

**HARD TO EARN, EASY TO LOSE: THE EXPERIENCES OF THREE MUSIC
LEARNING THEORY-BASED ELEMENTARY GENERAL MUSIC
TEACHERS AND UNIFIED CURRICULUM WRITERS**

A Thesis
Submitted to
the Temple University Graduate Board

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
MASTER OF MUSIC

by
Maria C. Parks
December 2024

Thesis Approvals:

Alison M. Reynolds, Advisory Chair, Music Education
Beth M. Bolton, Music Education
Nathan Buoviri, Music Education

ABSTRACT

Local education agency (LEA) administrators often require elementary teachers of standardized tested subjects English Language Arts, math, science, and social studies to use pre-published pacing guides and scripted lesson plans. These administrators do not require the same of music educators. As such, elementary general music educators often create and use their own lesson plans with the same cohort of students over multiple years. They are responsible for the liberating yet daunting task of helping students meet local or state standards with few to no mandates for short- or long-term planning.

Elementary music teachers may draw from published music curriculums or create their own based on established music pedagogical frameworks (Bresler, 1995; Bugos, 2011; Hernandez, 2022; Mynatt, 2018). As an elementary general music teacher, I have drawn heavily from Gordon's (2012) Music Learning Theory (MLT) as my pedagogical basis for music instruction. MLT-based materials I have used for kindergarten through 4th grade include *Jump Right In: The Music Curriculum, Revised Edition* (Taggart et al., 2000, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2010). However, I have found that I need to supplement *Jump Right In* with contemporary materials to craft a modern curriculum fitting my unique teaching context and students. When I looked to the literature to understand how other MLT elementary general music teachers have written their own curriculum, my searches yielded no results.

To improve instruction in elementary general music, the purpose of this qualitative research was to understand the experiences of elementary general music educators who created and used LEA-wide elementary MLT-based curriculums. The single question guiding my study was, how do MLT-based, elementary general music

teachers describe their experiences writing and implementing a formal curriculum in their LEA?

I selected a qualitative, interview-based design for my study. I used purposeful sampling to recruit three elementary general music teachers who had worked with colleagues in their LEA to write and implement an MLT-based curriculum. Using Seidman's (2006) three-interview design, I gathered information from the participants. Because of my personal connection to the study, I used Braun and Clarke's (2013, 2022) six-phase iterative approach to conduct reflective thematic analysis: familiarizing myself with the data; coding; generating initial themes; developing and reviewing themes; refining, defining, and naming themes; and writing up.

While analyzing the data, I developed codes from which sixteen subthemes emerged. I assigned each of these subthemes to one of three emergent themes: (a) teachers were steadfast and determined, (b) teachers were advocates, and (c) LEA policies helped and hurt. Participants' data became organized by one overarching theme, *instigators of and obstacles to change*.

For these three teachers, the experience of creating and using LEA-wide elementary MLT-based curriculums was *hard to earn and easy to lose*. I present implications for music educators and their LEA administrators who aim to undertake similar projects. I discuss personal implications, and I make recommendations for future research.

Keywords: Music Learning Theory, elementary general music, teacher-created curriculum, reflexive thematic analysis, critical qualitative approach

This project is dedicated in loving memory of my grandmother, Marie Tropiano, RN. She was the first woman in our family to complete higher education, supported all our educational dreams, and adored listening to my classroom stories. I love and miss you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis is only possible because of the support I received from so many individuals along the way. Thank you to my loving parents for fostering my passion for music, making this degree possible, and forever supporting my dreams.

Thank you to my research advisor Dr. Alison M. Reynolds for your relentless commitment to my growth. I am a better teacher and scholar because of you. Your warmheartedness, attention to detail, and belief in your students' success is something I will carry with me through my life. I am certain our work together has only just begun.

Thank you to my committee members Dr. Beth M. Bolton and Dr. Nathan Buonviri for your guidance and support in helping to make this thesis the best it can be. I appreciate your generosity of expertise and time in all I have learned from you.

Thank you to my three participants for your courage, insight, and willingness to be part of this project. Your dedication to your students and your craft is an inspiration and the stories of you and your colleagues deserve to be told.

Thank you to my professors and teachers at Temple University, University of Delaware, Half Hollow Hills High School West, Candlewood Middle School, and Otsego Elementary School. I hold a special place in my heart for each of you.

To my students, past, present, and future: you are the reason I sought out this degree and you have impacted me more than you will know. Thank you.

Thank you to the friends and colleagues who cheered me on. Love especially to Diana, Christopher, Brock, Lauren, Margaret, Beatrice, and Baby O. LGR!

I am forever grateful to my husband Chris for walking beside me through this degree. Life used to be so hard, now everything is easy 'cause of you. I love you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE	1
Review of Literature	7
Music Learning Theory Overview	8
Audiation.....	9
Skill Learning Sequence.....	10
Music Aptitude	14
Learning Sequence Activities	16
Music Learning Theory Written Curricula	17
Seminal American Works in Curriculum Design.....	20
Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives	21
Bruner’s Spiral Curriculum.....	23
Wiggins and McTighe’s Understanding by Design and the National Core Arts Standards	25
Meyer et al.’s Universal Design for Learning	29
Classroom Teachers as Curriculum Writers	32

Music Educator Professional Learning and Collaboration	35
Purpose and Research Questions	37
2. RELATED RESEARCH.....	38
Klossner (2018).....	38
Bugos (2011).....	40
Wright (2023).....	41
Nowak (2012).....	42
Korte (1962).....	43
Summary	44
3. METHODOLOGY	46
Qualitative Approach	46
Theoretical Framework	47
Semi-Structured Interviews	49
IRB Approval and Participant Recruitment.....	50
Setting and Data Collection	53
Member Check.....	53
Reflexive Thematic Analysis	54
Phase One: Familiarization	54
Phase Two: Coding	54
Phases Three and Four: Generating Initial Themes; Developing and Reviewing Themes.....	55
Phases Five and Six Phases Five and Six: Refining, Defining, and Naming Themes; Writing Up	56
Revising My Research Questions	56

4. RESULTS	58
Theme One: Teachers Were Steadfast and Determined.....	60
Theme Two: Teachers Were Advocates	66
Theme Three: LEA Policies Helped and Hurt	71
Summary	77
5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	79
Research Purpose and Question, Study Design, and Analysis	79
Results and Conclusion.....	80
Implications.....	81
Personal Implications.....	82
Suggestions for Future Research	84
Epilogue.....	84
REFERENCES	86
APPENDICES	96
A. A MODEL OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES BASED ON A TAXONOMY FOR LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSING: A REVISION OF BLOOM'S TAXONOMY OF EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES.....	96
B. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL	97
C. IRB APPROVAL	100
D. INTERVIEW FAMILIARIZATION NOTES.....	101
E. MIND MAPS.....	104
F. COPYRIGHT PERMISSION LETTER FROM GIA PUBLICATIONS, INC.	107

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Participant, School, and Local Education Agency Information.....	52
2. Summary of Themes and Subthemes.....	59

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Levels and Sublevels of Skill Learning Sequence	12
2. Original Bloom's Taxonomy (1956/1984) and Updated Bloom's Taxonomy.....	21

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In 2009, President Barack Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced Race to the Top (RTTT), the first piece of broad federal education legislation since 2001's No Child Left Behind. Policymakers configured RTTT as a competitive grant program with \$4.35 billion available to be awarded across state departments of education and other educational agencies, requiring them to submit plans to reform educational practices in line with the Obama administration's priorities. RTTT plan scoring rubrics encouraged statewide adoption of newly designed college and career-ready standards; modification of No Child Left Behind-era end-of-year assessments to fit these grade level standards; prioritization of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education; creation of data systems to record and measure student standardized test scores; and linkage of student test scores to teacher evaluation systems (US Department of Education, 2009).

State Departments of Education were to submit RTTT plans in January 2010 to be considered for the first round of funding, or submit in July 2010 to be considered for the second round of funding (US Department of Education, 2009). To earn higher scores on these submission attempts, states could promise to adopt and apply the newly developed English Language Arts and Math Common Core State Standards as part of their proposals. By the end of 2010, 38 states and the District of Columbia rushed to do so. Twenty-six states committed to the writing, adoption, and promotion of the Next Generation Science Standards by the end of 2011 (Next Generation Science Standards

Lead States, 2013; State Education Practices, 2015). Forty-five states and DC Departments of Education divided into two groups—the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers—to generate assessments tailored to the Common Core State Standards. In 2010, these groups earned \$360 million in RTTT funds to further their standards-based testing development (Gewertz, 2015). In the wake of these ambitious and hastily constructed RTTT plans, local education agencies (LEAs) including school districts and charter schools prepared to make major changes to their instructional and student and teacher assessment practices, whether their state earned RTTT funding or not. In March 2010, the US DOE awarded the first round of RTTT funding only to Delaware and Tennessee. US Secretary of Education Duncan remarked these states, “have statewide buy-in for comprehensive plans to reform their schools. They have written new laws to support their policies. And they have demonstrated the courage, capacity, and commitment to turn their ideas into practices that can improve outcomes” (Holland, 2010).

When Delaware and Tennessee received first-round RTTT funding in early 2010, I was a senior in a public high school in New York, eager to graduate and study music education at University of Delaware that fall. During my undergraduate studies, including student teaching, I was naïve to the changing public education landscape and ways education policies might subsequently affect my chosen path. In fall 2014, my career as a Delaware public school music educator began. In the decade since then, now in 2024, I can pinpoint ways RTTT has continued to impact my students and me. For example, in spring 2015 during my first year of teaching, Delaware first administered SBAC tests. I remember third through fifth grade students arriving to our music classes overly energetic

and unable to focus after sitting for the hours-long, computer-administered tests, and I still can count on the same thing happening during testing season each school year. Each summer, the local newspaper publishes results of these tests by school, ostensibly for readers to review the effectiveness of individual schools, individual LEAs, and our state education system as-a-whole (Horn, 2022). The distilling of benefits of young children's education to standardized test score metrics in English Language Arts (ELA), math, science, and social studies continues to drive administrative policies at the state, LEA, and school level.

As another example, since joining my current school district in 2018, our district's Teaching and Learning Team purchases contracts yearly for prepackaged elementary ELA, math, and science curriculums and pushes out a social studies curriculum for district-wide use across its 21 schools to ensure student success on SBAC tests and other standardized and district-created assessments. District administration has hired both building- and district-wide content area leads who provide additional curricular and teaching support and evaluation. Building principals have attended professional development (PD) on these curriculums so that they know what to look for instructionally and to help teachers successfully deliver the curriculum with fidelity. My colleagues who teach in elementary homerooms must do their best to learn the content in each of these district-mandated curriculums, adapt publishers' materials to engage their 20 to 30 unique students in learning, and keep up with district curriculum pacing guides so that they address all necessary content by the time testing season rolls around. Building administrators have built near-weekly professional learning community (PLC) meeting time into each school's master schedule for grade level teachers to plan, reflect, and

problem solve together in accordance with the curriculum. Although some elementary homeroom teachers confess to feeling micromanaged by the prescribed instruction and oversight, all have a good district-directed sense of what they are meant to be teaching and when to teach it. They also know that their students will engage in standardized testing in ELA, math, science, and social studies in grades 3-5 and our school's test results will be published in the local newspaper each summer.

My ten years of experience as a music teacher in Delaware public schools are very different from that of an elementary classroom teacher. Compared with my homeroom teacher colleagues who must master pedagogy in four separate subject areas and lean on each other for support, I am responsible for teaching only general music to all my students, and I am the only general music teacher in my building. Instead of teaching 20 to 30 students in the same grade level each year, I am responsible for at least 575 students spanning grades 1-5. In contrast to homeroom teachers who see their students for 4.5 hours of instructional time daily, I see each child for a single 45-minute class period every 5 or 6 school days, totaling up to 28 or 33 45-minute classes each school year. If a student remains in my school for the entirety of their elementary education, I will have seen them for a maximum of just 123 hours over five years. Those details underpin a further distinction between the pressures faced by the elementary homeroom teachers in my district and those on me: My state and district allow me the freedom to choose what content to teach and when and how to teach it. I find this a mixed blessing. Although I am relieved that I am not subject to the pressure that homeroom teachers might feel, I am also daunted by the benefit of having complete autonomy to create and implement an

entire multi-year curriculum, daily lesson plans, and accompanying assessments for students in first through fifth grade.

In 2022, my district hired one of our own arts teachers to a brand-new district-level art specialist position. This position was created to better understand and address the needs of the more than 40 performing arts educators and programs—spanning the areas of general music, band, strings, choir, and theatre—and more than 30 visual arts educators and programs. In the time since, our district art specialist has provided optional curricular resources, broad state standards, and guidelines around a singular mandatory student assessment with implications for our yearly teacher evaluations; but, to date has supplied no other curricular mandates or initiatives for my subject-area colleagues and me to meet. My building administrators support my approach to music education and the performances my students and I give. But without curriculum expectations, my building administrators admit to being unaware of the music concepts students are learning when they observe in my classroom and do not have content-specific feedback to offer me.

Though I am the only general music teacher in my building, I am fortunate to meet weekly with my building-level PLC team comprising the library, physical education, Spanish, STEM, and visual art teachers. The members of my team do not have instructional content in common, so we cannot focus on curriculum and instruction. Instead, we spend our PLC time discussing classroom management, student concerns, or interdisciplinary projects. When our district arts specialist schedules time for the elementary general music teacher team to meet, she often needs us to use our limited time available to attend to issues such as festival planning, materials ordering, and rostering, rather than what many of us yearn to discuss: curriculum writing.

Even though members of our district elementary general music team come from different undergraduate backgrounds, most of us draw pedagogical inspiration from Edwin E. Gordon's Music Learning Theory (MLT). Our district arts specialist advocates wonderfully for our programs and makes regular visits to our classrooms. Thus far, her responsibilities have been too demanding to organize developing and mandating use of a unified, MLT-based elementary scope and sequence outlining what should be taught and when it is taught.

Elementary general music teachers make pedagogical choices that impact hundreds of students yearly and teach those students for "several consecutive years, in contrast to teachers of subjects such as math, resulting in a greater responsibility for curricular continuity and thoroughness on the part of music teachers" (Bugos, 2011, p. 41). My ten-year teaching journey thus far includes teaching positions in two schools. This fact, coupled with the disruption of the Coronavirus Pandemic, means I have yet to teach five consecutive years of consistent in-person music instruction. Now back in the classroom consistently, I have devoted my concentration to uncover what is possible for students in each grade level to accomplish during elementary school general music. I yearn to apply my increased understanding of MLT and my skills engaging my students in its tenets by codifying a five-year curriculum for my students in my classroom. To date, I have not written such a plan, and that task is one I would prefer to undertake with like-minded colleagues. However, without being provided dedicated meeting time with my music colleagues, I have begun to tackle it alone.

As I reflect upon my early years of teaching, I know that, although my lessons seemed to engage students who successfully made music, each achievement they made

was discrete. I lacked confidence in myself when planning and developed lessons that I would now describe as “MLT-inspired” because my instruction overall lacked successful scaffolding of students’ sequential skill acquisition and transfer. In other words, I was unsure what my students were supposed to learn and when they were supposed to learn it, and I did not have close music colleagues to ask.

Now, as I create my week-to-week or month-to-month plans, I do my best to plan comprehensively using the loose parts of: my undergraduate coursework; self-directed graduate coursework partially funded by my district; professional learning and resources provided by my district; professional learning and resources I seek out, fund, and purchase myself; and the insight I’ve gleaned from my decade of classroom experience. I am pedagogically aligned with more music colleagues in this district than in my previous district and know that I teach most similarly to one specific elementary general colleague. This music colleague and I sometimes find pockets of time after school to meet via Zoom and consult each other about instructional challenges, look at student assessment data together, and discuss what our students might need to learn next. When we talk, we often find ourselves wondering, what might the music teaching and learning process look like if our entire district elementary general music team was provided time, PD, and robust resources to create, use, and maintain a unified elementary general curriculum? This wondering was the impetus for my literature review and ultimately for this study.

Review of Literature

Elementary general music teachers can base their instruction on many pedagogical approaches, such as Dalcroze Eurythmics, the Orff Schulwerk approach, the Kodály method, and Gordon’s MLT (Marshall, 2024). MLT is the only one of those that

originated in the United States and is the youngest and most emergent: of 96 PK-5 general music teachers in the United States responding to a survey, 23 (23.96%) consult MLT for their instructional planning. That statistic was in comparison to 25 (26.04%) who consult Dalcroze, 57 (59.38%) who consult Orff Schulwerk, and 60 (62.50%) who consult Kodály (Mynatt, 2018).

I first learned about MLT in my undergraduate program, and I began my teaching career in 2014 with initial understandings of it. In summer 2019 I completed my first Gordon Institute of Music Learning (GIML) Professional Development Levels Course (PDLC) in Elementary General Music Level 1 and in summer 2022, I completed Piano 1. My learning in MLT PDLCs elevated my teaching practices in my elementary general classroom and in my private piano studio and has propelled me on a mission to understand how to create longitudinal elementary general written curriculum using MLT.

Music Learning Theory Overview

Gordon (2012) described MLT as, “an explanation of how we learn music. ... not a method nor a theory of teaching” (p. 25). He published his first comprehensive writing about MLT in 1975 and, until his death in 2015, he revised aspects of MLT through decades of performing, teaching, observing, and researching music students. Gordon worked with colleagues to establish GIML in 1995; GIML continues to serve as the premier international professional organization for the advancement of MLT. GIML offers PDLCs for certification in the strands of Elementary General Music, Early Childhood Music, Instrumental Music, Choral Music, and Piano (GIML, 2024).

Gordon and other scholars have explored MLT concepts and outcomes in projects and writings for nearly five decades. Three primary principles of MLT are audiation,

sequential learning, and music aptitude (Gerhardstein, 2001; Gordon, 2012; Marshall, 2024; Shouldice, 2021).

Audiation

Audiation in music is analogous to thought in language (Gordon, 2012). Gordon coined this term to distinguish being able to understand tonal functions, rhythm functions, and harmonic functions within a context from skills he understood practitioners to label as inner hearing, such as labeling intervallic distances, rhythm durations, and chord qualities devoid of context. MLT practitioners believe that expert musicians audiate, rather than relying on notation or an instrument, when listening to, reading, writing, recalling, improvising, and/or composing music. Audiation is how humans make aural sense of music present or not present, comparing it to the music they already know, and how they use those comparisons to predict what might come next (Gordon, 2013b). When one is audiating, one can also be inner hearing, but is experiencing a broader and deeper understanding of music context.

Parents, guardians, caregivers, and practitioners can begin fostering audiation skills in children in utero and from birth using *preparatory audiation* or *informal guidance*. For this early childhood instructional period, music engagement should look and sound more like play and exploration than formal music lessons or classes (Gordon, 2013a; Reynolds & Valerio, 2024; Reynolds et al., 2020; Valerio et al., 1998). Adults sing or chant to engage children in musical sound using diverse tonalities, meters, and styles coupled with movement. They offer props such as scarves, puppets, bean bags, and small hand percussion instruments to children to encourage opportunities to play while coordinating one's breathing, movement, and singing or chanting. This approach to early

childhood music engagement, where silences and all responsive vocalizations and movements are validated, works well both when children engage one-on-one with a caregiver at home and when children engage in groups to learn from each other and from adults. Music skills are acquired socially; as children realize that their singing, chanting, or moving does not necessarily match others', they begin to self-correct. Through informal guidance, children begin to audiate and are guided through coordinating breath, body, and voice—all useful for transitioning into formal instruction in music (Gordon, 2012; Gordon, 2013a).

Gordon offered types and stages of preparatory audiation theoretically associated with age ranges in early childhood. However, he also asserted that music learning does not necessarily correlate with chronological age. For example, both a very young child and their caregiver who encounter a song in phrygian tonality in a preparatory audiation class might be considered the same musical age for that tonality. In that way, Gordon suggested that adults also could benefit from audiation-based informal guidance before beginning formal music learning in any musical context.

Skill Learning Sequence

When a child exhibits coordination between breath, body, and voice, they are ready to move from informal guidance to formal instruction along the *skill learning sequence*. Gordon (2012) offered practitioners a skill learning sequence (Figure 1) for guiding learners' music acquisition. Gordon's materials and most MLT practitioners in the Western part of the world focus on major tonality, minor tonality, usual duple meter, and usual triple meter as the first contexts for students to perform in and become proficient with. They expose students to other tonalities (e.g., dorian, phrygian, lydian,

mixolydian, aeolian, locrian) and other meters (e.g., usual combined, unusual paired, unusual unpaired, usual combined) throughout instruction to scaffold later proficiency in these contexts (Gordon, 1990a, 1990b, 2001, 2012). Teachers prioritizing MLT-based instruction mostly focus on functional Western tonal, rhythmic, and harmonic patterns (i.e., content) as musical building blocks. With a proficient music educator modeling flexible and fluent audiation and adeptly applying the skill learning sequence, students engage in songs and chants by listening, singing, chanting, improvising, creating, reading, writing and playing instruments in a wide variety of tonalities and meters. Teachers use a whole-part-whole process in which they (a) introduce a whole—a song or chant—to establish a tonal or rhythmic context, (b) engage students in singing or chanting musical patterns which deliver the content (e.g., tonic patterns, dominant patterns, macrobeat/microbeat patterns, division/elongation patterns) and use the scaffolded skill learning sequence to guide students towards understanding the tonal or rhythm parts, and (c) return to the whole song or chant once again for students to apply their newfound audiatonal insights. MLT-based teachers also espouse the importance of movement using the Laban efforts of space, time, weight, and flow to aid the body in internalizing rhythm and understanding expressive elements of music (Gordon, 2012, 2013a; Reynolds et al., 2020; Valerio et al., 1998; Weikart, 2006).

As shown in Figure 1, Gordon’s skill learning sequence levels are divided into two broad categories: *discrimination learning*, during which students learn skills and knowledge by rote from teachers’ direct modeling and *inference learning*, during which the teacher removes their direct modeling and offers opportunities for students to apply skills and knowledge learned through discrimination learning (Gordon, 2012).

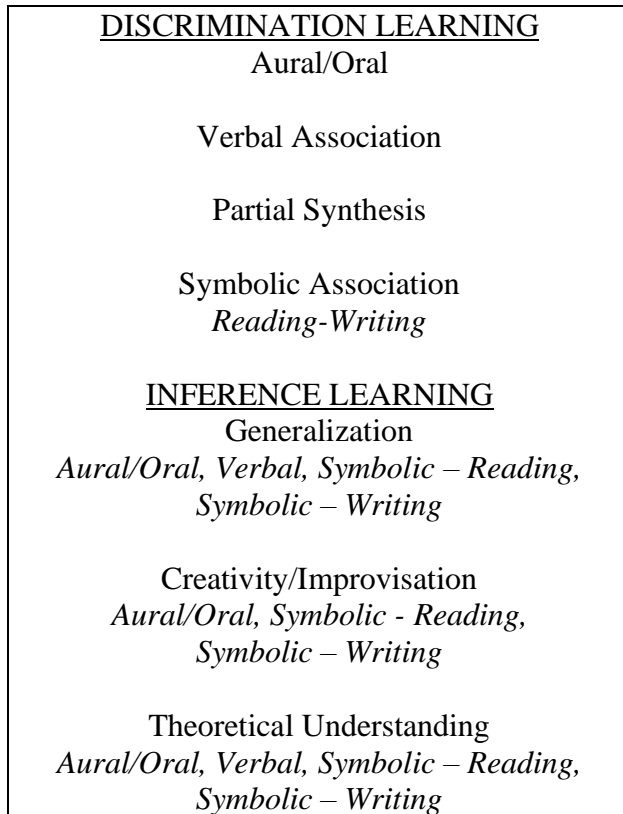


Figure 1. Levels and Sublevels of Skill Learning Sequence. Adapted from *Learning Sequences in Music* (p. 98), by E. E. Gordon, 2012, GIA Publications, Inc. Copyright 2012 by GIA Publications, Inc. Adapted with permission. See Appendix F.

The skill learning sequence levels are mainly taught in stepwise order, but skilled MLT-based teachers frequently guide students in bridging activities, temporarily skipping ahead to a different level of the skill learning sequence. When students are bridging to more advanced levels, they will not experience success at the same rate as if the same level was approached by stepwise movement. However, through bridging, students are given an opportunity to stretch their musical skills, resulting in more advanced audiation upon return to the level from which they bridged (Gordon, 2012).

In the first level of the skill learning sequence (aural/oral), students listen to a teacher model and subsequently sing or chant patterns in imitation. Students are then taught to perform the same patterns on moveable-do solfege or beat-function rhythm syllables (verbal association), guided to sense tonal and rhythm contexts through comparison (partial synthesis), and ultimately read and write familiar tonal and rhythm patterns (symbolic association – reading and writing). In the final level of discrimination learning (composite synthesis – reading and writing), students then combine the skills learned at the previous two levels (partial synthesis and symbolic association) to begin to recognize tonality or meter when given familiar tonal or rhythm patterns to read and write (Gordon, 2012).

In the inference learning side of the skill learning sequence, teachers design lessons to guide students in using the skills and knowledge they learned in discrimination learning to teach themselves. In the first level of inference learning, teachers provide opportunities for students uncover for themselves and perform the resting tone or macrobeats/microbeats to an unfamiliar song or chant, determine whether tonal or rhythm patterns are same or different, and aurally identify where a given pattern occurs in a song or chant (generalization). These activities can be performed on neutral syllables (at the aural/oral sublevel), with solfege or rhythm syllables (at the verbal association sublevel), and/or with notation (at the symbolic – reading and symbolic – writing sublevels). Notational tasks here include reading and writing unfamiliar tonal and rhythm patterns, a contrast to the writing of familiar patterns as in symbolic association and composite synthesis. In the next level of the skill learning sequence, teachers encourage students to, from audiation, create and improvise music as it is performed (at the

creativity/improvisation aural/oral sublevel) or notated (at the creativity/improvisation symbolic – reading, and creativity/improvisation symbolic – writing sublevels). When a teacher bridges students from discrimination learning to any of the aforementioned inference learning levels (e.g. from the aural/oral level to the creativity/improvisation – aural/oral level), teachers gain a more thorough understanding of student audiation, and students return to the lower level with increased musical understanding (Gordon, 2012).

In the final level of Gordon’s skill learning sequence, students learn explanations for all they have learned through discrimination learning, audiating, and performing (theoretical understanding). Akin to learning the grammar rules of a language, here students learn to apply, in context of a tonality and meter, content traditionally associated with music theory coursework. This includes identifying letter names of pitches on the staff, learning about the rhythm tree, aurally labeling intervals, or exploring any number of intellectual, theoretical, and analytical musical concepts. Teachers should avoid bridging to the theoretical understanding level. Although many traditional music methods and coursework begin by teaching students these facts, when teachers delay such information in the MLT approach, students bring functional, contextual, and audiatonal meaning to their learning through the syntax of music, having performed and created upon musical examples featuring theoretical concepts (Gordon, 2012).

Music Aptitude

Gordon (1965, 1979, 1981, 1986, 1989, 2012, 2013a) highlighted that all persons are born with *music aptitude*, the potential to achieve in music. He believed, “as there are no unintelligent persons, there are no unmusical persons” (Gordon, 1979). He reported that music aptitude is normally distributed among the population and varies from person

to person. Gordon's research found that aptitude exists for a plethora of domains including melody, harmony, tempo, meter, phrasing, balance, and style, and varies from domain to domain within a person. He regarded aptitude as how easily achievement may come for each person in each music domain.

Gordon developed several music aptitude tests for music educators to use with their students and normed them for students in multiple grade levels. Elementary general music educators may use the Primary Measures of Music Audiation (Gordon, 1979), Intermediate Measures of Music Audiation (Gordon, 1986), and Musical Aptitude Profile (Gordon, 1965) assessments. Each of those tests include Tonal and Rhythm subsections.

In his research, Gordon found that aptitude test scores were inconsistent on otherwise reliable test instruments for children ages five to nine years, but scores became consistent at approximately the age of nine. This resulted in Gordon's distinction between developmental and stabilized music aptitude. Until approximately nine years old, a child's musical environment and engagement causes developmental changes in music aptitude, reminding us of the potentially under-tapped, profound importance of this period in a child's music education journey. Through Gordon found that aptitude becomes stable at approximately age nine, he repeatedly emphasized that persons can continue to achieve musically at any age.

Gordon intended that music educators use students' aptitude test results to ensure that, for students under the age of nine, their instruction is indeed helping each to maintain their maximum music aptitude. Before and after students' aptitude stabilizes, educators can also ensure equitable instruction through music aptitude testing. When

armed with music aptitude test results, music teachers can tailor instruction to meet each student's specific educative needs (Gordon, 2012).

Learning Sequence Activities

Developed by Gordon (2001), *Learning Sequence Activities* (LSAs) offer concentrated classroom time devoted to tonal or rhythm pattern interactions and are unique to MLT. Gordon published instructions for engaging in LSAs the *Reference Handbook for Using Learning Sequence Activities* (2001) that correspond with tonal patterns or rhythm patterns published in respective pattern *Register Books* (1990a, 1990b). LSAs aid music educators in both navigating the skill learning sequence and differentiating instruction for students of varying musical aptitudes. Each LSA in the *Register Books* focuses on two components of MLT: 1) specific tonal or rhythm discrimination or inference skill (e.g., echo, label, improvise) within the skill learning sequence and 2) scaffolded tonal functional content characterizing tonalities or rhythm functional content characterizing meters.

In his *Register Books*, Gordon provided one pathway for teachers to apply the skill learning sequence and build musical pattern vocabularies with their students in a variety of musical contexts and with a variety of musical content. Most LSAs consist of three patterns from Gordon's (1978) research on pattern difficulty: one easy to audiate, one moderately difficult to audiate, and one difficult to audiate. Students with low music aptitude in the domain of focus are responsible for engaging with the easy pattern only, students with average music aptitude are responsible for engaging with both the easy and moderately difficult patterns, and students with high music aptitude are responsible for

engaging with all three patterns. Differentiation in this way keeps students from becoming frustrated or bored with instruction (Gordon, 2001, 2012).

To achieve whole-part-whole music instruction, teachers are meant to pair the loose parts of LSA skills with whole song- or chant-focused classroom activities in the same musical context and using the same musical content as the LSA. This instruction provides students a chance to reinforce skills and concepts learned in LSAs, move in ways that help coordinate their bodies and increase their musical understanding, engage in tonalities and meters that may not have been the focus of the day's LSA, and build listening, singing, chanting, improvising, creating, reading, writing and instrumental skills. Classroom activities too can be differentiated according to individual aptitude levels through assigning tasks (e.g. patterns, vocal parts, instrumental parts) of varying difficulty in purposeful ways to specific students (Shouldice, 2021).

Music Learning Theory Written Curricula

MLT is complex. The summary provided thus far lays only a foundation for understanding its multifaceted dimensions. Though MLT is not a method in that it does not prescribe what should be taught nor when it should be taught, Gordon's skill learning sequence has provided music educators with a set of musical development principles upon which instruction should be built and he makes suggestions for how to navigate the skill learning sequence to make decisions about which skills, contexts, and content to present when (Gordon, 1990a, 1990b, 2001, 2012). Gordon published the LSAs and his first elementary general music curriculum (Gordon & Woods, 1986) as examples of how MLT could be applied in elementary general music classrooms. New and revised MLT-based resources exist for early childhood music in *Music Play* (Valerio et al., 1998) and

Music Play 2: Part A and Part B (Reynolds et al., 2020a, 2020b), for instrumental music (with separate books for winds and percussion, strings, and recorder—often taught in elementary general music settings) in *Jump Right In: The Instrumental Series* (Grunow et al., 2000a, 2000b, 2020), for piano in *Music Moves for Piano* (Lowe, 2005), and for Kindergarten through fourth grade elementary general music in *Jump Right In: The Music Curriculum, Revised Edition* (Taggart et al., 2000, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2010).

Each of the *Jump Right In: The Music Curriculum, Revised Editions (JRI)*, of which Gordon was a coauthor, contain a scope and sequence that aligns song and chants and accompanying classroom activities with LSAs (Taggart et al., 2000, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2010). Authors wrote the *JRI* scope and sequence to aid educators in providing students “the opportunity to achieve all of the goals as defined for each of the levels within the [1994 National] standards document [for music education]” (Taggart et al., 2000, p. xxv). In 2014, the State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education (SEADAE) published new music standards focusing on artistic processes and forty states have since adopted some form of these standards (SEADAE, 2014a, 2024). Therefore, *JRI* requires updating. Much has changed for children, educators, music, and music education since 2000, and textbooks in all subject areas eventually become outdated. Furthermore, differences in contact time, class sizes, and student needs mean that *JRI* may not be possible for teachers to implement as published in all learning situations. The *JRI* scope and sequence is a great starting point as Gordon’s skill learning sequence endures in 2024. However, music educators may desire to supplement with contemporary materials to craft a modern curriculum fitting their unique teaching contexts, just as I strive to do in my classroom.

Current and former MLT elementary general music classroom educators have published their MLT-based tonal and rhythm curriculum work as a reference point for other educators. Bluestine (2000, pp. 171-186) outlines sequential tonal and rhythm objectives that coordinate with Gordon's (1990a & 1990b) *LSA Register Books* and delineates these objectives by grade level in accordance with what worked best in his classroom that school year. Former elementary general music classroom educators Reese (2019) and Shouldice (2021) provide a similar breakdown of LSAs and accompanying objectives by grade level. The lists each have slight differences. This can be due to both complex issues such as varying personal philosophies around pacing and classroom priorities, or to simpler logistical issues such as class size or contact time with students.

As important as tonal and rhythm skills are, they alone do not make a comprehensive music curriculum. Conway and Hodgman (2024) categorized music curriculums as objectives-based, skills-based, knowledge-based, or repertoire-based. Many music educators will use a combination of all four. Reese's (2019) curriculum breakdown contains LSA-based objectives and accompanying skills but also includes classroom instrument skills to support audiation, movement skills to develop bodily coordination and sense of expression, and knowledge-based planning around instrument families and expressive terms. Reese et al.'s (2021) planning materials include a chart of specific folk dances found in Weikart's (2006) guide to movement, which is an example of more repertoire-based planning. The authors provide just a handful of examples of MLT-based curriculum documents upon which elementary general music educators can base their curricula. The documents are by no means comprehensive, and may or may not reflect the philosophical viewpoints, educational priorities, or local standards

requirements of other music educators. For music educators setting out to develop curriculum particular to their teaching situations, a prudent starting point might be the work of general curricular design theorists of the last century.

Seminal American Works in Curriculum Design

Curriculum can have multiple meanings and associations for all involved in the educative process (Campbell et al., 2021; Schubert, 1986). Does curriculum refer to the list of courses a student must pass to successfully graduate from an institution, or is curriculum the scope and sequence of skills and concepts students are taught during their coursework? Does curriculum include the activities students engage in and the meaning they draw from those activities or only the meaning educators aim to convey in those activities? Is it prepackaged and widely commercially available, or is it teacher-designed and belonging to a community? For the purposes of this project, I will use this definition:

Curriculum is a standards-based sequence of planned experiences where students practice and achieve proficiency in content and applied learning skills. Curriculum is the central guide for all educators as to what is essential for teaching and learning ... the structure, organization, and considerations in a curriculum are created in order to enhance student learning and facilitate instruction. Curriculum must include the necessary goals, methods, materials and assessments to effectively support instruction and learning. (Rhode Island Department of Education, 2023)

Walker (1980) argued that “a rich confusion is the right state for curriculum writing” (p. 81). Over the past seventy years, key American education psychologists and scholars such as Bloom (1956/1984), Bruner (1977), Wiggins and McTighe (2005), and Meyer et al. (2014) have helped to demystify the creation and delivery of curriculum and the student learning process. Some of their assertions about designing curriculum align with some of the principles of MLT. As in many educators’ publications, the previously listed

authors provide plenty of references to applications to standardized tested subject areas but make scant mention of applications to visual or performing arts in their work. Thus, music education researchers, and in some cases MLT-specific researchers, wrote more specifically about the functions of these curricular principles in music education.

Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives

Bloom (1956/1984) worked with a group of college examiners to develop his original taxonomy of educational objectives as illustrated on the left side of Figure 2. His pyramid-shaped hierarchy remains the basis in education for classifying and illustrating cognitive skills from lowest-level to highest-level.

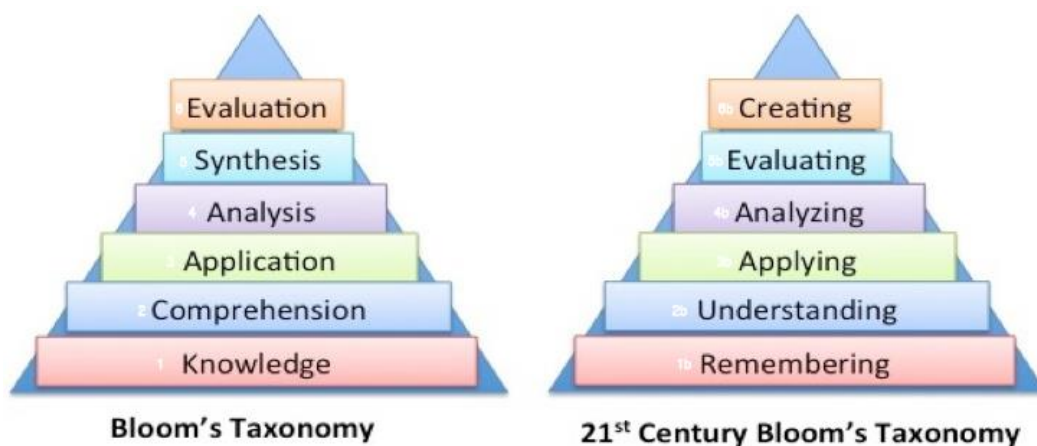


Figure 2. Original Bloom's Taxonomy (1956/1984) and Updated Bloom's Taxonomy (2001). Adapted from *Bloom's Taxonomy Old and New*, by Global Change Lab, 2016. (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/149065276@N07/25358925239>). CC BY 2.0.

Bloom and his collaborators Engelhart, Furst, Hill, and Krathwohl posit that rote knowledge and memorization, the most basic level of learning within a subject area, are

important prerequisites for developing additional skills within that subject. Once students possess factual knowledge in any given subject, educators can then engage students in learning that requires increasing complexity and abstractness to deepen student understanding (Armstrong, 2010). Bloom's (1956/1984) taxonomy outlines those educational goals as progressing from *knowledge* along steps up the pyramid through the categories of *comprehension*, *application*, *analysis*, *synthesis*, and *evaluation*.

Nearly half a century after Bloom published his taxonomy, Anderson and Krathwohl published a revision as illustrated on the right side of Figure 2 (2001). They made notable updates, including (a) changing category names from nouns to verbs to reflect the dynamic acts of learning and teaching, (b) listing verbs within each taxonomical category name to aid teachers in designing student tasks in alignment with the applicable level of learning, and (c) reversing and relabeling the final two levels to *evaluate* (formerly evaluation) followed by *create* (formerly synthesis) (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Armstrong, 2010). Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) also added a second dimension: a taxonomy of four types of knowledge from most basic to most complex: factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive (see Appendix A). Educators can use the two dimensions concurrently to plan curriculum that appropriately scaffolds students towards deeper understanding and higher-order thinking and ability.

Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) revised version of Bloom's taxonomy highlights the importance and challenge of the foundations of music education. The introduction of the knowledge domain speaks to the complexity of developing as a musician. One does not need to look further than a beginning vocalist or instrumentalist juggling both cognition and motor skills to see the importance of procedural knowledge

in music. Furthermore, that musician can only effectively practice at home and improve at their craft if they possess metacognition skills (Hanna, 2007). When determining that the create domain belongs as the highest cognitive category, Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) provided utmost support for arranging, composing, and improvising. These skills require that students apply an understanding of musical syntax to generate a unique output that makes musical sense (Hanna, 2007)

Verbs in Bloom's revised taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) have parallels in Gordon's (2012) skill learning sequence. For example, starting at the bottom of the cognitive process dimension in Appendix A, MLT-based music educators ask students to echo/recall patterns at the aural/oral and verbal association levels; classify tonality, meter, or function when a pattern is performed on syllables at the verbal association level; differentiate between tonalities or meters of a series of patterns at the partial synthesis level; integrate musical notation with patterns they previously audiated and sang or chanted at the symbolic association level; and create different tonal or rhythm ideas at the creativity/improvisation level. Bloom's revised taxonomy and Gordon's skill learning sequence mirror each other.

Bruner's Spiral Curriculum

Bruner (1977) also developed a paradigm pertaining to structures of learning. Consistent with Bloom's placement of the knowledge level as the foundational, lower level of his pyramid, Bruner asserted that children can be taught the basic principles of any subject in a developmentally appropriate manner; there is no need to deny students foundational knowledge based on age alone (Bloom, 1956/1985; Bruner, 1977). This is consistent with Gordon's advocacy for music education from birth, his development of

preparatory audiation, and his championing of informal guidance to best guide babies and toddlers toward formal musical understanding (Gordon, 2012, 2013).

Bruner (1977) is most famous for his spiral curriculum, asserting that once subject-area concepts are introduced, “a curriculum as it develops should revisit these basic ideas repeatedly, building upon them until the student has grasped the full formal apparatus that goes with them” (p. 13). Because of Bloom (1956/1984) and Bruner (1977), most educators likely have learned the benefit of introducing content with simple recallable facts and planning curricula to revisit these educational concepts over the course of a child’s educational career. Efficient educators increase the cognitive demand and depth of knowledge upon students in each encounter with the subject matter or skill.

Bruner’s (1977) notion of a spiral curriculum has high relevance in the elementary general music classroom where the same teacher is responsible for consecutive years of a child’s education. Howell (2009) suggested to music educators that different skills such as singing, playing instruments, reading notation, and listening can be thought of as individual “pillars” (p. 37) upon which a curriculum is built. Just as Bruner asserted that young learners can grasp the foundations of any concept, Howell recommended that in a successful elementary general music curriculum, teachers present readiness for each pillar early in a child’s music education career. In well-designed curricula, teachers help students advance the separate pillars together at a similar pace rather than experiencing overdevelopment in any one area at once. When teachers plan this way, “content will be reinforced from one grade level to the next to ensure that whatever content students possess at the end of elementary school will be stored in long-term memory ... for the remainder of their lives” (Howell, 2009, p. 39). Howell recommends that to help an

elementary schooler learn skills and concepts that they can recall readily over their elementary school years and beyond, teachers should repeat songs (rather than widening the song repertoire) and increase cognitive demands through higher order activities to fit the various stages of music development.

Gordon's (2001, 2012) skill learning sequence and LSA process shares similarities with Howell's applications of Bruner's spiral curriculum in music. Gordon, too, recommends that children have repeated opportunities to sing and chant the same patterns over their years of classes, engaging with and applying those patterns in many ways across the discrimination and inference learning levels of the skill learning sequence: from echoing them on neutral syllable in the aural/oral stage; to bringing audiatonal meaning to the notation of that pattern in the composite synthesis stage; to improvising, creating, and analyzing patterns in notation in theoretical analysis.

Wiggins and McTighe's Understanding by Design and the National Core Arts Standards

In a later instructional design milestone, Wiggins and McTighe (2005) developed the process of Understanding by Design (UbD) as a framework for lesson, unit, and curriculum planning. UbD challenges educators to use a three-step backwards design of "i) Desired Results, ii) Evidence, iii) Learning Plan" (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 18). In this process, educators consider established goals (e.g., state or national standards) meant to be addressed during learning, and then parse out the enduring understandings, essential questions, and important objectives for the unit of study, which all point to a "desired result" (Bowen, 2017, The Benefits of Using Backward Design section, para. 3). Bluestine (2000) outlines sequential MLT-based tonal and rhythm objectives that

coordinate with Gordon's (1990a & 1990b) *LSA Register Books*, and teachers can use these objectives to begin the UbD process.

Once teachers have established learning targets, Wiggins and McTighe (2005) then recommend that they focus on assessment by creating or locating cumulative performance tasks that ask students to use their learned knowledge or skill in real-world ways. Educators generate rubrics or other rating systems that determine that students have achieved proficiency with the content. In designing such performance tasks, teachers are encouraged to use verbs towards the top of Bloom's revised taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). Quizzes, tests, or homework assignments that reflect a lower level of cognition can serve as formative assessment touchpoints for preliminary encounters with the subject material prior to spiraling upwards, but high-quality cumulative summative assessments ask students to engage with content on a deeper level.

Following the process of UbD, once educators determine learning goals and assessment practices, they can then continue to work backwards to thoughtfully plan learning activities such as lectures, reading, group discussions, hands-on encounters, or other instructional strategies (Bowen, 2017). UbD helps instructors avoid activity-based planning. This mindset puts intent behind every planning choice for instructional time in both individual lessons and in overarching curriculum maps. Used in conjunction with Bloom's taxonomy (1956/1984), UbD empowers teachers to select appropriate learning activities that build on preexisting student understanding, thus avoiding student boredom or frustration that comes with engaging with content at too low or too high of an educational goal.

In the context of UbD, revisiting Conway and Hodgman’s (2024) assertion that music curricula can be objectives-based, skill-based, knowledge-based, or repertoire-based begs the question: is mastery of a specific piece of music—indicative of a repertoire-based curriculum—an appropriate standalone desired result? Wiggins and McTighe (2005) specifically warn against such activity-oriented design within their framework; repertoire should be part of a learning plan and never the end goal itself. Repertoire-based planning is perhaps a reason leadership and members of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), the leading national professional organization of music educators, partnered with “an ad hoc consortium of arts education thought partners” (SEADAE, 2014b, p. 2) to develop the 2014 National Core Arts Standards (NCAS) in dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts (SEADAE, 2014a). This standards overhaul was based heavily on UbD (SEADAE, 2014a).

The thought partners created the NCAS outline with four artistic processes—create, connect, perform/present/produce, and respond—across all art forms (SEADAE, 2014a). The standards were written to align with the contemporary Common Core State Standards in mathematics and ELA where appropriate. The NCAS and CCSS critically overlap in their inclusion of essential questions and enduring understandings, a vital component and a desired result for teachers and curriculum writers employing UbD. For example, in the music standards under the category of “rehearse, evaluate, and refine, [the enduring understanding that students should glean is] to express their musical ideas, musicians analyze, evaluate, and refine their performance over time through openness to new ideas, persistence, and the application of appropriate criteria” (SEADAE, 2014c, p. 5). The corresponding essential question is, “how do musicians improve the quality of

their performance?” (SEADAE, 2014c, p. 5). Furthermore, NCAS writers in consultation with McTighe provided model cornerstone assessments to demonstrate the type of summative learning outcomes students should be expected to produce when learning is aligned to these standards (SEADAE, 2014a; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Elementary general music educators have credited NCAS as the largest influence on their curricular priorities, although not all fully understand or know how to implement the standards (Hernández, 2022; Mynatt, 2018).

As of 2024, the NCAS have been adopted in some form by forty states, which would seemingly legislate on the state level that UbD is the most influential of the four general curricular development principles that appear in this paper (SEADAE, 2024). However, Johnson et al.’s 2017 mixed-methods study of UbD awareness and usage in the music education field found that the concepts are not broadly used by college music education professors. An initial survey of music teacher educators found that among 300 institutional representatives from music teacher preparation programs, only 25% of survey respondents agreed that music education faculty at their institution addressed UbD in their program (Johnson et al., 2017). Furthermore, 27% of these respondents rated their own understanding of UbD as *not at all*. As a result, the university professors and researchers concluded UbD was not well-known in their local communities of pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade teachers, and UbD knowledge came largely from school district provided PD rather than teacher preparation programs.

Survey participants who self-selected into an interview portion answered follow-up questions in a semi-structured interview format (Johnson et al., 2017). Researchers found that as this group of music teacher educators learned more about UbD, “they

realized that they were already incorporating many of those strategies into their teaching ... though they may have used many of the aspects of UbD, they did not use the term ‘Understanding by Design’ nor did they necessarily conceptualize it in that way” (Johnson et al., 2017, p. 17). Participants especially agreed that UbD would be applicable to general music classes rather than ensemble-based music classes. However, the extent to which backwards design with the end goal of meeting the NCAS is happening in public school general music classrooms remains unclear.

Meyer et al.’s Universal Design for Learning

As educators use Bloom’s taxonomy (1956/1984), Bruner’s spiral curriculum (1977), and Wiggins and McTighe’s UbD (2005) in curricular and lesson planning, it’s important that they consider each of their learners’ differing strengths and needs in the classroom. Drawing from the universal design movement in architecture which emphasizes building accessibility for all people regardless of age or ability, Meyer et al. (2014) generated Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a framework that helps instructors plan effectively for diverse learners. The goal of UDL is to center the entire community of learners by removing as many barriers to academic content as possible. UDL Guidelines challenge teachers to offer multiple ways for all students to (a) become engaged and interested in academic material, (b) represent or understand the material, and (c) act on and express their understanding of the material. These guidelines indicate checkpoints in each of these areas as concrete considerations for educators as they work to help a broad variety of students achieve success. Checkpoint examples include, “heighten salience of goals and objectives” (CAST, 2018) in the category of engaging students, or “offer ways of customizing the display of information” (CAST, 2018) in the

category of providing multiple means of representation. CAST, the organization responsible for publishing and maintaining UDL content, also posits that UDL-based planning can help students develop the mindset of continually striving towards becoming “expert learners who are purposeful and motivated, resourceful and knowledgeable, strategic and goal-directed” (CAST, 2018) not just in the subject at hand and for the duration of a specific course, but in all areas throughout one’s life.

CAST (2018), formerly the Center for Applied Special Technology, along with Meyer et al. and others, has updated UDL Guidelines multiple times since they were first published in 2008. Version 2.2 is the most current iteration. A critique of the current UDL Guidelines and related literature is that the body of work fails to explicitly account for how cultural backgrounds of students and teachers shape behaviors and perceptions of those behaviors, and that students in marginalized communities may have different outcomes than students with a more similar background to their instructor (Sadowski, 2014). CAST (2024) shared that a future Version 3.0 of the UDL Guidelines is in progress and aims specifically to address issues of bias, equity, and honoring and valuing all learner backgrounds. CAST’s update would bring UDL closer to its original ideal that:

A “successful’ or ‘rigorous” curriculum is one that provides genuine learning opportunities for all. It is responsive and nimble enough to adjust to the needs and interests of all users, including students, teachers, and members of the wider educational system. (Meyer et al., 2014, p. 76)

Teachers who use MLT-based instruction aligned with Gordon’s recommendations can meet the needs of learners of various music abilities. Gordon’s (1965, 1979, 1986, 2001, 2012) system of music aptitude testing and delivering LSA patterns tailored to students based on aptitude test results is a way of differentiating

MLT-based instruction to meet specific student needs. Furthermore, MLT practitioners and researchers are working on updating Gordon's (1990a, 1990b) *LSA Register Books* to reflect modern needs for teachers and students, as well as to better align tonal and rhythm patterns with the types of music Generation Z students are more likely to listen to outside of school (Shouldice, 2024).

Teachers, schools, and districts can broaden access to music education for all ages and at multiple levels of influence. In the case of early childhood general music classes, *Music Play 2: Part A* (Reynolds et al., 2020) provides a list of questions for teachers to consider when preparing for classes and encourages teachers' reflexive instructional practices—especially when students behave in unexpected ways. Authors recommend that teachers remain flexible in their responses to children's varied musical and movement contributions to class, which is a core tenet of MLT-based early childhood music instruction. In K-12 schooling, districts and schools can revise coursework offerings to include more students in music education. For example, administration might change policies to allow students of all ages to begin on an instrument, rather than limiting entry points to a fourth or fifth grade year when some students may not be developmentally ready to enroll (Hourigan, 2024). Teachers can make meaningful classroom changes by preparing specific apps or other technology-based ways for students to make music regardless of gross or fine motor and vocalization abilities (Darrow, 2016). Suggestions about how music educators can eliminate barriers to their content area abound.

Curricular planning is an exacting undertaking. Skilled curricular planners and educators work to ensure that instruction is (a) sequential, (b) guides students

appropriately to achieve learning targets and transfer skills successfully, (c) seeks to understand individual learner needs through continuous assessment, and (d) strives to meet the needs of all learners. Bloom's taxonomy (1956/1984) and Bruner's spiral curriculum (1977) help teachers in all disciplines ensure longitudinal education increases student understanding upon subsequent encounters with material. Wiggins and McTighe's UbD (2005) guides teachers to plan instruction by "begin[ning] with the end in mind" (Covey, 1989, as cited in Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 1). Meyer et al.'s UDL (2014) provides guidelines for ensuring all learners are considered in instructional planning, widening opportunities for success. Even though these authors may not have had music educators specifically in mind when researching and publishing their curricular development ideas, the taxonomy of educational objectives, spiral curriculum, UbD, and UDL strongly relate to tenets of Gordon's MLT and are important concepts for music curriculum developers.

Classroom Teachers as Curriculum Writers

Though prepackaged curriculum tailored to statewide accountability measures is nearly ubiquitous in ELA, math, science, and social studies, teacher-written curriculum is powerful. Garcia (2016) and Mouser (2019) both found that local teacher team-created curriculum in writing and math respectively resulted in higher student standardized test scores than in that of students taught using prepackaged curricula, showing the importance of materials developed by those who best know their students. Many studies have been conducted on co-designed curriculum, where classroom teachers and university researchers work together to solve a problem and support each other's learning (Berry, 2017; Hundal et al., 2014; Penuel et al., 2022). As co-designers, Penuel et al.

(2022) found that curriculum design balances standards and interests and priorities of nondominant groups and communities best when the process (a) is led by a diverse group of stakeholders including professors, teachers, students, and community members, (b) uses multiple methods to ascertain student interest and community priorities, and (c) ensures all participants on the writing team, “develop a shared, expansive understanding of the standards” (p. 167) to support their writing. Local curriculum collaboration in subject areas other than music is possible and has been successful.

There is not much extant research on local unified music curricula, perhaps implying that not many such curriculums exist. Nowak (2012) reported on music curriculum district revision policy in one region of the United States but did not detail the curriculum writing process itself. Korte (1962) and Klossner’s (2018) ethnographies each detailed the music curriculum writing processes of Princess Anne County-Virginia Beach City School District and Memphis City School District, respectively, in the 1970s, while Wright’s (2023) study focused on a 21st century curriculum project in a district she referred to as East Highland Public School District. Teachers interviewed and surveyed in each district in Korte (1962), Klossner (2018), and Wright’s (2023) studies viewed the curriculum writing and adoption experience positively. Wright (2023) even found that despite a messy rollout of the curriculum being studied, most teachers implementing the curriculum *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they found the content of the new curriculum to be valuable, they were implementing the new curriculum with fidelity, and they still felt they had adequate teacher agency over what to teach and how to teach it.

In Bugos’s (2011) survey of early-career (year one through five) elementary general music teachers in New York, a staggering 88% of novice teachers found district

policy or curriculum *not at all influential* or *minimally influential* in their instructional choices, indicating that such policy or curriculum may not exist in their context. Only two respondents were required by their district to use a specific instructional approach such as Dalcroze, Orff Schulwerk, Kodály, or MLT. The researcher noted, “teachers seemed pleased that an approach was encouraged by their district, particularly if they had already been interested in that approach prior to being hired” (p. 140). In open-response questions, participants who had instructional freedom in their jobs shared they floundered in their early careers until they found structure that aligned with their identity as educator. A few teachers wrote that, “knowing which approach was preferred in a district [before joining that district] helped them find the right fit [during the job search process]” (p. 140). These results indicate that though centralized LEA curriculums are rare, novice elementary general music teachers especially benefit from the direction and focus such policies provide. Participants shared that finding a like-minded district music team can result in more job satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of the present study which focuses on rare cases of cohesive district teams in the MLT community.

Despite such writing on cohesive district teams and a near-national set of music standards, music education decision-making is largely made at the individual classroom level and is not subject to much stakeholder scrutiny (Bresler, 1995; Bugos, 2011; Hernandez, 2022; Mynatt, 2018). Bresler’s (1995) ethnography of elementary school music programs summarized the lack of information about how music educators determine what should happen in classrooms:

Whereas advocacies for the “ideal music curricula” abound, school practice in music receives little attention. Factors contributing to this inaccessibility include nonstandardized curricula, the vast diversity of

potential music activities, and the absence of testing. These factors are interrelated. Music curricula have never been central to public education and typically are not subject to either local or national evaluation. With few demands to increase test scores, productivity, and cognitive skills, teachers are left to draw on their own resources, personal beliefs, and visions. (p. 22)

Because elementary music educators have historically had little direction for curriculum writing, and are often isolated in their schools, on-the-job PD could help address their unique needs and demands. However, researchers have found that administrators do not always know how to best support the professional growth of these educators.

Music Educator Professional Learning and Collaboration

To understand what constitutes effective professional support, Bernard and Abramo (2019) inquired about the types of PD practicing elementary general music educators in the Southeastern United States found most meaningful and applicable to their classrooms. Participants responded via electronic survey consisting mainly of multiple-choice questions with some open-ended response questions. When asked to optionally type issues pertaining to music PD, of the 470 respondents, 130 (27.1%) chose to type about one or more of the following gaps between desired and provided PD: (a) better quality and/or content-specific PD (23.8%), (b) more collaboration with other elementary music teachers, including mentoring (15.4%), and (c) local content-specific PD (3.8%) (Bernard & Abramo, 2019).

Siebert (2008) conducted in-person focus groups of music educators in western New York State. Even though all educators were from the same county, results pointed to vastly different music teacher experiences in district-provided PD and collaboration opportunities. One focus group participant shared that their music department “really had

to fight to have our own time [with music teachers]” (p. 68), but another shared that their district proactively allotted for this time together and, “it really benefit[ted] us as a department to get together like that” (p. 68). Meaningful professional collaboration and PD for music educators is vital to their improved practice and sense of confidence, so much so that music educators often pay for PD themselves (Kastner, 2014; Reynolds, 2012; Siebert, 2008; Stanley, 2018; Stanley et al., 2014). The importance of meaningful collaboration is especially pronounced for music teachers abiding by the same music pedagogical approach (Robbins, 1994; Vaughan-Marra & Shouldice, 2021). Additionally, Hoke’s (2022) study found that content-specific mentoring, although not the norm, can be a powerful force in arts teacher satisfaction for both mentor and mentee. Music educators desire and benefit from robust PD.

Unfortunately, the longing for but lack of meaningful district-provided PD is one that is familiar to me and my colleagues. My work experiences include state-required mentoring by my building’s well-meaning physical education teacher and mandatory PD in math and ELA pedagogy. In contrast, attending our annual state music PD day (for which my district pays my registration fees) and taking opportunities to host and mentor my local university’s undergraduate music education students through practicum and student teaching placements has been most valuable to my professional growth. When I have questions, I seek pedagogical advice from MLT-based teachers I personally know from my teacher preparation program or GIML PDLCS, or I ask those I do not yet know via MLT-based Facebook groups. These are professional connections I have sought out on my own. I am mindful to tailor their advice to my own context; I know that what works best for these individuals and their students may not work for my students and me.

Purpose and Research Questions

Tailoring curriculum and practices to local context with others can be an arduous undertaking. Gordon's MLT is a strong foundation for music instruction Gordon (2015) himself recognized the important challenge presented to those looking to implement his research in creating local, unified curriculums:

Creating comprehensive and unified school music curriculums is a formidable task. Various groups have attempted it with little or no success. The mission may be unattainable for a myriad of factors. ... The structure put forward cannot possibly apply to only one universal curriculum. It serves as framework for a variety of curriculums, each suitable to unique needs of a school, district, and state. Organization and presentation of content of a music curriculum is most successfully implemented by resident teachers, instructors, and administrators. (p. vii)

Research on team-completed, MLT-based curriculum design in elementary general classrooms is lacking, even though we know locally made curricula in other subject areas can be best for students (Berry, 2017; Garcia, 2016; Hundal et al., 2014; Mouser, 2019; Penuel et al., 2022). This study aimed to, using an MLT lens, add to the small body of work on teacher-created local curriculum.

To improve instruction in elementary general music, the purpose of this qualitative research was to understand the experiences of elementary general music educators who created and used LEA-wide elementary MLT-based curriculums. Two questions guided this study: How do MLT-based, elementary general music teachers come together to make decisions about curricular priorities? What are the benefits and challenges to designing and using a unified, MLT-based LEA curriculum?

CHAPTER 2

RELATED RESEARCH

In completing my review of the literature, I located quantitative theses and dissertations from the second half of the twentieth century which inventoried music learning conditions across various school districts or states; this appeared to be a fashionable student topic for the era (Gale, 1986; Rasor, 1987; Walker, 1988). To the authors of those publications, *curriculum* referred to operational concerns such as courseload, personnel, scheduling, enrollment, materials, and facilities, as opposed to scope and sequence. I determined their research was only tangentially related to mine. I also located many brief guides geared to current elementary music educators seeking to map curriculum, but these sources did not refer to the creation of a specific existing curriculum, employ a MLT lens, or address the delicate nature of working with local collegial teams (Bailey, 2023; Conway, 2002; Howell, 2009). Further, these guides lacked the empirical elements needed to inform my present study. In the end, five studies—two theses and three dissertations—all with qualitative, interview-based elements informed the structure of my study. Next, I describe pertinent aspects of each.

Klossner (2018)

Klossner's (2018) dissertation most influenced my decisions about my research purpose, research questions, interview questions, and inclusion criteria for my study.

Klossner developed the following research purpose and questions:

The purpose of this historical case study was to trace and examine the evolution of a curricular approach ... I sought to discover what effect (if

any) the people, time, and place had on the introduction, adoption and implementation of a curriculum. [Research questions were:]

1. How does a curriculum evolve when transferred from the local culture and time of origin to another local culture and time?
2. How do local and national sociopolitical influences impact these developments and adaptations of a curriculum?
3. What forces drive the process of the evolution of an elementary music curriculum? Which impact change? Which reinforce original intent (thereby resisting change)?
4. How does the passage of time impact how a curriculum changes and evolves? (p. 8)

Klossner's third research question focusing on the factors affecting the adoption of a curriculum informed by one pedagogical approach most closely impacted the purpose statement and the first iteration of the research questions of my study.

In addition to examining primary and secondary source documents pertaining to elementary music education in Memphis City Schools in 1971-1980, Klossner (2018) conducted oral histories of Memphis State University Orff Course founders, instructors, and attendees to gather more information and verify the credibility and accuracy of the information in the sources, informing my interview-based design. In her interviews, Klossner asked teacher and curriculum writer participants very broadly about their and their colleagues' experiences in Orff Schulwerk and the effect of those experiences on the curriculum they wrote for Memphis City Schools. Participants shared that although not all those who taught music were involved in creating the curriculum, Orff Schulwerk expert teachers in the district were afforded weekly release time from their teaching roles to write the curriculum and aid others in implementation, and all attended PD from Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education Course instructors. These findings from the participants' interview responses informed my decision to ask interview questions regarding teacher pedagogical backgrounds and LEA-related support for the curriculum (see Appendix B).

Klossner's research most closely reflected my interest in exploring district teams that have worked together to create and implement a curriculum based on one music pedagogical framework, highly influencing the inclusion criteria of my study.

Bugos (2011)

Bugos's (2011) dissertation influenced my decisions about my research purpose, inclusion criteria, and interview questions. The purpose of her study was to investigate the curricular choices made by early-career (year one through five) general music teachers. In her purpose statement, Bugos stated her aim to address the issue of elementary general music teachers feeling overwhelmed by the responsibility of making numerous pedagogical decisions without local curriculum documents. This aligned with my career experience thus far and shaped my purpose to improve instruction in elementary general music by understanding local creation and use of cohesive music curriculums. Bugos's research questions pertained to pedagogical approaches of novice teachers, changes in and influences on those pedagogical approaches, and incorporation of pedagogical approaches in their classroom practice.

Bugos (2011) used a two-phase, mixed methods approach to address the research questions. In Phase One, she used an electronic survey with a mix of selected-response, Likert style, and open-ended questions designed to gather information from participants about teacher preparation program coursework, other PD, pedagogical approaches, teaching philosophies, and instructional influences. In Phase Two, most relevant to my study, she purposefully selected three survey participants based on their music pedagogical preferences, which formed the bases for my study's purposeful sampling process. Bugos observed these general music teachers' classroom teaching and conducted

interviews to better understand their classroom practices. In the interviews, she asked about their education background and pedagogical philosophy, which inspired questions in the Participant Background and Curriculum Design Process Overview sections of my interview protocol (see Appendix B).

Wright (2023)

Wright's (2023) dissertation influenced my decisions about my revised research question and interview questions. She conducted a mixed-methods program evaluation of East Highland Public School District's (EHPSD's, a pseudonym) middle school general music curriculum reform. Wright analyzed curricular documents, interviewed the district music supervisor and three of the middle school teachers and curriculum writers, and administered a questionnaire to all district music teachers to answer the four research questions:

- 1) What is the nature of EHPSD's curriculum reform in middle school general music?
 - 2) How is EHPSD's new middle school general music curriculum enacted?
 - 3) How do EHPSD music teachers describe their experiences, including their sense of agency in implementing a new middle school general music curriculum?
 - 4) How do EHPSD middle school general music teachers conceive of the alignment between the curricular documents and their classroom practice?
- (Wright, 2023, p. 26)

Wright's third research question became the basis for my revised research question, which I share in Chapter 3. While I decided against a mixed-methods study, Wright's (2023) study compelled me to ask my participants to screenshare on Zoom and talk me through their curriculum documents for further insights into their process. Just as Klossner (2018) found that district conditions helped the curriculum creation process,

Wright (2023) also made recommendations around district conditions for full curriculum effectivity (e.g., adequate compensation for curriculum writers and team PD) which inspired further my interview questions (see Appendix B). Wright (2023) deemed the music supervisor in this district “an instigator of change” (p. 117), and this phrase remained with me as I designed my interview questions and later completed my analysis.

Nowak (2012)

Nowak’s (2012) thesis influenced my decisions about inclusion criteria and interview questions. In his grounded theory master’s study, he investigated unified district music curricula in five public school districts in the Rochester, New York area. He focused on curriculum evaluation some years after initial creation and, in contrast with my aims for the present study, did not ask specifically about the creation process.

Research subquestions were:

1. Who is responsible for making decisions regarding curriculum evaluation and how are these parties identified and selected?
2. What resources are used to formulate evaluation procedures and guide decisions?
3. What are the criteria used to determine the effectiveness of a curriculum?
4. How is content selected for inclusion in a public school music curriculum? (p. 9)

Nowak conducted interviews with the arts supervisor or lead music teacher in each of the five districts. In addition to some of his research questions appearing in my interview protocol, his interview questions regarding decision-making personnel, resources available, curricular content, and curriculum analysis and revision processes also influenced interview questions in my study (see Appendix B).

Using a grounded theory analysis, Nowak (2012) examined procedural and structural similarities and differences between the curriculum revision processes of various districts. He generated a best practices curriculum evaluation process model for other districts to use. His focus on individuals in multiple districts with cohesive music curriculums was an important starting point for my study. Research results and recommendations included that curricular committees should be comprised mainly of district music faculty and that each curriculum cycle should begin with a review of the department philosophy. This influenced my study's inclusion criteria that participants all must have begun their curriculum processes by establishing a department philosophy of MLT-based instruction.

Korte (1962)

Korte's (1962) thesis influenced my interview questions. Her study documented the development of the Elementary Music Curriculum Guide for Princess Anne County-Virginia Beach City Schools. Korte served a dual role as researcher and as chairperson of the district music department and curriculum committee. I found Korte to be an "instigator of change" (Wright, 2023, p. 117) in the study, which modern researchers might choose to categorize as an autoethnography. Prior to Korte's district's curriculum creation retreats, the Virginia Supervisor of Music visited her and her colleagues to provide guidance and connect them with teachers who had engaged in similar projects in neighboring districts.

Korte's (1962) district involved all general music educators in curriculum writing, rather than using just a subset as the districts in Klossner's (2018) and Wright's (2023) study. These music educators met for three consecutive workdays during the students'

first week of school and prior to the start of music classes. Veteran teachers paired up with new teachers to outline first through seventh grade curricula in their assigned subject areas of “(1) Singing and Fundamentals, (2) Rhythms, Dramatizations, Free Expression, (3) Listening, Appreciation, Creativity, and Study of Instruments, and (4) The Characteristics of Children and Implications for Musical Learning” (Korte, 1962, p. 32). Just as in the district in Wright’s (2023) study, Korte’s district team found that they needed to use nights and weekends beyond the initial meetings to complete their work. Korte bemoaned that her colleagues submitted the different sections to varying degrees of completion when the due date arrived. Korte compiled all content and completed all writing and revisions in the curriculum document before pushing it to her colleagues and sending it to the State Supervisor of Music.

Because of Korte’s (1962) study, I added interview questions regarding the potential consultation of outside experts in the curriculum writing process and the relevant education and teaching experience of all individuals on curriculum writing teams (see Appendix B). This study, along with Wright’s (2023), emphasized the importance of compensation and time allotted for curriculum writing, and hinted that the issue might also be raised by participants in the present study.

Summary

In designing my study, I reflected on my own experiences as an elementary general music educator without a curriculum, my review of the literature, and the findings from the five studies by the researchers identified in this chapter. The research in Chapters 1 and 2 enabled me to design a comprehensive methodology and interview protocol to help answer my research questions and increase my understanding of the

many facets of this kind of curriculum creation. Each of the five researchers in this chapter used qualitative and interview-based elements to uncover something about individual music educators' struggles creating curriculum and the positive effectiveness of like-minded teams, leading to my choice of a fully qualitative, interview-based design.

Klossner (2018) and Bugos's (2011) dissertations inspired my research purpose. Klossner (2018) and Wright's (2023) dissertations influenced my initial and revised research questions. Klossner (2018), Bugos (2011), and Nowak's (2012) studies shaped my inclusion criteria. Each of the studies in this section informed questions in my interview protocol. I knew from my network of MLT-based elementary general music educators that very few LEAs nationwide were fully MLT-based, and I was eager to meet and learn from the complex experiences of educators in such LEAs.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Approach

Because qualitative research allows for “thick descriptions [from a small number of participants and] values personal involvement and partiality” (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 2), I selected a qualitative interview-based approach to begin to understand others’ experiences creating a unified, MLT-based curriculum. At the outset of this study, I was a neophyte qualitative researcher in need of a method that could accommodate my personal experiences as an MLT-based elementary general music educator. Because I hoped to later engage my colleagues in the same curriculum building processes my participants have undertaken, I intended to serve both as an “insider researcher...a member of the group [I am] studying and an outsider researcher...not a member of the group [I am] studying” (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 18). The concept of “inside/outside” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. xi) is especially used to describe teacher-conducted research about teaching and learning in the school and university setting.

I consulted many sources to decide the type of qualitative study which best supported my positionality, research purpose, and research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013, 2020; Miles et al., 2020; Patton, 2015, Thomson, 2020-2022). Braun and Clarke (2013) described thematic analysis as, “a method of identifying themes and patterns of meaning across a dataset in relation to a research question” (p. 225). They recommended this method for student researchers like me, stating, “[Thematic analysis] offers the

chance to learn basic data-handling and coding skills without having to delve deep into theoretical constructs” (p. 228).

Braun and Clarke (2020, 2022) later developed a process for conducting research using reflexive thematic analysis, advising researchers that “subjectivity is the primary tool for reflexive [thematic analysis]. ...Your subjectivity is not a problem to be managed or controlled, to be gotten rid of, but should be understood and treated as a *resource* for doing analysis” (p. 8). As such, reflexive thematic analysis made most sense to me as the appropriate choice of method.

Theoretical Framework

Braun and Clarke (2022) put forth these considerations for theoretical frameworks in research studies: qualitative approach, theory of language, ontology, and epistemology. Reflecting on my personal connections to the topic and on participant interview responses, I began leaning into uncovering how, despite the marginalization of music education in the wake of federal policy initiatives, some MLT-based elementary music teachers have persisted in codifying their child-centered way of educating musically. Crotty’s (1998) description of critical research as distinct from experiential research resonated with me, especially as I began analyzing the data:

It is a contrast between a research that seeks merely to understand and research that challenges ... between a research that reads the situation in terms of interaction and community and a research that reads it in terms of conflict ... between a research that accepts the status quo and a research that seeks to bring about change. (p. 113)

Because I wanted to conduct this research for myself and other elementary general music educators who may be seeking to further MLT-based instruction in their LEA, a critical qualitative approach made sense as critical research is

“dialogic, transformative; eliminate[s] false consciousness and energize[s] and facilitate[s] transformation” (Guba, 1990, p. 25).

Braun and Clarke recommended that researchers next consider theory of language. I determined participants’ word choices and thus my theory of language as intentional, reflecting participants’ personal, “mind-dependent truth” (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 164). Finally, in terms of ontology and epistemology, Braun and Clarke (2022) summarized, “ontology is about *what* it is we think we can know and epistemology is about *how* we think we can know it” (p. 166). I adopted an ontology of critical realism in which I sought to understand that all I was able to access was my participants’ representations of their realities as mediated by language and by the sum of their life experiences. Aligned with reflexivity and critical realism, I ascribed to a contextual epistemological approach as described by Braun and Clarke (2013):

[Contextualism] doesn’t assume a *single* reality, and sees knowledge as emerging from contexts (hence the name) and reflecting the researcher’s positions, so that it is local, situated, and therefore always provisional...but it does retain an interest in understanding *truth*, and hence has a realist dimension (p. 36)

Understanding and labeling my own theoretical worldviews—both within and beyond the context of this project—was important to me as a beginning researcher. Choosing a critical qualitative approach, an intentional theory of language, an ontology of critical realism, and a contextual epistemological approach at the outset of my study enabled me to continually apply reflexivity while centering my participants’ experiences in my analysis and report writing.

Semi-Structured Interviews

As I was refining my purpose statement and initial research questions, reviewing the literature, and completing my Temple University Institutional Review Board application, I concluded that an interview-only design would best yield the sort of information I hoped to glean from my participants. Based on the extent of my curiosities and on Seidman's (2006) recommendations, I chose an individual, in-depth, three-interview design with both in-person and virtual interview options, anticipating that most if not all interviews would be conducted virtually.

Seidman (2006) recommended three individual interviews for phenomenological interviewing which aligned with my contextual approach, and a three-interview design also offered me the ability to build rapport with each participant. To accommodate for busy teacher schedules, I designed each interview to take approximately 60 minutes, a shorter length than the recommend 90 minutes. Questions fell into categories of participant background, LEA personnel background, curriculum design process overview, curriculum structure, curriculum longevity, and reflection. I planned to address two categories per interview. I also planned to schedule time after each interview to reflect on participants' experiences relative to my experiences and make notes in my researcher's journal, meant to dissect my own positionality in relationship to this project (Braun & Clarke, 2022). I planned to allow previous participant interviews to inform interviews with successive participants, aligned with Kidder and Fine's (1987) view that, "Qualitative (big Q) researchers begin their data collection with a hunch ... as they proceed, they continually discover new questions relevant to the people under study" (p. 60).

While awaiting IRB approval to conduct my study, I conducted a practice interview with my building's Spanish teacher as her districtwide team uses a unified curriculum, but I modified questions to make them applicable to her content area. I then conducted a practice interview with my husband using nearly all my original interview questions (see Appendix B), as he collaborates on course syllabi with the other high school band directors in our school district. These practice interviews helped me increase my sense of natural engagement while maintaining effective interviewer techniques, such as feeling comfortable extending wait time for responses, being friendly but not overly familiar, and probing for more information after a participant response (King & Horrocks, 2010).

IRB Approval and Participant Recruitment

I received Temple University Institutional Review Board approval to conduct my study in late January 2024 (see Appendix C) and began to recruit participants to my study in early February 2024. My study's inclusion criteria were specific, therefore purposeful sampling was vital (Patton, 2015). I initially sought three current or former public school elementary general music teacher participants, each in traditional school districts with elementary general music teachers who all worked together to create and use the same MLT-based curriculum. My early recruitment efforts involved posting in various MLT-centered Facebook groups (after securing group administrator approval) and contacting MLT-minded colleagues I met in college and in GIML PDLCs. I was able to gain two participants who met my inclusion criteria via these recruitment strategies. My study even generated interest from two teachers who had written and implemented their own

MLT-based elementary general curriculum. However, these teachers did not collaborate with district colleagues, so their experiences did not meet my inclusion criteria.

After consenting two initial participants, I used snowball sampling (Patton, 2015) to locate a third. I directly emailed three potential participants suggested by my enrolled participants and MLT-knowledgeable university professors across the country. One teacher was not comfortable with participating and the other two did not respond. I continued to reach out to my MLT network, and in July 2024 I expanded my inclusion criteria to include a teacher who also served as a music content lead in a charter school network that implemented a network-wide MLT-based curriculum.

Ultimately, each of the three general music teachers who consented to participate in this study taught in different LEAs from each other. Each had created and used unified MLT-based curriculum across multiple schools at the elementary level. I had anticipated that each of the participants' curriculums would still be fully in use, but through the consent process I learned that none of the curriculums were in use by all elementary general music teachers meant to be using them, and one participant had moved to a job in another LEA entirely. I assigned a pseudonym to each of the three participants, as seen in Table 1. The number and grade bands of the elementary schools in Rebecca's charter network was most like that in my school district. Kate only had one other music teacher collaborator responsible for the same grade levels in her district. Meanwhile, Isobel collaborated only vertically (i.e., Isobel taught K-2 and her colleague taught 3-5).

Table 1. *Participant, School, and Local Education Agency (LEA) Information*

Characteristics	Isobel	Kate	Rebecca
Teacher			
Demographic Information	White Female	White Female	White Female
Bachelor's Degree	Music Therapy	Music Education	Music Education
Master's Degree	Music Therapy	Arts Administration	Childhood/Special Education
PDLC ^a Strands Attended	EC ^b 1, EGM ^c 1	EGM1	EC1, EGM1, EGM2, I ^d 1
Grade Levels Taught During Curriculum Project	K-2	K-2	K-4
No. of Years Teaching at Start of Curriculum Project	22	2	6
No. of Years Teaching at Time of Interviews	25	6	12
LEA			
No. of Elementary Schools in LEA	2: 1x K-2, 1x 3-5	3: 2x PK-2, 1x 3-5	Up to 9: K-4
LEA Geographic Region and Classification	Northeast, suburban	Northeast, suburban	Northeast, urban

^aPDLC = Professional Development Levels Course

^bEC = Early Childhood

^cEGM = Elementary General Music

^dI = Instrumental

Setting and Data Collection

After I received IRB Approval in January of 2024 (see Appendix C) and began consenting each of the three participants, I scheduled three individual interviews. The nine interviews ultimately took place between March and August 2024. As I had anticipated, due to geographic distance, each interview was conducted virtually via Zoom, and each participant and I either logged on from home or from our classrooms. I recorded each interview to the cloud from the Zoom platform and used the Voice Memos App on my iPhone as a backup audio recording device in case of technical difficulty. Immediately after each interview I wrote in my researcher's journal about any emotions or wonderings, and I noted follow-up questions for subsequent interviews. Zoom auto generated an interview transcript, which I imported into Microsoft Word. I listened to each recording again to verify the accuracy of the AI-created transcript. I removed from each transcript any identifying information such as location names, school/district names, or colleague names to protect participant and colleague identities, inserting pseudonyms.

Member Check

I sent each participant a copy of each revised interview transcript shortly after our interviews. I asked participants to verify that their words were written accurately and to confirm whether they felt that the interview transcript reflected their experiences and desired responses. Two participants completely agreed with what was written in each transcript, and one made very minor corrections to words AI and I misheard. In September 2024, I sent each participant a near-final draft of my thesis manuscript and invited them to confirm that my findings accurately reflected their experiences, engaging in co-constructionist practice aligned with my contextual epistemological approach. Two

had brief additions for me to make, such as adding previously forgotten or unmentioned details.

Reflexive Thematic Analysis

In August 2024, I started data analysis using Braun and Clarke's (2013, 2022) six-phase iterative approach to conducting reflective thematic analysis. Their six phases are: familiarizing myself with the data; coding; generating initial themes; developing and reviewing themes; refining, defining, and naming themes; and writing up. I outline my process for the first five phases as I complete Chapter 3 and continue the approach into Chapter 4 and 5 to complete the analysis and this report.

Phase One: Familiarization

I began familiarizing myself with the data by listening to each interview and following along in the interview transcript while making handwritten notes in my researcher's journal (see Appendix D). I circled and boxed commonalities among each of the participants, loosely organized these commonalities, and used these labels as initial codes for my analysis. I wrote about some of the emotions these transcripts evoked for me, including pride, awe, frustration, and even jealousy.

Phase Two: Coding

I uploaded all nine interview transcripts into NVivo qualitative data analysis software to begin coding. Because of the personal nature of this project, I opted to forego the kind offer of a friend to serve as peer coder to maintain self-reflexivity and to keep my research more aligned with what Kidder and Fine (1987) referred to as "big Q" (p. 59), fully qualitative and aiming to convey an individual researcher's subjective truth, than "small q" (p. 59), partially qualitative with some elements of positivism, and

requiring researchers to come to the same conclusions as others as in quantitative approaches.

Braun and Clarke (2022) state that when coding data, deductive to inductive orientations and semantic to latent coding exist on spectrums, rather than as their own discrete camps. As I was coding, I generally took a more deductive stance, “where the dataset provides the foundation for coding and theme development, but the research questions asked—and thus the codes developed—reflect theoretical or conceptual ideas the researcher seeks to understand through the dataset” (p. 56) rather than an inductive orientation. I coded with a more semantic than latent orientation, staying close to the spoken language of my participants and not seeking subtext or implicit meaning.

During the coding phase, I learned I needed to make a few changes to my initial codes. When I finished my first pass of the data, I used MindMup (www.mindmup.com) to organize these codes into a mind map and added connection arrows (see Appendix E1). My emergent code labels remained mostly the same as those I drew boxes around during the familiarization phase, with a few small wording changes (see Appendix D).

Phases Three and Four: Generating Initial Themes; Developing and Reviewing Themes

Upon completion of my first mind map (see Appendix E1), I realized I had the of a topic summary, which Braun and Clarke (2022) warn against as a pitfall of researchers who intend to conduct reflexive thematic analysis. This contrasts with the goal of themes that achieve “meaning-unity and conceptual coherence” (p. 77). Braun and Clarke (2022) suggest visual mapping to develop themes and understand how provisional themes might interact. I consulted the transcripts and my advisor as I devised candidate themes,

combined, split, and discarded codes, and reorganized the structure of my thematic analysis—a recursive process. Appendix E2 shows a mind map somewhere at the midpoint of my shifting theme development in which titles were not yet “informative, concise, or catchy” (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.111).

Phases Five and Six: Refining, Defining, and Naming Themes; Writing Up

As Braun and Clarke (2022) recommended, skipping ahead to phase six and writing about my themes as I believed them to be fully developed illuminated some needed adjustments. Braun and Clarke (2022) also recommended finding ways to “let things go” (p. 234), and I found that some initial themes did not fit into the emerging structure of my data. Using that advice, the mind map in Appendix E3 shows a final version of my themes with appropriate titles in what I believe to reflect the best organization of the content. This mind map is reflective of my connection to participants who undertook curriculum creation projects and of my experiences working in the larger system of an LEA member hoping to attempt music curricular coherence at the elementary level.

Revising My Research Questions

Of research questions in reflexive thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke (2022) wrote to researchers:

Importantly, the specifics of your research question do *not* have to be locked in right at the start of a project. For reflexive [thematic analysis], research questions can evolve, narrow, expand or sharpen as your analysis takes form – as long as your final questions are part of a conceptually coherent design. (p. 26)

As I was conducting my thematic analysis relative to my research questions, I found that my original questions were not fitting the story reflected by my participants, their

contributions, and my data analyses. Supposing I would locate three participants in the same district with many schools of the same grade levels band, I had written the original two questions guiding this study: How do MLT-based, elementary general music teachers come together to make decisions about curricular priorities? What are the benefits and challenges to designing and using a unified, MLT-based LEA curriculum? Because my participants worked with few curriculum collaborators, and because neither curriculum was still in use LEA-wide, my research question became, how do MLT-based, elementary general music teachers describe their experiences writing and implementing a formal curriculum in their LEA?

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter, I present the results of my thematic analysis, which supported my aim to understand the experiences of three MLT-based, elementary general music teachers writing and implementing a formal curriculum in their LEA. While completing my analysis using a critical research paradigm, I landed on an overarching theme to capture my participants' descriptions of their experiences that expanded on Wright's (2023) idea of "instigators of change" (p. 117): *instigators of and obstacles to change*. Under the umbrella of instigators and obstacles, three themes emerged to describe these three participants' experiences: (a) teachers were steadfast and determined, (b) teachers were advocates, and (c) LEA policies helped and hurt. Table 2 presents a summary of themes and subthemes. As displayed in the mind map in Appendix E3, each theme impacts the other two. After the table I will describe each theme and share data that guided me to the development of that theme and its subthemes. Themes and subthemes appear for the first time in the text in italics.

Table 2. *Summary of Themes and Subthemes*

Category	Theme One	Theme Two	Theme Three
Theme	Teachers were steadfast and determined.	Teachers were advocates.	Local education agency (LEA) policies helped and hurt.
Definition	Participant teachers worked to create a Music Learning Theory (MLT) - based curriculum that benefits them, their colleagues, and their students.	Participant teachers impacted LEA stakeholders and policies to support MLT-based curriculum initiatives.	What happened at the LEA level helped and hurt MLT-based curriculum initiatives.
Subthemes	Teachers built personal expertise.	Teachers advocated outright.	Admin gave varying levels of support.
	Teachers went above and beyond LEA requirements.	Teachers acted tactfully.	Compensation was needed for work above LEA requirements.
	Teachers worked with pedagogical allies.	Teachers let MLT-based work speak for itself.	Collaboration time was vital to curriculum projects.
	Teachers wrote flexible curriculum to enable use across different music teaching and learning conditions.	Teachers employed general curricular frameworks, which gave their curriculum creditability.	Professional development drove curriculum creation and usage.
	Teachers supported other music teachers by writing curriculum.	Teachers wrote curriculum to legitimize MLT in the eyes of stakeholders.	Hiring practices most impacted the longevity of a curriculum.
	Teachers sought out resources.		

Theme One: Teachers Were Steadfast and Determined

The first theme, *teachers were steadfast and determined*, emerged from codes pertaining to characteristics of these MLT-based teachers, actions these MLT-based teachers have taken, and characteristics of the curriculums they have created. Isobel, Kate, and Rebecca each sought out PD to *build personal expertise* in understanding MLT and teaching with this lens. Resultingly, each created change by *going above and beyond LEA requirements* to spearhead the creation of a unified, MLT-based elementary curriculum, often alongside a likeminded *pedagogical ally*. They created these curriculums to *support other music teachers* as they delivered daily instruction to their students. They *sought out resources to create flexible curriculum to enable use across different music teaching and learning conditions*. Their hope was that these flexible curriculums made audiation-based outcomes more attainable in a variety of elementary general music situations.

Each of the three participants came to MLT-based instruction in different ways. Rebecca's undergraduate music education program primarily focused on MLT, but Kate and Isobel's teacher preparation programs provided an overview of various music education pedagogies including strategies recommended for Dalcroze Eurhythmics, Orff Schulwerk, Kodály, and MLT teachers. Rebecca was committed to MLT from the beginning of her career, but Isobel and Kate each became interested in MLT-based teaching after seeing MLT engagement in action. Isobel observed a new teacher in her district and Kate saw a demonstration by experts at an Early Childhood Music and Movement Association Convention. Each participant spoke to MLT improving their personal musicianship. This corresponds with Bugos's (2011) MLT-based case study

participant who shared, “I started to use it in my classroom because I found how much of a better musician I was becoming, and I wanted to be able to put that into my students immediately” (p. 190).

Each of the three participants built personal expertise by taking at least one GIML PDLC two-week intensive course (see Table 1) and continuing to attend additional MLT PD sessions. Kate and Rebecca paid for their PDLC tuition and room and board themselves. Isobel was able to receive tuition reimbursement from her school district. None of the three participants were compensated for their time spent attending their respective PDLC or additional MLT PD.

Kate described attending the PDLC as an experience that “broke [her] brain” but made her “whack-a-doodle passionate” about MLT-based instruction. This dedication is similar to Bugos’s (2011) survey of early career elementary general music educators in New York, which found that 74% of teachers who identified their pedagogical approach as strictly Dalcroze-, Orff Schulwerk-, Kodály-, or MLT-based had taken a certification course in the corresponding pedagogy. However, Bugos did not ask if commitment to that particular pedagogy inspired attendance at that certification course, or vice-versa.

Because of these educators’ commitment to MLT, each took it upon themselves to create change in their LEA music department by going beyond LEA requirements to write and implement an MLT-based unified curriculum. Isobel, a K-2 general music teacher, and her pedagogical ally and MLT influence Margaret at the 3-5 building started a revision by sneaking MLT-based rewrites into outdated district curriculum:

Thinking back to the first time we started changing [the curriculum] to make it more accurately reflect what we were actually teaching, that prompt [from administration to make changes] was probably just a

formatting issue, like, “oh, we need everyone to go back and add the pacing,” or “put it in this template” or something like that. And I think we were like, “well, if we're going to take the time to do that, let's just rewrite parts of it.” So, we didn't seek [curriculum change] out on our own, but when we were sort of tasked with doing these little revisions early on, we just said, “hey, we let's write this the way we want to write it' ... it really was just for ourselves.

When their states' adoption of the NCAS necessitated curricular changes, Isobel and her pedagogical ally Margaret, and Kate and her pedagogical ally Beatrice (who in fact transferred to the other K-2 school in Kate's district specifically to unify the buildings with an MLT-based curriculum) rewrote their districts' music curriculums in their entirety. This grassroots effort differs from the district-mandated efforts in Korte (1962), Klossner (2018), and Wright's (2023) studies.

Although administration in both districts provided release time and/or compensation for their teachers to write curriculum, in retrospect, Kate shared that the curriculum collaboration and writing process took more time than anticipated and thus she and Beatrice worked past what the district provided in order to complete the work. Kate recognized the importance of a pedagogical ally who was willing to go above and beyond LEA requirements to see this project through, saying, “What's really frustrating is that I don't think I would have been as successful in creating the curriculum that we have now without having a counterpart at the other building who was so invested.” Similarly, the teachers and curriculum writers in Korte's (1962) and Wright's (2023) studies were not able to finish their curriculum projects in the time allotted by their districts and needed to work beyond paid time. Korte (1962) herself, as chairperson of her district music department, completed sections of the curriculum previously assigned to other music teachers to meet the district deadline.

Rebecca served as a paid content lead for her charter school's network of up to nine K-4 buildings, in addition to teaching in one of the buildings. She too created change and went beyond LEA requirements by taking it upon herself to write an MLT-based curriculum to support music teachers and students in her network:

We were looking to see what we could do to support music teachers. A good number of our music teachers came with very little training in music education, and very little experience. I just felt like I was watching teachers that didn't have a curriculum, and they were kind of all over the place, and it was really hard to give guided feedback because they were pulling out random Pinterest lessons and it wasn't, grounded in anything. And so that, plus I think the network wanting something that could be more solid, that they could look at and say, "Are you teaching these things?" ... It just made sense to make this K-4 curriculum that had goals. Like I mentioned, my network was very data driven. So being able to assess what we're learning, and it just made it easier also, even just with budget things.

Rebecca, however, did not have as strong of a pedagogical ally in creating this curriculum. She described her closest curriculum writing colleague as an individual who came to teaching after completing a master's degree in jazz performance at an institution with an MLT and audiation-focused music education department. Said Rebecca of this pedagogical ally, "He just loved talking about the musicality of it all, and what you could accomplish. Just 'nerding' out as a musician."

With the lack of MLT-knowledgeable teachers in her LEA, Rebecca sought out pedagogical allies and resources for curriculum writing elsewhere. She self-enrolled in and self-funded attendance at the GIML Elementary General Music 2 PDLC during her time at the charter school network and used that educative experience to ask curriculum-related questions of faculty and other attendees, with whom she remains in touch. Isobel, Kate, and Rebecca all cited outside personnel, most notably their fellow PDLC

classmates and members of MLT-based Facebook groups, as resources. Researchers have shown that music teachers who remain in touch with those beyond their districts who use the same pedagogy lean on each other to problem solve and build confidence (Robbins, 1994; Vaughan-Marra & Shouldice, 2021). Participants in the current study also sought out print resources such as MLT-based books, blogs, curriculum maps posted by other districts, and Teachers Pay Teachers (www.TeachersPayTeachers.com) resources to create their curriculum document.

Participants described their curriculums as flexible to allow for a variety of music teachers and music teaching conditions to meet the goals of the curriculum. None of the curriculums included LSAs outright to accommodate for teachers and/or group of students not yet ready to use them. Only Kate's curriculum included recommended-but-not-required songs and chants for teaching, and no curriculum prescribed classroom activities.

The reality of differing and changing teaching situations also reinforced participants' need for curricular flexibility. Isobel shared that the curriculum writing and delivery processes have been impacted by changes to her own teaching conditions during her tenure in her building:

I did use to have my own classroom, and the last 2 years I have been off and on but most mostly on a cart, so I didn't go back and rewrite the curriculum because of that. But it definitely changed how I'm teaching and what my actual lesson plans are. ... There's the learning activities, learning objectives. But [the curriculum] doesn't say we're doing this at this particular point, they're just overall for the whole year and it just covers broad strokes. ... No 2 years usually ever work out exactly the same.

Although Kate’s curriculum was more detailed than Isobel’s, she too explained that her teaching still changes year-to-year. Teachers following the same curriculum can even use different music pedagogical approaches to meet audiation-based objectives:

[Teachers] can still choose their pedagogy, even though we have in the curriculum ... [traditional MLT-based] verbiage for the end results that the kids are able to produce. ... Someone could meet those objectives with Orff or Kodaly or Dalcroze if we had somebody [with expertise in another pedagogy].

Rebecca wrote her curriculum in a similar way, especially due to the size of her charter network and the variety of educational backgrounds of her colleagues:

I did it for what I was hoping for and also what I thought would give people room for creativity. ... [An example fourth grade objective is] “perform tonal and rhythmic accompaniment on melodic instruments, master a variety of chords on accompaniment instruments.” I tried to keep it broad enough so that a teacher that wanted to teach through keyboard could, and a teacher who wanted to teach through ukulele could. They were still teaching the same thing and the same skills, which I feel like Music Learning Theory really helped with. Because at the end of the day we just want the kids to be able to sing a melody, sing a bass line, play chords, be musical. There's so many different ways of showing that, you know?

Each curriculum writer created a flexible curriculum that focused on audiation-based outcomes for students, knowing not all teachers who might use the curriculum would have a high level of MLT-based expertise, even if it best served curricular outcomes.

Each was aware that teaching situations or contact time might change, despite NAFME’s (2020) *National Opportunity to Learn Standards* which recommend that K-5 students all experience at least 90 minutes of general music instruction each week¹. These teachers’ drive and expertise enabled them to find a balance between following Gordon’s skill learning sequence and avoiding overly prescriptive means to do so. Because of the

¹ Kate’s district was the closest to meeting this instructional time recommendation with 40 minutes of instruction twice every six school days.

structure their curricular documents provided, these participants experienced more meaningful professional collaboration, maximized student instructional time, and facilitated smoother student transitions between buildings, all to the benefit of student audition-based learning.

Theme Two: Teachers Were Advocates

When LEA conditions were less than ideal, *teachers were advocates* for policies and stakeholder buy-in in favor of cohesive elementary MLT-based curriculum. Some participants were *outright advocates* in speaking with others about MLT. Kate particularly spoke to the need to *act tactfully* in helping others to understand how this style of instruction works for students. Kate and Rebecca accomplished this by simply *letting the work speak for itself*. Each participant intentionally and unintentionally *employed more commonly known general curricular frameworks* in writing their curriculums, *which gave their curriculum creditability*. Each participant felt that writing their *curriculum legitimized their MLT-based practices in the eyes of stakeholders*.

Kate used outright advocacy for her MLT-based curriculum by making connections between music aptitude and literacy skills (Patscheke, 2019; Rubinson, 2010; Skubic et al., 2021). This was her starting point for winning over building and district administrators' support:

I always try to communicate to administration that what I'm doing is I'm helping and I'm a part of the team. ... We're actually contributing to strengthening those phonological skills, strengthening same/different, strengthening students' ability to hear differences in those letter sounds and things like that. That was a part of strengthening my and Beatrice's position to rewrite the MLT curriculum, because we did have administrators who sang our praises to our department leader.

Isobel and Rebecca both shared with their respective administrators about MLT, but Isobel bemoaned, “We've told them about it, but I'm not sure they could even remember what it's called.”

Each participant expressed the hope to someday vertically align audiation-based curriculum from kindergarten through twelfth grade. They used outright advocacy for this dream by sharing reasons to use MLT-based pedagogy, but this didn't compel colleagues to become pedagogically aligned. Isobel shared, “We've tried to extol the virtues [to colleagues] and all that. But they're like, ‘oh, that's nice,’ and then they just do their own thing.”

Kate cautioned that MLT advocates should act tactfully and not overwhelm colleagues by coming on too strongly or creating too much change at once:

One of the things that has been an obstacle to writing [MLT-based] curriculum is working alongside colleagues who don't think that kids *can*, or don't think it's our responsibility to teach kids certain things because it's too advanced. ... if that is all that my colleagues know, then that's all they know. ... [I've been] trying to come at it from a place of empathy and compassion and welcoming them into a “what if we haven't seen the top of the mountain yet?” ideology/thought process; that's my own area of professional growth that I'm currently exploring.

A successful way to act tactfully was to let the MLT-based work speak for itself. As previously mentioned, Isobel and Kate knew the power of this phenomenon as they came to MLT after witnessing audiation-based instruction in action. Kate and Rebecca let the work speak for itself when administrators and colleagues observed their classrooms. Kate describes one visit from her new assistant principal, who had just left a school music teaching position himself:

He came into the classroom. He introduced himself, and I said, “You want to make music with the kids?” and he said, “Sure.” So I had this like, 56-

year-old man, suit and tie [laughs], lay on his back and paint the ceiling with his feet just like the rest of the kids as I sang a song in Lydian 7/8. ... He came back to talk to me later. The questions weren't "Well, how do you know this works for the kids?" It was "how did you get them to do that?" And there were more questions of curiosity because he saw the results. He saw the receipts.² He saw the end product. He wanted to know how it was made. ... You have to let the results of audiation education show themselves.

While neither Isobel nor Rebecca had such experiences with administrators, Rebecca won over colleagues who were initially hesitant to follow her curriculum:

Everybody watched me teach a kindergarten class. I wanted to really show this is what your kids can be doing. This is the amount of things they can be doing. This is what that lesson can look like. I really felt like I needed to continuously show and model those things, and that would win them over more when they actually saw it in action. ... some [teachers] were like, "wow, this is really exciting what we're doing!"

Because of Rebecca's work sharing MLT-based practices in her charter school network, some of her music colleagues became inspired to seek out and attend MLT-specific PD sessions outside of the workday

Kate shared a more personal anecdote of a veteran secondary music colleague who brought her infant son to an early childhood music class. Notably, district administrators who saw the value in Kate and Beatrice's MLT-based work found funds to run this class:

I actually have a colleague who teaches middle instrumental music, and she's been teaching for 16 years and really has gotten the bug. ... She brought her newborn son to one of the early childhood classes that I taught. ... She was just completely blown away. ... Observing her child do the "audition stare" and being enraptured by what was happening, and also watching Beatrice and [another infant] do pattern play, that was something that just hooked her right away, and she saw something that she never thought could happen.

² The slang dictionary on dictionary.com (2020) states, "Receipts is slang for 'proof' or 'evidence'."

And Kate said of other secondary music teachers in her district:

When the kids started leaving our programs doing the things that they did, that's when we solidified their trust. And they realized, okay, ... [Kate and Beatrice are] doing something good, and they're doing it together. And so, we're not fighting it because we have a good thing going right now. We don't know how it's happening, but it's good.

Another way participants acted tactfully was by realizing colleagues had limited experience teaching creatively with an MLT lens and supporting their instructional needs. Some participants found and shared published page-by-page curricular materials intended to guide teachers to teach in MLT-based ways, before empowering colleagues to create their own lesson plans to apply the skill learning sequence and respond to student musical needs themselves.

None of the participants had sought or been required to participate in PD focused on general or music education curricular design, but each had managed to *employ general curricular frameworks, which elevated the legitimacy of their curriculum*. When I asked the three participants outright about Bloom's (1956/1984) taxonomy and Bruner's (1977) spiral curriculum, each intuited that quality longitudinal MLT-based instruction always incorporates these frameworks, so the frameworks were embedded in their curriculums. Because of LEA formatting mandates, all three curriculums detail NCAS, essential questions, and/or learning targets around which teachers should plan lessons, essentially forcing UbD practice without putting a name to it (SEADAE, 2014a; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). In the case of UDL, Isobel and Margaret's district required them to explicitly write inclusive practices and general learning accommodations into their curriculum (Meyer et al., 2014). But beyond a written curriculum, all participants agreed that skilled MLT practitioners are the "universal" in UDL. Said Kate:

That kind of nuanced sort of navigation of the learning theory and sequences? That's the good stuff. The theory? You own it now, and you're able to apply it to meet real student needs. ... *You* are malleable as a resource rather than the kids needing to fit in this cut and paste pathway that has been predetermined for them.

Reynolds and Valerio (2024) wrote that “interactions are critical to audiation and music learning processes ... more knowledgeable [music educators] offer sensitively crafted feedback, and guide children toward what they were coming to know through continued [music interactions]” (pp. 381, 383). Only a very granularly written curriculum could instruct a teacher to modify curriculum for specific students’ musical needs in MLT-informed ways by, for example, in classroom activities pivoting from a not yet able-to-echo arpeggiated pattern to more familiar-to-echo stepwise pattern to help an out-of-tune singer find more success. Skilled MLT-based educators know to do this because of their education and experience.

Lastly, participants wrote their curriculums to *legitimize MLT in the eyes of stakeholders*. Isobel’s district requires that every course has a curriculum posted online, and she and Margaret wanted the document to accurately reflect their style of instruction. In taking on extra work to replace the vague and outdated curriculum, Isobel reasoned, “we need a curriculum ... any parent can go and look at it, see what we're doing, or ask if they have any questions. ... It was important to us.” Kate shared that the written curriculum when she arrived in her district was “very sparse” and she and Beatrice worked to revise it to “something better that's not only beneficial for our department and for our kids, but also brings along our administration for the ride.” Rebecca recalled a similar purpose in writing her charter networks’ curriculum:

Music was not [our network administration's] the biggest focus ... [our music curriculum] was rigorous, it was sequential, and we could prove that's what we were teaching. ... I just felt like that made us feel more valid. ... But we weren't told we had to do anything.

Participants' experience differs from the districts in Korte (1962), Klossner (2018) and Wright's (2023) studies, as these districts each required and supported complex elementary music curricular efforts from the outset. The three participants and their pedagogical allies created such thorough audiation-based curriculum entirely of their own volition to support teachers, support students, and gain the support of other stakeholders.

Each participant served as an advocate for MLT-based curriculum and instruction in their own way. Although Kate was comfortable advocating outright, she was the only participant to express the importance of acting tactfully in advocacy efforts. Isobel and Kate allowed MLT-based work to speak to them, and Kate and Rebecca let MLT-based work speak for itself in growing the number of audiation-based instruction teachers in their LEAs. All three curriculums, intentionally or unintentionally, used Bloom's taxonomy, Bruner's spiral curriculum, UbD, and UDL which elevated their credibility. And all three curriculum writers wrote their curriculum specifically to legitimize MLT.

Theme Three: LEA Policies Helped and Hurt

The third theme, *LEA policies helped and hurt*, emerged from codes pertaining to LEA and administrative policies that positively and negatively impacted curriculum creation, delivery, and longevity. Isobel, Kate, and Rebecca and their colleagues found that building and LEA *administration gave varying levels of support* in writing and utilizing the curriculum. Each participant expressed that *compensation was needed* for their work writing their curriculums. *Collaboration time and professional development*

were vital to writing and maintaining progress along the curriculum, but not necessarily adequately provided. Last but certainly not least, *hiring practices left much to be desired* in terms of selecting music educators well-equipped to follow the curriculum, as the curriculum was not adhered to by all who were meant to be using it.

Isobel, Kate, and Rebecca had varying experiences with leadership pertaining to the MLT-based curriculum. Isobel summarized her administration's laissez-faire approach:

As far as Music Learning Theory goes, nobody is out there, not my principal or supervisors or anyone in the district is saying, 'Oh, please write this curriculum that reflects this Music Learning Theory you use.' We've told them about it, but I'm not sure they could even remember what it's called.

Similarly, Rebecca described her experience with charter network administration as, "There was a bit of a revolving door with who was supervising us. ... So, there wasn't really a lot of consistency in [what was expected of us]." Both examples provide a contrast with Kate's experiences with her district and building administration, who at least were interested in MLT and cared to learn more about her instructional practices. Kate even shared that her district music lead and former music educator would tell Kate that, "She likes the way the dinner tastes, but she doesn't know how it's made" and that the musical output of Kate's students compelled her to learn more about MLT. The work spoke for itself.

None of the participants or their LEA colleagues were evaluated for teaching to the curriculum by building or LEA administration, leaving curriculum adherence entirely contingent on self-monitoring. Isobel and Kate's districts employed arts-specific specialists who may have been best positioned to evaluate teaching in relation to the

curriculum, but these specialists did not conduct such observations. Said Isobel, “Nobody ever asks. No principal, none of my supervisors have ever said, ‘How does this line up with the goals?’” Kate shared that sometimes building administration did not see what she believed to be her most skilled teaching work when they visited her classroom, but administrators were none the wiser, “Sometimes [in terms of MLT pedagogy, I believed] everything was a disaster, but it just looked good because the kids were singing and engaged, and that's all [administrators] care about.” This corresponds with literature that shares that music teachers are often evaluated based on test scores in areas other than music and evaluated by administrators who lack music backgrounds (Bernard & Abramo, 2019; Reynolds, 2012).

Rebecca’s LEA also did not expect all elementary general music teachers to adhere to the curriculum. Although Rebecca served as curriculum author and music for her charter school network, when she observed other music teachers she was not permitted to comment on their teaching in alignment with the curriculum. Her position was merely one of providing feedback for music educators’ general improvement in practice.

As mentioned earlier, all three participants received compensation for their curricular work, and Kate shared that the compensation was not commensurate with the amount of work done. Kate and Rebecca both used regular collaboration time with colleagues to create the curriculum and/or monitor student progress in accordance with the curriculum. Kate and her colleague Beatrice initially carved out their own PLC time by giving up planning time in their schedules because, as Kate explained, “having a tight collaboration with another MLT practitioner makes the job so much more enjoyable,

because then you can just DO. And you don't have to think as hard because you're sharing that cognitive load.” When administration learned these teachers were giving up their personal planning time to meet, building principals dedicated music PLC time into the building master schedules every six school days for subsequent school years.

On the other hand, Rebecca’s charter network dismissed students early each week to allow for teacher collaboration and PD. LEA administration tasked Rebecca with planning the music department meetings that occurred every few weeks as part of her content lead role. Because so many music teachers on her team were new to teaching and didn’t know how to follow the curriculum, she used most of that time to help educate teachers in using the curriculum rather than discussing teaching and learning in accordance with the curriculum. She shared:

My dream was always to have, you know, an MLT faculty [member] come and do a weeklong workshop, and I would do my own version of that. I would spend a day at the beginning of the year doing a “What is MLT [presentation],” taking basically what we did in general music methods class [as undergraduates] and turning it into a 3-hour presentation. ... I would try to bring in MLT practitioners to come and present so that it wasn't just hearing it from me. ... We would meet, and maybe teachers would mention what their kids were working on or what they were struggling with, but not formally like, “oh, did your students meet this goal?”

Of the three participants’ LEAs, Isobel’s district provided the least amount of collaboration time; she and Margaret were only scheduled to meet to discuss curriculum when state or district policy necessitated curricular edits. Isobel longed for more time in professional community with other music teachers, especially those with like pedagogical practice, which mirrors other researcher’s results (Bernard & Abramo, 2019; Kastner,

2014; Siebert, 2008; Stanley, 2018; Stanley et al., 2014; Robbins, 1994; Vaughan-Marra & Shouldice, 2021).

All three participants discussed hiring as the primary factor in determining if an MLT-based curriculum could be sustained. In each participants' LEA, hiring decisions are made by building administration with little or no music team input. This means that new hires may not have the requisite background to deliver the curriculum as written.

Kate bemoaned:

The power to recruit MLT colleagues is really out of our hands. Even if we have an outstanding MLT colleague, if the administrator doesn't like that person for whatever reason, then we're out of luck. And so that sort of powerlessness that we have has created a slight pessimism. And Linda, the department leader, just gave us this sort of sigh, like, we can't guarantee that if God forbid, something happens to Beatrice or Kate, somebody who comes in will have MLT.

After creating and implementing the curriculum, Kate's pedagogical ally Beatrice moved across the country, and Isobel's pedagogical ally Margaret moved to a different teaching position within the same district. The replacement hires lack coursework or certification in MLT, thus now both curriculums are only delivered by study participants. Rebecca moved to a different school district and hears from former colleagues that the MLT curriculum she wrote is no longer in use.

Participants were not always sure if their colleagues' hesitancy towards adhering to the MLT-based curriculum could have been due entirely to a lack of education, a lack of desire, a "survival mode" mentality, or as one participant put it, "areas of apathy and almost taking comfort in not having eyes upon us. ... [Some administrators and educators believe] as long as the kids are happy and sound good, you're doing great. ... [concert] results rather than process."

Although a lack of MLT background and desire to use the curriculum could potentially be remedied through collaboration time and PD, LEAs do not provide funding, time, or mandate for any sort of MLT-based instructional learning to help progress along the curriculum. This aligns with extant research that revealed that music teachers hope for districts to provide more content-specific PD (Bernard & Abramo, 2019; Siebert, 2008). As mentioned earlier, each of the three participants in my study self-registered for an Elementary General 1 PDLC which enabled them to write and deliver this curriculum. Two of three paid for their own tuition, as is often the case with music educators (Stanley, 2018). All participants agreed that the gold standard of PD would be sending an employee to a PDLC. However, if LEA leadership does not evaluate that a teacher is teaching to the written and published curriculum of the LEA, the LEA has no need to provide any PD—let alone PD a teacher might consider a gold standard—and there is no need for a teacher to attempt to adhere to any curriculum. This lack of PD requirement contrasts Klossner’s (2018) study, in which she found that teachers hired to implement Memphis City Schools’ Orff Curriculum in the 1970s were expected to attend Orff Teacher Education Courses. The district Orff coordinator, at the direction of the superintendent, wrote a grant to fund the creation of the curriculum, including funds for teacher attendance at these courses:

With those teaching jobs came the expectation of attending the summer Orff Schulwerk training. ... Orff coordinator Nancy Ferguson clearly communicated the necessity of attending the summer course: ‘If you [were] going to be a music teacher in Memphis City Schools, you [had] to take the [Orff] levels.’ ... The teachers would be pedagogically prepared for their classrooms (pp. 89-90)

Participants in the current study said of their colleagues choosing not to adhere to the curriculum, “[they are] unable to fulfill the curriculum with fidelity,” “[they are] just kind of going along,” and “there was a lot of either ignoring it or doing what they thought was interpreting it, but kind of phoning it in.”

Each participant’s LEA had varying policies around leadership, compensation, collaboration time, funding, and PD needed to write and adhere to the curriculum. As such, the elementary general music teachers meant to use each curriculum delivered it to varying levels of fidelity at varying points in time. The participants’ LEAs lacked hiring practices to assess a general music candidate’s preparation and ability to use MLT to deliver the MLT-based curriculum. The most severe impact was on the degree to which the curriculum was delivered.

Unfortunately, the longevity of these curriculums was compromised due to district policies. When the teachers in this study designed MLT-based curriculum, up to 13 elementary music teachers total across the three districts were meant to use the respective MLT curriculums in their teaching. Now in 2024, fewer than five years after the adoption of each of these curriculums, only two teachers (both of whom were curriculum writers and participants in this study) continue to use their respective LEA’s curriculum.

Summary

Using reflexive thematic analysis and a critical research paradigm, I distilled three themes and 16 total subthemes under the overarching theme of instigators of and obstacles to change. The three expert teachers and curriculum writers who served as study participants were steadfast and determined in designing and using MLT-based

curriculum, and were advocates for audiation-based instruction. LEA policies both help and hurt curriculum creation, implementation, and longevity.

Results in my study aligned with the teachers and curriculum writers in Korte's (1962) and Wright's (2023) studies, as all participants were unable to finish their curriculum projects in the time allotted by their districts and needed to work beyond paid time. Furthermore, Kate and Rebecca's experiences seeking out and paying for their own GIML PDLC attendance mirrors other researchers' findings that LEAs do not provide enough meaningful professional development to music educators (Bernard & Abramo, 2019; Kastner, 2014; Siebert, 2008; Stanley, 2018; Stanley et al., 2014; Robbins, 1994; Vaughan-Marra & Shouldice, 2021).

My three participants' experience differs from that of the participants' in Korte's (1962), Klossner's (2018), and Wright's (2023) studies. Participants in those three researcher's studies worked in districts that each required and supported complex elementary music curricular efforts in a top-down manner. My three participants and their pedagogical allies created thorough audiation-based curriculum in an entirely bottom-up grassroots approach, which may be why neither of these curriculums is fully in use today. Klossner's (2018) ethnography makes clear that 1970s Memphis City Schools funded new teacher attendance at Orff Teacher Education Courses and provided professional development in alignment with the Orff-based curriculum at least through 1980, which she chose as the endpoint for her historical research. The Orff curriculum's nine years of full implementation is more enduring than—sadly—any curriculum in this study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Research Purpose and Question, Study Design, and Analysis

To improve instruction in elementary general music, the purpose of this qualitative research was to understand the experiences of elementary general music educators who created and used LEA-wide elementary MLT-based curriculums. The single question guiding my study was, how do MLT-based, elementary general music teachers describe their experiences writing and implementing a formal curriculum in their LEA?

For this study, I used a qualitative semi-structured interview-only design and recruited purposely sampled music teachers from my professional network to participate. Three consenting participants, each an elementary general music teacher who wrote and implemented an MLT-based curriculum for use across their LEA, completed three semi-structured individual interviews between March and August 2024. I steered the semi-structured interview process. Interview questions addressed categories of participant background, LEA personnel background, curriculum design process overview, curriculum structure, curriculum longevity, and reflection.

As researcher, I edited Zoom's AI-generated interview transcripts and sent the respective revised transcripts to participants to confirm word accuracy and to verify that they felt that their interview accurately reflected their experiences to the extent they wanted to share. I used Braun and Clarke's (2013, 2022) six-phase iterative approach to conducting reflective thematic analysis: familiarizing myself with the data; coding;

generating initial themes; developing and reviewing themes; refining, defining, and naming themes; and writing up. I kept a researcher's journal to explore my perspective as a fellow MLT-based elementary general music teacher as part of the reflexive process.

Results and Conclusion

Results coalesced under the overarching theme of instigators of and obstacles to change. I derived three themes: (a) teachers were steadfast and determined, (b) teachers were advocates, and (c) district policies helped and hurt. Sixteen total subthemes emerged under these three themes, which are all listed in Table 2. The mind map in Appendix E3 outlines all themes and subthemes, in addition to displaying the connections among various instigators and obstacles. In reflecting on the experiences of these three elementary general music educators in their LEA, their powerful work to create and aid others in following an MLT-based curriculum, and the fact that only two teachers continue to use these curriculums, I selected the phrase *hard to earn and easy to lose* to encapsulate participants' stories.

Because of the structure their documents provided, these participants experienced more meaningful professional collaboration, maximized student instructional time, and facilitated smoother student transitions between buildings, all to the benefit of student audition-based learning. It is difficult to build cohesive MLT teams and endure teacher turnover. MLT teachers require specialized PD and experience, but LEAs can lack pedagogical knowledge of MLT and thus lack support for MLT music educators. As a result, MLT-based teachers may benefit from knowing from the outset of their curriculum writing efforts that, without serious district investment, they may struggle to maintain depth and longevity of district-wide MLT curriculums.

Implications

This study contributes to a small body of literature on elementary general music curriculum creation processes and the effect that LEA policies have on those processes. Since this study focuses on only three teachers' experiences designing and implementing an MLT-based, elementary general music curriculum in their LEA, results may not be generalizable. However, the results may have transferrable implications for elementary general music educators wishing to create pedagogically aligned curriculums and for building and LEA administrators seeking to support such projects. Before making suggestions for such educators, I acknowledge that many teachers and administrators today are pressed for time and not compensated for the full extent of their labor.

Music teachers wishing to create pedagogically aligned curriculums can begin by attending PD (especially in the form of certification courses) and informing themselves about their preferred pedagogical framework to develop expertise and create a network of personnel and informational resources. If the opportunity arises, teachers can recruit pedagogical allies as positions open in their LEA. From this solid foundation of expertise, teachers seeking to create change can invite music colleagues and administrators into their classrooms (either in real time or via video recording) to share their teaching processes and student outcomes and to open a dialogue about instructional choices. Study participants found that making time to collaborate with other music teachers in the district helped to align pedagogical choices and solve teaching challenges. Teachers can use the strategies mentioned earlier to advocate to administration for policy change in support of curricular projects.

All three study participants would agree that the best way LEA administrators can support unified music curriculums is to secure tuition money, release time, compensation, travel reimbursement, and/or per diem pay to send music teachers to certification courses all in the same music pedagogy. This one-time per educator expense would cost less purchasing curricular materials, providing PD on those curricular materials, and licensing online student and teacher access to curricular materials as LEAs often do for standardized tested subject areas. LEA administration can partner with organizations focused on music pedagogy, such as GIML or the Organization of American Kodály Educators, to offer to host certification courses, making that coursework more local for district employees. LEA administration can then provide adequate compensation and/or release time to teachers to write curriculums in line with these pedagogical ideas, and then work with building administration to secure frequent professional collaboration time for music educators. LEAs that provide time for elementary general music educators to work together take an important step to achieve pedagogical alignment, problem solve classroom issues, and combat professional isolation. Lastly, to protect the labor, time, and funds invested in curriculum creation, administrators can ensure that hiring practices either require a candidate to have the requisite education to follow the curriculum or provide that PD to staff upon hire.

Personal Implications

In my teaching context, another MLT-based elementary general music teacher in my district encouraged me to apply for my current position. We are fortunate to have each other as in-district pedagogical allies. We both spent personal time and funds to attend GIML PDLs, and thus our planning and teaching is thoroughly MLT-based. This

school year, we happily and coincidentally have the same lunch and planning time. While administration cannot schedule meetings during these contract-protected minutes, our respective building administrators and building-level team colleagues are aware that we prioritize meeting on Zoom during lunch once a week. This conveys that we are serious about our pedagogical practices.

When we meet, my pedagogical ally and I discuss the skills and knowledge our students currently possess, what they need to learn next, and how to most effectively teach these skills and concepts. We have begun our own joint curricular development but are keeping the written curriculum flexible in hopes of making it accessible to a wider reach of in-district elementary general music colleagues. In addition to my presenting the results of this research project, my pedagogical ally and I are excited to share our curricular progress with our district colleagues and arts specialist when we all meet in person later this school year, hoping the work will speak for itself. We hope more of them will be able to join us for our weekly Zoom meetings and perhaps observe our instruction in the future. In the meantime, we forward MLT-based PD opportunities and resources to our district elementary general music colleagues and our arts specialist.

While I still supplement from my funds and personal time, when my building administrator is able, she allows building funds and release time towards the purchase of MLT-based resources and towards my attendance at MLT-based PD. Although she is not a musician, she recognizes that these experiences provide professional fulfillment, and she can tell that my style of instruction results in truly musical students.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future researchers can replicate this study using different inclusion criteria. For example, they can focus on the experiences of music curriculum writers who (a) teach grade levels or subject areas other than elementary general music, (b) use different pedagogical practices, (c) wrote vertically, rather than horizontally, aligned curriculum, or (d) wrote curriculums that are still fully in use. Researchers can also replicate related studies by conducting process evaluations of a newly-implemented curriculum (Wright, 2023), interviewing and observing teachers to understand if a written curriculum truly aligns with practice (Bugos, 2011), interviewing groups of district curriculum officials to gather information about curriculum revision cycles (Nowak, 2012), or documenting the process of curriculum creation as a whole (Klossner, 2018; Korte, 1962). Lastly, organizations focused on music pedagogy could conduct longitudinal studies on certification course attendees to understand if and how they impacted instructional policies beyond their classroom walls because of their attendance at these courses.

Epilogue

As I conclude this report, I reflect on my initial wondering: what might the music teaching and learning process look like if our entire district elementary general music team was provided time, PD, and robust resources to create, use, and maintain a unified elementary general curriculum? I realize that my study did not address all aspects of my wonderings. The MLT-based elementary general music teachers in this study worked diligently to create and use unified curriculums in their LEA, but their LEAs did not necessarily provide adequate time, PD, and resources to maintain their unified curriculums. Nevertheless, if LEA elementary general music teacher teams can follow the

brave example set by these participants, and especially if LEA policies can support the longevity of these curriculums, they too can offer the same advantages to their students.

Because of this project, I know to make more outreach to my music colleagues and building and district administrators. I have begun to make more of an effort to speak to the theory behind how I teach and why student outcomes in audition-based education likely look different than from outcomes in other elementary music education settings. I have a better understanding of what specific policies will help put curriculum in place and ensure its endurance. While I previously was daunted by the prospect of unified curriculum, Isobel, Kate, and Rebecca inspired me. I feel empowered to initiate change in my district. My hope and theirs is that this research will positively affect many more LEAs for years to come.

REFERENCES

- Abril, C. R., & Gault, B. M. (2006). The state of music in the elementary school: The principal's perspective. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 54(1), 6–21.
- Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives*. Longman.
- Armstrong, P. (2010). *Bloom's taxonomy*. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching. <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy>
- Bailey, J. (2023, July 29). *Curriculum mapping made easy*. SingtoKids. <https://singtokids.com/curriculum-mapping-made-easy>
- Bernard, C. F., & Abramo, J. M. (2019). *Teacher evaluation in music: A guide for music teachers in the U.S.* Oxford University Press, Inc.
- Berry, A. (2017). *Explore-create-share study: An evaluation of teachers as curriculum innovators in engineering education* (Publication No. 10244461) [Doctoral dissertation, Boston University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Bloom, B. S. (Ed). (1984). *Taxonomy of education objectives, handbook I: Cognitive domain* (2nd ed.). Longman. (Original work published 1956)
- Bluestine, E. (2000). *The ways children learn music: An introduction and practical guide to Music Learning Theory* (2nd ed.). GIA Publications, Inc.
- Bowen, R. S. (2017). *Understanding by Design*. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching. <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/understanding-by-design>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2020). Can I use TA? Should I use TA? Should I not use TA? Comparing reflexive thematic analysis and other pattern-based qualitative analytic approaches. *Counselling & Psychotherapy Research*, 21(1), 37–47. <https://doi.org/10.1002/capr.12360>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Bresler, L. (1995). Curricular orientations in elementary school music: Roles, pedagogies and values. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, (127), 22–27.

- Bruner, J. S. (1977). *The process of education* (1st ed.). Harvard University Press.
- Bugos, K. M. (2011). *New York State early-career teachers' selection and use of pedagogical approaches in elementary general music* (Publication No. 3475296) [Doctoral dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Campbell, M. R., Thompson, L. K., & Barrett, J. R. (2021). *Constructing a personal orientation to music teaching: Growth, inquiry, and agency* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi-org/10.4324/9780429327346>
- CAST. (2018). *Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.2* [graphic organizer]. CAST Website. Retrieved April 2, 2024, from <http://udlguidelines.cast.org>
- CAST. (2024). *Summary of proposed updates for UDL Guidelines 3.0*. CAST Website. Retrieved April 2, 2024, from <http://cast.org/impact/summary-of-proposed-updates-for-udl-guidelines-3.0>
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (1993) *Inside/outside: Teacher research and knowledge*. Teachers College Press.
- Conway, C. (2002). Curriculum writing in music. *Music Educators Journal*, 88(6), 54–59. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3399806>
- Conway, C., & Hodgman, S. (2024). Defining musicianship-focused curriculum and assessment. In C. Conway (Ed.), *Musicianship-focused curriculum and assessment* (2nd ed., pp. 13–28). GIA Publications, Inc.
- Crotty, M. J. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Darrow, A. (2016). Applying the principles of Universal Design for Learning in general music. In C. R. Abril & B. M. Gault (Eds.), *Teaching general music: Approaches, issues, and viewpoints* (pp. 308-326). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199328093.003.0015>
- Dictionary.com. (2020, January 29). Receipts. In *Dictionary.com slang dictionary*. Retrieved September 30, 2024. <https://www.dictionary.com/e/slang/receipts>
- Garcia, J. O. (2016). *The effectiveness of teacher involvement in the design of a writing curriculum* (Publication No. 10174018) [Master's thesis, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

- Gerhardstein, R. C. (2001). *Edwin E. Gordon: A biographical and historical account of an American music educator and researcher* (Publication No. 251086471) [Doctoral dissertation, Temple University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Gewertz, C. (2015, September 30). *The Common Core explained*. Education Week. <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/the-common-core-explained/2015/09>
- Global Change Lab. (2016, November 15). *Bloom's taxonomy old and new* [Graphic]. Flickr. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/149065276@N07/25358925239>
- Gordon, E. E. (1965). *Musical Aptitude Profile*. GIA Publications, Inc.
- Gordon, E. E. (1978). *A factor analytic description of tonal and rhythm patterns and objective evidence of pattern difficulty level and growth rate*. GIA Publications, Inc.
- Gordon, E. E. (1979). *Primary Measures of Music Audiation*. GIA Publications, Inc.
- Gordon, E. E. (1981). *The manifestation of developmental music aptitude in the audiation of "same" and "different" as sound in music*. GIA Publications.
- Gordon, E. E. (1986). *Intermediate Measures of Music Audiation*. GIA Publications, Inc.
- Gordon, E. E. (1986). *Advanced Measures of Music Audiation*. GIA Publications, Inc.
- Gordon, E. E. (1990a). *Jump right in: Rhythm register book one*. GIA Publications, Inc.
- Gordon, E. E. (1990b). *Jump right in: Tonal register book one*. GIA Publications, Inc.
- Gordon, E. E. (1998). *Introduction to research and the psychology of music*. GIA Publications, Inc.
- Gordon, E. E. (2001). *Reference handbook for using learning sequence activities*. GIA Publications, Inc.
- Gordon, E. E. (2012). *Learning sequences in music: A contemporary music learning theory*. GIA Publications, Inc.
- Gordon, E. E. (2013a). *Music Learning Theory for newborn and young children*. GIA Publications, Inc.
- Gordon, E. E. (2013b). *Quick and easy introductions*. GIA Publications, Inc.

- Gordon, E. E. (2015). *Structuring comprehensive and unified sequential music curriculums: A concise overview*. GIA Publications, Inc.
- Gordon, E. E., & Woods, D. G. (1986). *Jump right in: The music curriculum, book 1 teacher's guide* (1st ed.). GIA Publications, Inc.
- Gordon Institute for Music Learning (2024). *GIML history*. Gordon Institute for Music Learning. <https://giml.org/giml-history>
- Grunow, R. F., Azzara, C. D., & Gordon, E. E. (2020). *Jump right in: The instrumental series, recorder teacher's guide* (2nd ed.). GIA Publications, Inc.
- Grunow, R. F., Gordon, E. E., & Azzara, C. D. (2000a). *Jump right in: The instrumental series, winds and percussion teacher's guide*. GIA Publications, Inc.
- Grunow, R. F., Gordon, E. E., Azzara, C. D., & Martin, M. (2000b). *Jump right in: The instrumental series, strings teacher's guide*. GIA Publications, Inc.
- Guba, E. G. (1990). *The paradigm dialog*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Hanna, W. (2007). The new Bloom's taxonomy: Implications for music education. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 108(4), 7-9, 12-16.
<https://doi.org/10.3200/aepr.108.4.7-16>
- Heer, R. (n.d.) *A model of learning objectives based on a taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives* [Graphic]. Iowa State University Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching. <https://iastate.app.box.com/s/z0otio951flaii112ro3h42kp8q6fdmm>
- Hernández, N. (2022). *Elementary music teachers' lived experiences implementing the National Core Art Standards: A phenomenological study* (Publication No. 29390167) [Doctoral dissertation, Azusa Pacific University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Holland, S. (2010, March 30). *Tennessee, Delaware schools to get Race to the Top funds*. CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2010/US/03/29/schools.funding/index.html>
- Hoke, R. M. (2022). *The impact of content-specific virtual mentoring on job satisfaction and attrition: A mixed methods study of Delaware arts teachers* (Publication No. 28968847) [Doctoral dissertation, University of South Carolina]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Horn, B. (2022, August 9). *See how your school stacked up in the latest Delaware state testing assessments*. Delaware Online.

<https://www.delawareonline.com/story/news/2022/08/09/delaware-2022-school-test-scores-see-how-your-school-performed/65396253007>

- Hourigan, R. (2024). Understanding music and Universal Design for Learning: Strategies for students with learning differences in the 21st century. In C. Conway (Ed.), *Musicianship-focused curriculum and assessment* (2nd ed., pp. 317–335). GIA Publications, Inc.
- Howell, A. C. (2009). Curricular pillars in the elementary general music classroom. *Music Educators Journal*, 95(3), 37–41. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432108330800>
- Hundal, S., Levin, D. M., & Keselman, A. (2014). Lessons of researcher–teacher co-design of an environmental health afterschool club curriculum. *International Journal of Science Education*, 36(9), 1510–1530. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500693.2013.844377>
- Johnson, D. C., Peterson, A. D., Spears, A., & Vest, J. (2017). Investigating “Understanding by Design” in the national music education standards: Perspectives and practices of music teacher educators. *Visions of Research in Music Education*, 30. <https://digitalcommons.lib.uconn.edu/vrme/vol30/iss1/5>
- Kastner, J. D. (2014). Exploring informal music learning in a professional development community of music teachers. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, (202), 71–89. <https://doi.org/10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.202.0071>
- Kidder, L. H., & Fine, M. (1987). Qualitative and quantitative methods: When stories converge. *New Directions for Program Evaluation*, 1987(35), 57–75. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ev.1459>
- King, N., & Horrocks, C. (2010). *Interviews in qualitative research*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Klossner, H. L. (2018). *A wildflower takes root in Memphis: The adaptation of Orff Schulwerk to the Memphis, Tennessee school curriculum* (Publication No. 10791936) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Rochester]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Korte, I. A. (1962). *The development of the elementary music curriculum guide for Princess Anne County-Virginia Beach City Schools* (Publication No. 10632204) [Master’s thesis, The College of William and Mary]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Lowe, M. (2005). *Music moves for piano: Book 1, teacher’s lesson plans*. GIA Publications, Inc.

- Marshall, H. (2024). Musicianship-focused approaches to music teaching and learning. In C. Conway (Ed.), *Musicianship-focused curriculum and assessment* (2nd ed., pp. 69–84). GIA Publications, Inc.
- Meyer, A., Rose, D. H., & Gordon, D. (2014). *Universal Design for Learning: Theory and practice*. CAST Professional Publishing. <https://clusive.cast.org/>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2020). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (4th ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Mouser, S. (2019). Examining the effects of curriculum use on mathematics student achievement (Publication No. 13898930) [Doctoral dissertation, Missouri Baptist University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Mynatt, J. K. (2018). *Curricular priorities of elementary general music teachers* (Publication No. 10791936) [Master's thesis, University of Delaware]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- National Association for Music Education. (2020) *Opportunity to learn standards: Facilities, personnel, and curricular resources*. National Association for Music Education. <https://nafme.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/NAfME-Opportunity-to-Learn-Standards-2020.pdf>
- Next Generation Science Standards Lead States. (2013). *Lead state partners*. Next Generation Science Standards. <https://www.nextgenscience.org/lead-state-partners>
- Nowak, T. E. (2012). *Procedures for evaluating public school music curricula* [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Rochester, Eastman School of Music.
- Patscheke, H., Degé, F., & Schwarzer, G. (2019). The effects of training in rhythm and pitch on phonological awareness in four- to six-year-old children. *Psychology of Music*, 47(3), 376–391. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735618756763>
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Penuel, W. R., Allen, A.-R., Henson, K., Campanella, M., Patton, R., Rademaker, K., Reed, W., Watkins, D., Wingert, K., Reiser, B., & Zivic, A. (2022). Learning practical design knowledge through co-designing storyline science curriculum units. *Cognition and Instruction*, 40(1), 148–170. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07370008.2021.2010207>

- Rasor, S. H. (1987). *A study and analysis of general music education, K-8, in the public schools of Ohio* (Publication No. 8908457) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Cincinnati]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Reynolds, A. M. (2012). General music teachers talk professional development: Kindling the spark, fanning the flame, and keeping an eye on the fire. In M. Barrett & S. Stauffer (Eds.), *Narrative soundings: An anthology of narrative inquiry in music education* (pp. 275-286). Springer.
- Reynolds, A. M., & Valerio, W.H. (2024). Early childhood music curriculum. In C. Conway (Ed.), *Musicianship-focused curriculum and assessment* (2nd ed., pp. 365–407). GIA Publications, Inc.
- Reynolds, A. M., Valerio, W.H., Taggart, C. C., & Salvador, K. (2020a). *Music play 2: Part a, guide for parents, teachers, caregivers, and children*. GIA Publications, Inc.
- Reynolds, A. M., Valerio, W.H., Taggart, C. C., & Salvador, K. (2020b). *Music play 2: Part b, guide for parents, teachers, caregivers, and children*. GIA Publications, Inc.
- Rhode Island Department of Education. (2023, August 22). Curriculum definition. *Official State of Rhode Island Website*. <https://ride.ri.gov/instruction-assessment/curriculum/curriculum-definition>
- Robbins, J. (1994). Levels of learning in Orff SPIEL. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, (123), 47–53.
- Rubinson, L. E. (2010). *A correlational study of the relationships between music aptitude and phonemic awareness of kindergarten children* (Publication No. 3390687) [Doctoral dissertation, Capella University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Sadowski, J. (2014). *Promoting diversity in the universal: Rethinking Universal Design for Learning* [Senior honor's thesis, University of Louisville, Kentucky]. ThinkIR: The University of Louisville Institutional Repository. <https://ir.library.louisville.edu/honors/55>
- Schubert, W. H. (1986). *Curriculum: Perspective, paradigm, and possibility*. Macmillan.
- Seidman, I. E. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (3rd ed.). Teachers College Press.

- Shouldice, H. N. (2021). *Weaving it all together: A practical guide to applying Gordon's Music Learning Theory in the elementary general music program*. GIA Publications, Inc.
- Shouldice, H. N. (Host). (2024, May 22). E01.64: Chatting with Andy Mullen [Audio podcast episode]. In *Everyday musicality*.
<https://everydaymusicality.com/2024/05/22/e01-64-chatting-with-andy-mullen>
- Siebert, J. J. (2008). *Why music teachers remain in the profession: Conversations with career music educators* (Publication No. 3295324) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Rochester, Eastman School of Music]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Skubic, D., Gaberc, B., & Jerman, J. (2021). Supportive development of phonological awareness through musical activities according to Edgar Willems. *Sage Open*, 11(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211021832>
- Stanley, A. M. (2018). Professional development for the elementary general music teacher. In S. L. Burton & A. M. Reynolds (Eds.), *Engaging musical practices: A sourcebook for elementary general music* (pp. 269-284). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Stanley, A. M., Snell, A., & Edgar, S. (2014). Collaboration as effective music professional development: Success stories from the field. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 24(1), 76–88. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083713502731>
- State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education. (2014a). *National Core Arts Standards: A conceptual framework for arts learning*. National Coalition for Core Arts Standards.
https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/NCCAS%20%20Conceptual%20Framework_0.pdf
- State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education. (2014b). *Prologue 2: Meet the coalition*. National Coalition for Core Arts Standards.
https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/Volume%203_%20Prologue_%20Meet%20the%20Coalition_1.pdf
- State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education. (2014c). *Standards at a glance: Music*. National Coalition for Core Arts Standards.
<https://nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/Music%20at%20a%20Glance.pdf>
- State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education. (2024). *State adoption of new arts education standards since 2014*. National Coalition for Core Arts Standards.
<https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/map>

- State Education Practices. (2015). *State adoption of mathematics and English/Language Arts Common Core State Standards initiative, by state: 2015*. National Center for Education Statistics. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/statereform/tab2_17.asp
- Taggart, C. C., Bolton, B. M., Reynolds, A. M., Valerio, W. H., & Gordon, E. E. (2000). *Jump right in: The music curriculum, book 1 teacher's guide* (Rev. ed.). GIA Publications, Inc.
- Taggart, C. C., Bolton, B. M., Reynolds, A. M., Valerio, W. H., & Gordon, E. E. (2001). *Jump right in: The music curriculum, book 2 teacher's guide* (Rev. ed.). GIA Publications, Inc.
- Taggart, C. C., Bolton, B. M., Reynolds, A. M., Valerio, W. H., & Gordon, E. E. (2004). *Jump right in: The music curriculum, book 3 teacher's guide* (Rev. ed.). GIA Publications, Inc.
- Taggart, C. C., Bolton, B. M., Reynolds, A. M., Valerio, W. H., & Gordon, E. E. (2006). *Jump right in: The music curriculum, book 4 teacher's guide* (Rev. ed.). GIA Publications, Inc.
- Taggart, C. C., Reynolds, A. M., Valerio, W. H., Bailey, J. M., Lange, D., & Gordon, E. E. (2010). *Jump right in: The music curriculum, book K teacher's guide* (Rev. ed.). GIA Publications, Inc.
- Thomson, O. (Host, producer). (2020-2022). *The words matter podcast with Oliver Thomson* [Audio podcast]. <https://www.wordsmatter-education.com>
- US Department of Education. (2009, November). *Race to the Top program: Executive summary* (Report No. ED557422). ERIC. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED557422.pdf>
- Valerio, W. H., Reynolds, A. M., Bolton, B. M., Taggart, C. C., & Gordon, E. E. (1998). *Music play: The early childhood music curriculum*. GIA Publications, Inc.
- Vaughan-Marra, J., & Shouldice, H. N. (2021). Teachers' experiences as participants in a Music-Learning-Theory-focused virtual mentoring program. *The GIML Audea*, 21(1), 13–26.
- Walker, B. C. (1988). *The status of elementary school general music programs in selected elementary schools in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg County school system in North Carolina* (Publication No. 8907846) [Doctoral dissertation, University of North Carolina at Greensboro]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

- Walker, D. F. (1980). A barnstorming tour of writing on curriculum. In A. W. Foshay (Ed.), *Considered action for curriculum development*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Weikart, P. S. (2006). *Teaching movement and dance: A sequential approach to rhythmic movement* (6th ed.). The High/Scope Press.
- Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by Design* (2nd ed.) Prentice Hall.
- Wright, B. F. (2023). *Telling the whole story: A mixed methods process evaluation of middle school general music curriculum reform* (Publication No. 30421651) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

APPENDIX A

A MODEL OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES BASED ON A TAXONOMY FOR LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSING: A REVISION OF BLOOM'S TAXONOMY OF EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES



Adapted from *A Model of Learning Objectives Based on a Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, by R. Heer, n.d, Iowa State University Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (<https://iastate.app.box.com/s/z0otio95lflaii1l2ro3h42kp8q6fdmm>). CC BY 4.0.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview #1: Participant and LEA Personnel Background

Disclaimer: I will record this interview to review and analyze later. This audio and transcript will only be shared between myself, a peer researcher, and my advisor at Temple University. Names and other identifying information will be removed from the transcript. Is there a pseudonym you'd like to create for yourself for me to use in this research?

This is a semi-structured interview format. The researcher may slightly modify questions, ask follow-up questions, or skip over questions altogether depending on participant responses.

Participant Background

- a. How many years have you been teaching elementary general music?
- b. Tell me about the elementary music program in your school and local education agency (LEA).
- c. Tell me about your music teacher preparation program as it relates to elementary general music teaching and curriculum.
- d. Tell me about any other coursework, professional development, or other ways you've grown in elementary general music teaching and curriculum design since beginning your teaching career.

District/LEA Personnel Background

- a. Who was involved in creating your LEA's unified elementary general music, MLT-based curriculum?
- b. What is the relevant educational background of these colleagues?
- c. Did you consult any outside experts when creating your curriculum? If so, who?
- d. What, if any, collaborating did you do with other music and nonmusic educators in your LEA when creating this curriculum?

Interview #2: MLT Curriculum Overview

Disclaimer: I will record this interview to review and analyze later. This audio and transcript will only be shared between myself, a peer researcher, and my advisor at Temple University. Names and other identifying information will be removed from the transcript.

This is a semi-structured interview format. The researcher may slightly modify questions, ask follow-up questions, or skip over questions altogether depending on participant responses.

Curriculum Design Process Overview

- a. Why Music Learning Theory? Does your curriculum reflect any other music education approaches?
- b. Why did you and your LEA colleagues create your MLT curriculum? How did this curriculum project come about?
- c. What general curricular frameworks or theories inform your curriculum?
- d. What requirements (standards, testing considerations, LEA administration mandates, etc.) did you need to fulfill when creating this curriculum? How did this affect the process?
- e. How do your teaching and learning situations (physical space, schedule, materials available, courseload, etc?) differ and how did this impact curricular creation?
- f. What compromises needed to be made when designing the curriculum? Were there any “sticky points?”

Curriculum Structure

- a. How prescriptive is your curriculum? What was purposely detailed and what was purposely left up to individual teachers to decide, and why?
- b. What resources did you use when creating this curriculum?
- c. What assessments are detailed for use along with the curriculum?
- d. Would you be willing to share any curricular documents, lesson plans, or any other materials or artifacts from this process?

Interview #3: Curriculum Longevity and Reflection

Disclaimer: I will record this interview to review and analyze later. This audio and transcript will only be shared between myself, a peer researcher, and my advisor at Temple University. Names and other identifying information will be removed from the transcript.

This is a semi-structured interview format. The researcher may slightly modify questions, ask follow-up questions, or skip over questions altogether depending on participant responses.

Curriculum Longevity

- a. How do/did you generate buy-in from your colleagues for this curriculum?
- b. Do hiring practices assess a candidate's ability to utilize the curriculum?
- c. In what ways is instruction the same and different between educators following this curriculum?
- d. Do you believe the curriculum is successfully delivered throughout the LEA?
How do you know?
- e. Does anyone evaluate your teaching to the curriculum? If so, who, and how?
- f. Does your team meet and discuss student progress along the curriculum? If so, how often?
- g. What systems are in place for revising the curriculum?
- h. How does professional development align with the curriculum?

Reflection

- a. What advice do you have for other LEAs looking to begin a similar journey?
- b. Is there anything else I should ask you that I haven't already?

APPENDIX C

IRB APPROVAL



Research Integrity & Compliance
Student Faculty Center
3340 N. Broad Street, Suite 304
Philadelphia PA 19140

Institutional Review Board
Phone: (215) 707-3390
Fax: (215) 204-4609
e-mail: irb@temple.edu



Approval for a Project Involving Human Subjects Research that is Approved as Exempt

Date: 24-Jan-2024

Protocol Number: 31208
PI: ALISON REYNOLDS
Review Type: EXEMPT
Approved On: 24-Jan-2024
Risk: Minimal risk
Committee: A2
Sponsor: NO EXTERNAL SPONSOR
Project Title: Teacher-Designed, Music Learning Theory-Based, Elementary General Music Curricula

The IRB approved the protocol 31208.

The study was approved under Exempt review. The IRB determined that the research **does not require a continuing review**, consequently there is not an IRB approval period.

As this research was approved as Exempt, the IRB will not stamp the consent or assent form(s).

Note that all applicable Institutional approvals must also be secured before study implementation. These approvals include, but are not limited to, Medical Radiation Committee ("MRC"); Radiation Safety Committee ("RSC"); Institutional Biosafety Committee ("IBC"); and Temple University Survey Coordinating Committee ("TUSCC"). Please visit these Committees' websites for further information.

Finally, in conducting this research, you are obligated to submit the following:

- **Amendments - Any changes to the research that may change the Exempt status of this study must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.** Examples of such changes are: including new, sensitive questions to a survey or interview, changing data collection such that de-identified data will now be identifiable, including an intervention in the methods, changing variables to be collected from medical charts, decreasing confidentiality measures, including minors or adults lacking capacity to consent as subjects when previously only adults with capacity to consent were to be enrolled, no longer collecting signed HIPAA Authorization, etc. Please reach out to the IRB Staff with any questions about if a change to the study warrants an Amendment.
- **Reportable New Information** - Using the Reportable New Information e-form, report new information items such as those described in HRP-071 Policy - Prompt Reporting Requirements to the IRB **within 5 days**.
- **Closure report** - Using a closure e-form, submit when the study is permanently closed to enrollment; all subjects have completed all protocol related interventions and interactions; collection of private identifiable information is complete; and analysis of private identifiable information is complete.

For the complete list of investigator responsibilities, please see the HRP-070 Policy – Investigator Obligations, the Investigator Manual (HRP-910), and other Policies and Procedures found on the Temple University IRB website: <https://research.temple.edu/irb-forms-standard-operating-procedures>.

Please contact the IRB at (215) 707-3390 if you have any questions.

APPENDIX D1

ISOBEL FAMILIARIZATION NOTES

"More Music"
VS
once every 6 days

#coding for each of the
instructional design - VDL,
VSD (EQS)

Aspirational
Certificate program
went back to total
curriculum vs reality
"ideal" situation -
esp. b/c of changing
T situations, scheduling

Kodaly model during ST,
1st 4-5 years of teaching

"MLT... is all I do"

include OVA

not quite aligned
w/ standards or
a point

NCPAS adoption
as an impetus
for long term

VDL in district
state initiatives
\$gin summer
PD days ^{raise} _{vs} ^{reflect} _{passion}

flexible
music instruction conditions
based on building
needs school
location (cost)

research, borrowing
for others
flexibility key
"doing my best"
"no two years usually
ever work out the
same"

Distinct hired MLT teacher,
they talked, she was influenced

PD Days observed her
PARTICIPANT CHANGED HER
WAY OF TEACHING

Kodaly → MLT
"TM to extend the virtues"
"dreaming to get K-12
on board"

Communication b/w buildings

"I there now... familiar
with MLT, but not as
nervous," not knowing
about other colleague's
practices

experts

focus on SLS

curriculum brings
legitimization

Other practices
"Admin doesn't ask"
"MLT... it is the
strength"
critical of standards
"does not seem
worthwhile... I just
wait to do music"

"I don't [look at
curricular stuff]"

Fairband as
related, a met
in the middle

"they could've
taught us [curriculum
design]... that
didn't even
down on me"

"if he never did
that... no one
would even know"

"I know I'm lacking the
foundation... what I'm doing
is really important"

policy plan

took PDLC upon hearing but
was reimbursed

"instigated change" w/
Beatrice

performance
as interruption

pedagogical
Soulmates

APPENDIX D2

KATE FAMILIARIZATION NOTES

Audiation instruction is equity-based education
 Make noise to colleagues
 Hope to train the new T

ECMMA experts as inspiring demonstration

colleagial pedagogical matches

advocacy for programs to administration

letting the work speak for itself

"win over" other colleagues

"in it to win it" made their own PLC

time - social + professional

Feierabend as a stepping stone

Spiral curriculum + accompanying tunes

visualize VDL

then admin codified it

Zone of Proximal Development in spiral curriculum enables scaffolding and success and safety

"If educators don't have the relevant training they can't follow the curriculum" hoping they come to next MLT

leadership - content - led - must have their own

"fatigue when comfort is prioritized over S needs, S learning"

Respond to S needs in real time

audiation-based

"passionate"

advocacy → show admin growth

"power vacuum" "hole"

leader as important educate non-music admin

agents of change

usca in mtg 2!

"I just feel no fear"

fervor from MLT - specific PD

"old guard... blessing"

-invite others to into their classroom

"old culture"

"smokescreen" as protection for admin

what makes other music T so adverse to MLT? empathy, fear, need compassion

"What would happen if I got a little bit better"

S as unlimited in what they can do with this instruction

Friere? not transactional

obstacle - "don't think that kids can, don't think it's our responsibility, but it's too clanced"

MLT preferred in interview

"Grassroots" Eastman

community as a reason for staying "I don't know if I'll have this again"

starewinds update as an impetus for curriculum update

pride

PLC check-ins

observations as most convincing

"Singing is the pencil and paper of the music classroom"

"teacher shortage" admin isn't aware

self-monitoring

T.L. curriculum, date - not discussed before, Ts might hide?

efficient

transition btw distinct bldgs easier as a benefit

HARD PROCESS TO CREATE

intrinsic motivation to learn, improve - (sampling error)

collaboration as new to the MUSD profession

curriculum as efficient

APPENDIX D3

REBECCA FAMILIARIZATION NOTES

Ortiz Levels

Math "agent of change" - Eastman friend
tried to influence others w/ mixed background
"alone on this project"

Strength in our MLT community

Feedback as accessible, more scripted

Need to meet S needs but practices AND T needs
start w/ elementary schools, would have loved to collaborate up to 12

"Modeling trying to convince"

let the work speak for itself

hard for new T to invest-struggling to stay afloat

curriculum improves continuity of instruction

- school was influenced by this

a lot for T needs experts, needs professional oversight
what my S could do

"how musical the outcomes are"
"nerding out"

MLT as more "assessable"

"MLT is the most exciting"
support
"all of your S' JUDL"

curriculum as support for music teachers

network wanted a curriculum - different than other districts

"I was run much trusted | they didn't really care"

flexibility within

performances as an interruption

"what I was hoping for"

curriculum as aspirational?

not knowing curriculum as pushback

ignoring checking boxes
Isabel did this too until revision
T following what they wanted

lack of consistency at district admin level

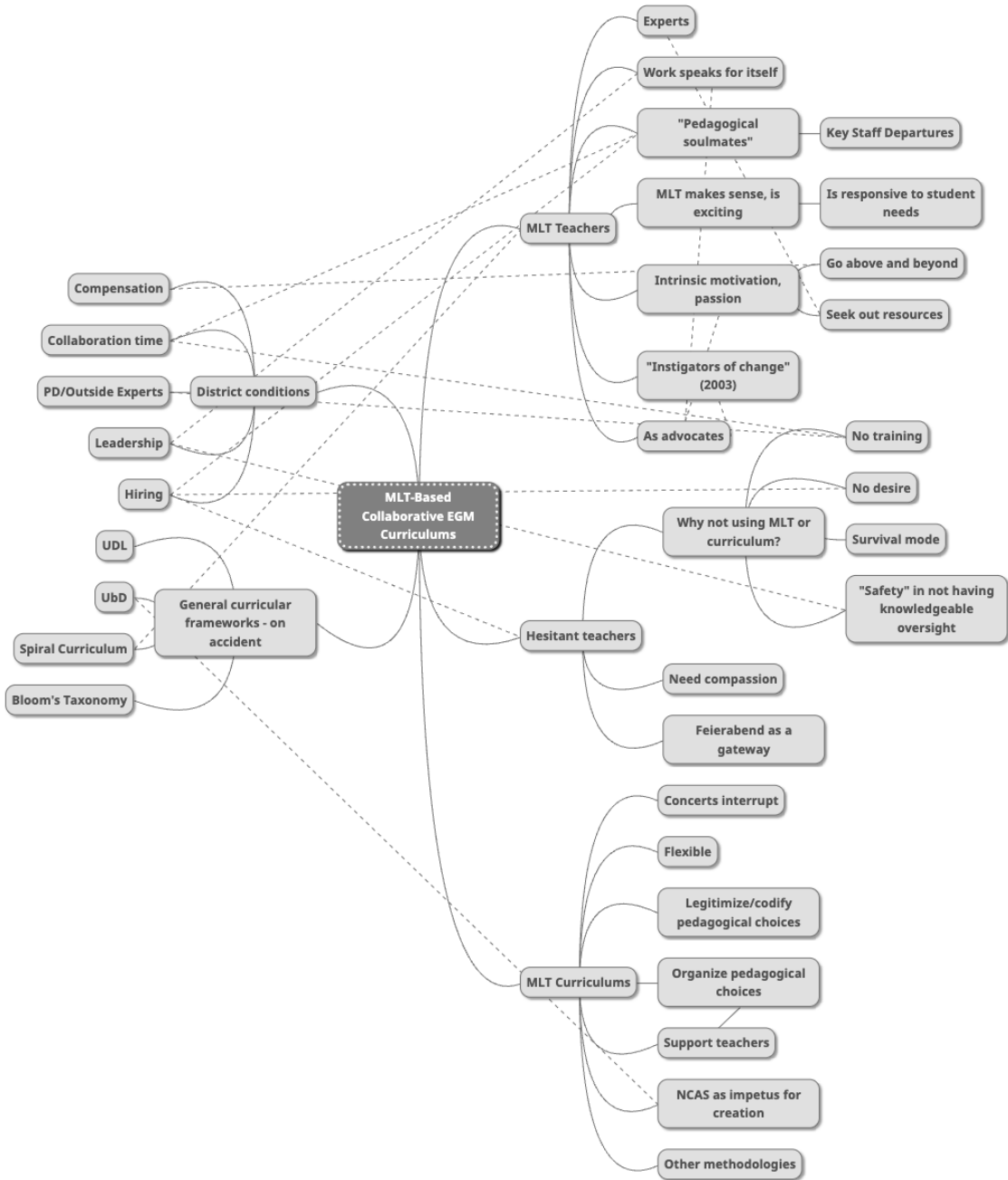
"it just kind of made sense to these people"
"depth"

gender issues

stipend for extra work

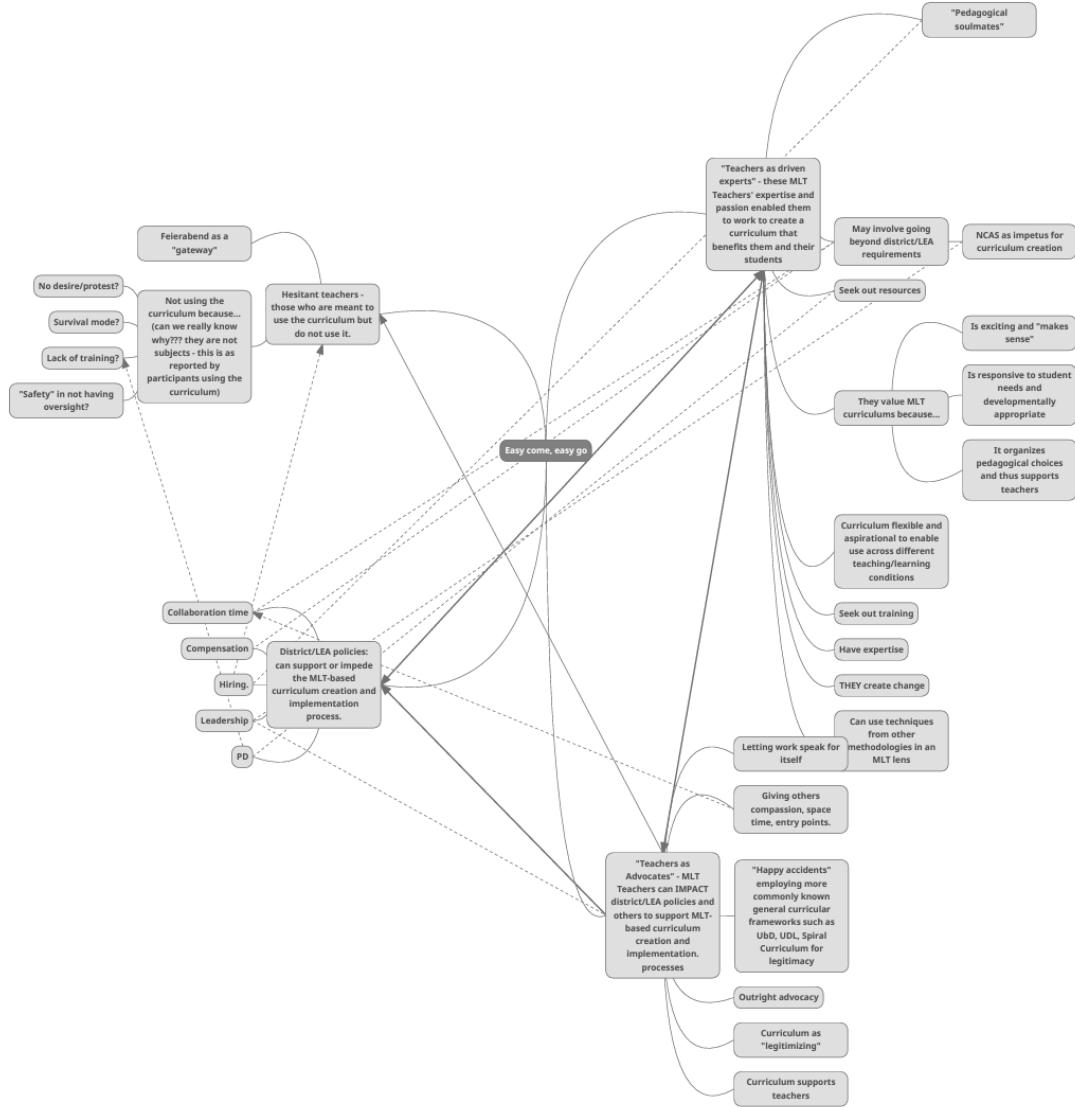
APPENDIX E1

MIND MAP 1 – AFTER FAMILIARIZATION AND INITIAL CODING



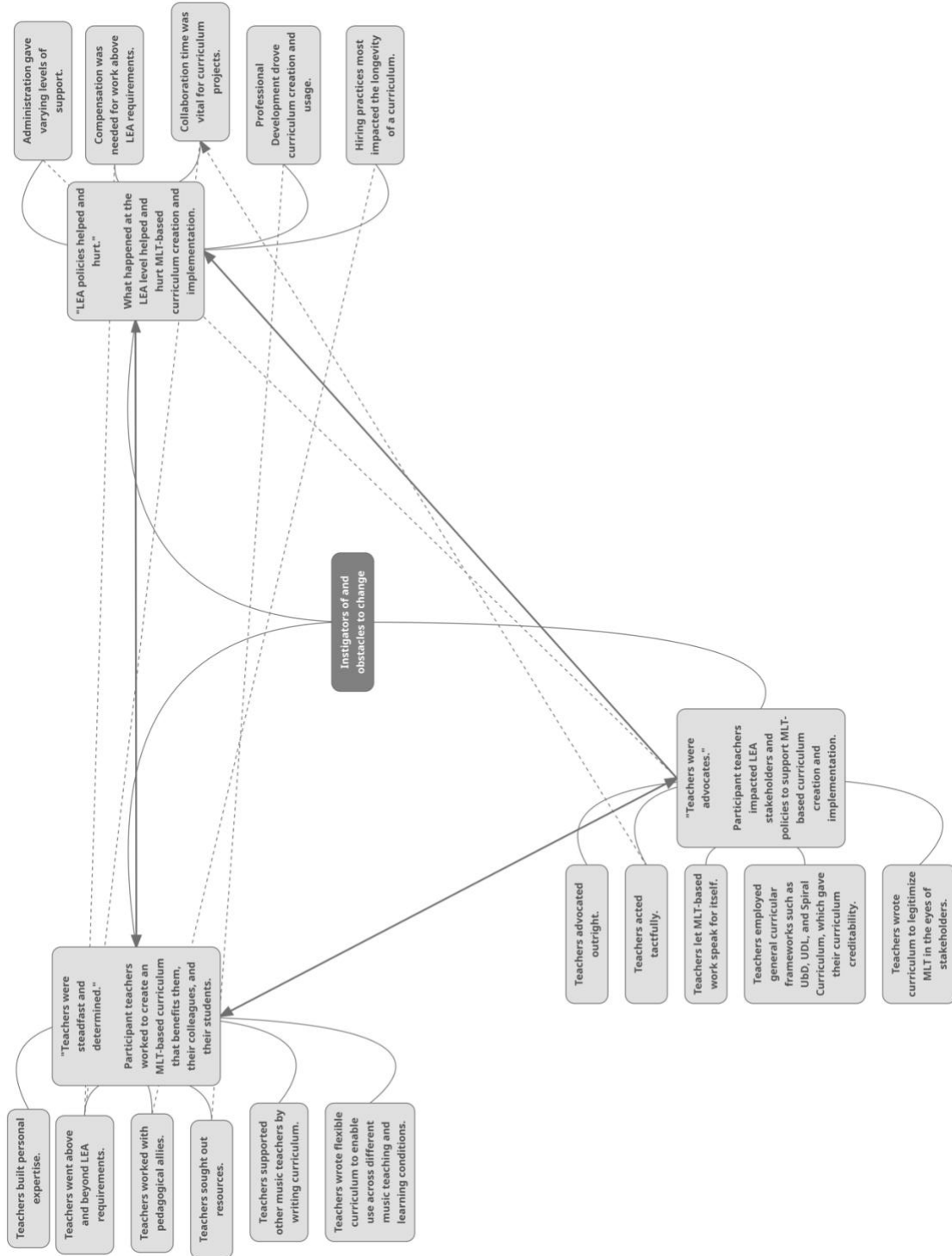
APPENDIX E2

MIND MAP 2 – MIDWAY THROUGH CONSTRUCTING AND REVISING THEMES AND UNDERLYING CODES



APPENDIX E3

MIND MAP 3 – FINALIZED THEMES AND SUBTHEMES



APPENDIX F

COPYRIGHT PERMISSION LETTER FROM GIA PUBLICATIONS, INC.



GIA Publications, Inc.

7404 South Mason Avenue
Chicago, IL 60638
www.giamusic.com

P 800.GIA.1358
F 708.496.3828

October 8, 2024

Maria Parks
Temple University

via email to maria.parks@temple.edu

Dear Maria,

With this letter GIA Publications hereby grants you permission at no charge to reproduce an adapted version of Table 5 on p. 98 of *Learning Sequences in Music* (2012) by Edwin E. Gordon in your master's thesis for academic purposes.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kyle J. Cothorn".

Kyle Cothorn
Permissions Editor
kylec@giamusic.com