not only considered for immediate value, but that the student considered the future need to act on them and transform them to be even more effective for their specific situation and personality type. Furthermore, the students' consideration of the challenges and negotiations associated with how to implement these activities and why they should be used demonstrated an acute sense of reflexive awareness (Giddens, 1991).

In the final case study, the participants with AD also made several comments that identified their strengths and weaknesses. They spoke openly about their background experience with music and several admitted to their perceived abilities, or lack thereof, in singing: "You know I can't sing. I try"; "I don't read music, but I love to sing"; "I can't sing, but I like to be here. [...] I pick them up quickly because I think I have a good ear." In one case, a participant decided not to return after assessing her condition and realizing that her physical challenges were barriers to her satisfaction and her ability to do what she wanted to do in the program. For the participants who remained, learning was evident, although not always articulated by the persons with AD themselves. Their ability to retain music and requests for the music to be performed a certain way was indicative of their learning. A comment from one of the program organizers

acknowledged her belief that persons with AD were capable of realizing their own learning: "I think one of the things they are learning is that they can still learn."

This comment from a singer with AD in the choir, summarized key stages in the process of enacting agency. In Jack's recollection of why he joined the choir he admitted "I got one of those voices you know, that are far, far away and ah, it's not very good. So I, really thought it was, you know, something, something for me to do ah, and I'm, I'm enjoying myself. I really am." This comment demonstrated that he realized he could still try new things and enjoy them. He assessed his ability, was aware of a desire to participate in something new, and then made a conscious choice to follow through with action. His reflection on his enjoyment of the program and his decision to return related to the concept of reflexive awareness presented in Giddens' (1991) concept of agency, whereby individuals are aware of acting and why they are acting in a certain way.

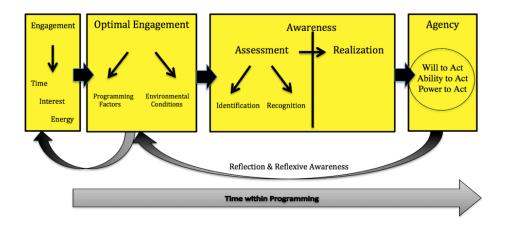
The data revealed that participants made identifications of their abilities, and the knowledge used from this assessment enabled participants to realize, or become aware of, the learning that had transpired over the course of the program.

The realization of one's learning, which participants reported as a condition required to experience engagement, was thwarted if participants were only involved in infrequent activities. Thus, the passage of time affords the development of agency through the processes of assessment and awareness. It is through repeated opportunities whereby participants can exercise agency through their will, ability, and power to act, that they are afforded the realization of learning.

The relationship between engagement and agency can be represented in the following model (see Figure 7). While motivation is a key construct that could be said to

preface the following model: Reeve's (2012) explanation that motivation acts as an antecedent to engagement, suggests that motivation may be considered as a factor in one's decision to enroll in a program in the first place. This construct therefore occurs in the stage leading up to the model. Since the current investigation is exploring the relationship between engagement and agency, this construct therefore lies outside the remit of this paper.

Figure 7. The Relationship between Engagement and Agency



The programming factors and environmental conditions that facilitate heightened engagement act as affordances for agency to be developed and enacted. The concept of agency, however, appears to require an additional dimension on a temporal plane whereby learners are empowered again and again to act musically, to witness and believe in their abilities as musicians and take ownership of these situational fundamentals on a continual basis. Essentially, time acts as fuel for agency. In turn, time within programming also permits ongoing experience, rather than fleeting encounters. This connection between experience and agency is paramount to Karlsen's (2011) sociologically-inspired explanation of how agency is "needed for, or developed through"

(p. 117) performance, transformation, identity, access to learning experiences, and empowerment. Furthermore, this experiential element allows for the discovering, rediscovering, and learning about oneself through music (Karlsen, 2010) and speaks to the experiential and active domains that encompass musical participation (Karlsen, 2011).

This temporal element provides space and opportunity for participants to realize and come into awareness of their learning. As a precursor to awareness, several participants reflected on their background as musicians and their past and present levels of ability. Ultimately, this laid the groundwork for them to eventually realize their growth in learning. Assessment and awareness played a critical role in considering: should I act? How will I act? And what is my course of action? These processes were seen to influence one's course of action, modes and methods of learning. This awareness becomes a catalyst to effectively act or direct one's course of action; in other words, awareness leads to action. To complete the loop, 'reflexive awareness' is a key component to articulating what the learner is doing and why the learner is doing it. This information then drives the thinking of whether the participant will continue to devote time, energy, and interest into continued musicking.

What are required to facilitate lifelong musicking, therefore, are the key fundamentals of programming factors and environmental conditions that provide the foundation for optimal engagement over a sustained period of time and thus afford agency. Successful programs will ensure that participants are able to experience these fundamentals, which reside within the critical constructs of autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Furthermore, opportunities for participants to assess their abilities and to become aware of their learning are crucial to influencing their actions and exercising

agency within music education programs. According to Giddens (1989, as cited in Wright, 2010) agency refers "not just to the intentions of the actor in performing an action but rather to the pattern or flow of actions over time," (p.12). Agency as a temporal construct leads us to question what the forward trajectory is that will keep participants acting and keep them involved in musical participation? If engagement fundamentals are present in programs and participants are given the opportunity to exercise agency through their continued will, ability, and power to act, then agency in turn fuels heightened engagement. Recognizing the temporal qualities of agency as a series of recurring opportunities for action that precipitate the need for learners to return to the situation allows us to understand that environmental conditions and programming factors are critical components of optimal engagement. What keeps learners returning to the conditions of learning depends on the perception of their will, ability, and power to act.

**Research question two.** Within such provisions, what are the differences with respect to pedagogical strategies in different generational cohorts?

The presentation of findings indicated that there are fundamentals for engagement that are unique to certain age cohorts. The second central research question prompts the use of this information to improve pedagogical practices. Program facilitators might incorporate these fundamentals into their programming therefore, so that participants experience the full benefits of optimal engagement.

Although all generations in this investigation were able to experience all of the psychological nutriments of autonomy, relatedness, and competence in various forms, educators must also account for the variances in the ways in which generations learn.

Myers (1995) explains the difference between adult and child learners:

is the extent to which adults consciously draw on their accumulated experience in developing new concepts. [...] In general, the typically prescribed principles of learning for adults do not differ dramatically from those for children: readiness, intrinsic motivation, positive reinforcement, sequencing, meaningfulness, and connection to learner goals and interests are consistent themes. However, in the context of maturity represented by adult learners, strategies and techniques for achieving these principles are likely to be different from those used with children. (p. 22)

Given that Myers advocates for different strategies and techniques for different generations, perhaps tailoring pedagogical practices for optimal engagement in different generations is worthy of consideration. Figure 8 represents the themes of heightened engagement, which act as conditions or affordances for developing agency as they pertain to specific generational cohorts.

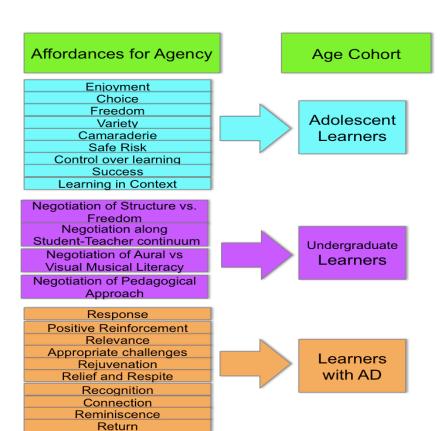


Figure 8. Intercase Analysis of the Affordances for Agency

For the secondary school students the prevalence of comments in relation to their ability to achieve and progress in their musical skills suggests that it is important for students to see their development fairly immediately. The confidence that arose in response to their recognized achievements is a pedagogical consideration that should not be ignored. Observations noted that often when students did not immediately grasp a concept, they got frustrated, and convinced themselves that they would never be able to

achieve the skill. Thibeault (2013) reminds us that students in school are curriculum driven. They are "focused on some precise and specific goals and objectives that are appropriate for those students at the time in that sequence of learning," (p. 23). A key premise in Musical Futures is to have the students feeling successful immediately. This could be a reason why the program has been linked to increased enrolment, achievement, behaviour, attendance, and engagement. This concept of gratification suggests that a pedagogy that corresponds to one of progression is important for students of this age.

Although there may have been some concurrence in the themes between the first and the second cases, the complexity of the various participants' thinking around these themes was really indicative of their relative maturity. Essentially, undergraduate music education students were not just identifying instances of engagement and agency but were critically thinking about how their experiences could be transferred to their future educational contexts as teachers. Not only did they reflect on what these opportunities meant for them in the moment but they were also considering what they would look like in their future classrooms when they were teachers themselves. This process seemed to involve for these participants a baseline assessment of their existing skills and insecurities at the outset of the course.

The additional dimension represented in the perceptions of these older students had a lot to do with their exploration into new territory, departing from their previous experiences with music learning and with music making. For example, many had come from a strong classical background in their private lessons, high school education, and the first few years of their undergraduate education, that used standard notation at the forefront of their musical literacy skills. Therefore, permission to rely on

their ear and off-the-page learning, while being allowed to venture into new styles and tastes of music was at times a struggle for some and a welcome relief for others.

Furthermore, negotiation was made between their familiarity with previous learning environments often dominated by teacher-directed instructional methods and the unfamiliar environment in which the teacher played a more adaptable role whereby they may act as a facilitator. As in the case of negotiating between visual notation and aural skills, students experienced situational dissonance in the manner in which they as students were given more control and ownership of their learning. This led to recognizing that the teacher could function just as effectively in a modified role.

Thirdly, the nature of the musical processes of composition and improvisation has inherent properties that invite the discussion of balancing structure and freedom within these activities. Students used these terms to reflect on boundaries and guidelines within the pedagogical parameters afforded by the professor. Broadly speaking, participants saw the potential benefits and concerns with either extremity of structure and freedom and used this realization to envision how they would design learning activities for their future students and the pedagogical strategies that would be employed to facilitate providing structure and freedom.

Finally, as an extension between the undergraduate students in the second case study and the secondary school students in the first case study was the importance of role identification as the undergraduate students negotiated their shifting identities between that of a student and their eventual status as a teacher. They expressed appreciation of the opportunity to be student led through these activities to understand how their students will feel, but then to have the opportunity to think how these activities will be enacted

under their role as educators. Even though they have been students throughout their entire undergraduate careers one can see that they are the students they will teach, thus allowing them to internalize the activities and project what the learning conditions would be for their students. Participants responded positively to the sequential development of the term's activities, the criterion-referenced rather than norm-referenced assessment measures, and the creation of a level playing field between all participants. Thus they anticipated that their positive experiences of these classroom dynamics would be prioritized and translated into their future teaching environments. Therefore, upon reflection on how the class informed their future practice, comments such as "I think I would use it a lot more in a classical setting as well and almost in the sense of the call and response," indicate how these participants project how they will act according to this information. Therefore, it is worthy of consideration that young adults who are embarking on their career pathway require pedagogical processes that allow for this projected thinking.

Finally, the learners with AD expressed affordances related to the needs of a returning or reflective nature in order to experience optimal engagement within this music program. Freund (2003) reminds us of the "power of music as a tool for reminiscence, and of our individual and collective responsibility to pass down the music that our parents and grandparents gave us," (p. 40). The specific needs for learners with AD to experience rejuvenation, respite, relief, recollection, reminiscence, and return should not be ignored in educational programming that includes participants with AD. In fact, the prefix "re" is associated with an experience of return or revisiting something again. Therefore, one should consider that learners with AD require pedagogical

practices that encourage and allow for reflection. These pedagogical considerations are illustrated in Figure 9.

Affordances for Agency Age Cohort Pedagogical Implications Enjoyment Choice Freedom Adolescent Pedagogy Variety Camaraderie Learners for Safe Risk Progression Control over learning Success Learning in Context Negotiation of Structure vs. Freedom Negotiation along Pedagogy Student-Teacher continuum Undergraduate for Negotiation of Aural vs Learners Visual Musical Literacy **Projection** Negotiation of Pedagogical Approach Response Positive Reinforcement Relevance Appropriate challenges Pedagogy Learners Reiuvenation For with AD Relief and Respite Reflection Recognition Connection Reminiscence Return

Figure 9. Pedagogical Considerations for Generational Cohorts

This model highlights the following considerations for pedagogies:

- the adolescent students appeared to thrive under these aforementioned affordances that fostered the identification and realization of musical progression and immediate development;
- university students appeared to require the added dimension of being able to
  project their pedagogical vision and negotiate where they had come from and
  where they were going within their musical lives and professions;
- and persons with AD expressed experiences of optimal engagement through the opportunity to reflect upon their past experiences in relation to music, others, and themselves.

The use of "pedagogy for" is intentional as it implies future direction or a forward trajectory, rather than the preposition "of" which tends to suggest a situated existence. I would also suggest that these pedagogical principles are not fixed and actually, are encouraged to be transient in nature. Participants in all groups should have the opportunity to experience the affordances I suggest whether these affordances for heightened engagement are associated predominantly with their specific age group or not. Thus, educators might wish to make available the conditions mentioned for all three cohorts within their own generational audience in such a way that they can negotiate the intensity and frequency of these offerings. Highlighting the affordances that correspond to each age cohort, while also borrowing complementary ones from other groups will provide a well-balanced and holistic pedagogy that navigates between needs for progression, negotiation and reflection. Perhaps this information can assist us as educators to bear in mind pedagogical practices tailored to our work with varying age cohorts. Perhaps a fundamental consideration might be that we need to make provisions for learners that focus on the needs that appear to specifically facilitate optimally engaging experiences. Essentially, facilitating the environmental features, designing programming factors, and fostering opportunities for personal, social, educational, and musical awareness among participants sets the motion in play for action or agency to be experienced and thus enacted by learners of all ages.

**Research question three.** What might a pedagogical model that enables, develops, and inspires lifelong musicking throughout the generations look like?

This final research question incorporates the findings that demonstrate the relationship between engagement and agency and what these constructs imply about educational possibilities for learners in music education programs.

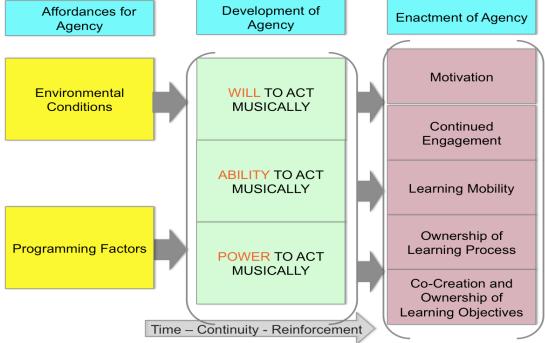
I reiterate the argument that the fundamentals for heightened engagement can be categorized into programming factors and environmental conditions. These components can be experienced by participants in a single occurrence as an activity or multiple times throughout an educational program. The development of agency, however, requires participants to experience the will, ability, and power to act over an extended period of time. I would suggest that the more opportunity participants have to experience and exercise agency, the more it will serve to strengthen this will, ability, and power to act. This forward momentum is the trajectory required to encourage lifelong musicking. It would be the intent that participants who experience a strong sense of agency will thus continue to participate in programs by devoting their time, energy and interest, as they are able. As educational leaders then provide the appropriate programming factors and environmental conditions suggested for participants to experience optimal engagement, these provisions act as affordances for exercising agency, and the cyclical process is established and perpetuated.

How then might educators recognize agency within the program participants? Should the affordances of agency be provided through programming factors and environmental conditions and the development of agency be experienced through the will, ability, and power to act, then enactment of agency can be demonstrated through participant motivation, continued engagement, learning mobility, ownership of the

learning process, and co-creation and ownership of the learning objectives. (See Figure 10).

Affordances for Development of Agency Agency

Figure 10. An Overview of Agency in Music Education Programs



The construct of motivation is demonstrated in that participants want to continue to participate in musicking. Ryan and Deci (2000a) explain the relationship of motivation to the Self-Determination Theory in the following statement:

> In Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985) we distinguish between different types of motivation based on the different reasons or goals that give rise to an action. [...] To be motivated means to be moved to do something. A person who feels no impetus or inspiration to act is thus characterized as unmotivated, whereas someone who is energized or activated toward an end is considered motivated. (p. 54).

As previously explained, Reeve (2012) discusses motivation as an antecedent to engagement. The interrelationship between motivation, engagement, and agency invite further research and discussion beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is important to have observed that at the conclusion of these research studies, future offerings of the courses and programs researched continued to flourish and a large number of participants returned to these programs.

Agency is also enacted in the form of continued engagement for the participants. In reference to the operational definition of engagement, many of these learners continued to invest and devote the interest, time, and energy to these music education programs. As stated in the review of literature, there is often confusion over the co-existence of motivation and engagement, yet the key difference is that motivation is an internal construct that is not observable, whereas engagement is a public demonstration of observable behaviour (Reeve, 2012). Therefore the presence of both observable behaviours and attitudinal perceptions characterized in the definition of engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008) are accounted for in participants' continued engagement.

Learning mobility is another way agency can be enacted in music education.

These specific programs seem to have created an environment that encouraged expansion and new directions as opposed to feelings of being "stuck." Some comments with respect to participants' perception of this expansion are as follows: "With Musical Futures you can do more of what you want than like, there's less rules and all that kind of stuff, so it's easier to expand"; "You get to play more instruments, expand as a musician or something." Several comments that related to "creative freedom" and the opportunity "to

see how much freedom we have; see where we can go with opportunities," indicated participant control over their direction and learning pathways. Furthermore responses that referred to previous feelings of being "stuck" within one traditional pathway suggest that participants have been able to break out of the confines of learning that had previously been defined for them and assigned to them. In reference to the provision of variety to explore different genres, one participant stated "I don't have to like stick to one." With reference to choice in song selection, one participant reflected this change: "well this is the song we have to sing and you're stuck singing it. And for Musical Futures we get to do what we want." The feeling of being "stuck" in the classroom and not able to learn at the pace or place you want to learn is also indicative of their newly discovered mobilized learning:

Like you're not, as much pressure on learning the song, whereas you can learn it at your own pace and you can work on it outside of school. Just kind of how like this whole range of freedom where you get to do and learn however you please, whereas when you're stuck in a class you have to do what everyone else is doing beside you and learn the same way as everyone else.

The realization that participants had flexible boundaries gave room for them to carve out their own personalized pathways of learning and to navigate themselves through the process. For educational purposes, this can open up several avenues of learning, providing endless opportunities for participants to realize and enact their potential.

The enactment of agency can also be demonstrated through participant ownership of the learning process. Educationally speaking, we know that when people own their learning, they are more invested and committed to the process. The provisions of variety,

freedom and a comfortable place to take risks allowed learners to control the pace of their learning and its process. The comment that they were given the "choice in how you want to learn" highlighted these program components. Several comments spoke to the transfer of ownership from the program leader to the student as the leader and valued the new less traditional role assumed by the teacher as a facilitator. The realization of learner ownership was conveyed through the following comment:

I think the main thing is that it actually becomes their project and not something it's not your project. Um, it's not your own accomplishment when you're when you see the end product, it's their accomplishment, so therefore it was their motivation, their creativity and if it doesn't work out for them well then they can think about what could they do next time.

Participants also felt ownership of the content, process, and learning environment when they assumed the role of the teachers. Peer mentorship and collaborative teaching were prominent features in the first two cases, however, in the intergenerational singing program this invaluable opportunity was provided to persons with AD through the exchange of knowledge, music, and stories with their student singer friend.

The final way in which agency is enacted by the participants is through their cocreation and ownership of the learning objectives. Again the provision of choice afforded
the learners the opportunity to set goals together and to determine how those learning
objectives would be achieved. Learning sessions often began with group discussions
about the nature of these objectives and then concluded with opportunities for reflection
on whether these objectives were achieved. Ultimately, when participants see the
program as one in which they are creating or recreating themselves through musical

learning they effectively feel as if they are creating and owning their learning environments and the resulting experiences.

In summary, should participants involved in music education programs be able to experience these conditions and program facilitators and educators be able to recognize and facilitate these agentic affordances, then this information holds much promise in terms of implications for deep, meaningful learning in both alternative and traditional musical settings.

# **Limitations of Research**

An overarching goal of case study research is to examine the nature and presence of issues within situated contexts, thereby making visible that which might be invisible. Throughout this interpretive process, several factors might have influenced the manner in which these data were extracted and presented. Firstly, due to the number of participants within each case study and various logistical issues such as, fluctuating attendance records and students' busy schedules, it was challenging to conduct final interviews with every member of each program. Furthermore, for those whom I was successful in interviewing, I did make every attempt at contacting them afterwards to confirm that my transcription of their responses and ideas uncovered during the interview process were accurate. As not every participant responded to confirm these representations, it is always possible that the transcriptions of those interviews might be incorrect and therefore my interpretation of their reflections inaccurate.

The variations in the quantity of interviews from each case study and the length of the interviews resulted in unequal data generated across the cases. In the informal music learning program, group interviews were conducted based on performing

bands and the students were quite anxious and eager to return to their instruments. While the group interviews were beneficial in that band mates prompted each other's reflections, some students may not have felt able to contribute or provide reflections in as much depth as they would have liked. In the improvisation and composing undergraduate case study, six out of 28 students in the class willingly volunteered to be interviewed. Therefore, the data from these interviews may not have accurately represented the views from the entire class. The reduced number of participants, however, allowed for sufficient time to be spent with each participant. Thus, these lengthy interviews provided a lot of rich and detailed narrative accounts of their program recollections. Finally, the intergenerational singing program included persons with AD, which presented additional challenges in communicating and conducting interviews solely with these participants. As such, interviews from numerous perspectives were conducted and the data from these interviews used to improve the accurate portrayal of their experiences in the program. These additional perspectives provided an extensive amount of data and are reflected in the length of the reporting of case study three. As case studies are advantageous in allowing research that provides accurate descriptions of contexts, to eliminate data from one case study for the sole purpose of equalizing the amount of data for comparison across cases would be irresponsible of a researcher attempting to establish honesty, trustworthiness, and accuracy in her report.

While measures had been taken to reduce researcher bias, I do acknowledge that as a program leader in music education myself, I view the educational teaching and learning process through this lens. My ultimate goal in seeing all participants optimally engaged in music programs may colour the manner in which they do experience and

present engagement. Essentially, my hope for them to experience optimal engagement and for them to be able to develop and exercise agency may have influenced their presentation of these constructs.

Finally, a limitation of the case study approach is that the data generated from the research is often considered bound to the time, place, and population from which it originated. I have acknowledged that the additional dimension of Alzheimer's Disease challenges the translation to all members of the senior population. The data contained, however, is certainly enlightening for facilitating music programs for persons with AD and only invites further research into other case contexts.

While I do recognize that not every adolescent student enrolls in a Musical Futures program in high school, not every undergraduate registers for an improvisation and composition course in university, and not every person with AD is recommended to an intergenerational singing program, the data from these case studies have presented findings that appear to enrich the participants' experiences which may hopefully foster continued involvement in musicking through life.

## **Research Impact**

The findings from this investigation deepen our understanding of the relationship between engagement and agency and the conditions that afford heightened experiences of these constructs in educational contexts. Ultimately, learners who are involved in programs where program facilitators seek to monitor and enhance high-quality engagement and agentic environments will benefit. Reciprocally, teachers and administrators who support the implementation of these practices will witness the benefits of learner satisfaction, well-being, and achievement. The impact of this research

will resonate not only with researchers, practitioners, program leaders, facilitators, and administrative personnel, but also with the politicians responsible for the implementation of music education programming. While the research disseminated through scholarly education, music education, and intergenerational journals seeks to reach academic colleagues, the practical applications of this research will impact early years', elementary and secondary school education, teacher education institutions, community music organizations, and seniors' community residences. Ultimately, learners who are involved in programs where program facilitators seek to monitor and enhance high-quality engagement environments will benefit. Ideally, these outcomes will translate into increased participation, health benefits, motivation, and retention rates that will not only provide short-term benefits for learners and institutions, but will also provide long-term benefits for all involved participants and their communities.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This research investigation involving a cross-generational comparison required an examination of programs that spanned a wide age range. Therefore, three separate case studies were selected as models of non-traditional programs that related to certain identified age cohorts. As such, the presentation of data focused significantly on the breadth of observation for analytical purposes, rather than its depth. Although investigating one study within each of the three age cohorts may seemingly compromise the ability to generalize the results to a larger audience, the information gathered from these cases served as a foundation to make comparative conclusions and thus, invites further research in different contexts. While I understand this is a small-scale study, the implications of the results emerging from the data are important to provide a foundation

for comparative analysis of the affordances of engagement and agency and how they are enacted within these settings. Future research investigating and exploring this relationship is required in other ages and stages of development for comparative purposes. The data from this investigation invite further exploration of the relationship between engagement and agency in both traditional and non-traditional music programs. Within the broader context of educational programming it would be advantageous to research whether these findings are transferrable to other subject areas.

As previously mentioned, the interrelationship between engagement and agency also invites the examination of motivation as a factor and influence within and between these two constructs. Research investigations in different contexts that shed light on how motivation, engagement, and agency relate to each other are likely to be the next step in this discourse.

These conclusions invite educators to consider pedagogical principles that take into account these engagement fundamentals and agentic affordances. They invite consideration of how curriculum and pedagogy are linked to these engagement and agentic principles and invite further inquiry into the question, if programming factors and environment conditions are established, why then, is optimal engagement not experienced by every participant every time? Furthermore, they encourage program leaders to frame questions in relation to the programming factors and environmental conditions described for experiencing optimal engagement. One of the fundamental themes expressed by all of the generations in this investigation was that of choice. Guiding questions directed around this element could include: Does my program include and account for the provision of choice for all participants? How can I include the element of choice within

this learning context? How can I assess whether participants are experiencing and benefitting from having choice in their learning environment? Further research, therefore, into how programs are affected by these findings is worthy of consideration.

#### **Conclusions**

The findings within each case study were illuminating in identifying the presence of engagement and agency within specific generational cohorts and in understanding the relationship of these constructs in facilitating musical engagement and affording musical agency. These data revealed that many participants across the three case studies reportedly demonstrated optimal engagement and exercised agency within their respective music education programs. The extended time frame provided by ongoing programming as opposed to isolated or short-term activities allowed for these constructs to be experienced by participants and manifested in both physical observations and affective reflections.

When the conditions of optimal engagement were analyzed according to the definitions of autonomy, relatedness, and competence they could be reduced and contained within the psychological factors of Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory. The engagement conditions expressed by the persons with AD within the intergenerational singing program, however, invited consideration of expanding the definition of relatedness in the educational sense of engagement to include a connection to the subject matter itself as well as an introspective connection within the participants themselves.

Similarly, learners within all three experiences reported barriers to engagement that often related to feelings of self-efficacy or one's perceived level of competence, or fear of social judgment, which fell within the psychological component of relatedness.

An intercase analysis enabled the researcher to identify commonalities of heightened engagement levels across the generational cohorts that included enjoyment, choice, safe risk, variety, social camaraderie, and success. This analysis also revealed conditions expressed that were unique to the individual generations. Although control over learning and learning in context were important conditions of engagement for the adolescents and university students, freedom was especially critical in the secondary school case. Opportunities for negotiation were significant for the undergraduate students, and several themes related to rejuvenation and reminiscence were important for persons with AD.

The data indicating variations in engagement conditions or affordances for agency required by different generations are significant for program facilitators and educational leaders. We must account for these programming factors and environmental conditions if we aim to facilitate optimal engagement and develop agentic learners within music education programs across the lifespan. The findings invite us to tailor our pedagogical practices in consideration of the engagement conditions and affordances for agency that appeal to different generational needs. I suggest that adolescent students experience pedagogical practices designed around their urgent or immediate need to see their progression and development; that young adults transitioning into their careers or the workforce experience pedagogical practices that enable them to negotiate their projected roles; and that persons with AD experience pedagogical practices that provide

opportunities for reflection. Stated differently, pedagogies for development, pedagogies for projection, and pedagogies for reflection are recommended considerations for educators from these research findings. Therefore, consideration of varying needs when educators design educational programs serves to facilitate optimal engagement and develop agency for music learners at every age and stage of life.

A synthesis of these themes further reduced the conditions for optimal engagement to programming factors and environmental conditions. I subsequently argued that these requirements are bound in time, and therefore could be viewed as static entities. As a case study is bound by time and place, similarly situations of optimal engagement can be contained within periods of time. In an educational setting, high levels of engagement may be experienced one day and not the next; one block of time and not the next; one moment and not the next. Beginning from Karlsen's (2011) work on musical agency and the research potential of observing musicking in real life situations, this research has found that agency appears to require an added temporal dimension for opportunities that enable participants to experience and reinforce their will, ability, and power to act within music educational environments. Ensuring that participants are optimally engaged increases the likelihood that they will continue to devote time, energy, and interest to these educational programs. Time then permits the processes of personal assessment and coming to awareness. It is this realization of learning that precipitates both informed action and the articulation of learner agency. As agency appears to be developed and strengthened over time, continued involvement in programs then affords participants the opportunity to further develop agency and strengthen their capacity for action. Agency, once developed and exercised is enacted to inspire lifelong musicking

through increased motivation, continued engagement, mobility of learning, ownership of the learning process, and the ownership of learning objectives. It is this iterative relationship between engagement and agency and its fundamental importance to ongoing engagement in musicking that the current study has illuminated.

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#### **Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Interview Protocols**

#### Musical Futures Canada Informal Learning Project

#### Student Interview Protocol

#### **Interview Questions:**

- 1. What is your favourite subject in school? Why
- 2. Tell me about your background in music in school and/or community
- 3. Why do you study music in school?

#### Experience in the IMP program

- 4. Tell me about the music lessons you have been having this semester? (Prompts: What is different to normal music lessons? What is the same?)
- 5. What did you think about this way of learning music? (How did it make you feel? What did you like/dislike?)
- 6. Did you notice any difference in the way you or your friends felt about school music?
- 7. Did you notice any difference in the way you or your friends behaved in music lessons?
- 8. Did you notice any difference in your marks in music?
- 9. What about other subjects at school. Has being involved in this project made any difference to you there? In what ways?
- 10. Would you like to tell me anything else about learning music this way?
- 11. If you could write a postcard to the people who decide how we learn music in schools, what would you say on it?
- 12. What were some signs that your friends were engaged?
- 13. How did you go about choosing friendship groups?
- 14. Can you tell me one of your favorite/most special moments in the class? A favorite song or activity? Why did you enjoy that song/moment in particular?
- 15. Can you tell me your least favorite song or moment in the class? Why did you not enjoy that song or moment?
- 16. What is your role in the learning process?
- 17. What is the role of your teacher in this process?
- 18. How do you feel about working in groups with your friends?
- 19. Do you enjoy the program? Why do you participate in the program?
- 20. What is the degree of motivation you feel in engaging in these musical activities?
- 21. What do you feel you are gaining from your participation in the program?
- 22. How much control do you feel you have over your success in the music activities?
- 23. What is your responsibility in the learning process?

## Teacher Interview: Musical Futures Program IMP (informal music principles)

#### Personal information:

- 1. Name
- 2. Preferred pseudonym
- 3. Years of teaching experience

Years of teaching at this school

- 4. Music education/training background
- 5. Music teaching experience: Where? How long? Age of students?
- 6. Personal and teacher experiences in informal music education settings?

#### Exploring philosophies of teaching:

- 7. What do you think are the most important attributes of a music education program for students?
- 8. How are these attributes met during your regular programming? How are they not met?
- 9. How are these attributes met during the IMP programming? Not met?
- 10. How confident did you feel as a teacher in the IMP setting?
- 11. Why have you chosen to continue using IMP in your music courses? What will be the same? What will you do differently?

#### Involvement with the program:

- 12. Have you noticed any differences in student engagement in music lessons this semester?
- 13. What were some signals (behaviour or attitudes) that students were engaged in the IMP lessons?
- 14. What were some signals that (behaviour or attitudes) that students were not engaged in the IMP lessons?
- 15. Have you noticed any differences in student motivation in music lessons this semester?
- 16. Have you noticed any differences in student behaviourin music lessons this semester?
- 17. Have you noticed any differences in student achievement in music lessons this semester?
- 18. What strategies did you use to encourage positive student engagement, motivation,

#### achievement and behaviour?

- 19. Why do you believe that IMP works well in your school with your students?
- 20. What difficulties did you encounter in adapting the program to your school?
- 21. What are the advantages/disadvantages to students in using IMP? To music in this school/community? To music education programs in general?
- 22. Is this program viable in other school settings? Why or why not?
- 23. Is there anything you would like to try in relation to IMP that you have not yet been able to implement?

#### Summary

24. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about your experiences during this IMP project?

#### Improvising and Composing in the Classroom

#### Semi-structured interview schedule for music students

#### Information for Interviewer:

This interview involves asking general, open-ended questions designed to elicit deep descriptions from the students. Focus on comments that help to inquire into a deeper understanding of the student's learning experiences during the course Improvising and Composing in the Classroom 3860a. The students may be nervous or feel self-conscious during the interview, so use general and neutral probes if needed to elicit as much detailed information as possible in responses. Some examples of probes are "How is that?" or "In what ways?" and so on. You will also be asked at times to provide prompts that move the question around different contexts/situations.

#### Interview Introduction:

- Introduce yourself
- Describe the goals of the research project (as per the information letter)
- Explain consent form and have respondent sign the consent form
- Explain that interviews will be audio recorded and that you may make some notes
- Explain that the respondent may stop at any time or choose not to answer any question
- Ask if the respondent has any questions before you begin, e.g., "Feel free to ask me to clarify any question you don't understand."

#### Personal Information

- 1. Please would you tell me your name/s?
- 2. Please would you think up a code name/code names you would like to be called when we write up this information?

#### Perceptions of value of improvisation

- 3. Tell me about your background in music in school and/or community
- 4. Do you think improvising is important? Why?
- 5. Tell me about your experiences of improvising before you took the improvising and composing in the classroom course?

#### Perceptions of educational outcomes of participation in the course

- 6. Tell me about the improvising and composing in the classroom course. (Prompts: What was different to other music classes? What was the same?)
- 7. What did you think about this way of making music?
- 8. (How did it make you feel? What did you like/dislike?)
- 9. Did you notice any difference in the way you or your friends felt about music?
- 10. What do you feel you learnt by taking part in this course?
- 11. Did taking part in the course change you in any way-personally or musically?
- 12. Would you like to tell me anything else about taking part in the course?

## Perceptions of educational role of musical improvisation

- 13. Do you think improvisation would be something you would use in music teaching in schools? How?
- 14. Do you think there are benefits for pupils in musical improvisation? What might they be?
- 15. Can you see problems in using improvisation in school music? What are they?
- 16. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about improvising and music education?
- 17. Does anything worry you about the skills?
- 18. What were some signs that you were engaged in the material?
- 19. What were some signs that your friends were engaged?
- 20. How did you go about choosing friendship groups?
- 21. How would you define engagement in musical learning?

# Intergenerational Singing: An Exploratory Study of Singing Engagement and Wellbeing

#### **Interview Protocol for Residents/Seniors**

#### Information for Interviewer:

This interview is inductive and involves asking mainly general, open-ended questions designed to elicit stories and descriptions by the respondent. Focus on personal narratives that gain a deeper understanding of the respondent's singing experiences and the influence these experiences have on their sense of self and well-being.

Using a number of general probes might be helpful. The purpose of probes in interviews is to enable the person being interviewed to provide as much detailed information as possible in their responses. Neutral probes encourage additional information, but do not suggest specific answers. Some examples of probes are "How is that?" or "In what ways?" and so on. You will also be asked at times to provide prompts that move the question around different contexts/situations.

#### Interview Introduction:

- Introduce yourself
- Describe the project and goals (as per the information letter)
- Explain that interviews will be audio recorded
- Explain that the respondent may stop at any time or choose not to answer any question
- Ask if the respondent has any questions before you begin, e.g., "Feel free to ask me to clarify any question you don't understand."

#### PART A – SINGING ENGAGEMENT

#### 1. What do you like most about singing?

Follow up questions: Do you think your reasons for liking singing have something to do with:

Who you are as a person (prompts: your own beliefs and values, attitudes, abilities?) Who is around you at the time of singing (prompts: family, friends, teacher, program director?)

*The situation or context at the time of singing* (prompts: available opportunities around you, community, structure/organization, accessibility?)

**Past experiences of singing?** (If so, what experiences in particular?)

#### 2. How important is singing to you at this time in your life?

Follow up questions: Why do you think it is important/not important? What benefits (if any) do you think singing has had on your health or sense of well-being?

#### 3. Do you find singing easier or harder to do than it used to be?

Follow up questions: Have you experienced any internal or external resistance and/or barriers/challenges to singing now and or in the past? If so, what are these and where do you think they come from? (prompts: any stress, a conflict, a problem, a special challenge, change in voice quality, songs that are sung?) What do you think is the easiest or most difficult part of singing?

#### PART B – LIFE STORY NARRATIVE ABOUT SINGING

#### 4. What kinds of singing activities did you do earlier in your life?

(List all activities - prompts: At school? Church or community choir? At home? Singing with the radio/records? Singing alone? Singing with others? (Breadth of singing involvement (what activities), intensity of singing involvement (how much singing), Duration of involvement (how long singing)?

#### 5. How important was singing to you in your earlier life?

*Follow up question:* Why do you think it was important/not important?

#### 6. Can you tell me a childhood memory that you have of singing?

Think about a key event relating to singing from your childhood that stands out to you for some reason. Can you think of a memorable moment involving singing? (Prompts: What happened? What were you doing? When did it happen? Where did it happen? Who was involved? What were you thinking and feeling? Did this event change you in any way? If so, in what way?) [Note: Try to get respondent to focus on a specific event/episode.]

#### 7. Was there someone important who influenced your singing?

(Prompts: for example, a parent, a teacher, a family member, a friend?) Describe the most important person who had had an impact on your singing. Specify the relationship you had or have with this person and the specific way in which he or she had (or continues to have) an impact on your singing experience.

#### 8. Was there someone whose singing you loved? A singer that you adored?

*Follow up question:* What did you love about his/her singing? Do you think he or she influenced your singing in some way? If so, in what way?

#### PART C – IG SINGING PROGRAM

#### 9. What do you like the most about singing with the students?

Follow up questions: Do you think your reasons for liking singing with the students have something to do with:

Who you are as a person (prompts: your own beliefs and values, attitudes, abilities?) Who is around you at the time of singing (prompts: family, friends, a recreational/music therapist, program director?)

The situation or context is at the time of singing (prompts: available opportunities around you, community, structure/organization, accessibility?)

Past experiences of singing? (If so, what experiences in particular?)
10. What do you think is the most important reason for singing with the high school students?
11. What do you think is the most difficult part of singing with the students?
12. How do you feel after the class? (Do you feel any different from before the class?)
13. What do you think is the objective/goal of the singing classes with the students?
14. What do you think is the singing facilitator's role? What are the important things she should do?
15. Has the singing facilitator helped you in any way? How?
16. Can you tell me one of your favorite/most special moments in the class? A favorite song or activity? Why did you enjoy that song/moment in particular?
17. Can you tell me your least favorite song or moment in the class? Why did you not enjoy that song or moment?
18. What do you think the students learn from the class?
19. Do you think the students learned something from you? Yes>what? No>why

20. In your opinion, why do the others come to the choir?

not?

21. Would you continue to come to sing with the high school students in the future? Why or why not?

## Intergenerational Singing: An Exploratory Study of Singing Engagement and Well-being Interview Protocol for Students

#### Information for Interviewer:

This interview is inductive and involves asking mainly general, open-ended questions to allow the respondents to reflect and present a diversity of emergent themes and experiences.

Using a number of general probes might be helpful. The purpose of probes in interviews is to enable the person being interviewed to provide as much detailed information as possible in their responses. Neutral probes encourage additional information, but do not suggest specific answers. Some examples of probes are "How is that?" or "In what ways?" and so on. You will also be asked at times to provide prompts that move the question around different contexts/situations.

#### Interview Introduction:

- Introduce yourself
- Describe the project and goals (as per the information letter)
- Explain that interviews will be audio recorded
- Explain that the respondent may stop at any time or choose not to answer any question
- Ask if the respondent has any questions before you begin, e.g., "Feel free to ask me to clarify any question you don't understand."

#### PART A - SINGING ENGAGEMENT

#### 1. What do you like most about singing?

Follow up questions: Do you think your reasons for liking singing have something to do with:

**Who you are as a person** (prompts: your own beliefs and values, attitudes, abilities?) **Who is around you at the time of singing** (prompts: family, friends, teacher, program director?)

**The situation or context at the time of singing** (prompts: available opportunities around you, community, structure/organization, accessibility?)

**Past experiences of singing?** (If so, what experiences in particular?)

#### 2. How important is singing to you at this time in your life?

Follow up questions: Why do you think it is important/not important? What benefits (if any) do you think singing has on your physical, social, mental, emotional health or sense of well-being?

#### PART B – LIFE STORY NARRATIVE ABOUT SINGING

#### 1. In what kinds of singing activities do you participate?

(List all activities - prompts: At school? Church or community choir? At home? Singing with the radio/records? Singing alone? Singing with others? (Breadth of singing involvement (what activities), intensity of singing involvement (how much singing), Duration of involvement (how long singing)?

#### 2. How important is singing to you?

Follow up question: Why do you think it was important/not important?

#### 3. Is there someone important who influences your singing?

(Prompts: for example, a parent, a teacher, a family member, a friend?) Describe the most important person who had had an impact on your singing. Specify the relationship you had or have with this person and the specific way in which he or she had (or continues to have) an impact on your singing experience.

#### 4. Is there someone whose singing you love? A singer that you adore?

Follow up question: What do you love about his/her singing? Do you think he or she influences your singing in some way? If so, in what way?

#### PART C - IG SINGING PROGRAM

1. Why did you sign up to participate in the IG program?

#### 2. What do you like the most about singing with the adults?

Follow up questions: Do you think your reasons for liking singing with the adults has something to do with:

Who you are as a person (prompts: your own beliefs and values, attitudes, abilities?) Who is around you at the time of singing (prompts: family, friends, a recreational/music therapist, program director?)

**The situation or context is at the time of singing** (prompts: available opportunities around you, community, structure/organization, accessibility?) **Past experiences of singing?** (If so, what experiences in particular?)

#### 3. What do you think is the most important reason for singing with the adults?

4. Did you find anything challenging about singing in this choir?
5. Why do you think the adults signed up to participate in the IG choir?
6. How do you feel after you leave the choir rehearsal? (Do you feel any different from before the class?)
7. How do you think the adults feel after the class?
8. How do you know if the adults are enjoying the singing class?
9. How do you know if your fellow peers are enjoying the singing class?
10. What do you think is the objective/goal of the singing classes with the adults?
11. What do you think is the singing facilitator's role? What are the important things he should do?
12. Can you tell me one of your favorite/most special moments in the class? A favourite song or activity?
13. What do you think your fellow students learned from the class?
14. Do you think the adults learned anything from the students in the class? Yes>what? No>why not?

15. Would you continue to come to sing with the adults in the future? Why or why not?		
16. Is there anything that you would change to make this program run more		

effectively in the futures?

Staff to be interviewed will include the music teachers from the school and the Organizers of the and and and and are also facility.

# Music teachers and Facility Organizers Semi-structured interview protocol

After each session, an open-ended debriefing session between PI and music teachers and facility organizers will be held to discuss what went well, what we will change for the following week, planning for the following session.

The interviews with the teachers and organizers will be semi-structured and will occur after the program is completed. The interview will be based on the following questions:

#### **Interview Questions:**

### A – Background Questions

- i) Biographic information: years of teaching music at this school/years in position as facility organizer
- ii) Describe your past involvement in intergenerational music programming with the participants in the project.
- iii) What have you experienced as the benefits of IG programs for students? For the seniors? For you as a teacher/organizer?
- iv) What are the drawbacks to IG programs for students, seniors and/or you as a teacher/organizer?
- v) What do you believe the advantages to your students/seniors/yourself might be as a result of this program? Drawbacks?

## B – Program Questions

- i) How did the program go? What learning occurred?
- ii) What benefits did you perceive to students, seniors, and yourself? What drawbacks?
- iii) What were some signs that the seniors were engaged in the singing program?
- iv) Did you see any signs of seniors who were disengaged in the singing activities?

- v) What were some signs that the students were engaged in the singing program?
- vi) Did you see any signs of students who were disengaged in the singing activities? How do you know if they are interested or disinterested?
- vii) Would we continue such a program? Why? What would be changed?
- viii) What would you describe as best practices for IG programs?
- ix) Should the program continue into the future? Why? What should be changed?

### Specific Questions for the Music Facilitator:

- i) How did you consider the song selections for the singing program?
- ii) Did you find any challenges when planning the repertoire for the singing program? What were they?
- iii) What factors did you consider when selecting your teaching strategies for the songs in the singing program?

#### **Appendix B: Ethical Approval**



Review Number: 1111-5 Principal Investigator: 1

Student Name:

Title: Tuning into the Future: Informal Learning and Music Education

Expiry Date: February 28, 2014

Type: Faculty

Ethics Approval Date: March 8, 2013.

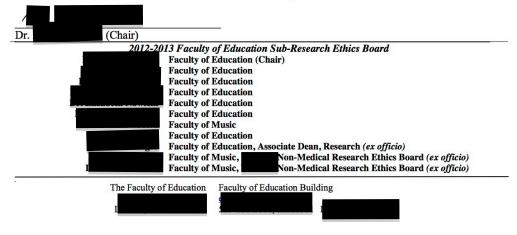
Revision #: 4

Documents Reviewed & Revised Study End Date, Letter of Information & Consent Updating on

Approved: confidentiality

This is to notify you that the Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board (REB), which operates under the authority of the Western University Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the date noted above. The approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the REB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the study or information/consent documents may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB, except for minor administrative aspects. Participants must receive a copy of the signed information/consent documentation. Investigators must promptly report to the Chair of the Faculty Sub-REB any adverse or unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected, and any new information which may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study. In the event that any changes require a change in the information/consent documentation and/or recruitment advertisement, newly revised documents must be submitted to the Sub-REB for approval.



Copy: Office of Research Ethics



Review Number: 1203-4

Principal Investigator:

Student Name:

Title: From 'emancipation from' to 'emancipated to': Rethinking the role of musical

improvisation in university education

Expiry Date: September 30, 2013 Type: Research for Course

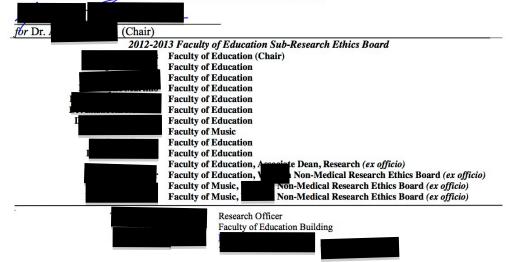
Ethics Approval Date: October 22, 2012. Revision #: 1

Documents Reviewed & Revised Study End Date, Revised Study Methods, Revised Number of Participants,

Approved: Revised Letter of Information & Consent

This is to notify you that the Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board (REB), which operates under the authority of the Western University Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the date noted above. The approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the REB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the study or information/consent documents may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB, except for minor administrative aspects. Participants must receive a copy of the signed information/consent documentation. Investigators must promptly report to the Chair of the Faculty Sub-REB any adverse or unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected, and any new information which may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study. In the event that any changes require a change in the information/consent documentation and/or recruitment advertisement, newly revised documents must be submitted to the Sub-REB for approval.





Review Number: 1210-4

Principal Investigator:

Student Name:

Title: Advancing Interdisciplinary Research in Singing - Intergenerational Singing sub-

theme Phase 3

Expiry Date: December 31, 2013 Type: Ph.D. Thesis (Music)

Ethics Approval Date: November 28, 2012

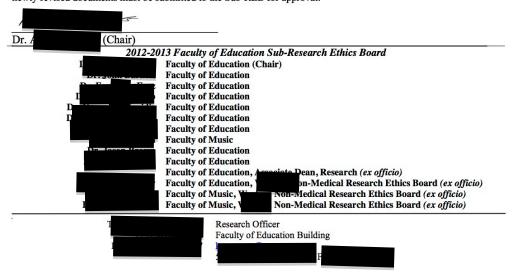
Revision #:

Documents Reviewed &

Approved: Western Protocol, Letters of Information & Consent

This is to notify you that the Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board (REB), which operates under the authority of the Western University Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the date noted above. The approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the REB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the study or information/consent documents may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB, except for minor administrative aspects. Participants must receive a copy of the signed information/consent documentation. Investigators must promptly report to the Chair of the Faculty Sub-REB any adverse or unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected, and any new information which may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study. In the event that any changes require a change in the information/consent documentation and/or recruitment advertisement, newly revised documents must be submitted to the Sub-REB for approval.



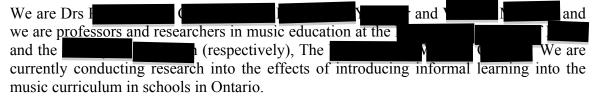
Copy: Office of Research Ethics

#### **Appendix C: Letters of Information and Consent**



#### Tuning into the Future: Informal Learning and Music Education

#### LETTER OF INFORMATION- students



Informal Learning is an innovative and exciting way of thinking about music making in schools. It brings informal learning and non-formal teaching into the more formal environment of school, to make music learning relevant by drawing on the passion, enthusiasm and motivation young people have for music. The researchers and your music teacher will work on a series of lessons based on this approach and you will participate in those lessons. The research study will evaluate the effects of the lessons. Researchers will video the lessons and interview you on your own and with your friends about the project. These interviews will be audio recorded.

If you agree to take part in the research you will be asked to allow us to video-record you during music class and to be interviewed once individually and once as part of a small group. The interviews will take place in your school. If the interview occurs at recess or lunch, you will be provided with a snack so you do not miss out. We anticipate that the interviews will take no more than 30 minutes in total to complete. All of our conversations will be audio-taped and then transcribed into written form.

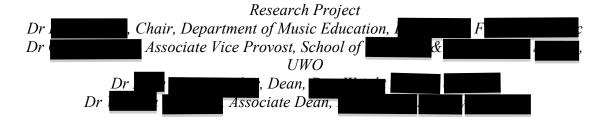
The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential; neither names, nor identifiers will be used in any research presentation or dissemination of results. You will be asked to create a code name by which you will be known in the research. Following the study, the recordings, transcriptions and any related material stored electronically will be kept in a locked cabinet. All data related to this study will be destroyed five years following its publication.

There are no known risks to taking part in this study. Participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your academic status.

If you have any qu	uestions about th	ne conduc	et of this study	or your righ	its <u>as a research</u>
participant you ma	y contact the Ma	anager, O	office of Research	ch Ethics, T	he i
V at	: o	r	<u>. I</u> f you <u>h</u>	ave any que	stions about this
study, please conta	ct Dr. 1	t_(	ext 8	or	ca, or
Dr.	Co-Investigator,	at	ext	or	ca.

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

## Tuning into the Future: Informal Learning and Music Education



## **CONSENT FORM**

I have read the Letter of Information, the study has been explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (please print):		
Signature:	_	
Date:		



#### **Tuning into the Future: Informal Learning and Music Education**

#### LETTER OF INFORMATION-Music Teachers

We are Dr. 1 Dr ( Dr. 1
We are professors and researchers in music education at the
Faculty of Music and the Faculty of Education (respectively),
Ontario. We are currently conducting research into the effects of introducing informal
learning into the music curriculum in schools in . Informal Learning is a different
way of thinking about music making in schools, bringing informal learning and non-
formal teaching into the more formal environment of the school.

The researchers will work with you in your school to design and implement a series of lessons based on informal learning. In preparation for this, you will travel with the researchers to the UK for the week from 29<sup>th</sup> January to 4<sup>th</sup> February 2012 to receive training in the approach at a workshop organised by Musical Futures UK at one of their champion schools in Forest Hill, London. Visits to two schools using Musical Futures will also be undertaken during this week and a seminar with teachers working in the approach in the UK will be attended at the University of Greenwich, London, UK. You will also be asked to take part in curriculum planning sessions with the researchers during this week in the UK. Teachers and researchers will together devise the series of lessons to be delivered in your school. This will not take longer than eight hours. (Expenses for your travel, subsistence and accommodations will be covered by the University.)

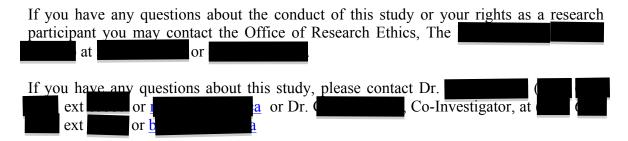
The aims of the research study will be to evaluate the effects of the program. The research portion of the study will include video-recording the lessons as well as interviewing you (music teacher), other teachers, school administrators individually, and pupils from your classes individually and in groups. Student interviews will likely occur at recess or lunch and we anticipate that the interviews will take no more than 30 minutes in total to complete.

If you consent to participate in this study you will be asked to allow researchers to video the music lessons during the project and to interview you in a place of your choosing at the end of the project. We anticipate that the interviews will take no more than 30 minutes in total to complete. All of our conversations will be audio-taped and then transcribed into written form and returned to you for comment.

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information which could identify you or your school will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept

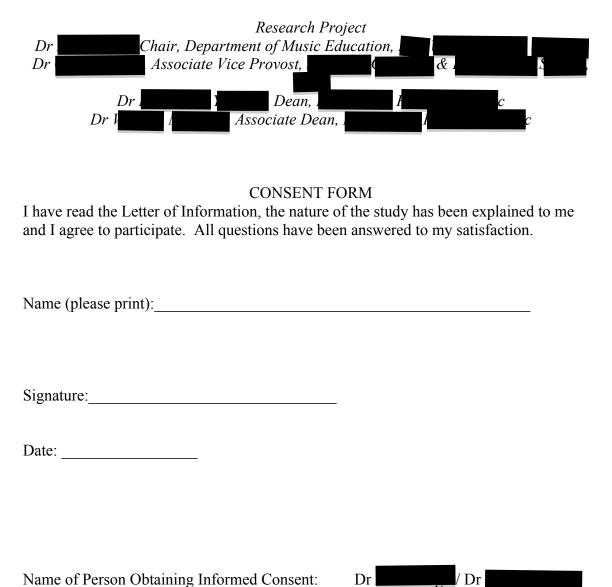
confidential; neither names, nor identifiers will be used in any research presentation or dissemination of results. You will be asked to create a pseudonym by which you will be known in the research. Following the study, the recordings, transcriptions and any related data stored electronically will be kept in a locked cabinet. All data related to this study will be destroyed five years following its publication.

There are no known risks to participating in this study. Participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your employment status.



This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

## Tuning into the Future: Informal Learning and Music Education



Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: \_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## From 'emancipation from' to 'emancipated to': Rethinking the role of musical improvisation in university education

LETTER OF INFORMATION Introduction and I am a Ph.D. candidate in music education at My name is I am currently conducting research into student perception of informal music learning and improvisation and would like to invite you to participate in this study. Purpose of the study The aim of this study is to use the information gathered through reflections and interviews from an undergraduate musical improvisation course regarding student perception on the effectiveness of using improvisation as a creative vehicle for musical instruction and successful student learning and engagement in the twentyfirst century arts curriculum. If you agree to Participate If you agree to participate in this study you will be observed during your 9:30-10:30 a.m. Tuesday class and 9:30-11:30 a.m. Thursday class in the course 3860a, improvising and composing in the classroom, which will conclude on December 5, 2012. I will also video record during the class session. You will also be asked to submit your final journal reflection from 3860a Improvising and Composing in the Classroom. If you agree to participate please return the signed office 7 consent form to and leave it in the box marked improvisation research. In an effort to gather more information, a follow-up interview may be requested. This interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed into written format. Interviews will take place in a conference room in and will last approximately thirty minutes. Confidentiality The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. will not be informed of your decision to participate or refrain from the study until the grades for the class have been submitted. Your confidentiality will be protected by removing your name and any other identifying information from your journal and coding your information before the data is will not view the video-recordings until after shared with the grades have been submitted. The data will be stored confidentially and will be

destroyed five years after publication.

#### **Risks & Benefits**

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

#### **Voluntary Participation**

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your academic status. If you do not agree to participate in the study all efforts will be made to avoid video-recording you in the class and if you do inadvertently appear on the recording your image will be made unidentifiable.

#### Questions

If you have any ques	tions about the cond	uct of this study o	r your rights as a
research participant v	ou may contact the	Office of Research	n Ethics, V
r at .	or 6	If you have	e any questions about
this study, please con	tact J	by phone	-4 or e-mail
or l	at:	ext.	or
A	copy of the findings	in the final paper	will be available for
you should you reque	est it.		

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Sincerely,

## From 'emancipation from' to 'emancipated to': Rethinking the role of musical improvisation in university education



I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (please print):

Signature:	Date:
Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:	
Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Conse	nt: .
Date: October 15, 2012	
If you agree to be interviewed as part of this stuinformation details below:	ndy, please provide contact
E-Mail:	
Dhone:	

## Advancing Interdisciplinary Research in Singing –

## Intergenerational Singing Sub-theme Phase 3

#### LETTER OF INFORMATION

(for adult participants)

We are for the Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education at the of Value and and PhD student in music education. We are part of a research team that is currently conducting research into Intergenerational (IG) learning through the development of a singing curriculum, and we would like to invite you to participate in this research.

The aims of this research are to begin to explore how to improve IG learning by determining what makes for successful IG learning curriculum and what can be done to bring about this success.

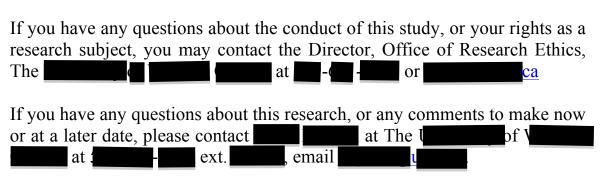
Information for this research will be collected by videotaping and audio-recording your involvement in the IG program, observing the program, taking field notes of these observations, and photographing interactions between participants during the program. You may also be asked to participate in an interview with one of the researchers, which will be audiotaped. The interview topics will focus on your previous and current experiences with music and singing, in addition to your opinions about the IG program. All research will be conducted during the normal part of the of IG programming and therefore will take up no more of your time than you would ordinarily spend in such programming. If you are interviewed you may spend from 15 - 60 minutes or more of your time depending upon the amount of time you choose to spend in the interview. The option is also available for you to be interviewed in shorter, multiple sessions if you so choose.

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and your name will not be used in any presentations or publications of the research results. Short segments of the videotapes and/or photographs may be used in the future in any presentation or publication of the research (e.g., scholarly

conferences, IG training sessions). They will not be used for commercial use. Individuals will be identifiable to those viewing the images.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time. Those who decide not to participate in the research may still participate in the intergenerational learning. There are no known risks to participating in this study.

If you do not agree to participate in the study the researchers will avoid including you in video-recordings. If you are inadvertently included we will edit the recording so that you are not recognizable.



This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

# Advancing Interdisciplinary Research in Singing – Intergenerational Singing Sub-theme Phase 3

## **CONSENT FORM**

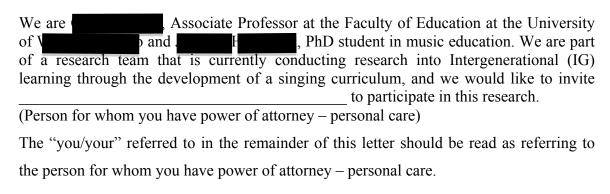
(residents)

I have read the letter of information, the nature of the study has been
explained to me, and I agree to participate. All questions have been
answered to my satisfaction.

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Your Name (please print)	
Your Signature	Date
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And/or	
Signature of Power of Attorney	Date
Printed name of person obtaining consent	
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interviewed as part of this study, please provide y that we can contact you for the interview:	our contact information so
E-Mail:	
Phone:	<u> </u>

Advancing Interdisciplinary Research in Singing – Intergenerational Singing Sub-theme
Phase 3

#### <u>LETTER OF INFORMATION</u> (to be signed by a Power of Attorney)



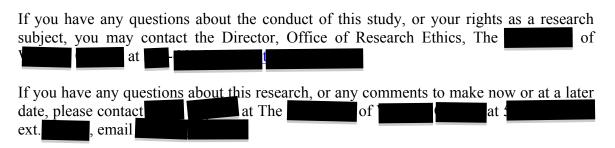
The aims of this research are to begin to explore how to improve IG learning by determining what makes for successful IG learning curriculum and what can be done to bring about this success.

Information for this research will be collected by videotaping and audio-recording your involvement in the IG program, observing the program, taking field notes of these observations, and photographing interactions between participants during the program. You may also be asked to participate in an interview with one of the researchers, which will be audiotaped. The interview topics will focus on your previous and current experiences with music and singing, in addition to your opinions about the IG program. All research will be conducted during the normal part of the for programming and therefore will take up no more of your time than you would ordinarily spend in such programming. You may spend from 15 - 60 minutes or more of your time depending upon the amount of time they choose to spend in the interview. The option is also available for you to be interviewed in shorter, multiple sessions if they so choose.

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and your name will not be used in any presentations or publications of the research results. Short segments of the videotapes and/or photographs may be used in the future in any presentation or publication of the research (e.g., scholarly conferences, IG training sessions). They will not be used for commercial use. Individuals will be identifiable to those viewing the images.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time. Those who decide not to participate in the research may still participate in the intergenerational learning. There are no known risks to participating in this study.

If you do not consent to participate in the study the researchers will avoid including you in video-recordings. If you are inadvertently included we will edit the recording so that you are not recognizable.



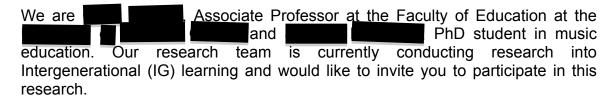
This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

## **CONSENT FORM**

(Power of Attorney)

and I consent to the participation of	I have read the letter of information, the nature of the study has been explained to me,
All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.  Name of Participant (Person over whom you have power of attorney – personal care)  Your Name (please print)  Your Signature Date  Printed name of person obtaining consent  Date  Participating in a follow-up interview is optional. If you consent to the person over whom you have power of attorney to be interviewed as part of this study, please provide your contact information so that we can contact you to arrange an interview:	and I consent to the participation of
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whom you have power of attorney to be interviewed as part of this study, please provide your contact information so that we can contact you to arrange an interview:	
your contact information so that we can contact you to arrange an interview:	
E-Mail:	E-Mail:
Phone:	

## LETTER OF INFORMATION (staff)



The aims of this research are to begin to explore how to improve IG learning by determining what makes for successful IG learning curriculum and what can be done to bring about this success.

Information for this research will be collected by videotaping and audio-recording the participants' involvement in the IG program, observing the program, taking field notes of these observations, and photographing interactions between participants during the program.

If you agree to participate in the study your presence in the IG singing sessions may be videotaped, observed and photographed for study purposes. After each session you may be asked by the researchers for your comments and observations regarding the previous singing activities. These comments from these discussions will be audio-recorded and documented in field notes.

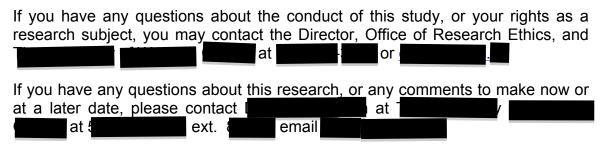
You will also be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview, which will be audiotaped. Topics will include demographic information about you such as the length of time working in this area, the kind of work you engage in, how you contribute to the IG programs, how you see these contributions meeting the needs of program participants, what other forms of contribution you would like to make, what kinds of learning you see happening through the programs, what kinds of exchanges you see happening through the programs, the identification of any "best practices" that you could share, what type of training or education you have received relevant to IG learning. All research will be conducted at a time and place of your choosing. Semi-structured interviews may last from 15 - 60 minutes or more of your time depending upon the amount of time you choose to spend in the interview.

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and your name will not be used in any presentations or publications of the research results. Short segments of the videotapes and/or photographs may be used in the future in any presentation or publication of the research (e.g., scholarly

conferences, IG training sessions). They will not be used for commercial use. Individuals will be identifiable to those viewing the images.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your employment status. Those who decide not to participate in the research may still participate in the intergenerational learning. There are no known risks to participating in this study.

If you do not agree to participate in the study the researchers will avoid including you in video-recordings. If you are inadvertently included we will edit the recording so that you are not recognizable.



This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

## CONSENT FORM (staff)

I have read the letter of information, the nature of the study has been explained to me, and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Your Name (please print)	
Your Signature	Date
Participating in a follow-up interview is	1
interviewed as part of this study, please that we can contact you for the intervie	•
E-Mail:	
Phone:	

## **LETTER OF INFORMATION**

(to be signed by parents of secondary school students under 18; or students over 18 years of age)

We are a part of the land of t
The aims of this research are to explore how to improve IG learning by determining what makes for successful IG learning curriculum and what can be done to bring about this success. With the permission of the District School Board, students from High School and their music teacher are involved in this program as well as a number of seniors. The program is taking place at the residence. There are 9 lessons involving the students and residents in singing activities, with each lesson lasting about 45 minutes. The final session on November 29 will include a performance of the learned songs at
If you agree to participate, information for this research will be collected by videotaping and audio-recording some of the IG sessions, observing the program, taking field notes of these observations, and photographing interactions between participants during the program. You will be asked to complete a short questionnaire regarding your age, grade level, gender, etc. You will also be asked to complete a short interview (15 -30 minutes), which will be audiotaped that asks you to talk about your experience with singing and perceptions of the IG program. This interview will be conducted in a classroom at School. The interview will be audiotaped.
The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and your name will not be used. Short segments of the videotapes and/or photographs may be used in the future in any presentation or publication of the research (e.g., scholarly conferences, IG training sessions). They will not be used for commercial use. Individuals will be identifiable to those viewing the images.
Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time. Those who decide not to participate in the research may still participate in the IG music programme. There are no known risks to participating in this study.
If you do not agree to participate in the study the researchers will avoid including you in video- recordings. If you are inadvertently included we will edit the recording so that you are not recognizable.
If you have any questions about the conduct of this study, or your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics, Toronto or the Director of Research Ethics,
If you have any questions about this research, or any comments to make now or at a later date, please contact at a later date, at ext.

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

# Letter of Consent (for secondary school students under 18 years of age)

## **CONSENT FORM**

I have read the letter of information, the nature of the study has been explained to me, and I agree that my son/daughter may participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name of Student (please print)
Signature of Student (please print)
_Parent/Guardian's name (please print)
Parent/Guardian's Signature
Date
Participating in a follow-up interview is optional. If you would like to be interviewed as part of this study, please provide your contact information so that we can contact you for the interview:
E-Mail:
Phone:

## Letter of Consent (for secondary school students 18 years of age or older)

## **CONSENT FORM**

I have read the letter of information, the nature of the study has been explained to me, and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name of Student (please print)
Signature of Student
Date
Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:
If you agree to be interviewed as part of this study, please provide contact information details below:
E-Mail:
Phone:

### Appendix D: Syllabus Improvising and Composing in the Classroom

Mus 3860a: Improvising and Composing in the Classroom

Faculty of Music
The University of Western Ontario

#### Fall 2012 COURSE OUTLINE

Thursdays 9:30am-11:30am MB345 Office: E-mail:	Tuesdays 9:30am-10.30am Thursdays 9:30am-11:30am	MB <sub>345</sub> MB <sub>345</sub>	
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#### Course Description and Rationale

Improvising and composing are often surrounded by an air of mystery and fear! For many classically trained musicians, the most frightening thing one can do is to take away their music and ask them to play (I know, I've been one of those musicians). In fact, I originally thought of calling this course 'improvising and composing for the terrified'. Many other genres of music however, rely almost entirely on spontaneous music making-improvising-that solidifies into accepted versions of a piece-composing and these musicians do not experience fear at such ways of working. This course will involve exploring some ways of introducing the skills of improvising and composing in the music class and then developing these skills so that they may be acquired by students before the fear sets in. We will look at some of the literature that has been produced discussing the role of creative activity in the classroom alongside workshops where we try out a range of musical activities ourselves. You will learn how to plan for creative music making in the classroom and other educational contexts. The emphasis will be on exploring and experimenting and on reflecting on the learning process itself not on the polished quality of the final products of our music making. A safe space will be created in which you can experiment with and enjoy creativity in a music education context without fear of judgment or failure.

### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- >Create and develop musical ideas within set parameters or in response to a given stimulus
- >Work effectively with others to create, revise and refine music
- >Comment thoughtfully upon musical products, identify strengths and weaknesses and make suggestions for improvement
- > Plan a series of creative activities for a designated group of students
- >Demonstrate appropriate application of a range of learning and teaching strategies for improvising and composing in music education
- Reflect critically upon the course and your learning in it with reference to the literature
- ➤ Identify barriers or obstacles to the introduction of improvising and composing in school music and offer suggestions to mitigate their effects

#### **Course Content**

- > Beginning with rhythm, echo clapping, questions and answers,
- > Rhythm improvising and composing with rhythm
- The creative process and the Ontario Arts Curriculum-why creativity?
- Introducing melody, pentatonic improvisation, developing the inner ear, pitched echoing, extending from questions and answers, Arriba
- > Moving from pentatonic improvising to composing, introducing foundations and skills
- Graphic and proportional notation, creating, interpreting and responding to music with graphic notation
- > Structuring classroom improvising and composing
- > Composing with the Dorian mode, traditional music and Dorian mode
- Music and mood, using images as stimuli

#### Mus 3860a: Improvising and Composing in the Classroom

- Composing with video stimuli
- Songwriting
- Music technology and composing
- Music, Informal Learning and the School:
- Modelling musical futures

#### **Key Transferable Skills**

Transferable skills is a label used to describe attributes that are acquired during a course that are not specific to the subject studied but are skills that can be used in a wider range of education and employment activities. By the end of this course, you will have developed and enhanced the following:

- >Creativity skills through classwork, assignments and group work, responding to given compositional and improvisation briefs and developing original ideas
- >Communication skills through assignments and group work (presenting written and oral arguments in a clear and cogent manner, responding to questions and situations appropriately);
- > Problem solving skills through assignments and course work (identifying issues, assimilating, evaluating and analyzing information, finding practical solutions that make effective use of available time and resources);
- Personal skills through class and volunteer activities (increasing self awareness, exploring and creating opportunities for self, planning actions, decision-making, coping with uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity; providing and accepting constructive feedback, reflection, assessment and learning from one's own actions);
- > Teamwork through group activities (establishing working relations with others, defining, sharing and negotiating responsibilities within the group; interacting effectively in social groups, promoting productive cooperation);
- > Intellectual skills through assignments and class activities (analyzing, evaluating and synthesizing information, thinking critically, increasing awareness of political and social justice issues).

#### Instructional Methods

Most of the classes will be in the form of practical workshop sessions in which the instructor and students will explore together activities and strategies for introducing and developing improvising and composing skills in the classroom. Supplementary reading will be required as listed in the course outline.

#### **Email Correspondence and Office Hours**

You can always send me an email if you have any questions or would like to communicate with me during the course. I try to respond to all my emails promptly. You can also email me to arrange a time to meet with me at my office. I am also available after classes for consultation (unless I have to attend a university or faculty committee meeting) or at other times by appointment.

#### **Required Materials**

There is no required textbook for the class. Readings will be notified to students by the instructor.

#### **Recommended Reading**

Bolden, B. (2005). Guiding Student Composing: Teachers' Perspective, Canadian Music

Educator, 46(4), 15-17.

Mus 3860a: Improvising and Composing in the Classroom Burnard P. & Younker B.A. Mapping Pathways: fostering creativity in composition
Music Education Research, Volume 4, Number 2, 1 September 2002, pp. 245-261(17)
Hollenbeck, K. (2009). Teaching Composition. <i>The Instrumentalist</i> , 64(3). 22-26, 103
Lapidaki, E. (2007). Learning from Masters of Music Creativity. Philosophy of Music Education
Review, 15(2), 93-117.
Paynter, J. (1992). Sound and Structure. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Reeves, S.D. R. (2001) Creative Jazz Improvisation 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J. : Prentice Hall, c2001
Simmons, L. E. (2006). Composition and Improvisation in the Elementary School
Classroom. Canadian Music Educator, 46(?), 29-33.
Strand, K. (2006). Survey of Indiana Music Teachers on Using Composition in the Classroom.
Journal of Research in Music Education, 54(2), 154-167.
Sullivan, T. (2005). Creativity and Music Education. Canadian Music Educator, 47(1), 24-27.
Sullivan, T. & Willingham, L., eds. (2002), Creativity and Music Education. Toronto:
University of Alberta.
Turner, K. (2006). Composition in Orchestra Class. <i>Teaching Music</i> . 14(2), 32-37.
Wiggins, J. (2001). Teaching for Musical Understanding. Toronto: McGraw Hill.
Course Assignments and Evaluation Class attendance

#### 

Total: 100%

Everyone is expected to participate in whole class and group work and take an active part in our class discussions.

This course has 2 assignments. Students are required to complete assignments by the required deadlines. Assignments should be submitted in class on the date of the assignment. Late assignments will not be accepted and will be marked at zero, unless accompanied by medical evidence or evidence of a compelling personal crisis. A summary of each assignment is provided below (detailed information for each assignment will be provided during class).

#### Assignment 1: Workshop Pack (25% of final grade) due date 22 November

In this assignment you will prepare a workshop pack which supports 3 x 1-hour sessions involving students in improvising and / or composing activities. You should specify the age of the pupils you would plan to deliver this workshop to- Grade 2, 7, 11 etc.

#### The workshop should:

- · be formulated around the outline given by the instructor
- be accompanied by appropriate resources (recordings, worksheets, other materials needed to lead the workshop)
   and
- include lesson plans that :
  - > specify clearly the learning outcomes
  - > outline a series of tasks sufficient to actively engage the pupils over a period of 3 hours in music;
  - > address issues of differentiation and assessment

### **Guidelines for completion**

Preparing this workshop pack is intended to provide you with experience of planning for creative activity in music. Essentially, you are being asked to produce a learning pack which includes original resources that could be used by a specialist teacher of music. When producing your pack you should bear in mind that the objectives and learning activities should be suitable for all pupils within the year group. Therefore, you will need to specify how tasks and teaching strategies might be adapted to suit pupils of all ability levels and with a range of musical experience. You should work around the following format.

- Brief introduction to describe the theme of the workshop and to provide an overview of the pack.
- Statement of the overall intended learning goals.-what do you expect your students to know, understand and be able to do by the end of the workshop
- Individual lesson plans containing outcomes for each lesson, description of the learning activities -what will students do in the session, how will they be organised, what resources will

#### Mus 3860a: Improvising and Composing in the Classroom

be used, strategies for differentiation and assessment and the resources required for that lesson

 Provide all resources needed (i.e. any materials used by the pupils or the teacher to support the learning taking place, apart from instruments). These might include: listening sheets, recorded extracts on disk, musical arrangements, backing tracks, worksheets, information sheets etc.

#### 3,000 words (or equivalent)

#### Assessment criteria

#### Your work will be assessed by the following criteria:

- Ability to design an innovative, engaging and imaginative creative experience at a level appropriate to the intended audience
- Appropriate and clearly defined learning goals,
- Appropriate lesson plans with clearly defined and measurable outcomes, well structured learning activities and appropriate strategies for differentiation and assessment
- Quality and appropriateness of accompanying resources.

#### Assignment 2 Reflective Journal (25% of final grade) due date Thursday 1 December

The purpose of this assignment is twofold. One is to invite you to consider your own thoughts about your learning as you progress through this course. You will journal the activities covered in classes and record your thoughts and reflections on your learning as a result of them. The second is to allow you to consider problems or barriers to introducing these creative musical activities in school and to suggest ways around them, if you think it possible or advisable. You may choose to discuss these issues as they relate to one particular phase of schooling-i.e. elementary school, junior high or high school, or discuss them as a whole. There is no right or wrong answer on this topic. What I am interested in is your ability to think about the issues and to critically reflect on your learning. You may use words, pictures, sound or video to compile your journal and submit in paper or virtual format. Be creative!

#### 2500 words maximum

#### **Assessment Criteria**

#### Your paper will be assessed on

- The ability to identify key learning moments
- · The ability to critically reflect on learning during the course
- · The ability to identify key issues concerning improvising and composing in the classroom
- The ability to identify key problems and barriers to improvising and composing in the classroom and to suggest solutions

## Student Evaluations and Comments/Suggestions

You will have the opportunity to evaluate the course formally at the end of the term. However, if at any time during the course you have any comments or suggestions, please feel free to discuss them with me so that we can try to find a mutually beneficial solution. Please do not hesitate to see me if you are having any problems with the course material or assignments.

<u>Academic Offences</u>: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, as found at: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic\_discipline\_undergrad.pdf

<u>University Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:</u> As of May 2008, the University has a new policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness, which states that "in order to ensure fairness and

#### Mus 3860a: Improvising and Composing in the Classroom

consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the appropriate Dean's office." Students with special learning needs or circumstances are asked to inform the instructor as soon as possible so that necessary accommodations can be made. This policy can be found at <a href="https://studentservices.">https://studentservices.</a>

Illness affecting work representing less than 10% of the total grade will not require medical documentation to be submitted. Accommodation will be provided at the discretion of the instructor.

#### Statement on Mental Health

Students that are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health(http://www.nentalhealth/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

<u>University Code of Student Conduct:</u> The University seeks to provide an environment of free and creative inquiry within which critical thinking, humane values, and practical skills are cultivated and sustained. The University Code of Student Conduct can be found at <a href="http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/board/code.pdf">http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/board/code.pdf</a>

Instructor's policy on attendance and late assignments: If you are unable to attend a class, please make every effort to let the instructor know in advance by email (preferably). If you miss a class, be sure to check your email for any instructions/reading which you will need to complete prior to the following class. Full attendance at all classes is expected and medical documentation is required unless you have the instructor's permission to be absent. Unexplained absences will result in a reduction in your participation grade. Students with medical documentation or an acceptable excuse for an absence will not be penalized. Late written assignments will only be accepted and graded if permission has been granted by the instructor in advance of the deadline.

### **Curriculum Vitae**

Name: Jennifer Lang

Post-secondary Education and Degrees: The University of Western Ontario London, Ontario, Canada

1997-2001 B. Mus.

The University of Western Ontario

London, Ontario, Canada

2001-2002 B.Ed.

The University of Western Ontario

London, Ontario, Canada

2009-2011 Ph.D.

The University of Western Ontario

London, Ontario, Canada

2011-2015 Ph.D.

Honours and Awards:

Province of Ontario Graduate Scholarship

2012-2013

Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)

**Doctoral Fellowship** 

2013-2015

Related Work Experience **Assistant Professor** 

The University of Saskatchewan

2015-2016

Course Instructor

The University of Western Ontario

2011-2015

**Teaching Assistant** 

The University of Western Ontario

2011-2015

Research Assistant

The University of Western Ontario

2011-2015

### **Publications:**

- Hutchison, J., & Beynon, C. (2014). "It's all about confidence and how you perceive yourself": Musical perceptions of older adults involved in an intergenerational singing program. *Literacy Information and Computer Education Journal*, 5(2), 1465-1474.
- Hutchison, J. (2014). MF Canada: Perspectives from our Musical Futures Canada program co-ordinator, *The Recorder*, 56(2), 28-31.
- Hutchison, J. (2014). Mapping Musical Futures to the Ontario curriculum, *The Recorder*, 56(2), 58-69.
- Hutchison, J., Linton, L., Wright, R., & Beynon, C. (2013). Musical Futures Canada: Tuning into the way we learn, *The Recorder*, 12-16.
- Wright, R., Younker, B.A., Beynon, C., Hutchison, J., Linton, L., Beynon, S., Davidson, B., & Duarte, N. (2012). Tuning into the future: Sharing initial insights about the 2012 Musical Futures pilot project in Ontario, *Canadian Music Educator*, 53(4), 14-18.
- Lang, J. (2001). Giving every student a chance to be a winner. *Canadian Music Educator*, 43 (1), 11-15.