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Learning Through Rock Band In The Elementary General Music Classroom

Nick Denis
Wayne State University,

LEARNING THROUGH ROCK BAND IN THE ELEMENTARY GENERAL MUSIC CLASSROOM

by

NICK DENIS

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INTRODUCTION

Music, like air, surrounds us daily. Whether it's the latest chart-topping hit playing loudly from the car down the street, an old favorite playing on the store PA system, or a soulful rendition of "Total Eclipse of the Heart" on karaoke night, it is all but impossible to leave the house without hearing music. Despite the fact that music is such an integral part of our world, and almost every person has their own favorite artists, shockingly few people make music in their adult lives. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) reported that only twelve percent of adults surveyed played a musical instrument alone in the preceding year, and only five percent played with others (NEA, 2015). These certainly cannot be the figures that the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) committed to the extension of the mission of school music into the community at the Tanglewood Symposium (Choate, 1968).

Encouraging lifelong learning is a goal for educators in all fields, including music. Since the 2015 renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 places music among the core subjects, it would seem that we are not meeting our goal, given the NEA's findings. The Tanglewood Symposium was not the only time educators and researchers attempted to address the problem of students putting down their instruments, or music altogether. Indeed, one year before the Tanglewood Symposium, Lawrence and Dachinger surveyed 328 adults of varying ages who had instrumental training to find that 73% of respondents reported playing their instrument rarely or never (1967). While there is a fairly substantial body of literature attempting to describe the reasons why adults who make music choose to engage in their activities, there is far less

information detailing reasons behind the abandonment of musical pursuits after the school years, other than this study from 50 years ago.

Although Lawrence and Dachinger's study showed that the main impediments to adult musical engagement were time and lack of technical skills (1967), it does not tell the complete story. According to Nielsen's 2016 mid-year music report (Nielsen, 2016), rock made up 26.8% of all physical and digital album sales by genre. In comparison, classical and jazz albums only accounted for 2.4% of sales. The NEA concurrently reports that attendance at classical, jazz, and opera performances have been on a general decline since 2002, noting that no more than 13.6% of adults listened to these genres on radio or television. This stands in stark contrast to the 46.9% of adults who listened to "other music, such as rock, pop, country, folk, rap, or hip-hop" on the radio or television (NEA, 2015). These contemporary genres of music also hold their popularity with younger age demographics as well. Adolescents regularly use "popular" music in many important ways in their lives: to regulate mood, develop emotional independence, enriching their peer relationships, and constructing their own identity (Tarrant, North, & Hargreaves, 2002). Despite repeated illustrations of the general positive affinity people feel for these more popular genres, they often get short shrift in school music programs and teacher training programs. A study of one American university's music teacher training program showed that while 93% of the students' time was spent on western art music, while less than 1% of their time was spent working on popular music (Wang & Humphreys, 2009). This combination can leave many students feeling alienated from their school music program, sapping their desire to make music at all.

The genre divide is not the only obstacle separating students from the content presented within the traditional school music program. Perceived ways of learning in traditional and popular

music styles can seem to be opposed. Traditional musicians rely exclusively on reading notation in order to faithfully recreate another person's work. Popular musicians, however, are more likely to learn through listening to models, recreating what they hear by ear (Green, 2002). Popular musicians generally view reading musical notation as a stepping-stone to other formal musical activities, so standard notation is rarely used in these groups (2002, p. 69). The tendency of traditional school music programs is to focus on the large performance ensemble model and western art music (Regelski, 2014), though these ensembles hardly reflect the ways most adults engage in music making (Tobias, 2013). Based on these factors, and bolstered by the work of authors such as Green (2002, 2008), Folkestad (2006), and Jaffurs (2006), popular music has recently made inroads into the traditional music classroom, as well as the research corpus (Mantie, 2013). These programs aim to provide students with a learning experience that uses both repertoire and learning styles that speak to their musical identity. By blending formal and informal learning practices, students gain ownership over the music they are making, and a more social learning environment is created, resulting in more durable learning that has a better chance of transitioning into adult music making (Green, 2002, p. 56).

In order to capitalize on students' close identification with popular music, and to form the aforementioned durable learning, I began teaching rock band to the 5th grade students at Lafayette Elementary School in Lincoln Park, MI in the fall of 2015. Having familiarity with some of the research concerning popular music in schools (Green, 2002; Rodriguez, 2004), I thought it would be an effective method of reaching the students who lose interest in music in fifth grade, and increase student participation both in class and at school concerts. After the first year, I noticed an

increase in the number of students actively engaged during music class, including some students who had never shown any interest before.

Because the rock band class was seemingly effective in meeting its goals, I decided to investigate it retrospectively, in order to begin to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the program and to improve instruction for the future. This study explores the developing musical identities of six students who performed in two self-selected rock bands during the pilot year of the rock band class. The goal of this research is to explore the participants' experiences in the rock band class and its impact on their developing musical identities. Four main factors were the focus of this exploration: 1) popular music as the main genre of study in a traditional school music class, 2) informal learning centered on peer interaction, 3) personal and social perceptions of musicians, and 4) motivation to learn music as reflected in self-efficacy beliefs and perceived rewards of music making.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Factors that influence student engagement in music are numerous and intricately interwoven, making up the unique tapestry that is each individual's life. Because the pattern is intertwined so tightly, many of the threads cross over and intersect each other, thus pulling out individual threads to examine them one at a time can be a confusing process. It is my goal here to show some of the most important threads of musical engagement pertaining to this study: popular music in the music classroom, informal learning, social identity, and motivations to learn music.

Popular Music

The school music classroom does not exist in a cultural vacuum, sealed in a protective bubble, away from the rest of the world. Students and teachers alike bring in outside influences daily, changing the educational climate around them. This is more evident now than ever, with the rapid advancement in cellular technology and mobile audio and video streaming. Folkestad highlights the importance of integrating the outside world into the music classroom:

> In former days, the surrounding world was present in school as a reference and as something one was taught about in order to cope with the future. Today, the world around is present in school as an alternative arena for knowledge formation and learning, with its own well-developed and established forms (2006, p. 144).

Despite the ease with which students identify with pop music, critics of this genre have existed for a long time (Cutietta, 1991; Fowler, 1970). Conservative English philosopher Sir Roger Scruton, for example, railed against "The Tyranny of Pop [music]" as recently as 2015 (Scruton, 2015). Scruton lobbies for the continuation of classical music instruction, and states "…that those who teach in the humanities ought at least to make the attempt [to teach classical music appreciation],

not so as to convert their students, but so as to give a sporting chance to those who are not yet morons" (Scruton, 2010). While countries such as Scandinavia, Australia, Germany, and many others have already integrated popular music into their school music programs, schools in the U.S. have been slow to do so (Green, 2008) [1]. This is not the first time the music education profession has been slow adopting a new style of music into the classroom. According to Volk (1998), the MENC didn't discuss teaching jazz in the classroom until 1960, and didn't accept and perform jazz in concert until 1968.

Students' aversion to classical music may be much more deep-seated than just disliking "old people music" that's "just a bit boring and pointless" (Green, 2008, pp. 155-156), even if they don't realize it. For example, the fourteen and fifteen year old participants in Tarrant et al. (2002) had not only a dislike for classical, jazz, and country and western music, but demonstrated a strong desire to avoid association with these genres. The students viewed classical music as an "other" form of music, and therefore classical music fans formed an "out-group," from which students strove to differentiate themselves in order to maintain their social identity (Turner et al., 1987). Students seek to align themselves with their desired group by matching the group's behaviors, mannerisms, and style of dress. As students age, especially through adolescence, they tend to rely heavily on music and the social behaviors associated with specific musical genres as they "try on" identities of different in-groups to find the one that they feel they belong to (Tarrant et al., 2002).

The attempt to dissociate oneself from classical music can also be exhibited as lack of interest in the music classroom. Roberts (2015) distinguishes between two types of interest:

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[1] See (Green, 2008, pp. 3-4) for extensive sourcing on popular music in schools outside of the U.S.

individual and situational. Individual interests are specific to each individual and linked with higher-level cognition goals, such as critical thinking. Situational interest is a weaker, temporary interest sparked by such things as surprising content, group work, and hands-on learning and relates to affect more than cognition. By utilizing popular music to kindle situational interest in students, teachers can better focus student attention which in turn may lead to increased in individual interest (Roberts, 2015, p. 182). Through this process, an unengaged, disinterested music student can transition to a regularly engaged student, on his or her way to developing a positive musical identity.

Informal Learning

Informal learning has been the subject of much attention in music education research, as well as education research in general, especially in the past two decades (Davis, 2013; Jones, 2015; Kastner, 2014; Livingstone, 2006). Informal learning is the process in which most popular musicians base their music learning experience (Green, 2002). The components of informal learning are largely intuitive and difficult to identify to those unfamiliar with them. When asked to describe the learning patterns of popular musicians, student responses were somewhat vague: "They just play what they feel and stuff," and "They get a guitar, and they go up to their bedroom" (Green, 2008, p. 21).

It is important to distinguish between "informal teaching," and "informal learning." As Folkestad describes it,

> Teaching is always teaching, and in that sense always formal. As soon as someone teaches, as soon as somebody takes on the role of being a teacher, then it is a formal learning situation. Even if there is no structure – that is the structure (2006, p. 142).

Therefore, it is impossible to research, codify, and fine-tune an "informal teaching" method, since by its definition, it cannot exist. Instead, it is more valuable to view formal and informal learning as two ends of a continuum, instead of two diametrically opposed concepts. Broadly, informal learning processes are peer-mediated and student-centered, and see students engaging in activities such as purposive listening, imitation, song selection, and composition. These activities lead to increased sense of ownership over the songs they perform, as they see their work as a unique expression of their own artistry. This can also lead to a more personal connection to the act of playing music in general (Green, 2008). Lucy Green identifies these specific behaviors in her multiple case study of popular musicians from the London area. The musicians led Green to realize how listening to their favorite artists and trying to copy their performances, to varying degrees of intended perfection, was formative for their musicianship. This process is much more vital to the musicians than learning traditional musical notation. In fact, Green also found that musical notation represented more of a stepping-stone toward composition, rather than an area of focus.

Dairianathan (2009) revealed much of the same attitudes toward notation by members of the band Rudra, an extreme metal band from Singapore. The band's musicians relied much less on notation for the creation of their songs and composed more through "doing." Through their compositional experiences, the band members revised their technique and began to rely more on self-made audio recordings of riffs by 2005. Traditional notation was never a key aspect of composition for Rudra, instead their creativity emerged as group efforts in improvisation and musical exploration. Group learning activities like this also serve to develop metacognition, or thinking about how one learns, according to Smith (1991). Through awareness, self-monitoring and reflection, metacognitive functions can be seen in many group learning activities as a

"transaction between the learner and others – parents, teachers, and co-learners" (p. 11). These processes are the more complex thinking skills of Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, Krathwohl, & Masia, 1984), which lead to deeper learning and are highly valued in the current trend of assessments driving schools today (Michigan Department of Education, 2017). Given the educational value of this group interaction, it is vital that students be provided opportunities to explore and experiment with music making.

Despite the evidence that informal approaches to learning and music making have great educational value, the music education community has been notoriously slow to change. Regelski (2006) notes that instructional processes in schools have been virtually frozen and curriculum is rarely designed with lifelong learning in mind. Green posits that "young musicians who acquire their skills and knowledge more through informal learning practices than through formal education may be more likely to continue playing music, alone or with others, for enjoyment in later life" (Green, 2002, p. 56). Similarly, Kruse's (2009) findings suggest that andragogical principles, or adult teaching strategies that foster group learning experiences, could be effectively combined with pedagogical principles in learning situations for both adults and youth.

Teacher's role in informal learning.

In order to create satisfactory informal learning situations in the music classroom, Green suggests that the teacher's role be conceived as that of a coach rather than an instructor. The teacher should establish ground rules for behavior, establish the task to be accomplished, stand back and observe, empathize with students and the goals they set for themselves, diagnose students' needs, and then offer suggestions (2008, p. 24). This approach is supported by the literature as an effective way for educators to operate in informal learning settings (Jaffurs, 2006; McPhail, 2013; Robinson,

2012). There may also be some more specific clues pointing to effective ways to increase informal learning opportunities in school in a surprising arena: adult education.

In a study of New Horizons International Music Association band and orchestra directors, Coffman (2009) was looking for differences in instructional strategies used by directors working with adult and child students. As a whole, adult instruction was more student-centered, and directors had to take a less strict leadership approach. The adult students were less of a "captive audience" and driven more by a sense of intrinsic motivation, compared to the school environment. One respondent said "If I gave one of my adult students an assignment and he told me he didn't want to work on that etude, simply telling him he had to doesn't work" (p. 235). To better motivate adult students, directors will pick music these students identify with and build social interaction time into rehearsals. In his conclusion, Coffman asks "…whether there are aspects of teaching adults that we fail to consider for our youth, because youth are 'a captive audience' in some respects" (p. 237). Centering instruction on students and their own motivation in this way produces an atmosphere of information sharing, in which students can participate in music making together, as a sort of social unit, instead of consigning musical participation to the artistic whims of an ensemble director, which can feel musically stifling.

Shared learning.

The atmosphere of social sharing and learning is similar to how students create and consume media outside of school. Most of the ways students interact with media is now online, and varies from participating in group comments or discussion threads to creating and uploading original music, or creating a "remix" or "cover" of someone else's music (Tobias, 2013). Jenkins calls this sharing of musical learning "participatory culture," characterized by socially connected

individuals, supporting, sharing and informally mentoring one another (Jenkins, 2006, p. 50). Both Tobias (2013) and Regelski (2013, 2014) agree that a "convergence" of participatory culture and music education would be incredibly beneficial for students. The learning in these instances would take place in ways that are more authentic for students, intersecting with the real world, and holding deeper meaning.

Informal learning in public schools.

Both Folkestad (2006) and Regelski (2006) recognize that in order to make more meaningful musical connections with students, music educators must be willing to review their practice based on current research and make music with their students not only in traditional classroom settings, but also wherever music making takes place. By giving students the space and freedom to explore musically, no longer treating students like a "captive audience," music educators can create "emancipatory learning," which can help students overcome personal, institutional, and environmental concerns which normally limit their options (2005, p. 56).

Social Identity

The concept of identity, especially as it relates to music, has gotten an enormous amount of attention over the past thirty years (Borthwick & Davidson, 2002; Dabback, 2008; Dibben, 2002; Evans & McPherson, 2015; Fornäs, Lindberg, & Sernhede, 1995; Gardikiotis & Baltzis, 2010; Kelly-McHale, 2013; O'Neill, 2002; Parker, 2014; Tarrant et al., 2002). The way we answer the question "who am I?" sits at the core of our self-image and self-identity (Hogg & Abrams, 1990, p. 30). Although it may seem like a simple question at first glance, there are numerous complexities to the ways we define ourselves in the world. Humans are social animals, so it should not be surprising that socialization affects our identities as much as our inner thoughts do (Tajfel

& Turner, 1979). In fact, self-image is developed partially by reflecting on how our behavior fits into our surrounding cultural norms. Because those surrounding cultural norms change constantly as we move through the world, we have a network of self-images, instead of just one, and form a self-system of interconnected identities (Hargreaves, Miell, & MacDonald, 2002, pp. 7-8).

One's general self-image is separate from, but directly linked to, an individual's social identity. Tajfel defines social identity as "…those aspects of an individual's self-image that derive from the social categories to which he perceives himself as belonging" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 40). For example, an individual's political views can inform the public actions they take or the people they associate with, and can also be a source of great personal pride (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987).

To accompany the social nature of human existence, humans also have a strong desire to categorize things in the world, including themselves. Individuals self-categorize into groups based upon how much they have in common with their own ideas about group membership (Turner et al., 1987). In this sense, a group is defined as

> …a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and of their membership in it (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 40)

The emotional attachment to a common definition and consensus action leads to not just one's comparison of themselves to their own "in-group," but by natural extension, an "out-group" (Hinkle & Brown, 1990). The differences between the in-group and out-group are used as reference points for an individual to differentiate herself from the out-group (Lorenzi-Cioldi & Doise, 1990).

Maintaining relevant in-group memberships and pursuing a positive social identity is at least as important as maintaining a positive personal identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This identity maintenance is a highly motivating force in an individual's life, encouraging them to pursue activities that relate to their identity positively.

One key aspect of social identity, especially for adolescents, is music (Hargreaves et al., 2002). Some musical genres, especially punk and rock, allow adolescents to begin to exercise their independence from their parents or demonstrate their rebellion against society in general (Fornäs et al., 1995; Gardikiotis & Baltzis, 2010). Music preference coupled with a wide variety of group attributes can influence the way an individual acts and dresses (Tarrant et al., 2002), lives as a member of their gender (Dibben, 2002), or sees themselves as a citizen of their country (Wiggins, 2011).

People begin to develop their musical identities from infancy and refine them as they age (Trevarthen, 2002). Through childhood and adolescence, students get some input from the school music environment (O'Neill, 2002), but the home environment is at least as influential, if not more so (Davidson & Pitts, 2001; Mcpherson, 2008; Pitts, 2009). Waggoner (1971) surveyed adult participants in community ensembles along with adults who had performed in an ensemble during high school but were no longer participating. He found that in childhood homes of adults still participating in music, it was more likely that their father was musically active and there was a larger presence of classical music. Borthwick and Davison found that the value of music in the home, and responses from family members, was a leading factor in forming musical identity, whether or not they themselves were a musician (2002, p. 76).

Motivation

    Self-efficacy.

Identity is not the only motivating factor driving human behavior. Self-efficacy is one's inner assessment of one's own capabilities (Bandura, 1977, p. 79). In general, if one's self-efficacy is high in a specific activity or area, then one is more likely to participate in it, since people are motivated to pursue activities with positive expected outcomes. Our efficacy expectations are drawn from four dimensions: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal (p. 80). In examining 290 middle and high school students, Zelenak (2015) confirmed that exhibiting mastery during performance was key to musical self-efficacy. Although Zelenak's study did not include elementary age students, the findings would suggest that musical self-efficacy is affected similarly throughout a person's life.

For many students, self-efficacy derives from the extent of their musical abilities. This can be the case from elementary to high school (Legette, 1998). The 1,114 students Legette surveyed attributed success or failure in music mostly to ability and effort. These two dimensions obtained mean scores of 4.12 and 4.04 on a 5-point Likert scale, respectively. These were rated higher than classroom environment, affect for music, and background elements. An increase in musical ability, and therefore success, can be seen even in an adult population. Lawrence and Dachinger (1967) found that participants who were trained on piano as well as another instrument were more likely to carry their music making past their traditional training and into their adult lives. The authors believe this is due to increased musical instruction, and therefore understanding and mastery.

If high musical ability and skill mastery can predict musical carryover, low levels of mastery and ability seem to point to a lower likelihood of pursuing musical ventures in adult life.

Ruddock and Leong (2005) illustrate in four case studies of musical non-participants how low self-efficacy judgments of musical dimensions can negatively affect one's pursuit of music making in adult life. From previous failures at achieving musical mastery and a sense that public music making is prohibited except for the particularly talented, the participants labeled themselves as "unmusical." One of the respondents related how the effects of her failure to learn an instrument in the school setting affected her self-efficacy. She reports how the perceived judgments of others on her performance would affect her own self-judgment. "I, for example didn't play a musical instrument because I felt that I was just shocking when I did try – and that everyone else would…would think that I didn't know how to do it right" (Ruddock & Leong, p. 15). This fear of judgment led to a strict personal prohibition of any public musical expression, fearing that a substandard musical performance would be considered socially unacceptable.

Schnare, MacIntyre, and Doucette (2012) corroborated this fear of being judged a poor musician in their study of possible musical selves, in which adult musicians described the hoped for benefits and feared consequences of making music. Along with fearing being judged a poor musician, respondents feared financial difficulty and lack of knowledge while hoping for improved musical skills, success, and enjoyment. In both of these cases, the participants' low self-efficacy judgments led to a self-fulfilling prophecy of musical failure (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 152).

Schmidt (2005) found that a sample of seventh- through twelfth-grade band students were not only motivated by a positive self-concept of themselves as musicians, but that many were driven by intrinsic motivations such as pursuit of mastery and a desire to work cooperatively. While this shows the importance of skill mastery, it also highlights the importance of high self-efficacy judgments and the social interaction that comes with ensemble membership, motivations

that have also been shown to carry over to adults (Dabback, 2008). Adult participants in a New Horizons band reported that their pursuit of membership in the ensemble was largely influenced by their identity as musicians as well as a desire to master new musical skills.

While internal drive to achieve musical success is an important motivational factor, the way students reflect on their past performance is central. Corenblum and Marshall (1998) observed that students who were less likely to attribute their success to uncontrollable factors such as luck or a good rehearsal reported the intention of continuing in band at a higher rate. Positive past experiences with music lead students to attribute their success to effective learning strategies instead of uncontrollable variables like luck. This finding is a confirmation of Schunk and Gunn (1986), who found that instructing elementary students in task-oriented strategies in solving division problems had a positive influence on reported self-efficacy in math. Ritchie and Williamon (2012) found that higher self-efficacy judgments led to more successful performances, while practice time made no significant impact on performance quality.

To sum up, a student's self-efficacy judgments in music can largely predict whether or not that student is likely to participate in music, both in and out of school. Positive judgments about musical abilities come from past performance successes, and preparing for performance with more specific, task-oriented skills can make students feel more confident. Continued negative musical self-efficacy judgments can lead to adults who are unable to engage the world around them musically out of a sense of shame.

Rewards.

The positive effects of making music into adulthood are well documented. Some of the most commonly reported benefits of music making are: fun, developing a musical identity,

fulfilling a lifelong dream, and socialization with peers (Jutras, 2006, 2011; King, 2009; Kruse, 2009; Schnare et al., 2012; Shansky, 2010). Most of the research on perceived rewards of music making is focused on adult music makers, and the studies of younger populations are focused on middle and high school students (Campbell, Connell, & Beegle, 2007; Pitts, 2007). The findings in these studies closely resemble the results of studies of adults, so it is valuable to consider the implications together.

Campbell et al. (2007) collected essays written by middle and high school students responding to the prompt of a proposed ban of music in education. There was overwhelming resistance to the proposal, as the majority of students wrote about their support of music programs in their schools. They also noted their use of music, both in and out of school, for its emotional benefits, but also to improve the community around them. Pitts (2007) found a similar commitment to contribute to community life within a school in her investigation of a secondary school's production of the 1934 Cole Porter musical, *Anything Goes.* Students also reported reaping the social benefits of music, since being in the production allowed them to spend time with like-minded individuals.

In a study of 711 adult piano students, Jutras (2006), found that the leading benefits of piano lessons were skill improvement, self-actualization, and play/fun. These findings were corroborated in his 2011 study of 1,823 New Horizons band members (Jutras, 2011). A questionnaire similar to the one used in the 2006 study was issued to band members in 57 New Horizons organizations. Responses found that, once again, personal and skills benefits ranked at the top. The most important benefits, as reported by band members were: play/fun, accomplishment, technique, and challenge. Carol Shansky (2010) conducted a similar study on

adult participants in the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra in New Jersey, finding that the subjects expressed a drive to continue their music making and that many of the participants viewed the orchestra as a place allowing for a "continuation of their life's work."

In a study of participants in the University of Tasmania Music Programme's six community bands, Coffman (2006) found that membership in one of the ensembles examined provided a source of serious leisure. Here, Coffman uses Stebbins' (1992) definition of serious leisure as a "significant effort to acquire knowledge and skill, perseverance, career elements… the development of a subculture identity… obtaining durable benefits, and a resulting strong identification with the activity." Stebbins' "durable benefits" include: self-actualization, self-enrichment, recreation, renewal, sense of accomplishment, enhanced self-image, tangible physical rewards, social interaction, and self-gratification.

Dabback's (2008) study of participants in the Rochester, New York area New Horizons Band found that the members of the ensembles saw their participation as a solidifying factor in shaping their identity in their later years. The participants reported that the New Horizons band helped fill a void in their personal and musical identities; a void that was often left from the ending of their lifelong careers. The musical identification coming from the musical engagement was something new for some participants, and revitalization or renewal of identity for others. Nathan Kruse (2009) also found that social interactions were a driving force behind adults' continued participation in two ensembles in Canada and the United States. Adult musical engagement is often more than simply a casual way to spend time, but instead an important way to form meaningful connections with a deeper concept of self, personally, musically and socially.

Conclusion

Traditional school music programs can have the tendency to focus on music that students struggle to identify with (Green, 2002; Tobias, 2013), causing them to lose interest (Roberts, 2015). This loss of interest may lead those students to avoid engaging in music for the rest of their lives, due to a feeling that it is something they "aren't supposed to do," or because they "aren't a musician" (Ruddock & Leong, 2005). By transforming the music classroom into a more inclusive space that encompasses genres and ensembles with which students identify more closely, students who are reticent to fully engage in music may be motivated to make extra efforts to participate and learn (Lamont, 2002). Students also gain positive mastery experiences by performing, both in class and in concert. This is a primary source of self-efficacy and a likely motivator for future music making (Bandura, 1977).

METHODOLOGY

In the literature cited above and my own personal experience, I saw that students did not identify closely with school music, negatively impacting student interest and participation, especially in the older grades. I saw an opportunity to address the issue and implemented the rock band classes for fifth graders. This new program incorporated group instruction, featured informal learning, and focused on popular music. In order to investigate the value of this experience for my students I realized that it was important to revisit my former students to find out what they really obtained from it. To get as close to their experiences as possible, I found it helpful to conceive of this study as a phenomenological case study with a focus on my students' perceptions of the rock band experience a year after they completed the class.

Theoretical Background and Design

Phenomenology is an approach explored in the work of philosophers like Kant, Hegel, Heidegger, and Sartre, but the central figure of phenomenology is Edmund Husserl (Spiegelberg, 1965). Husserl recognized that the true essence of conscious experience encompassed many factors, including timing of the event, location of the event, and the frame of reference of the individual. To truly understand what it is to *experience* an experience, or get "to the things themselves" as Husserl puts it, one must suspend their own prejudgments and biases, and examine the phenomenon from a cognitive position of temporary suspension of the belief that the world exists separate from our experiences. Husserl termed this process epoché (Moustakas, 1994). From this position of thinking, the phenomenon of rock band ceases to exist as an object on its own, but only exists through the viewpoints of the participants.

To truly capture the essence of this experience, as lived by my students, the case study design was the most useful. A case study is useful when searching for meaning in a specific, unique instance (Stake, 1995). This is an intrinsic case study, as it aims to understand the significance of music and learning in rock band class through the experience of the participants for each case individually, rather than attempting to understand the program as a whole (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003).

A total of seventy fifth graders participated in rock band classes during the 2015-2016 school year. In order to gain as complete an understanding as possible about the phenomenon of learning in the rock band setting, I invited eight students, their parents, and the current band director at Lincoln Park Middle School to participate in the study. Purposeful sampling was used to identify the potential participants of this study. As a non-probabilistic sampling method, purposeful sampling is often used in order to identify cases that will serve as information-rich sources to inform the study (Merriam, 1998). Maximum variation sampling entails finding cases that fit a variety of experiences, as a way to allow the researcher to draw conclusions more confidently (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014; Palinkas et al., 2015). This variation was sought in three main areas: gender, musical engagement level in elementary school, and current enrollment in music classes.

As girls and boys experience and relate to music differently (Dibben, 2002; Green, 1997; Papageorgi et al., 2010), it is important to view this phenomenon from different gender perspectives. The term "musical engagement level" refers to the amount the student took part in music class and other musical activities in elementary school as perceived by the researcher. A student with low musical engagement is one who often does not pay attention in music class or

puts little effort into succeeding with music. A moderately engaged student pays attention in class but does not seem to put in any extra effort to succeed at bettering themselves musically. High engagement students exhibit their engagement level in many ways, including: participating in extra-curricular ensembles or other musical activities, spending extra time at school practicing, learn or write songs on their own, or asking for extra music to learn. Current musical enrollment was accounted for because it is likely students choosing to enroll in an ensemble class would have a reasonably positive musical identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

The resulting pool comprised two self-selected rock bands, which were formed to fulfill a capstone performance at the end of the school year, as well as one additional student who was not an official member of one of the bands, but was close to them and shared in their process. Selecting intact bands was important for the study so the findings could properly reflect the group learning that was a central portion of the class. All of the students attended Lafayette Elementary from kindergarten to fifth grade. I began teaching at Lafayette Elementary when the participants were in first grade, and remained their only music teacher in school until sixth grade.

After obtaining authorization from the Wayne State University Institutional Review Board, eight potential participants were contacted first by mail, with a short description of the study. One week later, all eight potential participants were contacted via phone to discuss their decision. Two students declined to participate, citing a busy schedule, and a family vacation that would make it impossible to participate, bringing the final number of student participants to six: three boys, and three girls.

Interviews

  Each student was interviewed three times over the span of two weeks. The first two interviews were individual, followed by a group interview with all student participants. No student was interviewed twice on the same day, allowing time for reflection on the data by both researcher and participant in order to enrich subsequent interviews. This follows the three-interview model recommended by Seidman (2013). The first individual interview focused on the participant's early musical identity, including questions about music's place in the home, their parents' musical involvement, and their own perceptions of music in elementary school (see Appendix A). The second individual interview concentrated on the participant's perceptions of their own learning in fifth grade rock band, their current musical involvement, and musical plans for the future. The group interview explored the interactions during the year of rock band class, especially the more informal nature of the content and instruction. Interviews were held at Lafayette Elementary, in a neutral room, to avoid tainting the participants' recollections with nostalgia and to remove as much of the "teacher-student" power dichotomy as possible (Conway & Borst, 2001; Seidman, 2013). In order to triangulate the data, interviews with one parent of each participant were conducted via telephone and recorded for transcription in a similar fashion. In addition, the middle school band director was interviewed regarding the two students currently enrolled in music classes. Questions for the interview were informed by Nadler and Hannon's (2013) instrument, rewritten to be more open-ended, providing information-rich qualitative data. All interviews were recorded,

transcribed, and uploaded to Dedoose[2], a web-based Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis program.

Analysis

Interview data was coded for emergent themes to aid in analysis (Moustakas, 1994; Wernet, 2014). In the process of coding, Dedoose served only as a data aggregation tool. All decisions which led to identifying key phrases or themes were made by the researcher. This process was informed by a combination of coding strategies identified by Miles et al. (2014), resulting in descriptive, emotion, evaluation, and holistic codes. Codes were found for domains relevant to the participants' musical identities, such as family values regarding music, affinities toward specific genres of music, and recall of mastery experiences. This resulted in a rather large pool of codes. These codes were then sorted through the process of horizontalization (Moustakas, 1994), collapsing them into three main codes, or "horizons:" categorizing language, roadblocks, and rewards. All participant names have been exchanged for pseudonyms to protect confidentiality (Miles et al., 2014).

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[2]http:// www.dedoose.com

PARTICIPANTS

Description and Context

 The City of Lincoln Park and Lafayette Elementary.

 About ten miles south of Detroit, MI and bisected by I-75 sits the suburban neighborhood of Lincoln Park. The longtime residents of Lincoln Park will tell you that the city has been rapidly changing recently, referring mostly to an influx of Hispanic or Latino residents. Tightly packed houses contain a population of 36,720 people, 84% Caucasian, 15% Hispanic or Latino, and 6% African American, all in an area of fewer than 6 miles. The majority of residents are of working age, yet approximately 3.7% of residents are currently unemployed and 19.9% live in poverty, 4.1% higher than the state average (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Despite the rapidly crumbling roads and economic strife, Lincoln Parkers are proud of their city and many come together throughout the year at places like the community band shell and the high school football field for summer festivals, the annual "Winter Fantasyland," and to support the struggling "Railsplitters" football team.

 Situated near the interstate highway, surrounded on three sides by neighborhood homes, and on one by a large industrial building stands Lafayette Elementary School. Lafayette is the largest of seven elementary schools in Lincoln Park Public Schools, educating 500 students from between kindergarten and fifth grade. Two long walls of red brick meet to form a "V" shape in front of a horseshoe driveway, and visitors are welcomed by large, colorful, concrete crayons that support the awnings. One of the newer buildings in the district, the tidy interior, lined with brightly colored ceiling beams labeled with large letters naming the color each is painted, belies the relative

poverty of the community. Students go to three different "special" classes every week: gym, computers, and music. Each class meets for forty minutes, twice a week.

At the time that I conducted this study, I had been the music teacher at Lafayette Elementary for six years. This means that I had been the only music teacher the participants had in school, except for their kindergarten year. My first two years in Lincoln Park, I shared duties with Lafayette and one other building, rotating on a weekly basis. The third year, a third school was added to my rotation, and I spent three days at Lafayette, while only spending one at each of my other schools. For the following three years, I was only assigned to Lafayette. Most of my teaching and all of the content is based on Music Learning Theory and the work of Edwin Gordon (Bluestine, 2000). Instruction in kindergarten through second grade is mostly by rote, and focuses on pattern instruction and development of musical syntax through a use of folk melodies and original songs. Third grade sees the introduction of xylophones as a regular aid to learning. Fourth grade includes the recorder, utilizing the popular Recorder Karate method, which rewards students with differently colored "belts" after passing performance tests and demonstrating a new mastery on the instrument. The transition to rock band in fifth grade for these students represented an extension of the students' independent musicianship and an almost wholesale departure from my previous instructional methods.

Rock band class.

In January 2015, I attended the yearly Michigan Music Conference in Grand Rapids, MI. There, I heard Adam Kruse from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign give a talk about his time teaching popular music to sixth grade students. Inspired by the idea, I applied for a grant to start a similar program from the Colina Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to

helping children, especially in the downriver area of Michigan. After securing the funding, I planned the yearlong curriculum using a mix of formal and informal learning styles. Every class had two forty-minute music classes per week. It is important to note that students in Lincoln Park Public School at the elementary level receive no marks on their report cards for their "special" classes: art, computers, gym, and music. Using Coffman's (2009) "captive audience" analogy, it is fair to say that my students' attentions are not all captive. In order to reach my students more readily, I rely heavily on situational interest developing activities, like hands-on learning (Roberts, 2015). This means I have excluded some things that an observer may expect to see in a fifth grade music class, such as complex notation reading, to concentrate more on reaching those informal learning spaces.

All seventy of the fifth grade students learned the basic skills used for the guitar, electric bass, and drum set in both whole class and small group settings. The students then chose an instrument to focus on and selected three classmates to join them in a band. Each band selected their group's name and a song to learn, rehearse, and ultimately perform at the end of year concert. In order to supplement instructional times and provide practice time for those students without access to instruments at home, I also allowed students to rehearse as a group in my room during their recess, which aligned with my preparation period. These "Rock Recess" sessions were largely student-directed, often taking place while I was out of the room. Participation in the year-end concert was optional, as is the case with all concerts. Six of the rock bands were ready and able to perform at this concert.

The Bands and Participants

Band 1: Zoo of Echoes.

Originally a band of four girls (Belinda, Carly, Rachel, and Noelle), the girls' technical skills improved rapidly, allowing them to be the only band from the fifth grade that was capable of performing in a rock ensemble at the Christmas concert, a mere three months after beginning to learn their instruments. Shortly after that, just into the New Year, they were forced to find a new drummer when Noelle moved to another city. After holding informal "auditions," they brought Barry into the band, partly because "even though he was the only boy, he didn't even mind," according to Belinda. It was common for all of the members of the band to go to the music room for extra rehearsal time, even when they didn't need practice. The rehearsals were run democratically, with each student trying to help bandmates fix mistakes and improve their playing. Zoo of Echoes opened the spring concert with "Satellite" by Guster, to a receptive audience that was quickly clapping along with the beat, then giving a roaring round of applause which caused Barry to comment to his bandmates as they left the stage, "Wow, I see why you guys do this now, that was fun!"

Band 2: The Streak.

Barry, Dan, Elliot, and Peter, four boys who could have been described as unlikely to engage in extra-curricular music, formed this band during the school year. Although their previous musical engagement was middling, at best, this band developed into an important, defining moment for their musical identities. The Streak spent the most time rehearsing of all the bands. Barry's strong desire to master the drums brought him into the music room to practice most mornings for a half hour before the school day began. Peter joined with his bass shortly after,

initially just looking for a way to avoid standing outside on a cold January morning. Elliot, the vocalist, and Dan, the guitarist, asked if they could join, and make it their band's special rehearsal time. Soon, all of the boys were starting three or four days a week rehearsing in the music room. Both Elliot and Dan enrolled in band in sixth grade, and both played the trumpet. When asked about Elliot and Dan, Ms. Wilkes, their middle school band director, related that Elliot was usually engaged and excelling in band, while Dan's involvement was more centered around the social aspect of an ensemble classroom.[3] Though there was no de facto "leader" of the band, Barry's strong musical identity and work ethic drove the group forward. Throughout their learning and exploring processes during the year their close friend Drew was also present, though not all the time.

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[3] Elliot and Dan were both contacted to participate in the study but both refused. Elliot's father cited a busy work schedule, Dan's family being out of the country on a vacation to Mexico.

RESULTS

Belinda

Belinda approached the building with a palpable excitement for her interviews, and aside from her normal bubbly exuberance, an obvious sense of nostalgia hung around her, tinting everything she saw. Like the other participants, she attended Lafayette Elementary for all of her elementary years. Unlike the other students, however, she did not enroll in Lincoln Park Middle School, as her mother enrolled her in a private Catholic school nearby. She commented on how "weird it was to see everyone again," during this homecoming of sorts, even as she spoke about how "we're all still friends" on social media, a story contradicted by the cold interactions between her and some of her "friends" during the group interview.

Belinda has not always thought of herself as a musician, as she now does; as a young child, she identified more with sports, because of her long-time involvement in dance. Although she originally saw dance mainly as a physical activity, that is changing as "[she's] actually heard that dance *kind of* falls into the musician, because they're both a kind of art." [emphasis hers] Music was playing around her "all the time" in her younger years, mostly in the car, with her mother. Her mother is, in her own words, "a true 'music head,'" with roots in electronic and house music in Detroit. Although Belinda's mother played the violin when she was younger, she does not consider herself a musician. Still, music holds a very important place in life for her: "My grandma's religious, and she says 'love makes the world go 'round.' I always have to remind her no, 'love and *music* do,' grandma." [emphasis hers] These experiences listening in the car with her mother obviously hold a special meaning to Belinda, as she recounts

Belinda: There [were] a couple Eminem songs…I don't know the specific names of them. I still listen to them sometimes when I'm with my mom, we'll connect her phone to the Bluetooth in the car, and we'll put them on. I remember the one with him and Rhianna, "I Love the Way You Lie," that's like our favorite one.

At the end of her first grade year, she recalls making her first independent decision in listening when she asked her mother to purchase a One Direction CD for her, which remains one of her favorite bands, and a powerful musical influence.

Listening is not the only way Belinda expressed her budding musical identity as a young child. She distinctly remembers having a favorite blue electric piano that she would use to explore sounds, mostly in a silly way. "What I mostly did was slam my hands on the keyboard," she explains, as she makes noises with her mouth and smacks her hands on the table in front of her, "It was funny. My mom probably has a video of it somewhere [laughter] she has videos of *everything*." [emphasis hers] Although she views this play as mostly just noise-making, she does recall knowing how to play at least one song, but can't recall what it was. Not all of her musical exploration was unappreciated, however, as her mother has always supported Belinda's love of singing.

Belinda: No, it didn't [annoy her]. She actually enjoyed when I was singing. My mom says I started singing two months after I could talk. I don't believe that, I don't know why, I just don't believe it. She said she likes my singing, because she knows if I keep practicing, and keep practicing, it can do a lot of good for me. And she also said, if "America's Got Talent" ever came to Michigan for open call auditions that she would take me.

Indeed, singing on television is one of Belinda's main goals in life, and she sees it as a springboard to launch the career she would like, writing and recording her own songs. This would bring her closer to the celebrities that her world is obviously centered around.

Much of Belinda's idea of being a musician is wrapped up in celebrity. This shows up not only in her mental preparation for her possible "America's Got Talent" audition in the future, but also in how often she mentions current pop stars and compares herself to them.

> Belinda: One thing that I think I have in common with musicians….is that most musicians, I feel like they want to do what they know is right. So, Selena Gomez, she does not like to use autotune, but [her record label] forces her to use it, and she always says I don't want to use it, because everyone thinks that I'm very good at singing…[a]nd I'm somebody that likes the way everybody sounds naturally.

Ironically, as she talked about preferring natural performing sounds, I noticed that Belinda's answers sounded almost rehearsed or polished. Perhaps she saw this as an opportunity to practice for when she finally gets her shot on national television. She is not just expecting the phone to ring though, as she curates a personal YouTube channel. She may only post content sporadically, but she is invested in the success of her channel and recently received a new video camera and editing software to improve the quality of her recordings. Among the videos of her eating hot peppers and detailing coping strategies to deal with Zayn Malik leaving One Direction are her covers of favorite songs and instructional videos on how to play folk songs on recorder. In two such videos, which she left unedited, Belinda attempts to learn the ending motif of the *Spongebob Squarepants* from trial and error. She jumps with excitement and exclaims, "I finally learned it! Yes!" as she plays the jaunty tag with only one error. The error is minor, substituting the leading tone for the dominant

on the penultimate beat, showing a sense of musical syntax that is established well enough to let her know that it worked with the harmonic and scalar structure of the song.

Her passion in music took a hold in fourth grade, when she learned to play the recorder. In fourth and fifth grades, she participated in all of the extra-curricular musical activities at school, performing in the annual Christmas musicals, an advanced recorder ensemble, and many extra rock band rehearsals, as she could not limit her performance to one band, and joined with two other groups of friends for additional performances as a vocalist. Although Belinda attempted to master the guitar during fifth grade, she never attained a personally acceptable level of mastery. Despite this, she is still learning instruments at home: her guitar, a new ukulele, and the old blue electric piano that started it all. When she enrolled in her new school, she elected to add gym to her schedule instead of choir, "like a buffoon, because we had to run a whole mile." Her decision was largely based on her perceived lack of skills when it comes to reading notation. "That's why I'm kind of scared to be in choir, because I haven't read music in a really long time, since…I don't even know since when, really." Despite this fear, she plans on joining the choir next year, and expects to be accepted into the high performing audition-only group, a prediction shared by her friends at school. Her mother also continues to support her at home and places a high value on Belinda's continued musical engagement.

Belinda's mother: A lot of people don't get [it], don't understand music. And then there's people where music is different, it's just a part of their life. And I think Belinda, it's going to be there everywhere she goes, there's going to be a little bit of music here and there.

Carly

Normally shy and soft-spoken, Carly and her sister have been living with their single father since Carly was in the third grade, and their parents separated. When the conversation touches on a topic that is important to her, however, she comes alive. One is music, as she finds it central to her identity. The significant role music has in her life, according to Carly, a nine out of ten, seems to be a reflection, and an extension of her father's love of music. Music was always a passion for her father and he says that he's "attended more concerts than he can remember." After his daughters were born, Jim traded in his concert attendance for voraciously listening to bands like Led Zeppelin, Cream, and KISS, his musical tastes becoming the soundtrack for his daughters' lives. Even though music obviously holds an important place in his world, Jim does not consider himself a musician in any way.

Besides being the dad with the excellent record collection, Jim is committed to providing his daughters all the support he can. Carly has loved music all her life, recalling making up her own songs on a toy piano as a child. Beginning at an early age, she delighted in performing new songs, either learned at school or composed at home, for her father, who always made time to listen and encourage his daughter. She also brought this drive to share her musical identity to school. Ever since kindergarten, Carly loved music class, not only for the opportunity to sing and learn new songs, but the chance to share music with her peers held extra meaning for her. "We got to interact with other people and about one specific thing and liked how we could go into music class and you were there and excited to learn."

In fourth grade, she decided to join the Christmas play, acting for the first time. But learning to play her first instrument, the recorder, was a special moment for Carly. She remembers the first

time that she felt like a musician, after performing on the recorder for an audience in the spring concert of her fourth grade year.

> Carly: I think as soon as we learned the first song and we played it in concert I think that is when I thought for sure I was going to be a musician because it was a real song that we learned together instead of me just making up songs at home.

This successful and fulfilling experience encouraged her to expand her musical horizons in fifth grade, when she chose to focus on the electric bass. This inspired her to ask her father for a bass for Christmas, which she has and practices on here and there.

Fifth grade also brought some challenges for Carly. Recalling the process of picking friends to be your bandmates, she said that some friendships were damaged because she wasn't able to perform with all of her friends, since there is limited space in the ensemble. In order to heal one of these rifts, Carly chose to sing in a second band with a different group of friends. She was personally unhappy with the outcome of this particular performance in the spring, saying "I was really nervous, and a lot of people said 'You were so good!' but I really felt like I could have done a lot better." The negative perception of this performance may be one reason for her current aversion to singing, citing that she never sings in front of people because "I just don't want them to say I am not good at singing and you should just stop."

For Carly, the positives of expressing her musical identity far outweigh the negatives, which guided her to enroll in concert band in sixth grade, fulfilling her wish of learning to play the saxophone. Through the year, she has continuously improved, playing in a saxophone quintet as well as the concert band, and volunteering to hold the band banner during the Memorial Day parade. Carly's academic grades are consistently high as well, earning her a place in the National

Junior Honor Society (NJHS). Through NJHS, she had an opportunity to help autistic students and earn the public service hours that membership requires, but the timing would mean that she would have to transfer out of band. Her musical identity won out, for the same reason she is enrolling in band in seventh grade as well: "Not having music was *not* an option." [emphasis hers]

To be a musician, to Carly, means to fit a few fairly strict criteria. "You need to at least know notes and at least one song. So you can't call yourself a musician if you can't play an instrument." On inquiry, she admitted that the voice also qualifies as an instrument, so vocalists can be musicians too. She would not relent, however, on the notation reading requirement. Above all else, a musician must put in enough effort to hone their craft.

> Carly: [The one thing that makes you a musician is] if you are trying or not. If you are trying to sing or play an instrument, you are automatically a musician. But if you are not trying, or give up too easily and you aren't doing anything…that is not a musician.

Carly feels that she exhibited this quality through her performance in fifth grade: "I put a lot of effort into trying to learn the song…I kept trying over and over again, and I consider that a musician." Although it would seem that Carly fits all of her criteria of being a musician, she is aware that there is a lot more that she doesn't know about music and seems to hold that knowledge in high regard, as well as the people who have it.

Music will be a part of Carly's future in some fashion. She has thought of becoming a teacher, citing the value she puts on social interaction through and with music, and a desire to share her musical abilities with others. If her career does not involve music in the end, she is certain that she will keep making music at least as a hobby. Regardless, Jim will be supportive of his daughter's choices, but hopes she will continue with music, noting an increase in Carly's maturity and self-

esteem since she joined band. It may be that her father's love of music influenced Carly's identity, but perhaps the joy she finds in making music has influenced him in return, since he will excitedly tell you about his first instrument that he recently purchased: a Theremin.

Rachel

On the outside, Rachel projects a combination of happiness, compassion, and humor that doesn't always match her inner voice, which fills her with doubt of her own abilities. Rachel and her older sister live at home with their fraternal grandmother, whom they lovingly call "Amma." This has not always been the case, as in addition to her grandmother, Rachel's grandfather, mother, and father lived in the house as well. This was the situation until her parents separated when Rachel was six years old. This separation saw her father and grandfather move to Texas, while her mother reduced her involvement in her daughters' lives, leaving the majority of the child care and rearing responsibilities to Amma. Aside from estranging Rachel from her family, it also separated her from the most significant musical influence in her life, her father.

Rachel's father tried learning trumpet and guitar before settling on drums at the age of seven. This made a significant impact on her musical identity in her formative years, but he is not the only musical person in her family. Her grandfather also plays the drums, her great-grandfather played the violin, and some family members on her mother's side played "the guitar, or bass," but Amma could remember neither who they were, nor their instrument of choice. Thus, the household was filled with many different kinds of music as Rachel grew up: country from her mother, classic rock from her father, and Amma's "Spanish stuff." Although both Amma and grandfather were born in Mexico, and they speak fluent Spanish, as her father does, Rachel's Hispanic identity is

nowhere near as salient as her musical identity, if at all. Although she will speak at length about music, or a variety of other topics, Rachel has nothing to share regarding her Hispanic heritage.

Instruments were commonplace in the home in Rachel's youth and her father encouraged her to explore music. Amma recalls a time…

> Amma:…[b]efore my son left for Texas, he took the girls downstairs, he [had] his drum set here, and he took the girls downstairs…[and] they caught on really quick to the basic beat, and it's not easy to use both hands, you know? And the pedal too...I was really impressed.

Drums weren't the only instruments around; her father would bring a variety of instruments home from his job at a music store where he worked with his uncle. Rachel was always excited to encounter and learn about a new instrument, and was more than happy to share this knowledge with her friends.

> Rachel: My friends would come over and then they would [ask] "What does your dad do?" I would say, "[H]e works at a music store and that is where I got this, and this." I would point to a recorder, or a mini guitar, and like a pair of drumsticks.

Rachel had a special connection to and fondness for the drums in her childhood, even amid the myriad instruments she was becoming more familiar with. She recalls delighting in "making beats" with a practice pad and sticks "because that was really fun." Sometimes she would attempt to play along with music or replicate a pattern she heard from her father, but more commonplace was noisy play, where her older sister would take the sticks from her and "tell me that I was doing it wrong." This is the earliest example of somebody correcting Rachel, telling her she wasn't good, or not providing support in her musical pursuits—but it was by no means the last.

Rachel's musical identity began to form at an early age, but she would soon encounter obstacles on her musical journey. As Rachel entered elementary school, she found an instant connection with music class, which she showed through her high engagement during class time. During the final year that her father lived at home, she recalls one experience where he failed to give his normal level of support to her. "[T]here was one time in kindergarten I thought 'I can play that…and I will go home and tell my dad I'm a musician, and I could do everything!' Dad then [told] me no honey – not yet." This experience was repeated in fifth grade, when she was excited to tell her mother about the things she was learning in the rock band class. "I took a lot of interest [in rock band], and then went home and [said] 'Momma guess what I learned in music class today?' Then she would say 'that's cool, you told me yesterday,' and then scroll through Facebook." The lack of encouragement or support in these instances seems to reverberate inside Rachel to this day, perhaps serving as an early catalyst for her sense of self-doubt and lack of confidence.

Whether or not the seeds of self-doubt were sown this early in her life, Rachel continued to find a connection to music class through the upper grades. She performed in the Christmas musicals in fourth and fifth grade, and spent some extra time at school practicing, but not as much as her bandmates. When she learned to play recorder in the fourth grade, she was excited because she quickly recognized the first three songs in class as songs that her father had taught her previously. When she started to learn new songs, "[she] thought 'wow, this is cool, and I can't wait to tell [dad],'" which was more difficult, since he was living in Texas. Finally devoting time to learning how to properly play an instrument solidified the connection of school music and music at home in Rachel's mind.

Rachel: I thought it was cool I had so many genres of music in my life. "Oh my Mom was playing this song yesterday, and now it's stuck in my head, and the same with my Dad." [I]t was really fun and it was very inspiring…because that made me enjoy music class more and it inspired me to get more into instruments.

She "got more into instruments" quickly, performing in two different rock bands at the spring concert, once on guitar and once on drums.

Even with all the positive experiences she has had, Rachel's thoughts always seem to settle on her own lack of confidence and focus. She finds it difficult to take a long time to learn things. She tends to get frustrated, then loses focus, and then is distracted by other responsibilities and life around her.

Rachel:…I wouldn't focus on it [learning a song] for more than one day. I would just say ok, I can't do this, bye! I did that a lot, and then my dad would say "just learn one song, please, try it." And I would say, "dad, it's too hard." He was like "you tried it yesterday and you got it down." I said "No!" [in a pathetic voice]

Rachel often feels that her skills are inadequate and she is bound to throw off the people playing with her, or make a terrible mistake, and not be able to handle the embarrassment. She is cautious around her musical expression so as to not suffer from rejection or disappointment, a trend that is already beginning to change.

Rachel did not enroll in music in sixth grade, but it wasn't for lack of trying. She was absent the day elective enrollment forms were due, and Amma wasn't able to change it during the year. Next year, she will be attending school in another district and has already made sure to enroll in

orchestra, where she will be learning the violin. Privately, she is trying to learn songs on her guitar and is excited after recently hearing from her father.

> Rachel: [Yesterday,] my dad said he got me a ukulele for my birthday. I said "This is going to be fun! I'll learn how to play a bunch of Twenty One Pilots songs, and I'm going to be Josh Dun and Tyler Joseph [members of the band] at the same time. I looked up several [YouTube] tutorials, but remembered I didn't have the ukulele yet to play them.

Rachel's confidence in her musical abilities may vacillate, but this mirrors the relationship that she has with music in her life, full of ups and downs. She may not desire a career in music, but she is determined to keep making music all of her life.

Barry

Barry is a polite, hardworking, yet fun-loving child, who resembles his mother in many ways. Although it is difficult to work around her fast food work schedule, she was always more than happy to bring Barry to be interviewed, and to participate herself. Barry's world has always been full of music and that's just the way he likes it, since a world without music would "…be very dull." Barry has always delighted in adding his own sounds to the world around him, even ones that aren't very musical. His earliest musical memories include playing on a toy xylophone colored like the rainbow, which he remembers as "…just a fun toy to play with and make sounds." Little did he know that his noisy play with this bright, colorful toy would be the seed from which his musical identity would grow.

Barry has listened to music daily since he was a child, first in the car, and later with his first musical purchase, a Justin Beiber album. With this, Barry added his own musical tastes to a household where the rest of his family, his mother and older sister, were listening to music daily

already. Although his mother was never interested in learning how to play an instrument, she has always been drawn to listening to music on the radio. His family's musical tastes mostly center around classic rock and R&B, with the occasional country song coming from his sister's room; a genre not treasured by anybody else in the household. Despite this level of immersion, Barry has not always seen music as being important to his life, as he does today.

As a student, Barry was always moderately engaged in music class, even in his younger years, when he identified more as an athlete than a musician. Outwardly, it appeared to me that his behavior was mostly informed by his desire to be a "good kid" and follow the rules. For Barry, however, it seems to have been a natural expression of his musical identity, which he was unaware of. In music class, Barry was as drawn to the music as he was at home. He found that he "…enjoy[ed] hearing it and trying to learn how to play it. It was just fun," even though the folk melodies weren't exactly the same as the rock and pop songs he was used to. He would pick up on songs he learned in school quickly and share them at home with his family. "I went home and started humming it in my head and out loud, started singing it probably." Asked which came first, in his head or out loud, Barry recalls "humming music in his head" before singing out loud. From an early age, then, Barry demonstrated a strong sense of inner hearing or audiation.

Barry's experience in fourth grade did not begin with the immediate excitement to learn an instrument that others experienced, and he did not choose to participate in the Christmas musical. He found learning to play the recorder to be "…pretty fun, but kind of weird to learn." Exploring what was "weird" about the experience for him didn't result in much clarification, except for a sense that he struggled to learn the fingerings. His lack of skill in this area held him back from earning more than the first three or four Recorder Karate reward belts. The lack of belts left Barry

feeling behind, as if he could not, or should not, participate in the spring concert. "I really didn't know how to play all those songs. I only knew how to play…like two of them… Maybe three or four." He attributes this to being "…lazy at the time. Maybe I probably didn't pay attention then, in class…" It seems as if Barry's interest in music, at least in school, was fading.

Entering the fifth grade, music was just something that Barry listened to, but that changed quickly. Barry was excited immediately, noting that he would be learning more about the styles of music that "I listened to, and like. I thought it would be fun to start playing instruments and learning about it." The opportunities to explore other instruments in rock band were what really appealed to Barry. As we learned the basics for each instrument, Barry showed a genuine interest, but he was determined to learn drums from day one. He quickly became focused on a goal in his mind and set to pursuing it. During the lesson on string skipping utilizing the bass riff from "Sunshine of Your Love" by Cream as an example, Barry took an immediate liking to the song. In fact, this experience constitutes all he recalls of the song selection process for The Streak. "I think you played a couple of songs in [class]…and I'm pretty sure I liked the song, and I was like 'I want to do that one,' and we did it." He claimed the role of drummer immediately, and took it seriously. Early in the year, he approached me to ask if there was any time he could come practice on the drum set in the music room, outside of class time. I offered to let him use the room any day he wished for a half hour before school. After that, Barry's steady rock beat was the welcoming soundtrack as students and teachers entered on most mornings.

Barry's determination and initiative to master the drum set meant he quickly surpassed the rest of the fifth grade students in technique. In January, when Noelle moved and Zoo of Echoes was in need of another drummer, I suggested they try Barry. After a short audition process, which

consisted of attempting a quick rehearsal with each drummer, the girls decided Barry would make the best addition to their band. Soon Barry's drumming was not only filling the music room in the morning, but many afternoons too, as Zoo of Echoes signed up for Rock Recess at least two to three times a week. His determination spread as he soon convinced his bandmates in The Streak to join in on his early morning rehearsals. For the remainder of the year, Barry, Dan, Drew, and Elliot would gather in the music room while an audience of their classmates waited outside, hearing the muffled sounds of "Sunshine of Your Love."

The students used this time to practice, but it also served as a time of musical exploration. Often, the students would switch instruments and try to perform their friend's instrument. This was always done as a show of support or simply for fun. The playfulness of their rehearsal times, as well as Dan's lack of effort in general (as Barry saw it), led Barry to feel tentative about the final performance. He has an obviously difficult time describing the errors and error correction methods of The Streak.

> Barry: [W]e always couldn't get the right…at the right…like we always were not together. That's something that would happen a lot, when we weren't all together, playing at the same time. Someone would be playing a different note, and the other person would be speeding up, and then they'd get left behind.

This is Barry's attempt to describe the issues his band had with phrasing, specifically as it related to Elliot's singing during the chorus. With such large, indescribable issues confronting their performance, his trepidation is not surprising. In the end, all of their hard work paid off, as Barry recalls "it was pretty fun to hear it all together, and actually make it sound nice. It was fun…The one part, everybody loved it. *Everybody.*" [emphasis his]

Having experienced these two highly positive performance experiences, especially after being too "shy" to perform at earlier concerts, Barry felt a new connection to music and was propelled forward on a musical path. In the summer after fifth grade, there was talk of forming a rock band with friends outside of school, although that never materialized. Going into sixth grade, he joined band, where he continued to pursue percussion instruments. Barry attended the same extra rehearsals as Carly in order to hold the band banner for the Memorial Day parade, performed a percussion duet at the spring concert, and has greatly improved in skill over the year, according to Ms. Wilkes. She has also noticed the same work ethic that resulted in hours practicing drums in fifth grade. Through the year in sixth grade, he regularly brought practice materials home, and she noted that if he doesn't get something right away, it frustrates him and he practices until he's mastered it. He has also expressed interest in pursuing private lessons, but says "now isn't a good time," which I took to mean financially. When enrolling for seventh grade, he briefly considered enrolling in a Spanish class, but when he found out it would conflict with band, he opted out, because "…[music] can take you far."

Some elements of Barry's musical identity appear to have changed greatly over time, but still contain a clue to his history with music. Starting as a moderately engaged student, Barry cites his experience in fifth grade as a primary influence on his pursuit of band, saying he "probably wouldn't have" continued in music if not for the rock band class. Ms. Wilkes now describes his behavior as sometimes "too engaged," always tapping a pencil or playing a beat on his stand. Barry's mother was less than surprised to hear her son described this way: "[laughs] That's Barry! That's Barry, all day long when we're at home, he's tapping on something. You always know where he's at, because you can always hear him. I'm wiping the walls down every other day…"

Beginning his musical identity by filling his home with "funny noises" with the help of his trusty rainbow xylophone, and now developing it by marring his mother's walls, he hopes to take music into the future. His musical tastes have recently become more accepting toward classical music, and he has taken an interest in learning to play the piano. He also has complete confidence in his abilities to be a successful rock or classical musician. Although he does not know exactly what it would look like, Barry does know he wants his future to involve music. "It's fun, so hopefully I'll stay in it, and make a career out of it."

Peter

Peter came to all of his scheduled interviews late, after having just woken up. Truly seeking to enjoy his summer, he was staying up late every evening, watching television or playing video games. Despite his apparent exhaustion, Peter was honest and forthcoming with information about his history and identity, and had some animated moments. As he excitedly related to me how, only a day before his second interview, he had been "throwing firecrackers" at his friends who lived just across the street from the school, I was filled with the memories of the years of conflicts we experienced in school.

Peter is a physically active boy and he has always identified as an athlete. Throughout his early elementary years, his engagement in music class was almost always low. At first glance, it would be a reasonable assumption that Peter would not identify as a musician whatsoever, as it would not comport with the rest of his unmusical family. Peter lives in a household with five other family members: his mother, father, and three older siblings, two brothers and one sister. Of his immediate family, only his mother has had any experience making music, playing clarinet in sixth and seventh grade. That assumption is quickly challenged though, as Peter explains music's

importance in his life as a "seven out of ten" and his mother explains "…everybody in the house listens to music all the time, so I guess music would be pretty important. It's a stress reliever."

Peter reports that in his early elementary years, he rarely listened to music, but instead "…always watched cartoons." Although he did not make the conscious decision to listen to any music at this time, he confirmed "There [was] music in my house every, like every day. Like constantly in the background." Sounds of rap, rock, country, and "Mexican" music filled Peter's house and provide the musical backdrop for his life. Peter is unable to elaborate on what he means by "Mexican" music as he "…can't even understand the words." His father, a first generation American-born citizen in his family, is responsible for this music's presence. Peter also explained that his mother was also ignorant in the areas of the Spanish language and "Mexican" music, because "she's white."

Immersed in all of this music, Peter soon began dreaming of what it was like to be a rock star and imitate all of the "cool" guitar players he heard or saw on television. Like many children with this dream, he decided that he did not want to wait until he grew up to be a rock star and turned his living room into his first stage. "I would always grab sticks or something and bang them on the wall [pretending] that they [were] drum sticks. Or I'd think I'd have an air guitar, and I'd jump off something like [singing guitar solo]." He considers some of those experiences to be musical exploration.

> Peter: Actually I did both. [make noise and attempt to play along with music] Sometimes I would listen to music, and then I'd play along but that was only sometimes. I would still think that I was like making music when I was as banging it against the floor and stuff.

Ever an energetic young boy, Peter's musical play could sometimes get out of hand, once resulting in hurting himself while imitating someone he saw playing guitar on television. "…[O]nce, [the musician on TV] picked up a guitar, and he jumped off a chair, and he was playing…I did it [too], but I hurt myself."

As may be expected, the structured, rules-oriented environment of school didn't mesh very well with Peter's sometimes rambunctious nature. During the first few years of his school experience, Peter found himself disciplined on a regular basis. This was no different in the music room. The conflict between his personality and the structure of the school frustrated him, contributing to the already low level of interest Peter had in music. "Well, I didn't really like it [music class] in first grade through fourth [grade] because I always thought that you were mean, and I didn't really… I don't really like classes that teachers are mean in…." His inattention during school hours negatively affected his grades and his achievement in music class, especially in fourth grade on the recorder, when he only learned three or four songs, similar to Barry.

In fifth grade, Peter quickly became more interested in music class. He struggled trying to find the right words to describe what changed, but was unsuccessful. "I don't know, I just started to like music," he notes as he says, almost without realizing, "…I pictured myself with a guitar and we got to fifth grade with the guitars, and that's when I really started liking it." Entering the rock band class represented an opportunity for Peter to express an identity that had been inside all along, under the surface. He even remarked on the positive effect the rock band class had on our teacher-student relationship. "Once I got to know you in fifth grade, I really started to like [music class]," he explained. Peter, Dan, Elliot, and Barry quickly found each other and formed The Streak. Peter was soon spending extra time in the music room to practice, both by himself and with

others. He also helped Drew's band rehearse "Seven Nation Army" when their guitarist was home sick from school for a week.

A year of hard work paid off for Peter the night of the spring concert, made even more meaningful by his mother's presence in the crowd.

> Peter: It felt like…when I was on the stage, and there were so many people…when I got to play, I could hear my mom yelling, because she's the only one that knows my nickname, her and my grandma…and when I heard her yell it out…I just felt happy, because I knew that she was there to support me.

Although he had only planned on performing once that night, Peter performed in two bands, standing in for Drew after he was unable to come to the performance due to a family emergency. I approached Peter the morning of the concert and asked him if he wanted to play in Drew's place. He immediately agreed and the students successfully made it all the way through their song on the first attempt in rehearsal. Alhough I found this a great accomplishment for a student who had, up until his fifth grade year, a fairly unmusical identity, Peter wasn't intimidated. In fact, when he spoke about it, he made it sound as if it required no effort at all, saying "I was already playing bass, so I already know how to play it, and…..yeah, when I was practicing playing that song, it kind of tricked me, yeah. But I still did really good."

These successful performance experiences encouraged Peter to continue to explore his musical identity, though not in school. When enrolling in sixth grade, he chose gym…

> Peter:…[I chose] gym, of course, because I'm a sporty dude. And I didn't want to take music, because I didn't want to play, like the trumpet. Like, I don't want to be embarrassed,

and I always thought that would be what being in band would be like, so I don't want to play that.

Briefly, Peter, along with one of his older brothers, Barry and Dan, also considered forming a band on their own, prompting Peter to ask his parents for a guitar. That venture failed to materialize because his parents were unable to afford an instrument for him, which seemingly discouraged him from pursuing music altogether. According to his mother, "He wanted a guitar…[but] we couldn't get him a guitar, so he was just like 'fine,' and kind of gave up. And then…it just went from there." He may have been discouraged, but it hasn't completely destroyed his newfound musical identity as he firmly believes he could be a successful musician if his focus wasn't on becoming a football player. In the meantime, he doesn't have time to pursue music as a hobby, because he has taken to mowing lawns, because, as he says, "My parents just can't be like those rich people, just giving me money. I want to actually go and work for the money, instead of just asking my parents, 'can I have money?'" I hoped this was inspired by his unfulfilled wish to buy a guitar, but when he explained what he was planning on spending the money on, he could only think of going to the movies and buying more firecrackers to throw at his friends.

Drew

Drew is the older, and much quieter, of two boys. Always having a great interest in sports, Drew is always ready for a game of baseball or football with his friends. What confidence Drew has in athletics, however, is missing when it comes to speaking. Perhaps as a result of his braces, which are still finalizing the placement of his teeth, or because of the slight trace of a lisp, Drew is a child of few words. Throughout his early elementary years, I perceived Drew's engagement in

music class as being low, even though he reported he thought that music was "fun" and cited an early concert experience in kindergarten or first grade as making him feel like a musician.

Although music is played around Drew's home, it doesn't seem to hold a central place in the lives of his immediate family. Drew even feels slightly "different" from the rest of his family because he listens to music the most. His mother confirmed this, saying "…I'll hear him singing in the shower, or before baseball games he listens to his pump up music. So, he is definitely the most interested, and does the most with music in our house."

Drew's interest in music has not remained level over the years. After his reportedly "fun" years until third grade, Drew's musical identity suffered a setback in fourth grade, when it came time to learn the recorder. Drew felt ultimately unsuccessful at learning the recorder, as he only learned the first two songs. Feeling a complete lack of confidence on the recorder, Drew did not perform in the concert in fourth grade, and his mother even remembers "…fourth grade, Drew was not very interested at all in music." In fifth grade, however, his musical identity made a comeback.

In fifth grade, Drew was excited at the prospect of learning instruments that he was more familiar with. Although he had used instruments in earlier years in music class, he doesn't consider them to be "real" instruments. "[W]e used real instruments, like the guitar and drums. Not those little tube things [Boomwhackers]. I don't know, they're just not [real instruments]." With the help of these "real" instruments, Drew developed a "major liking to music," according to his mother. He formed a band with his friends, and they decided to learn "Seven Nation Army" by The White Stripes, with Drew on the bass. Throughout the following months, Drew worked tirelessly at perfecting the repetitive, familiar riff. He would often stop in the music room, if only to take a guitar off the wall and play his riff once before leaving.

Because Drew was close friends with the members of The Streak, he was often present during their rehearsal times, participating in conversations, but had no observations about their practice time. In his own band, he related how during rehearsal they would "just do our own thing," sometimes in separate areas of the room. With his performance, Drew was finding it difficult to follow the phrasing of the song, and had to work on listening for the form intently. After months of hard work, Drew's grandfather went into the hospital the night before the concert due to a medical emergency, so he was unable to play in the concert. When I asked him to explore those feelings, he simply said he "didn't remember" how it made him feel, though his mother recalls that he was "super bummed."

Drew's hope for the future is to play baseball or football, and he does not see music as being involved in his life, either as a hobby or a career. Despite not enrolling in band in sixth grade, and reporting no out of school musical activity, Drew's mother told me that he has a guitar, which she will sometimes hear him quietly playing in the basement. I have to call the veracity of this account into question, however, as Drew's mother seemed intent on giving the "right" answers, something she felt Drew failed at, given his restrained nature. Despite repeated assurances that Drew's interviews were not lacking, she remained unconvinced. If her story is to be believed, it seems that Drew does have some identity in music but hides it, like his words. It could be that being identified with music would damage his identity in sports, which would be an unacceptable compromise in his eyes.

DISCUSSION

In their descriptions of their experiences, students revealed how popular music, informal learning, social identity, and motivation affected the development of their musical identities. This discussion of the participants' experiences is centered on those four main topics. Due to the overwhelming volume of data gathered over the course of this study, I have chosen to present the emerging themes in a series of tables to assist in focusing the discussion. The tables contain interview excerpts from participants, followed by my interpretation and insights.

Table 1 - Popular Music

	Excerpt	Interpretation
Barry	It was fun to play the drums, and switch to different instruments, like get to know the guitar, like how to play it.	Barry was much more interested in rock instruments than he was in the recorder the year before, which he struggled to learn, and said was "a bit weird."
Belinda	Because sometimes I feel like the pop songs and stuff can be more complex [than classical music.]	Belinda finds more complexity in popular music than classical music, because it hold her interest, and is much more familiar. She finds little complexity in classical music, because she struggles to find much enjoyment in it at all. It would be interesting to ask about her feelings on this topic after she finishes the seventh grade and her first year in choir.
Carly	[In previous years] we didn't really play anything other than a recorder, but then we got to actually play instruments that [people know.]	Rock instruments are not only relatable to the students, but also to the "outside world," making them seem more respectable. Carly shows interest in classical music, but even for her, popular music seems to ring more true.
Drew	Yes [fifth grade made me feel like more of a musician], because we used, like, real instruments like guitars and drums, not just those little tube things.	Drew holds rock instruments in such a high regard that learning to play them was a rare instance where he would call himself a musician.

Popular Music

The participants enjoy popular music more and they identify much more closely with it, supporting Green's findings (2002). Table 1 shows a selection of responses that illustrate this. It also seems to confirm a hypothesis presented by Hargreaves et al. that musical identities have their basis partly in particular instruments that represent certain genres (2002, p. 14). Many of the participants made comments revealing their affinity toward instruments in general and those instruments associated with rock music more specifically. The extensive use of popular music over the year generated a sustained interest in both Drew and Peter, who were both beginning to find themselves increasingly drawn away from school music. For Barry, it served as a turning point in his musical identity, as he says without fifth grade rock band, he most likely would not have joined band in sixth grade. For the students whose musical identities were more firmly established, popular music presented a new avenue of musical exploration.

Children begin to form their musical identities at a very early age, through immersion in the world around them (Trevarthen, 2002). This means they construct a vocabulary of harmonic functions and melodic structures based on the music that surrounds them. If their musical identity is firmly rooted in popular music, then that genre can be used as a tool to generate more interest in low engagement students, but it is also the most natural way to allow students to explore composition in a way that seems safer to them. Not only does classical music represent an undesirable identity but also a musical language with which they are not as familiar.

Table 2 - Informal Learning

	Excerpt	Interpretation
Barry	We *tried* to take turns, but…[chuckles] sometimes I could hog [the drum set.]	The students tried their best to run their rehearsals democratically but they weren't always successful, and some of the rehearsals turned into extended periods of musical exploration, with all the students trying each other's instruments. This was a way for them to step away from any frustration they were having with their own part or instrument, and remember the fun activity that playing music was for them.
Carly	I got to experiment with different songs…we got to basically teach ourselves. I liked it because…if it was easier for me to do something else, I would do that…so I learned a lot more playing it the way that I taught myself, than with you teaching us.	After I helped her alter the rhythm to a bass line that was giving her difficulties, Carly valued the independence that came with small group learning. She even used the strategy of rhythmic alterations to help her friends, who were having trouble mastering their part in their own band.
Rachel	I thought it was cool because we could pick what we were doing, and we could pick the songs we wanted to learn and stuff.	Rachel was one of the students who appreciated the freedom to choose her own musical model to attempt to emulate.

Informal Learning

The participants valued their ability to direct their own learning, as shown in Table 2. All of the bands ran their rehearsals democratically, or at least tried to do so. Although informal learning settings bring about all of the positive benefits detailed earlier, there are also risks, such as one student's lack of discipline affecting his band's rehearsal times. This led to some impasses, like Dan's lack of commitment to learning during rehearsals. He had a difficult time mastering the syncopation in the lead guitar riff to "Sunshine of Your Love" and his attention would often wander, sometimes distracting his bandmates to the point of ending the rehearsal early. The participants were able to mediate most of these conflicts without intervention from a teacher. One way members of The Streak chose to handle off task behavior or flagging interests was by

swapping instruments and experimenting with different roles or songs. One explanation for why these students were successful at managing conflicts may be due to the district-wide positive behavioral support system that Lincoln Park Public Schools has in place. This program centers on each group of students democratically creating a "social contract" which details acceptable behavior in different situations, including conflicts. Interestingly, there was a governing music class social contract hanging on the wall where they were rehearsing, perhaps the visual reminder helped mediate the conflict as well.

Most of the students were motivated by the opportunity to select the song for their band. This represented an opportunity to strongly identify with a specific genre or musician. The connection between the band members and their song was public, as they shared it with their peers during class sessions, and with their parents and the rest of the audience at the spring concert. Rachel approached this process earnestly, looking for a song to challenge her abilities, but had a difficult time finding an artist to copy. Belinda's ideas of performers to cover, conversely, were numerous. With her extensive listening habits, she had a difficult time settling on one song to sing, and at one time tried to convince her bandmates to learn four songs at the same time, before conceding that it was indeed too much work. With the way adolescents wear associations with certain musical in-groups as a badge of honor or identification (Tarrant et. al., 2002), it is no wonder picking a single song to publicly perform would be such a difficult task for some. One way teachers might facilitate the song selection process would be to introduce songs during group listening times and ask students to talk about stylistic elements they hear in the music while exploring how they might replicate or alter them. For teachers, the key is to ask questions that will

encourage students to experiment with their instruments rather than telling them how to produce

the sound. By focusing the class' attention on a chosen musical example

of a novice level song and helping students focus their listening to be more purposeful (Green,

2002), bands can agree on songs to learn without much of a deliberation process.

Table 3 - Social Identity

	Excerpt	Interpretation
Belinda	[Classical music is] just not one of the things that I'm really…drawn to. I find it kind of…boring? Which I'm pretty sure most kids my age find it a little bit boring. Unless they're music nerds, which I know is kind of mean, but there are some of them out there. I have one friend that's like that.	With Belinda's close identification with multiple pop stars, her dislike for "boring" classical music is not surprising. Pop stars are the in-group for Belinda and central to her identity, both musically and personally. The fast, youthful exuberance of popular music speaks to adolescents through lyrics that address the emotional and social challenges they face in the world every day. Classical music can also be used to regulate mood, but the meaning is not as readily accessible to many adolescent ears.
Peter	I wanted gym, of course, because I'm a sporty dude. And I didn't want to take music, because I didn't want to play like, the trumpet. Like, I don't want to be embarrassed, and I always thought that would be what being in band would be like, so I don't want to play that.	Peter has no problems playing bass or electric guitar in front of a whole audience, but even carrying a band instrument with him would be embarrassing, damaging his "sporty" identity. To Peter, it seems that classical musicians and athletes are mutually exclusive groups, as being seen with a band instrument would make him "uncool."

Social Identity

Table 3 shows how social groups affect the participants' perception of music in their lives.

While adolescents are refining their own self-identity and mediating their actions based on the

social environment around them, music often plays an important role as a touchstone to in-group

identities to "try on." This can lead to wide-ranging exploration of musical styles, artists, and even

clothing styles to find the in-group with which the individual finds they share the most common

traits (Lamont, 2002). Conversely, adolescents' close identification with music can result in an inflexible attitude toward "other" music, especially from negatively perceived out-groups. Belinda stays away from classical music not only because it fails to hold her attention, but because she is afraid of being labeled a "music nerd." Barry, Drew, and Peter are also concerned with being labeled as a member of this out-group, but for different reasons. Peter identifies so strongly with athletics that the thought of being seen even carrying a band instrument would impact his social standing. This belief partially reflects a commonly held view of school music as a "feminine" pursuit (Dibben, 2002). During adolescence especially, gender roles begin to take on a new meaning during socialization. These interactions can turn male students away from music almost by default. The perception of popular musicians, however, does not hold the same gender label. This can serve as an inroad to a student building a new identity as a musician, as was the case with Barry.

The perceived social groupings adolescents assign to specific musical genres or artists can make the aforementioned group listening activities difficult, with students attempting to block out unwanted music from their ears or exhibiting other distracting off-task behaviors. This can quickly become detrimental to the teacher's efficiency. In these instances it is important to offer students an opportunity to explain, in their own words, what draws them to or repels them from musical examples, with a focus on musical qualities. By directing their attention to specific musical qualities or instruments, students can begin to evaluate out-group music in a way separate from the social identities that come wrapped with that music, if only slightly.

One particular strategy to encourage tolerance or exploration of unfamiliar music is to utilize covers. Students are already familiar with musicians covering each other's work, and

amateur covers of professionally recorded songs are numerous on the internet, especially on YouTube. By covering songs in different styles, students have the opportunity not only to increase ownership over a song by making their own version, but doing so can also help students connect musical concepts across genres.

Table 4a - Motivation (Self-Efficacy)

	Excerpt	Interpretation
Barry	If I really tried, and maybe got lessons yeah, I think I could definitely become a rock musician.	Barry is confident in his abilities, but doesn't like gaps in his knowledge, and wants to know as much as he possibly can. He also seems to hold what he doesn't know in a high regard, as if he has to study personally under a "master" before he can be a true musician.
Peter	I want to be a football player. But if I really tried to be a musician, and I *wanted to*? Yeah, I could be a musician. Yeah, I could play the guitar, and I could do everything else.	Peter has all the confidence needed to be a musician, but no desire. This is interesting, given his previous dreams of playing in a rock band. His excellent performance throughout fifth grade was a testament to the effectiveness of his perseverance, but he knows he has a lot of ground to cover in knowledge, and skills.
Rachel	I [would] go home and tell my dad, 'I'm a musician and I can do everything!' Dad would then tell me 'no honey, not yet.' [In fifth grade,] I took a lot of interest and then went home and [said] 'momma, guess what I learned in music class today?' Then she would say 'that's cool, you told me that yesterday,' then scroll through Facebook.	Although Rachel's father was normally supportive of her musical identity, at least in this case, he didn't provide her that support. Similarly, her mother, who is not regularly around the house, turned away from Rachel's attempt to share her love for music. Due to the tremendous importance of family in the development of musical identities, the impact of these two events on Rachel should not be overlooked. In both instances, she was being told that her music was "not good enough" or not interesting enough to capture someone's attention, a feeling that Rachel carries with her to this day.

Motivation – Self-efficacy

There seems to have been a general increase in positive musical efficacy beliefs in the participants over the year, as shown in table 4. Although music is not what Drew or Peter wish to pursue in their lives, they both have the confidence that they could do so if they put more time and effort into it. All of the participants indicated that they feel they could always have music as a hobby, if not as a career. With raised efficacy values like these, continued engagement out of school is much more likely. This is especially important in areas such as Lincoln Park, as students from a low socioeconomic background have been shown to be less likely to engage in musical activities (Tarrant et. al., 2002). Developing positive attitudes toward music and music making at a young age may serve as a mitigating force against the dissuasion brought on by their socioeconomic status, or by negative interactions with family, as in Rachel's case.

The most effective way to build positive self-efficacy judgments is through successful performance achievements. All of the students reflected how performing in concert made them feel like more of a musician and gave them a positive mastery experience to refer back to when making future efficacy judgments about musical activities. It is important, however, to also create opportunities for smaller performances throughout the year. Once students feel competent enough, teachers could encourage bands to attend each other's rehearsals and perform for each other. This promotes more group learning and the information sharing that is key to informal learning. During these times, students can also offer constructive critiques to each other, building social skills and developing an objective standard with which to judge and accept others' performances.

A surprising area of concern is reading music notation. Each participant expressed that their notation reading skills were not as advanced as they thought they should be. Carly and Barry hold

notation in an even higher regard, saying that you can't be a real musician without reading music,

and music is about the notes, respectively. This is in direct contradiction to Green's (2002) findings

that musical notation was not a key factor of learning for popular musicians.

Table 4b - Motivation (Rewards)

	Excerpt	Interpretation
Barry	Now I know why you guys enjoy being in this band so much; that was fun!	Although Barry enjoyed learning throughout the year, he found the applause of an appreciative crowd to be even more satisfying than just having fun with his friends.
Belinda	[The most memorable parts of fifth grade were] probably all the times we performed in front of people, or that I performed in front of people.	Belinda feels exceedingly proud of her performance accomplishments, as they have allowed her to live out part of her dream of being a professional recording artist.
Carly	I want to make music because I like making music, but I also like when you're around people because then you can play songs together…instead of just by yourself. I like that better. I don't know why, but I do.	Carly is driven mostly by intrinsic forces, but she has also greatly valued socializing in a musical environment from a young age. This connection of socialization and music making has led Carly to consider teaching music, so her career can be nothing but sharing her love of music with others.
Peter	I didn't even really care…[until] I could hear my mom yelling…and when I heard her yell out…I just felt happy, because I knew that she was there to support me…I always thought if I fail it would be a disappointment to my family.	Family support made this positive performance experience even more meaningful for Peter. The bond he shares with his family is clearly powerful, as he claims the performance would not have mattered to him, if not for his mother's cheers from the audience. When his mother could not purchase a guitar for him due to financial constraints, he walked away from music without expressing anger towards his family. Now, he chooses to do his part easing those financial burdens by mowing lawns.

Motivation – Rewards

Some of the rewards the participants cite from musical involvement in Table 5 mirror those revealed in the literature on adult engagement discussed earlier. Carly greatly values the social interaction that performing with others provides. Peter had the opportunity to fulfill his dream of playing guitar with a rock band. Each student also commented on how they had fun learning and playing throughout the process. The support of family is also greatly rewarding, as shown in Peter's evaluation of his concert performance. He claims that the performance would have been much less meaningful in the absence of his family. With the importance of family in the development of students' musical identities and self-efficacy beliefs, it is important to make sure parents in the school feel welcome in the community and are encouraged to attend their child's performances.

Each participant reported feeling rewarded through entertaining others, unlike in the adult literature. Barry and Belinda both reveled in the applause from an appreciative audience, and that feeling of accomplishment has driven them to continue performing. Popular music can be integrated into other areas of instruction, and arranged for different ensembles, but the authenticity of performing in a small band with "real" rock instruments is meaningful to the students. Since the ensemble is smaller than a traditional choir, band, or orchestra, the applause is much more meaningful to the individuals participating.

CONCLUSIONS

I devised and implemented a rock band curriculum for my fifth grade students as a way to increase participation from those students, both in school and in concert performances. This study explored the experiences of the students who learned during the first year of that program. Examination of the participants' descriptions was focused around four main concepts affecting this curriculum: popular music in school, informal learning, and group interaction, personal and social perceptions of musicians, and motivation to learn music reflected in self-efficacy beliefs and perceived rewards of music making.

While each of the participants has their own personal history with music and music making, learning in the rock band class was an experience they all benefitted from. All too often, students like Peter or Drew lose all interest in school music in the later elementary years, and give up on music for the rest of their lives (Lamont, 2002; Ruddock & Leong, 2005). Having the opportunity to play popular music with more familiar instruments allowed Peter and Drew to finally establish connections between school music and their own musical identities. This familiarity made Peter and Drew feel more comfortable expressing positive musical identities due to the inclusive nature of the class (Lamont, 2002; Tobias, 2013). From their point of view, one must wonder if they see the situation as the opposite; they didn't make room in their lives for my teaching, but my teaching made room for their lives.

Of course, there are the students who approach school music with an already-established positive musical identity. These students also made strides in building their musical identity and gaining experience for the future in the form of a positive performance experience at the end of the year. These positive performance experiences bolstered their self-efficacy judgments and their

musical identity. Indeed, all of the participants reported feeling like more of a musician after their performance, even if they didn't describe themselves as musicians.

Some participants found it difficult to describe the informal learning processes they experienced while rehearsing with their bandmates. This may be due to their rate of cognitive development, as students of this age are still refining their metacognitive abilities. To gain a deeper understanding of how learning happens in this program, and how students learn and make music on their own, a one-year longitudinal study would be invaluable. Over the course of a year, interview data could be collected from participants, gauging changes in their views in "real time." This could also be combined with videotaped student rehearsals and quantitative data from school exams to provide a detailed description of how learning and identity formation occurs within the context of rock band class.

As usual, this study leaves some new questions to be answered along with the insights gained. One of the key elements that I expected the participants to report feeling "freed" from was notation. Instead, they view the ability to read notation as a primary requirement for calling oneself a musician. This is curious, given that preparation for the previously mentioned concert contained no traditional notation, and little alternative notation. The students weren't able to square these two facts in their minds either, when asked in interview. It would be valuable to know how this elevation of notation to paramount status became part of the participants' musical identities.

It is important to remember that each student we teach has their own personal musical history they bring with them into our classrooms. This can mean more than simple differentiation of instruction, and even lead to a broad curricular change. As Mursell (1951) states,

Notice, finally, how human values and subject matter values come together in our proposed program, as they always must in any sound educational scheme. You are teaching children? Yes indeed. But you are also teaching music…for musicianship is not an affair of compartmentalized expertness or isolated skill. When a person possesses it, he becomes not merely a technician, but a musical person – a person in whose life the art of music functions for worthy and constructive ends. (270)

With the focus on standardized testing and data-driven instruction in today's schools, our focus can become granular and focused on quantifiable skills. In order to enkindle lifelong music making in a student, however, the focus may be better placed on ensuring each child feels included -- not only in the music classroom, but as a member of a larger group of music makers.

APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol

First individual participant interview: early musical identity
How important is music to you?
> *How often did you listen to music? How often do you talk about music with your friends/family? Do you enjoy making music as well as listening to it?*

How important is music in your house?
> *Do your parents listen to a lot of music around the house? Did your family buy you musical toys? Does anyone in your house make music? Do you and your family ever attend concerts or other musical events?*

Who were some of your favorite musicians as a young child?
> *Did you like the same music as your parents, or something different?*

What were your feelings about music class in school, from kindergarten until 4th grade?
> *Did these opinions differ from your opinions about music at home?*

Would you describe yourself as a musician?
> *What do you have in common with musicians? Can you recall an event that was important in being to call yourself a musician?*

What do you think makes someone a musician?
> *What musical skill do you think is the most important? Note reading? Listening? Playing by ear? What kinds of instruments do musicians play?*

Group interview with all student participants
Did you find the music that was learned in 5th grade to be more or less interesting than in previous years?
> *Did you like that we were learning more popular songs? Is popular music more interesting to you than classical music? Did you find that you were more motivated to learn popular music than classical music?*

How would you describe the differences in learning between 5th grade music and other elementary years?
> *What were the main differences? Was the classroom set up differently? Did your attitude towards music class change in any way?*

Did you like being able to control your own learning more?
> *Did you find that working problems out on your own, within your bands, to be a difficult thing to do? Do you feel confident that you could problem solve in a band to fix a performance issue?*

Did 5ᵗʰ grade music class make you feel like a musician?
> *What did we learn that fits with your definition of musician? Was there something that you thought was missing that all musicians "should know?"*

Second individual participant interview: current musical engagement and identity
Are you currently taking any music classes in school?
> *What were your choices for classes? Did you have to give up one class to be in music? What affected your decision to take or not take music?*

Are you making music outside of school?
> *Are you learning an instrument? Singing alone, or in public? Making music with friends?*

Do you believe learning in the rock band class made you think of yourself more as/less as a musician?
> *Do you think you could be a rock musician? Classical or other types of musicians?*

To you, what was the most memorable or important moment in 5ᵗʰ grade music?
> *Performing at the concert? Rehearsing with your friends and bandmates? Choosing the song to learn?*

Do you think you will be making music in the future?
> *Do you think you want a job that involves music in some way? Do you think you may want to make music as a hobby while doing something else for a job? What kinds of music would you make? Are there other types of music you might want to explore in the future?*

Telephone interview with parents
Did you child talk about music class differently while in 5ᵗʰ grade than other years?
> *Did your child tell you about the rock band curriculum at the beginning of the year? Were they excited about it? What parts were they most excited about? Did you sense a change in attitude toward music over the year?*

Would you describe yourself or your child as a musician?
> *What do you or your child have in common with musicians? What is different between you or your child and musicians?*

How important is music in your life? Your child's life? Your household?
> *How often do you/your child listen to music? How often do you talk about music with your friends/family? Do you enjoy making music as well as listening to it? Do you attend concerts with your child? If so, what kinds of concerts?*

Telephone interview with current music teacher
How would you describe the participant's general level of engagement during music class?
> *Would you describe the participant as mostly engaged, compliant, or off task? Is the participant normally prepared for class? Does the participant complete their homework/practicing assignments?*

Has the participant ever pursued any music outside of normal school hours; that you are aware of?

Has the participant asked you for help after school, or different music to play? Is the participant a member of any sort of ensemble outside of school? Has the participant been in a musical play?

How important would you say music is to the participant?

Do you ever hear the participant talking about music outside of class? If so, how often?

Does the participant show a particular desire to learn more about music?

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ABSTRACT

LEARNING THROUGH ROCK BAND IN THE ELEMENTARY GENERAL MUSIC CLASSROOM

by

NICK DENIS

August 2017

Advisor: Dr. Abigail Butler

Major: Music Education

Degree: Master of Music

Some students find connecting to music classes in school to be difficult, as the music and learning styles used in the traditional school music program can seem separated from music in the "real world." The dichotomous relationship between school music and "real" music can lead students away from developing a positive musical identity, which negatively affects their chances of choosing to make music later in life. In order to support the development of positive musical identities, I began teaching rock band to all of my fifth grade students. This phenomenological case study explores the experience of six students who participated in the first year of that class. Interviews with the students were used to describe the participants' perceptions of learning in this class. The description of the findings focuses on four important threads of musical engagement: popular music in the music classroom, informal learning, social identity, and motivations to learn music.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Nicholas A. Denis
23008 Carolina
St. Clair Shores, MI 48080
(586) 201-5577
NickDenis@Gmail.com

Personal Statement

I am a professional music teacher currently pursuing my Master's degree in music education at Wayne State University. For over 16 years, I have made it my goal to foster a lifelong love for making music in many different forms in my students.

Education

M.M.E Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan (August 2017 expected)

B.M.E., Hope College, Holland, Michigan (May 2003)

Michigan Professional Certificate, Secondary Certification (June 2016)

GPA: 3.63 cumulative

Honors   Magna Cum Laude, Dean's List, Alumni Scholarship, Hope Grant

Employment Experience

Music Teacher - Lincoln Park Public Schools (Lincoln Park, MI) October 2011 –)	Taught Kindergarten through 6th grade general music, and beginning band, assist with the high school marching band, and created a rock band program for 5th grade students.
Music Teacher - Trillium Academy (Taylor, MI) August 2010 – October 2011	Taught Kindergarten through 5th grade general music, middle school music appreciation, and high school choir, guitar, and electronic music. band, high school music appreciation and a reading course at a charter school.
Music Teacher -Detroit Academy of Arts and Sciences (Detroit, MI) August 2008 – June 2010	Taught Kindergarten through fifth grade general music, sixth grade group piano, elementary