

2019

"All I Remember Is Everybody Started Singing": A Qualitative Exploration of the Intended Learning Outcomes of General Music Courses

Geoffrey Nelson

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“ALL I REMEMBER IS EVERYBODY STARTED SINGING”: A QUALITATIVE
EXPLORATION OF THE INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES OF
GENERAL MUSIC COURSES

A thesis

Presented to

The School of Social Sciences, Education & Business

Department of Higher Education and Student Development

Taylor University

Upland, Indiana

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Higher Education and Student Development

by

Geoffrey Nelson

May 2019

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**Higher Education and Student Development
Taylor University
Upland, Indiana**

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER'S THESIS

This is to certify that the Thesis of

Geoffrey Nelson

entitled

“All I Remember is Everybody Started Singing”: A Qualitative Exploration of the
Intended Learning Outcomes of General Music Courses

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the

Master of Arts degree
in Higher Education and Student Development

May 2019

Todd Ream, Ph.D. Date
Thesis Supervisor

Scott Gaier, Ph.D. Date
Member, Thesis Hearing Committee

Tim Herrmann, Ph.D. Date
Member, Thesis Hearing Committee

Tim Herrmann, Ph.D. Date
Director, M.A. in Higher Education and Student Development

Abstract

Music is one of the most fundamentally human forms of art and communication in existence. Since Ancient Greece, music has served as a central component of a liberal arts education, a practice that continues today. In the modern higher education context, students are often required to take an art or music course as part of the liberal arts curriculum. Despite the importance of the study of music, general music courses face many challenges in regard to student learning. Some of the most prominent challenges include increased musical illiteracy and the increasingly saturated and diverse musical preferences of the modern student. This study examined whether general music courses achieve the course-level and institutional-level intended learning outcomes at a specific institution. Through interviews and focus groups with general education committee faculty members, music faculty members, and students, this study revealed specific areas of connection and disconnection among the three groups in regard to the effectiveness of the intended learning outcomes. Based on these areas of connection and disconnection, the study also provides a set of implications for practice and future research.

Acknowledgements

*To my family, Dr. Todd Ream, the MAHE faculty, the music faculty at Taylor University,
Dr. Charlie Brainer, Jeff Miller, Trudy Owen, and my dear Cohort XI,*

Thank you for continually encouraging me to pursue what is good, beautiful, and true in every aspect of my life. I owe so much of who I am and what I have accomplished to each of you and your impact on my life. Thank you for always supporting and guiding me throughout this journey.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Every semester, college and university students enroll in general music courses to satisfy a general education requirement within their institution's liberal arts curriculum. While some students previously participated in their high school music program, played in a local youth orchestra, or took private piano lessons, many others have no formal education or active experience in music. Despite differences in the previous exposure to the study of music, every student in these general music courses experiences and interacts with music, most likely on a daily basis. As the most culturally prevalent art form, music is used to celebrate, mourn, relax, excite, and entertain (Kalkavage, 2003). Music is a fundamentally human and universal phenomenon in which every aspect of humanity is explored through the structured order of sound and speech (Small, 1998).

General Music Courses

General music courses in the liberal arts curriculum are often known as "Music Appreciation," "Survey of Music," or a similar derivative. These courses typically provide an overview of the Western classical tradition of music, including the fundamentals of music theory and history, thereby providing a framework for the evolution of music from the monastic chants of the early church through the development of jazz and modern rock. Through these approaches and opportunities to experience live music, general music courses seek to provide students with the ability to actively engage,

participate, and critique not only music of the Western classical tradition but of all styles and periods.

Despite the prevalence and saturation of music in modern culture and society, college and university students do not often view general music courses in the liberal arts curriculum unfavorably or unexcitedly. Many students fail to understand the importance of studying a seemingly outdated style of music that offers little relevance to contemporary music culture. This sense of elitism is further reinforced by the large amount of knowledge required to understand its basic components and structure (Jorgenson, 2003). These barriers prevent students from fully understanding the music of the past that was used to express the fullness of humanity as it is also employed today.

Through an understanding of a historically significant style of music that continues to develop and evolve even today, students can understand how a long history of composers and musical styles have shaped their own current musical preferences. At the heart of the liberal arts mission, this ability to appreciate and engage with new areas of music allows society to “explore and celebrate our sense of who we are, to make us feel more fully ourselves” (Small, 1998, p. 142). The challenge, then, for educators of general music courses is to create alternative and effective methods of engaging students despite these barriers.

Despite the prominence of this type of course in the general education curriculum of many schools, little research explores how these courses fulfill the institutional mission for the liberal arts. Some studies have examined the effectiveness of different teaching strategies of general music courses, such as historical, theoretical, or contextual

approaches (Gordon, 1996; Halpern, 1992; Mann, 1999; Poirel 1998); however, little research has examined the ability of the course in forming a liberally educated person.

Due to the lack of formal education in music for many students, general music courses often provide an inactive knowledge of the basics of music theory and history, while professors may prefer, in contrast, to teach students how to use this information to actively engage, participate, and critique music of all kinds (Chenoweth, 2010; Kelley, 2006; Pierce, 2015). An institution's mission for the fine arts component of the liberal arts curriculum often reflects these more active principles. The inactive learning processes in these courses represent an unwillingness to adopt new creative teaching strategies, the ineffectiveness of existing teaching strategies, or the inability to develop a true appreciation for music due to social or intellectual barriers.

Music has the ability to open up students to a greater awareness of humanity and beauty, yet for many students a general music course may offer their only or final exposure to the formal study of music. Despite the many societal and academic challenges facing music and the liberal arts, Kalkavage (2003) stated, "As educators, we must, above all, aim high and never underestimate the power of great music to awaken in the young a love of all things beautiful—perhaps even divine" (p. 15).

Purpose

Through an increased awareness of areas of connection and disconnection between specific course and institutional goals, administrators and music faculty can develop courses and teaching strategies that implement more active practices. By increasing the connection between the intended learning outcomes of general music courses and the institutional mission of the liberal arts, students can more likely gain an

appreciation and active understanding of music beyond foundational knowledge. This research sought to answer the following question: Are the intended learning outcomes of general music courses being met, and are they achieving the intended learning outcomes set forth by the general education curriculum in both theory and practice?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

As an integral part of a liberal arts education, the study of music was present in curricula reaching back to Ancient Greece (Mann, 1999). Peter Kalkavage (2003), author of *The Neglected Muse: Reflections on Music as a Liberating Art*, stated,

Music is not just one of the traditional liberal arts; it is the paradigm liberal art, the art that best captures – in the breadth of its domain, in its union of the mathematical and poetic, the intellectual and the moral, in its involvement of the whole human being (body, soul, and mind), and in its abiding concern with living beautiful wholes – that ideal at which all true culture claims. Music, as a liberal art, liberates. (p. 14)

Despite its prominent role in culture, however, the study of music is no longer held in such high regard in a liberal arts education.

The role of music within the liberal arts curriculum was studied during the decades following World War II, but a significant gap in the literature also exists in this area. While some journal articles touch on general music courses, very little extensive research has occurred regarding the role of music in the liberal arts curriculum

Music in the Liberal Arts Curriculum

In Ancient Greece, Plato recognized music's ability to affect people's thoughts and actions, whereas Aristotle believed the primary goals of music were the promotion of

virtue, pleasure and leisure, and moral instruction (Stamou, 2002). The Ancient Greeks placed the study of music in the quadrivium, the primary classical curriculum, which also included the studies of arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy (Kalkavage, 2003). “This exalted placement points to the long-acknowledged bond that music has with number and nature, and sharply distinguishes music from the visual arts” (Kalkavage, 2003, p. 10). The study of music continued to enjoy a prominent role in education during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, especially in the church (Klein, 1966). The study and performance of music reached a zenith during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries when European concert halls provided a wealth of new music to study.

Today, the study of music within the liberal arts is most often relegated to the fine arts section of a general education curriculum, which may also consist of writing, literature, foreign languages, history, religion, philosophy, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences, and health and physical education (Warner & Koeppel, 2009). In order to adapt the general education curriculum to student demands for increased personal relevance and societal pressure for marketable skills, students now may have many course options by which general education requirements can be satisfied, rather than a set curriculum (Warner & Koeppel, 2009). A study by Darrell B. Warner and Katie Koeppel (2009) revealed that—in an examination of 72 national research, master’s comprehensive, and liberal arts universities—students had on average between 20.1 and 40.3 course options to meet a fine and/or performing arts general education requirement. Since music is often grouped together with the other fine arts, students could choose a visual art or theatre course to fulfill their fine arts requirement. Despite music’s

significant role in history and modern culture, students could complete their high school and college education without ever studying music beyond their own personal interactions.

The Challenges of General Music Course Design

Music's role in the liberal arts curriculum is most often found in the development of a course known as "Music Appreciation," "Music Humanities," or a related similar derivation. The term *appreciation* has decreased since World War II in an attempt to infuse more academic rigor in these courses, yet the overall approach has remained largely the same (Mann, 1999). These courses often provide an overview of music terminology, music history and theory, and listening experiences predominantly focused on the Western classical music tradition (Poirel, 1998). Many studies prove these music appreciation courses effective in the acquisition of general knowledge but ineffective in increasing students' appreciation for the studied music (Price & Swanson, 1990).

The concept of a music appreciation course faces many challenges within the liberal arts curriculum. Two common problems are the negative connotation of music as a "bastion of elitism and privilege" and a growing music illiteracy (Jorgensen, 2003, p. 130). These problems assist in rendering Western classical music "inaccessible to the general public just as the pervasiveness of popular music renders it inaudible and invisible" (Jorgensen, 2003, p. 130). Estelle R. Jorgenson (1988), Professor Emerita of Music at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, acknowledged these challenges as a "dialectic tension between the desirable and the possible, between what teachers want to do and what they can do" (p. 99)

Many students entering these kinds of courses are too uninterested or do not have enough previous exposure to formal music study to fully comprehend the material being taught. Musicologist Robert Walser (2003) presented a negative view towards the traditional music appreciation course, “whereby people who have greater authority, cultural capital or rhetorical skills (teachers, critics) tell others (students, fans) what they ought to be listening to (classical music, authentic rock) according to a single scale of value” (p. 19). Thomas A. Regelski (2005), an author of music education, noted a significant disjunction between student attitudes on “school music” and instead their preferred “real music” (p. 14). Robert C. Lagueux (2013) expressed,

Put very simply, most students already care about music (even if they only ever listen to pop music written in the last decade). Music, much more so than other forms of artistic expression, is ever-present in students’ day-to-day lives. It has become a particularly powerful marker of identity for college-age students, thanks in large part to portable music players that contain thousands of songs, the near-instantaneous availability of digital music, and the advent of services that aim to introduce users to new music based on their responses to recommendations. (p. 133)

Despite such negative views, music appreciation has become an established discipline that, when taught in a contextual fashion, can provide musically nonliterate students with the tools to intelligently analyze and discuss music of all varieties (Mann, 1999).

Musical Elitism

The view of Western classical music as a disconnected institution of the elite and privileged is perhaps the strongest challenge for music appreciation courses to overcome.

According to Austin B. Caswell (1991), classical music is often seen as a “cultural museum of the concert hall,” (p. 137) relying heavily upon the influence of European musical thought and tradition. This reliance on historical European thought alienates students who cannot comprehend the necessity of a foreign and a seemingly outdated genre of music that does not reflect their current musical preferences and cultural practices.

The model of music education in the United States is largely based on the European tradition, a model that began in the middle of the nineteenth century with the founding of the first American musical institutions (Caswell, 1991). These musical institutions promoted European aesthetics, performers, teachers, and musical works with little attempt to break apart from this tradition, an issue that continues to remain today (Caswell, 1991). To the young American mind, music appreciation courses resemble “museum guides for tours of the past, pausing at the same exhibits of music history to deliver routine tour talks; they could be replaced by tape recorders” (Klein, 1966, p. 81).

Musical Illiteracy

The second common challenge for music appreciation courses is the education of musically illiterate students. Music is typically not a mandatory course in secondary education. As a result, incoming college students on average have more experience and familiarity with literature and mathematics than they do with music (Poirel, 1998). In addition, educational reforms and budget cuts in the public education system decreased the number of students who receive any kind of music education other than performance opportunities (Gordon, 1996).

Lois Choksy (1981), author of *The Kodaly Context*, defined musical literacy as the “ability to read, write, and think music” (p. 6). In addition, it is the “ability to understand a wide variety of music as it occurs within a broad range of contexts” (Wiggins, 2001, p. 3). This literacy includes the ability to read musical notation and an understanding of the basic components of music, such as pitch, interval, melody, harmony, and rhythm (Poirel, 1998).

A knowledge and understanding of these components aids students in grasping a piece of music, thus making classical music more accessible to the student. A failure to develop musical literacy in the understanding of musical notation and the basic components of music makes it difficult to “break out of a solely aural/oral tradition and into a literate one” (Jorgensen, 2003, p. 135). However, the notion of the necessity of musical literacy is viewed unfavorably as a barrier of elitism as the public increasingly demands immediacy over a learned literacy (Johnson, 2002).

On the contrary, in an article titled “College Music Appreciation: Pedagogical Approaches and Preliminary Findings,” Lewis W. Gordon (1996) stated that students with little background in music can learn to understand and appreciate classical music; however, the challenge for educators is to develop courses that address both the perceived elitism of classical music, while simultaneously making the study of music more accessible through the development of musical literacy.

Current Course Design in Music Appreciation Courses

Music appreciation courses generally utilize one of three learning approaches: the historical approach, the analytical approach, or the contextual approach. The historical approach is a study of music from a chronological perspective, includes biographical and

general historical information, while the analytical approach is an examination of musical works for presentation of musical elements and overall style (Halpern, 1992). These two approaches are both necessary and important to the understanding of music. However, when comparing the effectiveness of each approach, Halpern (1992) noted the “the debate is apparent in the wide variance the formats of textbooks supposedly having the same goal” (p. 40).

A strictly analytical approach alienates students who have had previous exposure to musical education who feel that what they love about music is being “ignored” in favor of the technical aspects of music (Poirel, 1998, p. 77), while limiting the learning of non-musicians since so much of their time is dedicated to learning the language and technical aspects of music.

Gordon (1996) proposed a contextual approach that combines the historical and analytical approaches. The teaching of technical music terminology provides students with a basic understanding and ability to hear tempo, meter, types of melodies, major or minor tonality, dynamics, texture, and simple form, while the teaching of historical and cultural contexts provides students with an enhanced readiness for listening (Gordon, 1996). This contextual approach equips students with the necessary tools to begin understanding not only classical music but also the music students listen to for pleasure or entertainment outside of the classroom (Poirel, 1998). Mann (1999) affirmed this contextual approach: “It imparts security and meaning to the amateur’s musical experience and may serve as a searching orientation in music even for the student of more substantial musical inclinations” (p. 97).

While each approach has its own unique strengths, none of them can completely address the many challenges facing music appreciation courses. This type of course seeks to overcome these challenges by embracing a more holistic, personal understanding of music, rather than an understanding built on facts and information alone. This holistic and personal approach requires learning outcomes that include the understanding of music history and theory but also areas such as personal and cultural significance, personal expression of ideas, and the experience of music through the attendance of live performances.

Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning Experiences

In *Creating Significant Learning Experiences*, L. Dee Fink (2003) created a taxonomy of significant learning experiences primarily concerned with improving student learning and establishing clear objectives within the higher education classroom. Despite a desire for higher forms of student learning, many faculty members continue to teach using techniques, such as lecturing, that prove ineffective in developing stronger student learning (Fink, 2003). These newer methods sometimes require more work for the faculty member, which can cause them not to adopt these new methods due to the convenience of the current method, a resistance to change, or the existence of other significant demands present in their career. In regard to the current state of learning in higher education, Fink (2003) said,

We can continue to follow traditional ways of teaching, repeating the same practices that we and others in our disciplines have used for years. Or we can dare to dream about doing something different, something special in our courses that would significantly improve the quality of student learning. (p. 1)

A proper definition of a significant learning experience includes a process and outcome dimension (Fink, 2003). The process entails students engaged in their learning and a class with high energy level. The outcome dimension includes significant and lasting change that continues after the course concludes and the application of knowledge to be of value in a student's life, both personally and socially (Fink, 2003). Fink's (2003) taxonomy of significant learning is comprised of six components: foundational knowledge, application, integration, the human dimension, caring, and learning how to learn. In this taxonomy, content or "foundation knowledge" is simply one of six different categories, rather than the primary aspect.

The inclusion of active learning methods, such as the six aspects of Fink's (2003) taxonomy, allows students of all learning styles to achieve a greater understanding of the material discussed in class (Biggs & Tang, 2007). Biggs and Tang (2007) stated, "Good teaching is getting most students to use the level of cognitive processes needed to achieve the intended outcomes that the more academic students use spontaneously" (p. 11). The active methods suggested by Fink (2003) allow for more students to engage with the material and at a higher level of cognition.

Unlike previous models of significant learning, such as Bloom's (1956) Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, the individual components of Fink's (2003) taxonomy are not constructed in a hierarchical fashion but, rather, are integrated together. This interactive nature allows for one kind of learning (e.g., application) to affect another kind of learning (e.g., care). Two major implications of Fink's (2003) taxonomy that encourage significant learning experiences are the inclusion of other types of learning

beyond foundational knowledge and the combination of significant learning goals to create interactions between different types of learning.

In developing courses, faculty members can utilize Fink's (2003) taxonomy of significant learning by using the model of integrated course design. This model is comprised of three key components: learning goals, feedback and assessment, and teaching and learning activities (Fink, 2003). This model promotes a backward design in which learning goals, feedback, and assessment practices are determined before designing teaching and learning activities (Fink, 2003). By focusing first on what students should learn while completing these courses, faculty members have a better understanding of what teaching and learning activities are needed to achieve their vision.

Significant Learning Experiences in General Music Courses

In his book, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*, Christopher Small (1998) coined the term *musicking*. This term highlights the role of music as an active process, not an object. Musicking, or *to music*, is "to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing" (Small, 1998, p. 9). Small (1998) asserted human relationships are inherently at the very core of the act of musicking and that those relationships give the act of musicking its meaning. In regard to this relational nature, Small (1998) stated,

. . . we affirm them [the relationships] to ourselves and anyone else who may be paying attention, and we celebrate them, the musicking is in fact a way of knowing our world—not that pre-given physical world, divorced from human experience, that modern science claims to know but the experiential world of

relationships in all its complexity - and in knowing it, we learn how to live well in it. (p. 50)

Small's (1998) idea of musicking is summarized by three main ideas: the exploration, affirmation, and celebration of the relationships and values held by the participants of the musical experience.

Jonathan Chenoweth (2010) highlighted the inherent relationships and wonder by asserting that “music theory, criticism, and technique serve appreciation only when they return us to the common ground of human experience, when they *reflect* (not *replace*) the wonder of the musical encounter” (p. 132). This knowledge of human experience is ultimately the goal of a liberal arts education. Chenoweth (2010) continued,

It was, after all, in this immediate presence of music, in the act of participation, that the young and aspiring insider first encountered a reason to pursue her apprenticeship. The most compelling experiences afforded by listening to music are fundamentally the same for the insider and outsider. (p. 131)

In order for general music appreciation courses to move past foundational knowledge and into a more complete understanding of music as a cultural and human phenomenon, aspects of Fink's taxonomy can be applied. One of the main challenges to the development of significant learning experiences is the tension between intended learning outcomes at the institutional and course levels (Biggs & Tang, 2007). Intended learning outcomes for the fine arts at the institutional level involve the ability to engage, critique, and interact with art. At the specific course level, however, these outcomes often focus on the acquisition of fundamental knowledge of music theory and history. John Biggs and Catherine Tang (2007) suggested the learning outcomes of specific

courses must move from the static reception of information to the dynamic reception and application of information—an approach that is congruent with Small’s (1998) concept of musicking. Intended learning outcomes can reflect this dynamic understanding through the inclusion of words such as *solve*, *describe*, *select*, and *present* (Biggs & Tang, 2007, p. 71).

For example, in *Redefining Music Appreciation: Exploring the Power of Music*, Deborah L. Pierce (2015) said, “While listening to the various canons is important and can be engaging to some students, the piece that is consistently missing in addition to active learning is attention to personal relevance” (p. 1). Examples of relational and active learning in the music appreciation classroom include guided imagery, exercises to promote active and deep listening, reflective writing, communal and individual singing, performing, composing, interactions with guest experts, and field trips (Pierce, 2015). The inclusion of active elements into learning outcomes allows students to understand the technical and fundamental knowledge of music, which is further reinforced and developed through performance, critical thought, and analysis. These active elements also then properly align the intended learning outcomes of the course with those of the broader institutional learning outcomes in the liberal arts curriculum (Biggs & Tang, 2007).

The main obstacle in music appreciation courses is therefore not an ignorance of foundational knowledge but an indifference to its study (Chenoweth, 2010). By focusing on the challenge of indifference in music appreciation courses, the mystery of music is valued over mastery (Chenoweth, 2010). In this type of approach, the instructor becomes a facilitator of musical inquiry, rather than merely a lecturer of historical and theoretical

facts (Pierce, 2015). A facilitator's goal is not "to induct students, but to help orient them to new experiences, to help them cultivate thoughtful and creative responses"

(Chenoweth, 2010, p. 131). Through this approach, an instructor can introduce other aspects of Fink's taxonomy, such as care and the human dimension. For example, Bruce C. Kelley (2003) expressed,

If, for example, a student learns to really care about a particular piece of music, then he or she will be interested in learning how to learn more about the piece, which in turn could increase the integration between performance and theory and history, and could help the student to develop an increasing desire to share this music with others. (p. 66)

Through an increased sense of imagination, alternative teaching strategies, and a passion for the subject material, instructors of general music courses can create an environment in which students truly learn to appreciate the subject being taught and its inherent beauty.

Conclusion

Despite research on the effectiveness of different teaching strategies and course designs within individual general music courses, little information exists on how the intended learning outcomes of these courses fulfill an institution's mission for the liberal arts. An exploration of institutional-level and course-level intended learning courses for general music courses would assist faculty members in making guided and supported decisions towards general music course design. As a product of culture, music is ultimately a representation of the values of humanity throughout history, which necessitates research into how music is taught in the liberal arts curriculum.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This study utilized an instrumental case study methodology to understand better how the intended learning outcomes of general music courses reflect the institutional mission of the liberal arts curriculum. A significant gap exists in the literature regarding the teaching of music to non-majors and the effectiveness of general music courses, which allows this proposed research to provide new and important insight into this area. Due to the lack of research on this specific topic, this case study provides a foundation for further research and implementation in general music courses.

Type of Research

Creswell (2007) defined an instrumental case study as a methodology in which the “researcher focuses on an issue or concern, and then selects one bounded case to illustrate this issue” (p. 74). This research study used a single institution as the bounded case to explore how the intended learning outcomes of general music courses reflect the overall liberal arts mission. The instrumental case study methodology was chosen for this research due to a lack of scholarly literature regarding the proposed research question. This methodology was used to create a foundation on which further research can be developed. While bounded to a single institution, this approach can encourage other institutions to analyze their own liberal arts curriculum and goals to understand better how general music courses can have stronger intended learning outcomes.

Context

This research took place at a nationally ranked, private, faith-based liberal arts college in the Midwest known for its commitment to undergraduate teaching and a total enrollment of approximately 2,000 students. This institution was chosen for its strong liberal arts focus and the inclusion of a mandatory course on the arts in the general education curriculum for all undergraduate students.

Participants

The participants included two faculty who serve on the general education committee (GEC), three faculty who teach or have taught the general music course “Experiencing Music,” and eight students who have previously taken the required general music course. The title of the course and participants in this study were each given unique pseudonyms.

These different groups of participants were chosen for their ability to provide different levels of insight into how the intended learning outcomes of general music courses reflect the mission of the liberal arts. The GEC faculty members provided insight regarding the broader institutional goals for the liberal arts curriculum, while the music faculty members and students provided insight regarding the course specific goals and if those goals are met. The two GEC faculty members were chosen due to their prominent role in developing the current intended learning outcomes for the general education curriculum. The three music faculty members were chosen because of their experience teaching general music courses. The eight students were chosen because of their previous experience taking the “Experiencing Music” course. These students were

recruited for the voluntary focus groups through an email invitation sent to all students who had previously completed the semester mode of this course.

Procedures

The research process began by obtaining IRB approval at the chosen institution of research. After receiving IRB approval, the researcher started collecting data through one-on-one interviews with the faculty and focus groups with the students. The interviews and focus groups took place over two weeks and lasted approximately thirty minutes each. Prior to each interview, an informed consent document was signed by each of the participants.

A basic set of questions regarding the role of music in the liberal arts curriculum was asked of all the participants. The GEC faculty members, music faculty members, and students were then asked specific sets of questions regarding the intended learning outcomes of general music courses and how they reflect the intended learning outcomes of the general education curriculum. The GEC faculty members were asked about general education requirements, the intended learning outcomes of the general education curriculum, and how “Experiencing Music” fulfills those learning outcomes. The music faculty members were asked questions about their teaching methodologies, course content, course-specific intended learning outcomes, and how these learning outcomes fulfill the institutional intended learning outcomes. In the focus groups, students were asked questions about their personal interactions with music, the effectiveness of the course-specific learning outcomes, and the acquired knowledge in general music courses and its application in their daily lives.

Data Analysis

After the interviews and focus groups were completed, the recordings were transcribed. This information was then analyzed for broad themes and common perspectives which were used for further evaluation. These themes and perspectives were then further analyzed for similarities and differences between the GEC faculty, music faculty, and student perspectives.

After examining the broad themes from the different perspectives of the administrators, faculty, and students, specific areas of connection and disconnection in the intended learning outcomes and the institutional mission of the liberal arts were assessed. These areas of connection and disconnection were used to determine the specific strengths and weaknesses of the general music courses and their intended learning outcomes. From this information, a set of implications for practice and future research were developed.

Benefits

This research aims to benefit music faculty and administrators of the general education curriculum, as research of this kind does not currently exist. Little research examines how music is taught to non-majors in the liberal arts. Music appreciation courses have often relied on the same teaching methods, despite changes in the liberal arts curriculum and a growing desire for personal relevancy. The results of this research provide the chosen institution of research with valuable information regarding the role of music in the liberal arts curriculum. This research also provides other institutions with a model and a foundational understanding of how the course-specific intended learning outcomes of general music courses reflect the institutional mission of the liberal arts.

Presently, the value of a liberal arts education is under attack due to financial and social pressures, causing institutions to reevaluate their liberal arts curriculum and adapt to changing needs and desires (Logan & Curry, 2014). This research provides a foundation upon which institutions can increase the effectiveness of their general music courses and strengthen the role of the universal art form of music in the liberal arts curriculum.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of the study was to understand more accurately the effectiveness of the intended learning outcomes of general music courses, both at the course and institutional levels. The results from the study include a qualitative analysis of the intended learning outcomes of general music courses. These qualitative findings are grouped into three sets of themes representing the three categories of participants: General education Committee faculty, music faculty, and students. Four themes emerged from each set of responses, which then formed the basis of further exploration and discussion.

General Education Committee Faculty Perspectives

Two general education committee (GEC) faculty members were interviewed in order to understand their perspectives on the effectiveness of the intended learning outcomes of general music courses. The following themes emerged from those interviews: an emphasis on creativity and the human experience, the challenges of the aesthetic literacy learning objective, the importance of active participation in music, and significant challenges facing general music courses.

In general, these participants were more critical of the effectiveness of the general music course in achieving both the course-level and institutional-level intended learning

outcomes. In essence, Dr. Smith stated, “Well, quick answer is they're being met to some level. Are they being met to the level that we want? My understanding is no.”

Emphasis on music as a means of creativity and understanding the human experience. When asked about the purpose of music, both GEC faculty members expressed a focus on creativity, beauty, the human experience, the liberal arts, and a means through which society and history could be understood. Dr. Smith said,

Music is one of the most important things that exists among humans in terms of how we react to the world, react to one another. It has to do with what is good, beautiful and true. It is hard to imagine a world without it. Music is something that can be enjoyed at the lowest level by people who hardly know what they're doing, what they're hearing, but can create sounds and music and have enjoyment from it, up to the most deepest, most fulfilling thing a human can be part of when you listen, or even better, participate in creating and making music.

The GEC faculty members reinforced the essentially human aspect of music found throughout every culture and has been used to probe the most fundamental and philosophical questions of life.

The Aesthetic Literacy learning outcome. Despite music's predominance as an art form throughout history and in modern society, Dr. Smith noticed a significant lack of focus toward music within the aesthetic literacy learning outcome. While the general education curriculum was not intentionally designed for individual departments to bear the responsibility for individual learning outcomes, this reality emerged in relation to courses such as “Experiencing Music” and the aesthetic literacy learning outcome. In relation to the aesthetic literacy learning outcome, Dr. Smith said,

We have these three outcomes of the aesthetic literacy. But the third one says, "Students will explore their own creative potential as both participants and observers." And I think if we were doing our part, we would encourage students to go beyond the observing, beyond the consuming and into the creative process. But I'm sure we're falling far short of that. But I guess I would kind of say my true answer to your question is, we haven't really . . . our outcomes are not very music focused. And I wonder if that's a weakness in our aesthetic literacy objective.

Formal assessment of the general education learning outcomes has not occurred but will happen in the near future. Dr. Williams said, "What we've not done is gone back, and said, 'Okay. Well, what we want to see is a content mapping where you show us which of these outcomes are being addressed in each of your courses.'"

Importance of active participation. Both GEC faculty member participants mentioned the lack of opportunities for students to participate actively in or experience live music in a structured and guided format as part of the course. Modes of this course occur during the interterm in which students can travel to Chicago or New York to hear major symphony orchestras and operas. However, the majority of students do not have these opportunities in the mode of the course they take during the regular semester. Dr. Williams explained,

So that would be my major criticism, at the present, is that art as an experience, or art as a bad experience, as some students have dubbed it is a pretty hard course to deliver on campus. Even if every professor who goes in to that course to teach it is a crackerjack professor, you're just – you're limited if it's a one-dimensional

slide on a PowerPoint that you're showing, or it's only the sound that's coming out of a speaker that's playing.

Challenges. The GEC faculty recognized a core group of challenges that hinder the aesthetic literacy and course-specific learning outcomes. These challenges include class sizes that are too large, a lack of active participation and opportunities to experience music, and the inherent difficulties of the course managed by two departments and multiple faculty members within each department. Additionally, the main challenge observed by the GEC faculty members includes faculty overloads, faculty attitudes, and the use of adjunct faculty members. Dr. Williams stated,

There are some faculty who go into their courses, and for them that course is a passion. And if you're a student, you can quickly identify the faculty who don't see this as "I have to- I've been assigned to teach this. I have to teach it." You can see that in the sparkle in their eyes as they're teaching, and the voice inflection, I mean they really work to make it come alive, and in music that you can think of faculty- a couple faculty members, in particular, do that. But the problem, the challenge, is that those people also have other classes to teach, and so there are times when we have to bring in adjunct faculty, or we have to assign faculty, for whom this is not a passion that that they have. . . . So, I don't think those outcomes can be met; unless, faculty, like that, who are delivering the course.

Music Faculty Perspectives

Three music faculty were interviewed to gain their perspectives on the effectiveness of their course-specific intended learning outcomes in addition to the

general education learning outcomes. These interviews presented the following themes: music as a means of self-expression and understanding the human experience, a focus on interactive teaching strategies, use of assessment techniques, and significant challenges facing general music courses.

The music faculty also proved mixed on whether or not general education and course learning outcomes are actually met. While each of the learning outcomes in the general education are addressed to some degree, the music faculty have varied views on whether students actually learn and retain this information. During the interviews, only one of the music faculty referred back to all seven of the general education learning outcomes, not just aesthetic literacy.

Emphasis on music as a means of self-expression and understanding the human experience. When asked about the purpose of music, three music faculty members expressed a focus on music as a means of self-expression, understanding beauty and the human experience, expanding the mind through the liberal arts, communication, and understanding music as a divine gift. Dr. Brown shared,

And that there's something about music since we've found it in every culture you know, discovered on the planet. It seems almost like an, I don't know. It's somehow almost like the- since I have a soul, I have music, too because it seems to be in every person, everywhere. So, in some ways, music feels like it's something that . . . It's almost like a natural force . . . that we've encoded and codified so that we can make it emotionally expressive. But at the same time, teach it in a way that's logically, precise, and all those things. So, I think about it

as more than just an art form, almost as it's a way of life and that it's been a blessing from the Lord from the beginning.

Use of interactive teaching strategies. During the interviews, each of the three music faculty shared the teaching strategies used to engage students beyond basic lecturing. These interactive teaching strategies included discussion groups, live instrument demonstrations, listening assignments, and concert attendance. While a variety of interactive teaching strategies are employed in these courses, their effectiveness is ultimately limited by the large class sizes and lack of direct guidance, such as attending a concert as a class and immediately debriefing after the concert with the professor. When asked about the use of interactive teaching strategies, Dr. Miller explained,

You know, the title of the course is "Experiencing Music," and so I think if you, if the assessments really are about experience, then you have to get to what that question is after. But I think that because it's framed as a music history class that it can be very easy to not get to that part.

While each of the music faculty articulated different teaching strategies, Dr. Brown did express a lower incorporation of these strategies in their course than the other two faculty members.

Use of assessment techniques. In tandem with the use of interactive teaching strategies, each of the music faculty to some extent stressed the importance of informal and formal assessment techniques to improve the quality of their teaching and student learning. These assessment techniques included informal conversations with students,

use of survey questions after a quiz or at the end of the semester, and formal course evaluations. Dr. Stephens explained,

I have them write on the back of the quiz, “Tell me, when are you most engaged in this class? When do you start becoming disengaged? Right away. When you start losing interest, then I want to know that.” You know? And I can come at it a different way.

Challenges. During the interviews, the three music faculty expressed a wide array of challenges for this course. These challenges include class sizes that are too large, the perception that students feel forced to take this course, the vast amount of material to cover in seven weeks, and the lack of exploration regarding the aesthetic literacy learning outcome in the general education curriculum. In particular, prominent challenges mentioned by all three music faculty involved the difficulty of balancing theoretical and historical information with other course content, as well as interactive teaching strategies.

The music faculty not only felt unsure about how much theoretical and historical information to include, but they also seemed concerned if students would grasp this information in such a limited time. Dr. Miller said,

I'm not sure that everyone needs to know what a plagal cadence is, but I think the idea that, that music has phrasing, just like spoken language does and that some people use it well, and some people don't use it well, or some people look like they're not using it well are purposely trying to be obtuse, right? . . . So how do you talk about all of that without doing too much theory?

The amount of theoretical and historical information also presents a challenge of teaching to the highest or lowest common denominator as students in this course possess a wide range of previous knowledge and exposure to classical music. If music faculty include too much theoretical and historical information, they can isolate students who cannot grasp such a large amount of new information in a short time. Conversely, if not enough technical and historical information is included, students will not have the proper vocabulary and knowledge to describe and interpret the music in class.

Student Perspectives

During two student focus groups, the following themes emerged: an emphasis on music as a form of self-expression and entertainment, the need for interactive teaching strategies, an increased awareness of different musical styles, and the challenge of negative preconceived notions of this course. In general, these participants were more positive regarding the effectiveness of the general music course in achieving both the course-level and institutional-level intended learning outcomes. However, they also tended to provide slightly vague answers. The slight ambiguity of some answers makes it challenging to understand how much the students actually learned as a result of taking this course.

In regard to the effectiveness of the course-level learning outcomes, Maria made the following statement:

I think they were definitely met. I still . . . As you were reading those vocabulary words, I still remember very vague definitions of what those are. And I had Dr. Brown, and we also spent a lot of time just listening and experiencing the music,

which I really appreciated because it was more interactive and up to us to pay attention.

The students in the focus groups, including the student above, were largely unable to recall specific technical or historical information but could recall how the music made them feel or specific opportunities when they could actually participate in the music process, either through focus listening or active participation.

Emphasis on music as a form of self-expression and entertainment. When asked about the purpose of music, these eight students expressed a focus on music as a means of self-expression, cultural understanding, communication, and entertainment. Michael stated,

I think one of the things that I took away most from it was that music is a way of expressing yourself in the different emotions that you have at different times, which can definitely change over different times as different types of music convey different things and express different things about different people.

The majority of the students' answers reflected a desire for personal relevance in music as they seek to understand themselves and the cultures with which they interact.

The need for interactive teaching strategies. While the majority of students expressed the importance of the faculty member's enthusiasm and energy for music, interactive teaching activities proved to be more effective in increasing student learning and engagement when coupled with the faculty member's enthusiasm. Maria shared,

I think doing things like listening to different pieces, or like sometimes we watched videos, I think, but most of Dr. Brown's classes were more lecture style with a PowerPoint, and, like, there were a few interactive things throughout. But

I think because the class was so large and because a lot of it was PowerPoint, a lot of the class was really disengaged from it.

Maria also shared that many students spent the entire class on their laptops and were disengaged due to the predominant use of lectures and the large class size. Conversely, Michael said,

For Dr. Miller, one of things I remember for him is he was very engaging. And one of the things that I really appreciated and I thought was cool is when we'd be talking about certain types of, like melody or certain, types of music, he would go over to the piano and he'd start, like, improvising playing it, which I thought was amazing too that he could do that. But that got the class engaged.

Increased awareness and appreciation of different musical styles. While all of the students spoke to an increased awareness and appreciation of different musical styles, the students tended to speak in broad generalizations rather than specific examples. Only two of the students expressed a newly found interest in a specific style of music studied in the course that they continue to actively listen to today. The majority of the students' musical preferences, however, were not impacted by this course. While some of the students mentioned occasionally listening to classical music, this practice was relegated to using classical music as a means of focusing while studying or reading.

Interestingly, the students' prior participation in or exposure to classical music, or lack thereof, did not have an impact on their learning, engagement in the course, or musical preferences after the completion of the course. In a few instances, prior participation in or exposure to classical music actually presented an obstacle to student learning, as these students felt the course was redundant and unhelpful. Ashley stated,

I wouldn't say it's changed my preferences, but as I've said at the beginning about liberal arts and, how the music course affects is . . . it opens your views. And, it provides opportunities for you to see something you might not have been familiar with in the past. And I, like I would say that happened to me.

Despite the lack of expanded musical preferences, the majority of students noted an increased awareness and appreciation for other forms of music, and most importantly noted an increased ability to listen deeply to the music relevant to them. These students expressed an ability to go beyond the lyrics and emotions of the music they listen to on a daily basis by exploring the form and musical content more deeply.

Challenge of negative preconceived notions. One of the major challenges to student learning in this course is preconceived notions formed through negative feedback by upperclassmen or other students who took this course prior to the students in the focus groups. Three students expressed how these negative preconceived notions of the course hindered their own learning. Luke shared,

I wish I would've tried harder in the class because I think that's the biggest thing that hindered my learning was my own perception of what the course was going to be. And that if I would've divorced myself from that expectation, I would've given it more attention and I would've gotten more from it. And I still feel like, you know, I got something from it. I still feel like I learned, and I walked away with new understanding, but I felt like it could've been greater and more developed if I would've applied myself more.

Due to the required nature of this course for most students at this institution, students constantly interact with other students who have previously taken the course. Students

often feel forced to take general education courses and do not find these courses personally relevant to their lives or aspirational goals. Even if a group of students on campus experienced significant learning in this course, it can be more challenging for students to reject the more commonly accepted neutral or negative perspectives towards this course, rather than begin the course with a positive expectation of a significant learning experience.

Conclusion

The results of these interviews and focus groups provided a large breadth of information concerning the effectiveness of the intended learning outcomes of general music courses from the perspectives of the general education committee faculty members, the music faculty who teach these courses, and the students who have previously taken these courses. As mentioned by the three groups, many structural and pedagogical challenges exist in achieving the course-level and institutional-level intended learning outcomes. The primary challenge mentioned by each group that prevents the full achievement of the intended learning outcomes is the lack of active participation, especially in a course titled “Experiencing Music.” The highly nuanced and varying viewpoints between the three categories of participants proves much work remains to be done in addressing the effectiveness of the intended learning outcomes of general music courses. The three groups of themes revealed areas of connection and disconnection between the course-level and institutional-level intended learning outcomes, as well as their ultimate effectiveness, discussed further in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Discussion

A review of the data suggests the course-level and institutional-level intended learning outcomes are met to some extent, but they are not met to the extent desired by the different interviewed constituents. Despite the critical to mixed views of both the GEC faculty members and the music faculty members on the effectiveness of the “Experiencing Music” course, many of the students in the focus groups expressed a limited but increased awareness and appreciation of other musical styles, as well as a moderately increased ability to listen to music more deeply. These increases were generated in many ways by the music faculty members’ enthusiasm and passion for the course material. Even though students saw an increase in these areas, the students generally did not experience the same increases in the retention of historical and technical information studied in the course.

The interviews and focus groups provided information from which primary areas of connection and disconnection between the three groups are discernible. In particular, five main areas of connection and disconnection provide a foundation on which faculty for general music courses such as “Experiencing Music” can address these challenges and effectively achieve the intended learning outcomes set forth by the course and the institution.

- Perspectives differ widely on the effectiveness of the course-level and institution-level intended learning outcomes between GEC faculty members, music faculty members, and students.
- Students perceive the purpose of music differently than GEC faculty members and music faculty members. Students understand music as a means of self-expression and entertainment, whereas music faculty members and GEC faculty members, in particular, understand music as a means of understanding creativity, the human experience, and self-expression.
- Active participation was stressed as an important aspect of general music courses by each group but is not consistently present in “Experiencing Music.”
- The current course structure does not adequately support student learning or faculty teaching efforts.
- A wide range of challenges, such as large class sizes and preconceived notions about the course, prevent full achievement the intended learning outcomes.

The lack of consistency between the three groups of responses provides significant opportunities for growth as reflected in the data and the literature.

Implications for Practice

The results of the interviews and focus groups revealed significant opportunities to increase the effectiveness of the intended learning outcomes. These implications for practice include an increased focus on active participation and listening, an increased focus on personal relevance, an increased support for faculty teaching efforts, introductions to significant structural changes to the course, and modifications in the course-level and institution-level intended learning outcomes.

Increased focus on active participation and listening. Drawing upon the data and Small's (1998) idea of musicking, general music courses must move away from the strict boundaries of the largely historical approach of teaching to include more interactive teaching strategies. In particular, these teaching strategies should include opportunities for students to participate actively in the music-making process and listen to live music.

A potential approach to designing more interactive classes is to spend more time studying a select group of pieces or composers, rather than trying to cover the entirety of music history. This approach proves increasingly important given the divided nature and timeframe of the "Experiencing Music" course between art and music. This approach is reflected in the data, as many students could not recall specific historical or technical information since taking the course. However, they were able to recall specific activities or how the music made them feel.

The course activities in which students were invited to participate actively were also most salient to their learning. When reflecting upon an activity, David said, "So, I don't remember this. . . . Like the all the details of the activity, but all I remember is Dr. Stephens got on the piano and started playing. And then everybody in the class just started singing."

By introducing more interactive teaching strategies into the course and spending less time on historical or technical information, music faculty could increase opportunities to focus on more categories within Fink's (2003) Taxonomy of Significant Learning Experiences. The introduction of more aspects within Fink's (2003) taxonomy would allow for more holistic learning rather than solely focusing on factual knowledge gained through lectures. A foundation of historical and technical information regarding

music is vital for student learning in this course. However, the course must also be properly balanced with interactive teaching strategies that allow students to experience and participate actively in music.

In addition to interactive teaching strategies, general music courses need to consider more strongly the musical preferences of the modern student. A common theme in the student focus groups was a desire for personal relevance and self-expression. The music of Beethoven and Mozart, for example, is still performed all over the world. Their apparent relevance, though, is not as easily accepted in today's society where students are inundated with more musical options than ever before as a result of streaming services, such as Apple Music and Spotify.

Music faculty members should not abandon the works of Beethoven and Mozart but, rather, should use these composers as a foundational context for the modern musical preferences of students. Through learning how to listen to the great works of the Western classical tradition, students could make more informed decisions about their musical preferences. Music faculty members can encourage their students to analyze current music trends by providing opportunities in class to listen to and reflect upon current popular music and how it relates back to music of the Western classical tradition.

Introduce significant structural changes to the course. One of the most common challenges mentioned by the general education faculty members and the music faculty members was the large class sizes that do not lend themselves well to student engagement or interactive teaching strategies. As reflected in the music faculty member interviews, students find it challenging to appreciate interactive teaching strategies or talk about the emotions they felt while listening to a piece of music with fifty other students in

the class, many of whom they do not know. The reduction of class sizes may be financially unrealistic, as doing so would require offering more sections each semester. As it stands, however, the large class sizes prove a major hindrance to student learning.

While not an original area of focus for the current study, another main challenge expressed by the general education faculty members and music faculty members was the shared structure of the “Experiencing Music” course by the music and art departments. This hybrid model exposes students to both visual art and music. Doing so comes at the significant cost of only having half of a semester to cover a large amount of content.

In relation to the challenge of only having half of a semester to achieve the intended learning outcomes, Dr. Miller said, “So we have 28 class periods and I'm not sure how you provide a foundational knowledge of western music history. I just don't know. I'm not sure that that's a realistic goal.” No other general education courses at this institution attempt to cover two subjects within a one semester course.

A potential option to solving this challenge is to stop utilizing the dual-focus hybrid model and instead turn the course into two separate, semester-length courses. Students could then choose from the two courses based on their personal preferences. By splitting the single course into two separate courses, music faculty members could spend more time on material in class, cover more material in a deeper manner, and introduce more opportunities for interactive teaching strategies.

The current course confines simply do not allow for all of these goals to take place in a manner that fully satisfies both the course-level and institutional-level intended learning outcomes. This system would also allow each course to be a three-hour course, rather than a four-hour course that currently poses scheduling challenges for students.

Increased support for faculty teaching efforts. One of the most important aspects of student learning and the effectiveness of the intended learning outcomes is the faculty who teach the courses. General music courses are often taught by adjunct faculty members or taught as an overload by full-time faculty members. Additionally, most music faculty are not trained in how to teach this type of course as part of their undergraduate or graduate studies.

In order to increase the effectiveness of general music courses, special efforts should be considered to ensure the faculty are supported in their teaching. This course should preferably be taught by full-time faculty members who have the necessary disposition to engage with students for whom music may not be a familiar field of study. When needed, adjunct faculty members can be utilized to teach this course, especially those who have been trained or have prior experience in teaching this type of course.

Additionally, it is extremely beneficial for this course to be taught within a normal teaching load, rather than as part of an overload. Due to faculty retiring and failed attempts to hire a new faculty member, the music department at the researched institution currently has two fewer full-time faculty than the previous academic year. This challenge led to most of the music faculty teaching overloads, teaching courses they have not previously taught, and hiring adjunct faculty members to teach courses they cannot teach due to their full schedules.

The music faculty can also work together to create a common curriculum and course design for the “Experiencing Music” course. Doing so would allow for consistency among the faculty; a stronger, unified focus on achieving the intended learning outcomes; and an established framework for full-time or adjunct faculty new to

teaching this course. It is natural and even beneficial for each of the faculty members to incorporate their own style in teaching this course.

However, the three music faculty each had very different approaches to teaching this course. The lack of a cohesive course design between the three music faculty members may contribute to students' negative preconceived notions prior to taking the course. If a student has a negative experience with a faculty member who was not prepared to teach this course or does not utilize interactive teaching strategies, this student's peers may bring a negative attitude into the course the following semester, even though those students have an engaging and interactive faculty member.

Modify the course-level and institution-level intended learning outcomes. In its present form, "Experiencing Music" is unable to completely fulfill the course-level and institution-level intended learning outcomes. While institution-level intended learning outcomes are less adaptable due to a larger breadth of focus and more stakeholder involvement, special consideration should be taken to include more language involving music when these outcomes are reassessed as mentioned by Dr. Smith. Noting the importance of self-expression and personal relevance to students, music faculty should provide modest adjustments to their intended learning outcomes reflective of these aspects. As part of a liberal arts education, students need to know how to use the skills and knowledge they learned in the classroom in their everyday lives.

Implications for Future Research

The current study was exploratory in its focus of understanding the effectiveness of the intended learning outcomes of general music courses. Further studies should include larger student focus groups to assess more accurately the student experience.

While saturation of the data was achieved, a larger number of students participating in the focus groups may have offered more nuanced interpretations of the findings.

The current study should also be repeated with the other modes of the “Experiencing Music” course to determine if those modes prove more effective at achieving their intended learning outcomes. In addition to the semester option, this course is also offered during the January interterm, as well as during the summer as an online course. Specific sections of the interterm mode include a trip to New York or Chicago, during which students can attend performances as a group at major symphony orchestras and opera houses. An additional study focused on comparing the different modes of the course may reveal the impact of the presence or lack of group concert attendance of high-quality performances.

Finally, the current study should be repeated at other institutions in order to develop a set of best practices that can be used in general music courses. This phenomenological case study was only performed at one institution. Through the process of repeating the methodology at other institutions, a list of best practices could be developed. The resulting list of best practices would help general music courses in meeting their intended learning outcomes. Also, this best practices list could help general education committees to develop their institution-level intended learning outcomes.

Limitations

The largest limitation to this study was the small size of the student focus groups. While the majority of students at the institution of research have taken this course, only eight students in total signed up for the focus groups. While data saturation was achieved, larger focus groups would provide a stronger sense of accuracy. Due to the

voluntary focus group nature, the students who opted to participate may have been more likely to participate due to strong positive or negative experiences with the course.

Also, the students in the focus group only represented the semester mode of the course, which was an intentional limitation to ensure consistency amongst the responses. This specific focus allowed the students in the focus groups to share a more similar experience, rather than combining them with the students who participated in either the January interterm option or the online option. Additionally, this limitation provided the most significant data relevant to the research since the majority of students participate in the semester mode the course.

Lastly, though the researcher intentionally worked to avoid introducing any personal bias throughout the process, some may be present. While the researcher never participated the “Experiencing Music” course as a student, the researcher did study music as an undergraduate student at the institution where data was collected. As a result, the researcher developed a personal narrative of the course based on the mixed experiences of other students who participated in the course. The present research was an opportunity to find areas to address within that narrative to improve student learning. The researcher worked to avoid personal bias by asking indirect, open-ended questions, maintaining a neutral stance while analyzing the data, and using a third party to transcribe the interviews and focus groups.

Conclusion

Music is an essential aspect of the human experience that deserves exploration and understanding by all people. Due to the innate humanity found within music, its study cannot be only for those who have dedicated their lives to its practice. The process

of teaching general music courses to non-musicians or individuals not pursuing formal music studies presents many challenges for student learning. While institutions of higher education utilize specific intended learning outcomes for these general music courses, it is vitally important for an institution to assess not only whether the course-level goals are met but also the institution-level goals. Institutions of higher education cannot produce liberally educated students if the students do not effectively learn in their liberal arts courses.

In this particular case study, the institution where the research took place is achieving the course-level and institutional-level intended learning outcomes to a certain extent but not to the extent desired by general education faculty members, music faculty members, and students. While many challenges to student learning in general music courses exist, the present study provides multiple options to enact positive change. This study sought to challenge general education faculty members and music faculty members to reimagine what student learning looks like in the general music classroom. In a world saturated with a vast array of music, higher education institutions should seek to develop students who are able to discern and listen well to the music humanity has created.

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Appendix A

Survey Questions

General education Committee (GEC) Faculty Members:

1. What is the purpose of music?
2. What is the role of music in a liberal arts education?
3. Why is the study of music important to the education of a student today?
4. What, if any, criteria has the college established for the learning outcomes of the general education curriculum?
5. What, if any, criteria has the college established for the learning outcomes of the fine and performing arts?
6. How were these criteria developed?
7. From your perspective, how does this course achieve these criteria?
8. From your perspective, do you believe these learning outcomes are being met in this course?
9. Why has the general education committee decide to make this course a requirement for most majors?

Music Faculty Members:

1. What is the purpose of music?
2. What is the role of music in a liberal arts education?
3. From your syllabus, what are the intended learning outcomes for your course? Do you believe that these outcomes are being met?
4. How do the intended learning outcomes of your course contribute to a liberal arts education?
5. How is the content of your course structured? (Historical approach, theoretical approach, mixed approach, alternative approach)
6. What do you believe, if any, are the challenges of teaching this kind of course?
7. How do you simultaneously engage students with no personal experience and some or significant personal experience in music?
8. What kind of teaching methods and activities do you utilize in your course? How do these teaching methods and activities move the student beyond foundational knowledge into the areas of application and integration?
9. How do you assess your teaching in this course?
10. What do you believe is the most important and impactful aspect of a general education music course?

Students:

1. What is the purpose of music?
2. What is the role of music in a liberal arts education?
3. Prior to this class, did you have any experience with classical music? (Performing, lessons, attending concerts, etc.) Explain.
4. Do you believe the intended learning outcomes for this course were met? Explain.
5. Did the teacher create an engaging learning environment through their teaching style and activities? Explain.
6. What did you learn from this course?
7. What was most impactful about this course?
8. Has this course impacted your view of classical music? If so, how?
9. Have you listened to classical music and/or attended a concert since completing the course?
10. Has this course impacted your view of your own music preferences? Explain.

Appendix B

Informed Consent

TAYLOR UNIVERSITY INFORMED CONSENT

“All I Remember is Everybody Started Singing”: A Qualitative Exploration of the Intended Learning Outcomes of General Music Courses

You are invited to participate in a research study of the intended learning outcomes of general music courses. You were selected as a possible subject because of your role as the director of general education, professor of a general music course, or a student who has taken a general music course. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

The study is being conducted by Geoffrey Nelson and Taylor University, Department of Higher Education and Student Development.

STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to better understand the effectiveness of general music courses in promoting and strengthening the values of the liberal arts.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

If you agree to participate, you will be one of approximately 20 subjects who will be participating in this research.

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY:

If you agree to be in the study, you will do the following things:
Answer a series of questions regarding the purpose of music, the intended learning outcomes of general music courses, and whether these outcomes were effectively met in the course.

RISKS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

While on the study, there are not foreseeable risks.

While completing the survey, you can tell the researcher that you feel uncomfortable or do not care to answer a particular question.

BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

For administrators and faculty, the benefits to participation that are reasonable to expect are a stronger understanding of the current effectiveness of the intended learning outcomes of general music courses and potential means of improving these outcomes. There are no direct benefits to the students who have already taken this course.

ALTERNATIVES TO TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

The only alternative is not participating.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Your identity will be held in confidence in reports in which the study may be published.

Organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis include groups such as the study investigator and his/her research associates, the Taylor University Institutional Review Board or its designees, the study sponsor, Dr. Todd Ream, and (as allowed by law) state or federal agencies, specifically the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) etc., who may need to access your research records.

COSTS

There are no costs to participating in this study.

PAYMENT

You will not receive payment for taking part in this study

COMPENSATION FOR INJURY

There will be no medical compensation for injury since there are no risks for injury in this research.

FINANCIAL INTEREST DISCLOSURE

No individuals involved in this research will benefit financially from this study.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

For questions about the study, contact the researcher Geoffrey Nelson at 330-531-2173. If you cannot reach the researcher during regular business hours (e.g. 8:00AM-5:00PM), please email him at geoffrey_nelson@taylor.edu.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDY

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with Taylor University.

SUBJECT'S CONSENT

In consideration of all of the above, I give my consent to participate in this research study.

I will be given a copy of this informed consent document to keep for my records. I agree to take part in this study.

Subject's Printed Name: _____

Subject's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Date: _____

