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THE SMALLER COMMUNITIES OF MUSICAL PRACTICE: A STUDY OF
MULTIPLE MUSIC TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES FROM EL SISTEMA
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OKLAHOMA

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This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Dolores Leilani Christian, and my father,
Sherril Duane Christian.

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Abstract

THE SMALLER COMMUNITIES OF MUSICAL PRACTICE: A STUDY OF
MULTIPLE MUSIC TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES FROM EL SISTEMA
OKLAHOMA

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Advocacy for music education has come to the forefront of modern educational theorists' agendas and is raising questions about current pedagogy and music study in universities and colleges in the United States (Abeles & Custodero, 2010; Bell-Robertson, 2014; Camangian, 2013; Campbell, 2015; Hewitt, 2009; Elliott & Silverman, 2012). Increases in dropout rates, truancy, bullying, and unhappy school experiences are good indicators that educators are not meeting students' needs. According to the "National Gang Threat Assessment" (2015), criminal activity and membership in street gangs in the United States continues to rise. Gangs provide "a degree of order and solidarity for their members and make them feel like part of a group or a community" (Spergel, 1990, p. 171). Preliminary evidence suggests that it is essential that youth find places to belong, explore and grow in safe and supportive communities.

If music educators are to remain an active and guiding force in helping our youth stay involved in school, we must identify what is currently keeping students

actively engaged in their school environments (Kraus, Hornickel, Strait, Slater, & Thompson, 2014). While opportunities may exist for children to join a choir or band in school, the less formal music communities continue to rise in popularity and act to unify cultural diversity and promote social inclusion through music (Roland, 2015; Westerlund, 2006). Many of these opportunities exist outside of the traditional teacher-led paradigm, and are often created and led by the students themselves. The individuals within these groups then tend to be enthusiastic about their explorations and successes, and self-motivated when choosing the direction of progress. However, little research has been done to discover the values and philosophies found within these smaller and overlooked communities that would allow them to be used as models for future successes within the larger school community.

These often self-formed musical groups do not necessarily function in a manner similar to formal music curricula, yet they provide an environment for our youth to build community. With the development of relationships among like-minded people and supportive adults, students have a greater understanding of commitment and resiliency, and are more able to confidently voice their own thoughts and opinions (Kraus, Hornickel, Strait, Slater, & Thompson, 2014). It is imperative to identify and document how these smaller musical communities of practice are helping students build self-confidence while also providing a nurturing environment to safely explore and develop their musicianship skills. Examples of specialized music groups can be found in before- or after-school programs such as the El Sistema-inspired music programs across the United States, the Harmony Project in Los Angeles, California, local world

music ensembles, school stomp teams, garage bands, and many other smaller music communities.

Performance and participation within the larger El Sistema Oklahoma (ESO) orchestral program include smaller musical communities that deserve to be recognized and examined. It is through these smaller communities that ESO has developed an approach that effectively addresses both the musical and social needs of its orchestral members. This study examined how these smaller music communities function within the larger orchestra and determined what were the contributing factors to the program's overall success. The purpose of this study was to provide music educators with possible ways to utilize these smaller music community experiences to enhance the overall democratic well being of the larger school community.

Chapter 1: Introduction

El Sistema Oklahoma

El Sistema Oklahoma (ESO) is a free, non-profit music program founded by Cathy and Phil Busey, through a partnership with the Wanda L. Bass School of Music at Oklahoma City University, St. Luke's United Methodist Church of Oklahoma City, private donors, and the Oklahoma City Public School district. ESO focuses on providing social reform using a music program to help augment the overall well-being of the whole child. The mission of ESO is "to serve the community by engaging children within an ensemble-based music program so they can experience the joy of music making and grow as responsible citizens" (www.elsistemaok.org). ESO is loosely based on a similar free music program developed in Venezuela over the past 40 years dedicated to helping underserved youth through collective music practice and performance (Baker, 2014). Because of the success of the Venezuelan program initiative, there are now numerous El Sistema-based music programs across the United States and around the world. While ESO's focus is primarily an orchestra-based program, it has not only branched out to include many other areas of musical study but also addresses the social and academic needs of the student.

Faculty and staff currently include local music instructors and teacher assistants, an Executive Director, a Director of Teacher Support and Evaluation, a Site Director and Assistant Site Director, an Academic Coordinator, a Chef and Kitchen Assistant, three Lead Teaching Artists, and numerous volunteers who help throughout the entire program. There are nearly 220 students participating in ESO, ranging from third grade through ninth grade, who meet Monday through Friday from 2:40 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The ESO calendar follows the Oklahoma City Public Schools activity and events calendar, beginning in August and concluding in May annually. An additional offering of rehearsals Monday evenings during June expands the program 4 additional weeks into the summer.

There are five sections for students, including small group music composition and arranging, snack time, homework tutoring or guided instrumental practice time, fundamentals classes, chamber ensembles, sectionals, and full-orchestra rehearsals. Originally, ESO provided only two larger sections with snack time at the beginning of the afternoon. Due to the increased number of students, fluctuating public school schedules, and the general musical and social needs of the students, more sections were added for the 2016-2017 school year. The first section provides high school students, who arrive earlier than middle and elementary school students, the opportunity to meet as a small group. This group explores numerous musical avenues such as composing and arranging music, practicing and performing music created on their individual instruments, and creating a virtual scrapbook of the general cultural context of ESO. This group is also working on recording and producing its first album by May 2017.

The second section consists of snack time, academic tutoring, and free time in the gym. Originally, there was no opportunity for students to complete homework. Due to many parents expressing concern about their children not completing homework assignments because of arriving home late after the music program, ESO administration and faculty added an optional homework section in 2014. This section of varied offerings allows time for most students to arrive and compensates for varying school release times, while not disrupting the music instruction part of the day.

While the third section offers many of the same opportunities as the second section, this section provides more intensive help with homework and guided instrumental practice. An Academic Coordinator is available, along with faculty and volunteer tutors, to help students with homework questions and concerns. During guided practice, an instrumental instructor works with students in one instrumental area. For example, students who are struggling to learn a specific passage in an orchestra piece or who are having difficulty with instrumental executive skills (i.e. posture, instrument carriage, tone production, and articulation/bow technique/stroke) may meet during this time to receive extra help in a small group guided practice. Guided practice is also a time for informal peer mentoring, with students having the freedom to practice what they want and with other students. This section is “coached” but not “taught” like a class.

The fourth and fifth sections include participation in fundamentals classes, small and large chamber ensembles, homogenous instrument classes, or full orchestra rehearsals. All classes are intended to support the success of the full orchestra repertoire and overall musicality. The success of the group depends on the creativity, resourcefulness, and abilities of the teachers to identify ways to reach crucial performance goals within smaller music communities of practice. While five instructional core values (sound-before-sight, experience-before-theory, known-to-unknown, sequential instruction, and child development) exist to help guide teachers in musical instruction and direction, it is ESO’s belief that “highly qualified professional music educators should be given the autonomy to make professional decisions in their

classrooms” (El Sistema Oklahoma Staff Handbook & Curriculum Guide, 2016, p. 33). The orchestra repertoire is the unifier among all curriculum content areas.

The ESO program is divided into three orchestras: Nueva (new), Alegria (joy), and Esperanza (hope). Student placement is based on musical experience according to their skill levels. Fundamentals classes provide students with differentiated music instruction appropriate for each of these orchestras. The Nueva orchestra students meet three times a week in Fundamentals class. Students are provided with large group instruction on reading, writing, and creating music. Kodály and Conversational Solfège approaches are utilized during these classes.

Students in the Alegria orchestra also attend a Fundamentals class three times a week, but rotate between a creative music making class, which is called Musicians Using Self Expression (MUSE), and a more theory-intense class, which is referred to as Superior Notable Artistic Performer (SNAP). These classes also include instruction in composition and world music as part of the overall curriculum. Esperanza classes were structured identically to this format during the 2015-2016 school year. However, due to growth in musical learning, a new format was added to the 2016-2017 school year.

The Esperanza group is currently separated into four core classes. These classes are developed and implemented by four of the Fundamentals teachers. At the beginning of the year, students had the option of choosing World Music, Composition, “Bash the Trash” (a percussion ensemble), and Choir for one semester and the option of signing up for a new core subject the following semester. Due to lack of interest in Choir, a combination of the World Music class and Choir was created. Students in World Music opted to work on a choir piece once a week and focus on other world music

opportunities, such as Native American style flute, Stomp (a group that uses body percussion and objects to create percussive pieces), ukulele, and chimes, the other two days of the week. Students also participate in a small or large group ensemble, which provides experience playing in a smaller, inclusive musical setting. Teachers of these ensembles choose a repertoire based on the students' musical abilities and personalities. This small group opportunity helps teachers identify individual needs, which are often not noticed in the larger full orchestra.

ESO provides numerous opportunities for students to perform. Throughout the year, chamber ensembles and other small groups are invited to perform at local events, church services, and numerous other statewide functions. Four main performances are held during the regular program year and one concert is held as the culminating event from the summer evening rehearsals in June. The first performance in the early fall has ranged from performing at the Oklahoma City Jazz Festival to performing at halftime of a football game with the University of Oklahoma Marching Band. The goal of the first performance is to integrate the orchestras, as personnel have changed, and to re-energize the children. The Nueva students have their first "informance" in October. Then in December, March, and May, there are culminating performances. At each of these performances, all orchestras, along with several small ensembles, perform for friends and family at a local community college auditorium.

Researcher's Position at ESO

As a current teacher, Lead Teaching Artist (LTA), and insider of a culture-sharing group at ESO, this study allowed me to directly contact potential participants and complete fieldwork *in situ*. Over the course of two months during the spring 2017

program session, data regarding the diverse perspectives and pedagogies of multiple teachers from the fundamentals faculty, chamber ensembles, guided practice, and each teacher's use of music pedagogy in a smaller classroom setting to enhance the overall success of a larger group setting was collected. Because of ESO's repertoire-based philosophy, my research focused on how each teacher recognizes, fosters, and modifies pedagogy to enrich the social and musical needs of students in a smaller non-performance, classroom setting, and improves students' successes performing in a full orchestra ensemble.

Purpose and Rationale of the Study

The goal of this research was to discover 1) how teachers and administrators from the ESO program recognize and foster smaller student music communities within their pedagogies and the larger music program, 2) how these music communities evolve due to changes in organization structure, demographic changes, and the educational needs of the students, and 3) how all of the program's stakeholders are involved in the decision-making and action. Extensive research was devoted to documenting the processes found within small music communities and identifying how these communities provide younger learners with opportunities to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences in cultures, values, and individual beliefs within the ESO ensemble-based music organization.

Operational definitions.

Music communities – groups of people, within or outside of a formal school settings, who are involved in music making.

Small music communities – smaller musical groups found within the larger music community, many created and based around the musical needs and desires of students (i.e. Musicianship and Creative Music classes, Guided Instrumental Practice, Chamber Ensembles, etc.)

Problem Statement

It is important for music educators to be open to adaptation and modification in order to meet the changing needs of twenty-first century students in a manner that is both meaningful and purposeful in children’s educational experiences. Concerns regarding whether we are teaching to reach diverse students continue to be raised (Countryman, 2009; Karlen, 2009; Elliott & Silverman, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). While there is a call to unify cultural diversity and promote social inclusion through music curricula, much of the more experiential or humanizing pedagogy occurs in an informal setting (Green, 2005; Abrahams, F., Abrahams, D., Rafaniello, Vodicka, Westawski, & Wilson, 2012) and is often overlooked in traditional music classroom settings.

Camangian (2013) discusses humanizing pedagogy, or tapping into student’s lived experiences and social ways of understanding by beginning with “their realities, ideologies, and ways of communicating their understanding of the world” (p. 425). While choir, band, and similar music groups offer opportunities for students to learn music in a large group setting, the learning is preset or primarily decided by the conductor. Rarely are music students provided times throughout their daily routines to naturally discover their own musical likes and dislikes on their primary instrument, unless at home or in a small ensemble setting. As a result, music teachers seldom have

the opportunity to discover pedagogy to include this style of learning in their large group instruction.

Rather than exposing students to a prescribed method of learning, much can be gained by discovering how children learn music naturally and as a lifestyle within their communities (Green, 2005; Batt-Rawden, 2010). It is through these more specialized, adapted communities that students can fully explore their realities and ideologies, which in turn, provides a voice for them to communicate (Buysse, Lave & Wenger, 1998; Sparkman, & Wesley, 2003; Kenny, 2014). The intent of this section is to provide related literature regarding the urgency of revisiting teacher effectiveness, current music methodology, and pedagogy. I will also identify how ESO recognizes the constantly changing needs and realities of its students and adapts music pedagogies and curriculum to provide more effective instruction, identity formation, security, and success within a group. Significant focus of the research was placed on determining the effectiveness of small, specialized music communities nested within the larger orchestral program in providing young learners with opportunities to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences in cultures and individual beliefs within an inclusive, secure environment. In conclusion, the results and interpretation of data gathered during a short-term qualitative research study of El Sistema Oklahoma faculty and staff involvement will be presented, as well as suggestions on how to implement similar small musical communities of practice within the public school setting.

Research Questions

The investigator used Wenger's (1998) three dimensions of the communities of practice (CoP) framework to focus the study of social processes of learning,

conceptualizing, and in collecting data based on mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire (pp. 70-73). *Mutual engagement* is defined as a group of people that has become identified by a shared field of interest. Each member is respected for his or her values and commitment to furthering the common interest, and thereby creating a unique social identity. Within a community of *mutual engagement*, members engage in activities together, share ideas through discussions, and develop new ways to further their field of interest within a *joint enterprise*. Members frequently converse and assess what is working or not working within the groups' activities and adjust accordingly. This assessment and adjustment to better the community is called *shared repertoire*. Through evaluation, often in the form of casual conversations addressing common concerns or tools for success, a repertoire of resources is developed.

ESO's program structure and design were analyzed to determine *mutual engagement*. Special attention was given to the original logistical and managerial structures of ESO and how these structures were adjusted to accommodate continuous growth of the program. Current music pedagogies used during small and large group instruction were identified and examined to determine *joint enterprise*, with special attention on how fundamentals classes and guided practice evolve over time. Participants' perceptions were gathered and analyzed to determine if a *shared repertoire* exists. These data were used to determine if developing music pedagogies meet the demographic and educational needs of the students.

The following questions guided research and helped me determine the success of smaller communities of practice in ESO's music program:

- 1) How do teachers from the ESO music program recognize and foster smaller student music communities within their pedagogies and the larger music program?
- 2) How do ESO music communities evolve due to changes in organization structure, demographic changes, and the educational needs of the students?
- 3) How does the ESO administration encourage inclusion of all the program's stakeholder's decision-making and action?

Research Methodology

During the second semester of the 2016-2017 school year, beginning February 1 and concluding March 10, multiple methods of investigation were used to gather data, such as video and audio recordings, interviews, surveys, and opportunities for teachers to comment on playback video of a previously taught lesson. The pool of participants included approximately 30 teachers and 5 teacher assistants, 3 volunteers, the Executive Director, the Director of Teacher Support and Evaluation, the Site Director and Assistant Site Director, and the primary investigator as a participant observer. This qualitative ethnographic research focused on how faculty and volunteers of ESO recognize, foster, and modify practices to enrich the social and musical needs of students in a smaller non-performance setting, and improve students' success while performing in a full orchestra ensemble.

Potential participants were contacted in person by the principal investigator to ascertain interest in participation. Those who agreed to participate were provided an Informed Consent Form. After the Informed Consent Forms were signed and received, they were immediately stored in a locked filing cabinet. All participants were given

copies of the Informed Consent Forms. All communication regarding Informed Consent Forms and Assent Forms were deleted once the consent forms were received. SurveyMonkey.com, an online survey tool, was utilized to assist in the collection of data through open-ended anonymous surveys.

Potential Insights

Music is a discovery and bridging of ideas, identities, and values, expressed in a form unique to its creator. How each creator's music is expressed or shared can be personal or communal. It is the mission of music educators to help students recognize safe environments and to provide personalized programs that are beneficial in releasing their musical thoughts. It is the belief of the researcher that El Sistema Oklahoma has successfully discovered an approach that effectively addresses the current needs of its student population and provides a positive, nurturing environment that helps students cultivate educated feelings about the musical process and experience of music making within the musical communities they are constructing.

ESO models a music program that is open to variety, adaptation, and modification in order to meet the changing needs of our students in the twenty-first century in a manner that is both meaningful and purposeful. I propose that music educators within the United States and around the world contemplate the constructive results of this study and examine closely other music communities experiencing similar results. While opportunities exist for children to join a choir or band in school, it is often the smaller, more specialized music groups that tend to explore music more fully and grow in a more profound direction. Future research could investigate how schools

utilize and implement these smaller, often overlooked, musical communities to enhance the overall democratic well-being of the larger school community.

Examples of these overlooked communities include after-school stomp groups, world music ensembles, guitar clubs, and jump rope teams. Often, these communities are taught by teachers employed within a school, not teaching music classes, who nevertheless share a passion for creating and making music with their students. Discovering the diverse values and philosophies often found within these smaller communities would allow for extended reflection on how these small musical communities strengthen the overall efficacy of the larger group, and provide a framework for implementation.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Rethinking Curriculum for Stylistic Diversity: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Discovering where and acknowledging how music education's role has changed throughout the United States in the last 20 years is a crucial first step in the journey towards improving music education (Campbell, Myers, & Sarath, 2016). Conversations should ideally discern between what is working in our music education programs and what should be adjusted to appropriately fit the musical and social needs of millennial students. As an example of this responsiveness, Patricia Sheehan Campbell, president of the College Music Society, recently appointed a task force to research the roles of the twenty-first century musician. According to The Task Force on the Undergraduate Music Major (TFUMM) (Campbell, et al. 2016, p. iv), much of our current traditional music instruction "is at odds with what we know about perception, cognition, and motivation to learn" and supports the need to further investigate current structures and functionalities of music education in public schools.

Similarly, Hewitt (2009) recognized the need to further investigate music education in public schools, but also mentions how diverse musical genres, such as those found in the students' own family cultures, and less formal styles of music making, are rarely addressed in college course offerings. Hewitt states,

Failure to provide learning opportunities that address the extramusical aspects of stylistic diversity, and embed the normative behaviours and expectations of those communities within degree programmes, risks failing to engage students in the learning process. It risks failing to produce employable graduates who are

accepted and competent members of professional communities of practice (Hewitt, 2009, p. 335).

With little experience teaching these *extramusical aspects*, future music educators risk losing vital opportunities to connect with younger students, especially high school students who are typically in the prime of making musical preferences (Levitin, 2006).

When acknowledging the aforementioned research on what is occurring in higher education and in the public school setting, two questions arise: 1) how do we prepare future music teachers in a manner that adjusts to our students' ever-changing musical needs, and 2) how do we help current teachers make adjustments to pedagogy and curriculum to continue teaching effectively? While these questions are difficult to answer, the following section will attempt to provide insight into these issues.

Development of Self and Identity through Community

While many middle and high school students enjoy making music in social contexts such as garage bands, church choirs, and jazz ensembles, few take formal music lessons (Hewitt, 2009). Therefore, music teachers lose many interested music students who thrive in *knowledge-building communities*, and who feel less successful in more formalized structures of learning (Westerlund, 2006). Students often find success in the more informal music making, which is not often possible to experience in a teacher-to-apprentice style of teaching. This disinterest could be attributed to lack of connectedness students feel when taking lessons privately that are out of the social and musical context they are seeking. Music educators should consider looking into outside methods students naturally use when creating music from within their culture groups. According to Jaffurs (2004), "By understanding how children construct a method for

teaching themselves, music teachers may discover alternative methods for creating a learning environment” (p. 196).

Green (2005) advocated two approaches regarding how students engage in creating music informally. The first approach is through self-discovery of music and involves students experimenting with the limits of their instruments and their own musical knowledge. Students learn aurally from recordings of songs with which they not only identify or find fascinating, but also that piques and expands their interest in experiencing music. The second approach is the process of creating music while working with others. This approach challenges students to work with others when deciding on repertoire, style, and other facets of music that suit the desires of the group or ensemble.

Regardless of approach, both informal musical experiences require students to reach beyond what is typically asked of them in a traditional music classroom setting. Green suggests these types of settings can help young musicians “develop relatively advanced aural, improvisatory, compositional, and technical skills and, in some cases, theoretical understanding” and “value personal qualities of cooperation, responsibility, and commitment” (p. 1). This informal self-motivated style of learning emphasizes *feel* over technical ability, and allows for individual exploration of diverse styles or genres.

Green’s study focused on the process of informal, popular music-learning practices of students in four London schools over a six-week period. The classes consisted of 13- and 14-year old students who were asked to bring several choices of music into the music classroom. After choosing groups and songs, students copied down the music by any means necessary. Unless asked by students, the music teachers

provided little guidance and intervention. While the process appeared chaotic in the ways students chose to reproduce the songs, students eventually and successfully recreated their pieces, and on instruments of their choice.

Green then introduced another activity, asking students to expand on previous learning, except this time students were given a set of guided parameters. Through this process, the music teachers provided students with the excerpts of music. With little more than note names of riffs in the song, students were asked to reproduce the song through listening.

In this study, Green's intent was to introduce a more teacher-directed approach and determine the effectiveness of both methods. While many students expressed displeasure in the more formal structure of the second activity, they eventually took ownership of the piece and became excited about playing more challenging riffs. Most students enjoyed the opportunity to express themselves more freely than they had before these activities and discussed ways to incorporate these activities into future activities in the music classroom. Green recognized that this type of research opens the door to more questions than solutions, but surmised that understanding how students learn informally might also provide insight into ways students learn most naturally.

Similarly, Elliott (2012) believes that students bring many different interpretations of defining music from their formal and informal musical experiences. Elliott suggests that educators examine more closely the functionality of music education, with emphasis on *why* we teach students music rather than *what* and *how* we teach our students. With this idea in mind, music classrooms can be a place for students to practice music-making, experience and share music with others, and discover how

music can be utilized as a source for communicating their beliefs and values. By focusing on students' central values in teaching *through* music, students will interpret music in a manner that makes contextual sense. This process of discovering and interpreting individual musicianship alongside other musicians is how Elliott believes students become artistic citizens.

Elliott and Silverman (2015) closely examined the idea of music as a practice, or social praxis, by stressing the importance of reexamining music education with students' musical understanding, musical processes, and personhood in the forefront of research. According to Elliot and Silverman (2015),

When music is conceived and carried out ethically, for full human flourishing and transformation, music is not simply a practice, but a social praxis. Music should be conceived as a praxis – as something people do – as a distinctive and widely diverse form of creative and ethical human doing, making, and valuing that combines and depends on the integration of a complex web of people, processes, products, and contexts (p. 51).

While the term social praxis might not be as frequently used, the concept can be traced back to Greek philosophers who used this concept to critically reflect on the well-being of self and social interactions. Even today, this premise can be found in the development of organizations, government, education, and particularly with music educators, who want to cultivate a common passion within groups through interaction and collaboration.

For example, Buysse, Sparkman, and Wesley (2003) recognize how community collaboration in educational practices exists in professional learning communities

(PLC), collaboration in determining best practices, and professional development; however, they note “legitimate linking of ideas and innovations with the broader educational community” is less often stressed (Buysse, et al., 2003, p. 11). Typically, learning and collaboration end too quickly. The authors believe learning should continue, building a diverse community of knowledge and sustaining relationships among practitioners. For example, by promoting interdisciplinary training within staff development or in-service programs, teachers are exposed to diverse experiences and new perspectives on addressing educational goals as a community. With continuous collaboration, this type of social praxis can closely examine, modify, and strengthen curricula across subjects.

At the higher education level, Buysse, et al. suggest college instructors encourage an environment of collaborative learning, or *communities of practice*, by giving assignments that ask students to work closely with others through the discovery of their research. Students should be encouraged to apply their research to real-life applications and engage in continuous dialogue on how to better explore issues within their fields of study. According to Buysse, et al., this type of collaboration and community should also exist between teachers and researchers, and not merely coexist as separate entities or practices, to better the common initiative of successful pedagogy.

More specific to the music education field, many researchers have developed ideas similar to social praxis, such as musicking (Small, 1977), community music (Cahill, 1998; Higgins 2012; ISME 2013; Shippers & Bartleet, 2013), or communities of practice (Wenger, 1998; Lave & Wenger, 1991). In each of these ideas, the approach is centered on the awareness and development of self and identity through community.

Looking at music in community and in this social learning manner provides educators insight into how *communities of practice* might function or form within their music classroom.

Several researchers have used Wenger's idea of *communities of practice* to help guide collection of data and interpretation. While Wenger mentions music groups such as rock bands or choirs as examples of communities of practice, his focus is not grounded in music. The following section will first highlight Wenger's *communities of practice* followed by an example of research utilizing Wenger's model to examine functionality of music in classrooms and suggestions on cultivating this type of practice. Lastly, a brief description of a study involving both higher education and classroom teachers working together in *communities of practice* will be provided.

Wenger's Communities of Practice

According to Wenger (1998) learning is found "in the context of our lived experiences of participation in the world" and is very much a "fundamentally social phenomenon" (p. 3). Learning occurs beyond classroom walls, and includes daily conversations and actions with others. As a result of these interactions, change occurs in one's thoughts and perceptions, leading to a deeper engagement of subjects or belief systems. In Wenger's *communities of practice* model, students are encouraged to collaborate and discover answers that might not otherwise have been realized without the insights of others.

While the idea of collaboration in learning is not new, many current assessments require students to demonstrate knowledge in an unrealistic format. For example, often educators require students to display their knowledge of a skill only via standardized

tests rather than placing them in environments to successfully display their knowledge through participation or action. While some students may successfully showcase their superior abilities to interpret the testmakers' intentions, other students require more practical, real-world applications in which to prove their skills. Wenger proportionately recognizes the importance of providing students "access to the resources necessary to learn what they need to learn in order to take action and make decisions that fully engage their own knowledgeability" (p. 10).

Wenger's concept of *communities of practice* (CoP) consists of three-dimensional relationships that interconnect and act as one entity. The following figure represents this interconnected flow of dimensions (p. 73):

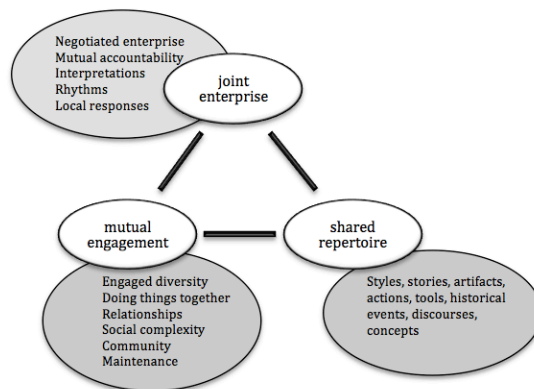


Figure 1. Wenger's dimensions of practice as the property of a community: a) mutual engagement, b) joint enterprise, and c) shared repertoire.

Mutual engagement. Mutual engagement involves the negotiations, involvement, and engagement of relationships that help define a group, or community. Wenger states that community does not exist in a vacuum but rather "exists because people are engaged in actions whose meanings they negotiate with one another" (p. 73). However, one does not merely belong to a group by claiming membership, but rather by

contributing knowledge and opinions that can positively or negatively influence relationships and differences within the group. While members' ideas and identities become interconnected, they are not "fused" (p. 76). Each member has a role and decides how he or she will contribute. The negotiated response of the community is the culmination of joint enterprise.

Joint enterprise. Joint enterprise involves the accountability of the members in action, or practice. Not all members within a community may agree with the direction of the group; however the terms or actions are continually negotiated. Wenger explains how "Their daily practice, with its mixture of submission and assertion, is a complex, collectively negotiated response to what they understand to be their situation" (p. 78). While outside influences or external forces play a part in the community's decision making, the group's actions ultimately negotiate its enterprise. Accountability of each member is crucial to the success of the community. Wenger mentions the importance of how members need to feel connected to each circumstance and to feel included in decision-making in order for positive change to occur.

Shared repertoire. Shared repertoire is the culmination of the group's actions, beliefs, or experiences, and manifests itself as the norm of the group and how the group identifies within the larger community or world. It is the means by which the group presents itself and engages within society. Often change, or means of negotiating a situation, is the result of a community's shared repertoire. And often, it is less apparent. Not all shared repertoire within communities is as evident as others and frequently takes the form of stories, new concepts or ideas, or initiative to start anew.

Communities of Musical Practice in Music Classrooms

Countryman (2009) gathered data from 33 young adults who were highly involved in music programs in high school and who graduated between one and six years prior to the study. Many mentioned feelings of satisfaction, pleasure, and pride when reflecting on their high school music experiences. According to Countryman, while *community* was determined to be the critical component of experience and commitment, *how* students experience *community* was inconsistent. By utilizing both Wenger's *community of practice* and Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) definition of happiness or *flow*, the author focused on how community is developed and what conditions are pertinent for *communities of practice* to exist.

While several participants belonged to musical groups in high school, Countryman (2009) mentions how “real community of practice was experienced only by those students who had ongoing opportunities to be ‘in community’ and ‘in charge,’ simultaneously” (p. 100). Countryman suggests these communities allow for greater *musical creativity*, *musical independence*, or *student leadership*, and mentions how students were encouraged to compose, arrange pieces or improvise, choose repertoire for the group to be played publicly, and to discover ways to engage the school environment through music. In the author's opinion, these examples fit Wenger's model of a community of practice.

Countryman suggests six ways for teachers to nurture *communities of practice* in the music classroom (p. 106):

- Privilege the musical knowledge students bring to their school music settings. Create project-based encounters where students are featured as experts in their chosen styles of music.

- Move away from the podium both physically (for example, set up the room as a circle so that each musician is positioned equally) and pedagogically (i.e. frame performing experiences as opportunities to explore and experiment).
- Craft music instruction as problem solving, and acknowledge multiple solutions to musical problems.
- Provide regular opportunities to improvise, arrange and compose music collaboratively.
- Provide opportunities for these creative collaborations, which will often be based on music of the students' own choosing, to be publicly performed.
- Acknowledge the physicality and the spirituality of music.

As mentioned earlier, activities and suggestions similar to Countryman's, regarding nurturing *communities of practice*, are time consuming and often logistically impossible in a large group setting. Both Greene (2005) and Countryman (2009), however, suggest creating smaller group opportunities or small ensembles for students to explore music making and call on educators to recognize the significant musical impact these groups have on student learning. Flexibility in styles of music and open-mindedness to less familiar ways of teaching new genres are musts for the practitioner and are the first steps towards creating an environment that nurtures community similar to Wenger's model.

Examining More Closely the Smaller Communities of Musical Practice

The Task Force on the Undergraduate Music Major report (TUFMM) recognizes the significance of small ensembles, or for this dissertation, small music communities,

within larger school settings. Campbell, Myers, & Sarath (2016) recognize how ensembles “could complement the standard classical chamber music model, or provide the basis for an entirely new model that achieves new kinds of diverse synthesis” (p. 44). With varying styles and genres introduced into the classroom, however, varying styles of teaching and learning in appropriate musical contexts should be considered. This process can be time consuming and often logistically impractical.

Another caveat, as Wenger (1998) mentions, is that it is not merely membership that creates a community of practice. Teachers and students will need to understand the interconnectedness of relationships structured within *communities of practice*. As with Green’s (2005) study, it was an adjustment for students to be given the freedom to create without the full assistance of a music instructor. However, Green’s study also presents a good example of how activities created with students’ ideals and natural approaches to music does engage creative music-making and ownership of learning within larger groups. These results warrant further investigations of the smaller communities of practice in music educational settings, which is where the researcher of this dissertation wishes to explore further.

Communities of Practice with Higher Education in Mind

Kenny (2014) discusses the need for further exploration in musical process and the importance of developing an awareness of communities of music practice. This collaborative project involved a musical partnership among a university, a local resource agency, and an elementary school in Limerick, Ireland. The nature and aim of the project was to provide “high-quality, innovative after-school initiatives to

complement and enhance the primary school music curriculum through a mentorship approach between student teachers and primary children” (p. 397).

Kenny used the *community of practice* framework (CoP) developed by Étienne Wenger to help guide and focus her qualitative case study on social learning and understanding. Data were gathered and analyzed to help determine the relativity and appropriateness of the music project imposed on children created by student teachers and university mentors. Kenny used multiple methods such as video recording, interviews, and audio recordings, to gather research over a two-month period. Stakeholders included six student teachers and 15 children, the Learning Hub Resource Director, and the editor as a participant observer, or dual research position. This dual position allowed Kenny to be an insider among her research colleagues and also an outsider beyond the school system by participating as an equal in workshops and partnering as the role of a teacher.

Utilizing Wenger’s CoP, Kenny recognized how weekly workshops evolved into a balance of power and ideas from teachers’ weekly classroom experiences. Student teachers felt validated by their peers, comfortable voicing their ideas and opinions, and safe to modify lesson plans knowing the group would provide supportive feedback. These are all significant indicators of *mutual engagement*. Kenny also observed *joint enterprise* through a negotiated refinement of the initial structure or aims of the project, which evolved to fit the needs of the students. As the group’s practice emerged among teachers, the director, and students, the group’s participation and involvement became more ubiquitous. Several participants mentioned how this music teaching experience was different from standard music teaching in a school setting in that the “shared

repertoire” and overall experience and development of the project felt more like the building of a family.

Kenny’s collaborative project prompted the author of this dissertation to conduct a similar study with El Sistema Oklahoma (ESO) and to discover the powerful benefits of music education as a springboard to bridging diversified pedagogies and building a progressive music curriculum. ESO’s multi-faceted methodologies, small music communities created for the students’ needs, and overall framework compare similarly to Kenny’s project and can be found within diverse communities of music practice (Green 2005; Countryman 2009). While a larger study involving students of ESO could not be accomplished at this time, the author will focus on a crucial element of the program: how teachers foster and nurture small communities of music practice nested within the larger ESO music program.

As with Kenny’s project, Wenger’s three dimensions of CoP will be utilized in guiding research and gathering data within an established framework. This author hopes this research will promote collaboration between K-12 music teachers in the field and researchers in higher education. If these groups can combine their efforts and align music curricula vertically in ways that are musically and naturally appropriate, then educators will be able to serve students’ learning styles and varied cultures, while enhancing the skills and mental processes necessary to become artistic, creative, and productive members of our increasingly global society.

Digging Deeper into El Sistema, Venezuela

El Sistema, a social program dedicated to helping underserved youth through collective music practice and performance, was founded in Venezuela in 1975. When

the researcher began initial investigation into the El Sistema program, most of the findings came from Internet articles and Google searches. In 2014, Geoffrey Baker published a book entitled *El Sistema: Orchestrating Venezuela's Youth*, which explored the background and origins of the El Sistema program, as well as the current structure and mission of the program. However, Baker (2014) exposed a slightly more sinister tone of the El Sistema program than often publicly represented and called for a more critical analysis of the program's significance. Baker described the conductor, José Antonio Abreu, as a dictator who ran an authoritarian-style ensemble with heavy influence in persuading politicians to support his cause. While Abreu understood the power of music, according to Baker he also understood very well the "music of power" (p.4) and it was rumored that few dared to cross Abreu's authority. Many people Baker interviewed feared that their positions would be compromised if they discussed anything negative about the program, saying, "To criticize the program publicly is to risk career suicide," or noted how others were too "frightened by the possibility of physical damage to my family or property" by providing divergent information about the program (p.7). Baker also suggested that the preconceived emotions of success of the program, after hearing these youths perform, left little room for observers and researchers to critically uncover whether or not the program was helping students succeed socially.

A review of Baker's book by Kenyon (2015) in the New York Review of Books, while mostly positive, provoked a somewhat nasty reply from Baker. By ignoring the more serious issues of gender discrimination, allegations of sexual abuse and many other similar concerns, Baker claimed that Kenyon focused solely on the trivial aspects

of his book. In reply to Baker's comments, Kenyon noted these allegations were only speculations, and noted how Baker, in the conclusion of his book, also acknowledged that there was no concrete evidence to support all of these rumors and allegations. Kenyon was most saddened by Baker's inability to see the idea of the orchestra as a powerful tool for social change.

While Baker's findings were somewhat troubling to read, it was not the researcher's intent to dispute Baker's claims, but rather to read them for a deeper understanding of the history, varying perspectives, and overall background information and mission of the El Sistema program. The role of the researcher in this dissertation was to focus solely on the musical perspectives of teachers from the Oklahoma El Sistema-inspired music program. Interestingly, however, because the researcher discovered the review and banter between Baker and Kenyon, another book was discovered by the researcher called *Playing for Their Lives: The Global El Sistema Movement for Social Change Through Music* by Tunstall & Booth (2016). This book provided the researcher a different perspective into the earliest accounts of El Sistema's inception through first-hand accounts from members who were involved from the beginning.

Tunstall and Booth (2016) described José Antonio Abreu, a conservatory-trained musician and government official, as a gentleman who conceived the idea of a local orchestra by inviting young musicians in Caracas, Venezuela to play together one evening in an empty downtown parking garage in February of 1975. The authors gave detailed accounts of interviews from members who explained how the group grew, starting with only 11 the first evening, most under the age of 17 years old, to much

larger numbers as they invited their friends to join. Tunstall and Booth explained how the more experienced musicians recognized early on that in order to become better as an orchestra, they would need to mentor the younger, less experienced students. As a result of the growth in numbers and need for space, the locations and logistics continuously changed, until the group eventually found an empty warehouse large enough to hold rehearsals.

According to Tunstall and Booth,

The intensity of rehearsals, the communal accomplishment against considerable odds, the thrill of delving together into great works of musical art – all these things were having rippling effects. Their intensive ensemble endeavor was doing more than producing good music; it was beginning to change their lives (p.7).

Abreu, as a government official and musician, knew it was important to gain larger support for his orchestra to continue thriving and to continue his dream of providing all youth the opportunity to experience music in this manner. From his ideas and structure, the basis for a new *Sistema* of music education arose across Venezuela. This system was not designed for only the most musically gifted children, but rather for all children, especially for those who lived in at-risk communities of high crime and poverty.

According to Tunstall and Booth, members of Abreu's orchestra and their successors continued nurturing new orchestras across Venezuela over the next few decades with government funding and public support. The authors discussed how these members "launched 'núcleos' (the Venezuelan term for El Sistema music centers) across the country that drew students, teachers, and supporters by the hundreds and

eventually thousands” (p. 8) and how there are currently over 700,000 students in these Venezuelan orchestras, which have inspired similar programs across the world.

Tunstall and Booth mentioned how significant statistics were discovered regarding El Sistema’s impact on students’ success. According to the Inter-American Development Bank comparing those students involved in El Sistema with non-El Sistema demographic peers in Venezuela in 2008:

Dropout rate 7% vs. 26%

Behavior problem incidents in schools 12% vs. 23%

Formal job found after graduating 41% vs. 13%

Participation in community events after graduating 60% vs. 40%

Most significant for this dissertation research, “children of El Sistema carry the social and emotional learning from their núcleos into full lives in other fields” (p. 12). Tunstall and Booth, who have travelled to 25 countries to visit El Sistema-inspired programs, recognized how El Sistema-inspired programs are fairly new and just beginning to flourish in over 64 countries. The authors admitted discovering the effects of these programs will be time consuming and costly, and mentioned how some researchers believe there is little convincing research to show the positive impact of El Sistema’s programs yet, or believe that these claims cannot be substantiated by research. On the other side of the spectrum, Tunstall and Booth mentioned numerous others in the field who are less concerned about the evidence and recognize the urgency to promote the program’s mission and implementation.

Conclusion

This urgency is where the researcher took a stand as a supporter and active member of an El Sistema-inspired program. Again, while it was not the researcher's intent to discover which of these two perspectives described was more accurate, or truthful, it made the researcher question even deeper the significance of El Sistema Oklahoma in the lives of students by way of teachers' perspectives. Future research will fully explore students' perspectives on the impact the Oklahoma program has made on their lives. The researcher has witnessed first-hand and researched the mission of the program and has seen the significant impact it has on the youth of the Oklahoma City community.

As with Abreu, ESO started small with a large vision for growth. ESO has grown over the course of almost five years from nine faculty members in charge of one orchestra to over 45 faculty and staff overseeing three levels of orchestras. This Oklahoma program is not a stagnant entity, but rather one that evolves as needed to provide its students the best possible musical and social learning environment. As Tunstall and Booth mentioned similarly about the original El Sistema of Venezuela, ESO members recognize change in curriculum and organizational structure as essential and rely "on the same intuitive drive that was propelling their success as an orchestra" (p. 7).

Through data analysis, the researcher discovered how the El Sistema Oklahoma endured many of the struggles the original El Sistema members encountered, such as structural changes and constant vying for community support. The Executive Director of ESO is fortunate enough to be in a position of political activism in the Oklahoma

City community and was at the same time advocating for those within the community. While the struggle to discover how to include those who otherwise might not have been informed to listen to the cause of ESO was very real and difficult, the Executive Director acted on them directly as mediator of every day struggles and existence, and has helped create the program that exists today.

According to the ESO Research Report (2015), “That the majority of students reported they are either unsure or would be at home, often alone, had they not been able to attend ESO suggests that the program is providing much needed service to families simply by providing a place for students to be after school that is safe and supervised” (p. 51). Other statistics from the ESO Research Report indicate that 97% of parents/guardians believe El Sistema Oklahoma has made a positive impact on their children and their families. Also, 98% of parents/guardians have observed an increase in their child’s confidence and an “ability to be successful in any endeavor since starting at El Sistema Oklahoma.” Interestingly, 85% of children feel they are doing better in school since starting at ESO and 87% indicate feeling happier or less stressed since joining ESO. While not yet as significant as the Inter-American Development Bank comparing those students involved in El Sistema with non-El Sistema demographic peers in Venezuela in 2008, it is most definitely a good start and reason to begin research.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Despite efforts to formalize appreciation for the validity of all cultures and styles in the music classroom, much of how students naturally experience learning and build community occurs in informal settings (Green 2005; Abrahams, F., Abrahams, D., Rafaniello, Vodicka, Westawski, & Wilson, 2012). Little research exists on how informal musical opportunities impact both individual student learning and larger, more regimented teacher-led music groups. This researcher believes El Sistema Oklahoma (ESO) exhibits many qualities that foster and nurture this type of coaxial relationship and intends to provide music educators ways to utilize smaller music group experiences to enhance the overall well-being of the larger school community. This chapter addresses how the researcher approached the study at ESO, provides a sample selection of participants, discusses data collection and analysis methods, and concludes with an explanation of researcher bias and reflexivity.

Approach: Axiological, Ethnographic

In a qualitative design, researchers describe and interpret the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2013). This researcher's goal was to recognize, describe, and interpret the *culture* of a particular group. This ethnographical, qualitative study documents and explores the diverse perspectives and pedagogies used by ESO teachers to enrich their students' musical and social needs. As this researcher is a lead teacher employed at ESO, an axiological approach allowed this researcher to "openly discuss values that shape the narrative and includes his or her own interpretation in conjunction with the interpretations of the participant" (p.21). However, a *rich, thick description* of the

research is provided to “to allow readers to make their own interpretations of the events and data” (Erlandson et. al. 1993; Merriam 1988). The underlying goals of this approach were to engage readers in reflective stories and unexpected events, and to provide a holistic *cultural portrait* of ESO (Creswell, 2013).

Interpretive framework: Social constructivism. The researcher worked within the interpretive framework of social constructivism to describe how participants function within the ESO organization. This framework provided insight into how participants view their responsibilities within the structure of the group. In social constructivism, the researcher listens intently to participants and critically observes their actions to interpret participants’ understanding of a situation (Creswell, 2013). ESO provided the researcher ample opportunity to observe organization and responsibility as a participant observer.

According to Bolman & Deal (1991) there are numerous ways organizations structure the group and designate responsibility. Discovering a structure that meets the needs of all stakeholders is challenging, especially in large organizations. Creation of smaller units or teams that follow the same paradigms within the larger structure is one way to distribute the workload, address the needs of each member, and achieve the mission of the organization. However, Bolman & Deal (1991) discuss how both the smaller units and larger organization must continually address the following questions to be effective (p. 100):

- 1) How should their members divide responsibilities across different roles?
- 2) How can they integrate diverse activities into a unified effort?

This researcher examined these questions and provides examples of the structure currently used at ESO to discover if the design is effective and flexible in restructuring. Attention was given to the interpersonal effectiveness and group dynamics in determining if and how ESO addresses the needs of its faculty in a manner that allows the organization to grow and flourish. Information, such as the aforementioned, can prove valuable to educators who wish to implement a similar structure in school environments.

Alongside cultural interpretation of the group, this researcher discerned working patterns of ESO and how it functions, asking questions such as “What do people have to know and do to make the system work?” (Creswell, 2007, p. 92). Themes analysis consists of patterns or topics that signify how the cultural group works together through an event or series of events. This researcher provides a cultural portrait in Chapter 4 describing how the program exists within an overall context, which incorporates emic and etic views of all participants.

Style: Verisimilitude. As a participant observer functioning as part of the group, this researcher served as primary collector of data. Although this researcher acknowledges that this research is only a representation of what is occurring at ESO, a verisimilitude style of writing was used to reach a wide range of educational practitioners. Creswell (2013) states how successful writing in this style is one “that transports the reader directly into the world of the study” (p. 219). The reflexivity component of the chapter hopefully explains the researcher’s passion for this dissertation topic and why collaboration between classroom teachers and researchers in higher education should meticulously continue.

Validation strategies. Although the intent of clarifying research bias and the closeness of the study was specified at the onset of the dissertation, this researcher engaged in peer review or debriefing, by having a third party oversee the research process (Ely, M., Anzul, M., Friedman, T., Garner, D., & Steinmetz, A. C., 1991; Merriam 1988). Creswell (2013) explains this strategy as “an individual who keeps the researcher honest; asks hard questions about methods, meaning, and interpretations; and provides the researcher with the opportunity for catharsis by sympathetically listening to the researcher’s feelings” (p. 251). The Director of Teacher Support at ESO acted in this capacity through the study’s entirety.

Triangulation (Ely et al. 1991; Merriam 1988) of theories and multiple data analysis sources were used to assist the researcher in discovering validity of themes, which presented themselves in various forms. As mentioned earlier, this researcher detailed research with rich, thick description to help portray themes appropriately and to allow the reader to make assumptions of the findings presented by the author (Creswell, 2013).

Smaller Communities of Musical Practice

Fortunately, school music programs provide a platform for students to share knowledge through performance. Assessment of successful preparation is often evident by the conclusion of the first song. While it was not the intent of this researcher to determine whether a musical group was successful or not, it is important to look at the underpinnings of what makes groups successful. Wenger’s (1998) framework of *communities of practice* is not necessarily music-centered, but does fit nicely in the context of school-based communities of musical practice (CoMP), as this author

explains. Wenger's framework was utilized during the research to focus the study of social processes of learning, conceptualizing, and in collecting data from the ESO program.

Wenger's *mutual engagement* is a simple concept to achieve with choir or band programs, as students quickly discover confidence and determination with the help of the conductor through trial and error. Each member plays a role in the group, whether insignificant or essential. Sadly, after a musical performance or concert, learning often stops short of recognizing and analyzing the depth of the learning experience. Wenger's idea of engaging students' knowledgeability from performance is rarely implemented. Discovering how ESO engages students' knowledgeability from performance and ongoing activities was documented and analyzed.

Joint enterprise was evaluated in the way ESO encourages (or discourages) student choice in repertoire or voice in regard to the success of performances. In Wenger's model, students can continue learning and building on previous schemata, making choices based on the groups' opinions and beliefs. For example, students might discover the pieces performed were too difficult or too easy for their level of musicality and decide to adjust future repertoire accordingly. Or, if the performance was successful, students might consider learning more music from the same composer or style. To inspire a greater level of engagement, conductors could suggest students create an improvisation or theme and variation on pieces they have learned in the past. The researcher documented these types of activities.

Ownership in learning, especially in music, naturally encourages accountability. Endless hours of practice do not equate with perfection if the practice is not meaningful

and purposeful. *Shared repertoire* is the result of the group's sensitivity to this involvement. Good sound and musicality is the evidence that is revealed in the final product. As Wenger mentions, "Becoming good at something involves developing specialized sensitivities, an aesthetic sense, and refined perceptions that are brought to bear on making judgments about the qualities of a product or action. That these become shared in a community of practice is what allows participants to negotiate the appropriateness of what they do" (p. 81). The researcher determined how *shared repertoire exists* at ESO.

Sample

The number of participants in the research was 23 of the approximately 45 current faculty members, including the Executive Director, the Director of Teacher Support, the Site Coordinator, music instructors, and assistants. The scope of musical performance experience of participants included no formal music training, first-year college students, a Ph.D. in Music Education and a DMA in Musical Performance. Levels of teaching experience range from students in college who have observed in music classrooms to teachers who are retired after having taught over 30 years in the public classroom.

There were two levels of participation available to all faculty and staff. The first level asked participants to engage in an open-ended survey to help the researcher discover a baseline of opinions regarding the culture of the ESO program and its ability to nurture young musicians through larger and smaller music communities. The second level allowed participants to continue further in the study by contacting the researcher via email, phone, or mail. The researcher then conducted personal interviews and

observations to document participants' backgrounds in music and experience within ESO. Perceptions and ideologies regarding teachers' music pedagogy and goals for ESO were gathered. The researcher took video and audio recordings of at least one class period for each participant with the opportunity for teachers to provide a systematic analysis of the lesson.

Research took place from February to March of 2017 and included observations, interviews, phone conversations, and video footage taken by the researcher. Location of the research was at Trinity Baptist Church, 1329 NW 23rd Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 73106. Other places for interviews or follow-up appointments included St. Luke's United Methodist Church, 222 NW 15th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 73103 and the Oklahoma City University, 2501 N. Blackwelder, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106.

Data Collection

After obtaining permission to use the ESO site, data collection occurred over a two-month period to allow the researcher enough time to question self-assumptions, work closely with participants, and observe situations unfold over time and through numerous viewpoints. Multiple methods of investigation were used to gather data, such as video and audio recordings, interviews, surveys, and opportunities for participants to comment on playback video of their recorded lesson. Research focused on identifying ways in which participants modify their pedagogies to meet the needs of students and how their classes function as integral components within the larger ESO full orchestra ensemble.

Table 1. Data Collection Process

ACTION	RESULTED IN
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Contact administrator	Information on: ESO's mission, purpose, and daily operations; Cultural context of program; Site support letter
Recruit participants	Pool of viable participants from teachers and staff members
Contact participants	Providing participants information on: Method of administration, collection of data, length of study
Conduct open-ended, anonymous survey at the beginning of the semester (Level 1 participation)	Information on: Perceptions of ESO's culture and program and the recognition of existing smaller communities of musical practice within the larger group
Conduct initial interview with teacher or staff participant (Level 2 participation)	Information on: Participant background in music; Experience within ESO; Perceptions and ideologies regarding participants' music pedagogy; Participants' goals for ESO
Conduct general ESO program observations	Information on: Cultural context of music program
Conduct small group and large group staff meetings observations	Information regarding: Cultural context of staff meetings; Ongoing teacher and staff collaboration; Administrative support
Conduct specific class observations	Information regarding: Routines and procedures, pedagogical approaches, curricular content, student interaction
Video record participant's classroom lessons	Visual and audio information on: Routines and procedures, pedagogical approaches, curricular content
Conduct playback interviews	Information on: Teachers' analysis of his or her procedures; Analysis of his or her lesson; Questions or issues raised during observations
Conduct follow up administrator interview	Addressing any questions or issues raised during observations

The initial open-ended online survey allowed participants to share perspectives on the relevancy of the smaller music communities within the larger ESO orchestra ensembles. Consent forms were provided for and signed by all participants. Audio of faculty meetings and team meetings was recorded for extended data collection of participant involvement. Wenger's CoP framework was utilized to guide documentation of the social processes of learning and conceptualizing and in collecting data based on *mutual management*, *joint enterprise*, and *shared repertoire*.

ESO's program structure and design was analyzed to determine *mutual management*. Special attention was given to the original logistical and managerial structures of ESO and how these structures adjust to accommodate continuous growth of the program. Current music pedagogies of the primary participants, as well as other smaller musical communities found within the ESO program, were examined to determine *joint enterprise*, with special attention to how these communities evolve over time. Participants' perceptions were gathered and analyzed to determine whether a *shared repertoire* exists. Data were gathered based on discovering how teachers recognize, foster, and modify their pedagogies to enrich the social and musical needs of ESO students while also improving students' success performing in a full-orchestra ensemble. The researcher also determined whether any of these created a community of practice and if so, how.

Data Analysis

Research questions defined the method of inquiry, data collection and analysis, which was gathered from teachers, staff, volunteers, site project manager, and directors within the ESO community who have been, or who continue to be, parts of the music

programs in the district. Initial data was gathered through a web-based anonymous survey at the beginning of the study. The following questions helped guide the direction of analysis:

Mutual engagement.

- Are conversations, discussions, or negotiations focused on teaching and learning encouraged?
- Do conversations nurture professional growth, build relationships, and result in more informed practice and improved student achievement?
- Is teacher, student, and parent learning genuine and connected rather than superficial and fragmented?
- Are activities and repertoire diverse and engaging? Do activities connect learning to life and community or provide a sense of belonging?

Joint enterprise.

- How does the current music system at ESO address the diverse needs of students with opportunities to explore differences in cultures, values, and individual music enrichment?
- Do students, teachers, and parents feel accountability towards the success of the program? If so, how and why?
- Is there a belief that making a difference in the lives of children and families requires serving the needs of the community as well as the program?
- What evidence demonstrates smaller CoMP as viable to the overall success of ESO?

Shared repertoire.

- What music pedagogies are being used? Which ones and why?
- How does the current program gather and consider data, new knowledge, and others' perspectives when planning objectives and goals for student enrichment?
- Is there a common direction or development of shared understandings that improves the school experience for all members?
- How is success measured?

Researcher's Reflexivity

Choosing to be a music educator stems from fruitful involvement in school music programs, an abundance of family support in the arts, and immersion in music from various cultures in which I have lived or visited. From these experiences, I found the most joy and confidence creating music when involved in groups that also held similar beliefs and passions. Simply making music together and working on a common goal to share music was the foundation from which all my paradigms were formed.

Teaching nearly 20 years in an elementary public school setting, and within a variety of school demographics, furthered the importance of working together with like-minded people. Each of my three schools was quite different in regard to administrative support, teacher commitment, and parental involvement within the school community. I often refer to these three schools as my naïve stage, growing up stage, and mature stage, respectively. As I moved from one school to the next, my position as a music educator morphed from teaching music to students as their mechanism for coping in an underserved community, to offering a music class that provided a showcase of talent for

family and friends, and finally, to using music as a source of enrichment and way of expressing one's thoughts as a lifestyle. The binding force across these situations is the successful formation of musical groups that addressed the needs of each school's community, while also helping students to progress musically, academically, and socially.

For many of my students who lived in a lower socioeconomic community, music was an opportunity to escape the harsh realities of a difficult home life. I noticed very early on in my teaching career, particularly during my naïve stage, that students who struggled academically and socially in other subjects often excelled in music class. Interestingly, students with behavior problems were most frequently the ones whom I cast in main roles in musicals. Several of these students were also ones that I had to "bail out" of suspensions or for whom I had to make a deal with administration, in order to not lose my best actors on performance night. It was not until later in my career that I realized it was more practical to place this bartering responsibility solely on my students. In other words, if students wanted to be a part of my musicals or choir, they had to commit to keeping their grades up and staying out of trouble.

Keeping this successful student commitment tactic in mind and moving to my next school, I created a contract for students to participate in musical opportunities. Reaching beyond student commitment, my music colleague and I also created an application form for students to participate in an after-school world music ensemble. The application form asked students to provide reasons why they should be considered for the ensemble and to explain how they would contribute to the group. Parents were

also required to sign the application and contract of commitment recognizing and supporting their child's commitment.

Students monitored themselves and needed few, if any, reminders when issues of academics or misbehavior arose. We also encouraged homeroom teachers to come to us immediately with student concerns, creating a new collaboration between music teachers, homeroom teachers, and administration. Typically, students who were struggling only needed a gentle reminder of the contract and application to produce significant positive changes. This growing up stage opened many new avenues for me as a teacher, and for my students as fully engaged musicians. This stage also involved me recognizing the importance of student choice and my position as a music facilitator rather than merely as a dispenser of knowledge.

Demographically, my third school ranged sharply from students whose parents were fully involved in their child's education, to those whose parents chose less involvement. Thankfully, my developed ideal of student commitment and accountability that I utilized during my previous school worked extremely well with a diverse group of students. The support I received from the school community was plentiful, and collaboration among all stakeholders became a necessity and the norm. For example, because of a supportive administration, music became a cross-curricular tie throughout faculty meeting planning. As teachers depended on me to provide support in their subject areas, they too reciprocated my musical needs and objectives by addressing them in their classrooms and outside of class.

Hearing phrases from homeroom teachers like, "I need you to walk pianissimo and largo throughout the hall," not only made me happy but also created a unique

lifestyle of musical language throughout the school community. Teachers also played a large role in helping me with grade level programs and school activities. My mature stage was recognizing the importance of nurturing the smaller communities of practice (music and non-music communities) and discovering ways to allow these mixed communities to interconnect. It was common for me to notice a student misbehaving in the hallway or at recess and remind him or her, “Is that acceptable in Zambuko (our world music ensemble)?” A quick positive change in behavior was nearly always evident to surrounding peers and teachers.

Choir, world music ensembles, musical small group rehearsals, Friday morning assembly news teams, marimba lunch gatherings, all met outside of class time. It was evident that these groups were important to students as they continued to join these groups on their free time. Commitment strengthened within each musical opportunity I offered. By creating smaller communities of musical practice within the larger music program, students felt comfortable expressing their ideas and were willing to expand their comfort zones. As simple as it may seem, it was not until I was genuinely able to listen to what my students craved in learning that my growth as a teacher and mentor occurred.

In each community of practice formed throughout my career, I recognize the importance these communities play in my student’s lives. For example, through weekly reflections and casual discussion inside and outside of class, students express the enjoyment of voicing their opinions on their learning in a safe, non-threatening environment. With time and encouragement, students can articulate the successes and

failures of class projects, performances, and other music activities in an articulate manner.

As I continue this style of teaching, it is more obvious to me that my students' needs are being met. I do admit, however, that the most difficult, and at the same time most rewarding, challenges in constructing these communities are the time and energy that it takes to create them. The relentless preparation time forming each group and setting up each meeting time for success is time intensive. However, once the group meets, my job turns to becoming a member, facilitator, and observer, depending on the need at the time. The goals and outcomes of each meeting or rehearsal seem to flow naturally and uninterrupted. The benefits of this style of interaction are priceless and the results are often immediate.

While each community of musical practice looks and acts differently depending on the needs of the group, the commitment and passion for each group is steadfast. I always ask myself why students are drawn towards this social belonging and why they continue to gravitate towards this style of learning. From my one-on-one conversations regarding these questions, students mention having a strong sense of pride from being in a group that differs from the norm by demanding participation and commitment, and simultaneously fulfills their musical and social needs. Former students mention how these smaller group opportunities made the difference in their choices to attend school that day or not, improve their grades or let them slide, and the choice to possibly act as an influential ambassador of a particular formed musical group.

If I had acquired the knowledge that students could be held accountable for their commitment to learning early on in my career, I think I would have been a much more

effective teacher. Sadly, a tragic event happened during one of my first few years of teaching that I rarely discuss. A student who had just left school and was playing around recklessly on the handlebars of a bike with other students fell into the street and was hit by a bus. This student was my choir student and one who often needed a little extra incentive or reminder to attend rehearsals. On this day, my colleague, who also co-led choir, was absent and I was unable to remind and encourage this student to attend rather than skip. While I know this is not my fault, it most definitely has become the impetus for me to continue discovering ways to keep students involved in school and accountable on their own accord. For this reason and numerous others, I recognize the importance of researching the smaller communities of musical practice and discovering how successful communities are formed.

As a lead teaching artist at ESO, I have the opportunity to explore the process of creating and maintaining small communities of musical practice directly. Through a collaborative effort from the fundamentals faculty and administration, we continually seek to discover the musical needs of our students. During the 2016-2017 school year, the fundamentals faculty was asked to create personalized music classes for our older and more experienced group, Esperanza. Each of us decided on an area of music we felt passionate about and opened these classes to our students to choose for a semester. From this, a world music ensemble, a composition class, a percussion group (who made and played instruments from repurposed materials), and a choir were formed.

Also, by recently polling students regarding how we as a faculty and as music mentors could further expand their musical abilities, we discovered extensive interest in the following areas: musical theater, arranging popular music, music theory and music

history, Mariachi style band, jazz ensembles, vocal percussion, dance, and drama.

While we could not possibly fit every student's suggestion into our classes, we were able to add "elective" courses, which met once a week. These elective classes included areas such as musical theater, bucket drumming, arranging, and a chime and choir combination class. The core classes worked to include other suggestions from the poll, such as Gumboot dancing in world music and arranging popular music in core composition classes. It is within the core classes offered the second semester, along with the newly added elective classes, that the bulk of my investigation will occur. This process took an abundant amount of flexibility and open-mindedness on the part of faculty members, and is explored in detail in this dissertation.

My familiarity with Wenger's work (1998) regarding the significance of learning as a social practice has been helpful in identifying the *communities of practice* that I created naturally in my own teaching. Using Wenger's framework as a guide, I observed a successful trend, found within these smaller musical communities of practice, and embedded in the larger ESO organization, similar to the one I examined throughout my career. From data gathered from this research, I believe this phenomenon exists at ESO.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

Introduction

From the results and interpretation of data gathered during a short-term qualitative research study of El Sistema Oklahoma (ESO), the researcher determined that ESO has effectively discovered an approach that recognizes and fosters small, specialized music communities nested within its larger orchestral program. Wenger's three dimensions of communities of practice (mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire) were discovered throughout data collection. While most teachers believe these smaller communities of musical practice provide young learners with opportunities to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences in cultures and individual beliefs within an inclusive, secure environment, some teachers believe ESO still has room to improve. According to Wenger (1998), varying opinions and establishing norms "does not entail homogeneity" but rather allows for diverse opinions and enables mutual engagement (p. 75). As discovered through interviews and surveys, mutual engagement is present at ESO and helps to define its social identity.

Changes in organizational structure, demographic changes, and the educational needs of the students, necessitate ESO's evolving in a manner appropriate to the high demands of its program. While the structure of ESO and the process of collaboration changes and improves, this is an imperfect process. Teachers perceive that they play a significant and active role in decision-making and in determining the direction of the program, and believe they are making strides toward accomplishing the goal of bettering the program. This process of moving forward with teacher negotiation, or joint enterprise, is another element Wenger (1998) mentions that should exist in

communities of practice and is predominant at ESO. According to Wenger (1998), shared repertoire of a community of practice includes “routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become a part of its practice” (p. 83). These very things that define Wenger’s shared repertoire are also vital aspects of the practices of the education community at El Sistema Oklahoma. Through observations and interviews, it was evident to the researcher that the motto of ESO – “Transforming the Lives of Children Through Music” is being brought to life every day.

This chapter provides a clear identification and detailed description of El Sistema Oklahoma, a culture sharing-sharing group, and investigates the inner workings of how the program exists and functions by design. The data collection is presented to the reader in a linear sequence that shows how the results unfolded and Wenger’s dimensions of communities of practice were recognized. The first section of this chapter presents findings through a semi-structured interview with participant Robyn, Executive Director of ESO, which helped define the researcher’s parameters and aided in obtaining data in a manner appropriate to the timeline of this dissertation. The second section of this chapter examines Lead Teaching Artists’ (LTA), a Nueva Conductor’s, Alegria Conductors’, and Esperanza Conductors’ perspectives on ESO’s current events and execution of its mission. Following this section, the results of the online open-ended surveys, which were open for a total of six weeks on the web application, are presented. The final section of this chapter provides the reader a

window into the various small communities of musical practice across the ESO program derived from data collected through observations and interviews.

An Executive Directors' Perspective

In the interview, Robyn, Executive Director of ESO, referenced several factors that influenced the general structure and design of the program. These factors included: (1) the culture identity and origins of the program, (2) decision-making and democracy among stakeholders, (3) the existence of the smaller communities of musical practice, and (4) the evolving orchestral music program and curriculum.

Culture and origins of El Sistema Oklahoma. Robyn described ESO's program as much more than a team and associated the depth and intricacies of relationships that exist among the faculty, students, board of directors, volunteers, community, and administration to acting like a family. As within a traditional family, Robyn mentioned how "you get irritated at each other and you don't always like each other all the time" but there is no question "fundamentally where you stand" (executive director interview, lines 20-23). While the occasional disagreement or fight does occur in regard to the direction of the program, Robyn mentioned how ESO members voice their ideas and opinions, work through the process, and discover solutions.

And I think that's different than a team, which kind of indicates ... that at some point that we leave and we go on about the rest of our business. I don't think it's too far fetched for me to say that the spirit or the work we do sort of permeates kind of all these other areas of our lives outside of the building. And that's what you do with your family as well. You carry your family with you no matter what environment you're in. (executive director interview, lines 27-32)

Similar to Kenny's (2014) qualitative case study on social learning and understanding and utilizing Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice (CoP), members feel validated by peers, comfortable voicing their thoughts, and able to provide and receive supportive feedback. These examples are signifiers of mutual engagement.

When asked about her leadership role in ESO, Robyn referred to herself as "an accidental executive director" (executive director interview, line 38). Having taught 10 years of middle school band and strings in the public schools, traveling one year as state teacher of year, and eventually working with the foundation for Oklahoma City Public Schools, Robyn spent a great amount of time working closely within the community and in close communication with influential members in and around the Oklahoma City area. Robyn credited these experiences to her emergence as a translator "between these two worlds: the external community and the world of public education," (executive director interview, lines 54-55) and advocacy for underserved populations of students.

Oklahoma City University (OCU) contacted Robyn in 2013 regarding starting up an El Sistema-inspired program in Oklahoma City. While Robyn was still employed by the Oklahoma City School Foundation and hesitant to leave that position, she offered the idea of a partnership between the Foundation and OCU. With creative navigation between two jobs and support from both positions, Robyn, together with a core team of people who remain integral to the program (Mike, current Director of Teacher Support, and Laura, current Site Director), helped formulate and build a strong foundation for the El Sistema Oklahoma orchestral music program.

While an executive director of ESO was originally appointed, the director only remained with the group for one semester, leaving an empty position. Not realizing the

duties Robyn and the core team were already doing to compensate for this loss, it was a surprise to her that she was asked to fill the position as Executive Director, commenting, “I don't how to be an executive director” (executive director interview, line 96). Robyn’s boss simply replied, “You have been being an executive director” (executive director interview, line 97). This negotiated refinement of the initial structure or aims of the project evolved to fit the needs of the students, faculty, and program structure, and continues to endorse the foundation of Wenger’s (1998) shared repertoire. Accidental executive director or not, Robyn, along with Mike and Laura, continues to play a significant role in the developing El Sistema Oklahoma program.

Decision Making and Democracy. While many decisions are predicated by the amount of funding available, time allotted in a day, and the “individual mental, physical, emotions capacities” (executive director interview, line 127), Robyn mentioned the importance of a balance when asked about the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making by stating,

[I]f there is no wiggle room for flexibility, you don't ask people their opinion.

Because when you ask people for their opinion, there is an expectation that you are going to act on that or that they'll have some sort of influence. So I would hope that what the faculty here and people who work with me see as when there's room for opportunity to influence, I ask. What should we do? How should we do it? What are all the opportunities on the table? (executive director interview, lines 116-121)

While Robyn encourages faculty members to voice their opinions and actively engage in the forward progress of the program, she also recognizes that as executive administrator, her decision might not always be based on the consensus of others' input.

According to Robyn, while ESO attempts to allow all faculty a voice in the decision-making process, the leaders of the program ultimately make final decisions, which allow members of the program to toil. Robyn mentions, "that toil is important. It is painful" (executive director interview, line 132-133). However, involving members in the process of decision-making allows for a voice in the direction of the program and accountability for the final outcome. Delegating leadership is an equally important aspect of ESO, especially as the program continues to grow in regard to the number of students and faculty. Robyn mentioned welcoming all opportunities for members to share in the abundant amount of responsibility that it takes for ESO to function effectively, and as an ever-growing leader, Robyn eagerly looks to others to step up and contribute. It is not uncommon for her to say, "what is it only Robyn can do?" and if those responsibilities are "not falling on that list.... I'm probably delegating it to somebody else who is...the first point of contact or deciding how can we delegate those things" (executive director interview, lines 162-164).

While leadership is shared across the ESO faculty, Robyn noted that the opportunity and engagement in leadership roles vary among members. The ability for members to negotiate their commitment and accountability in the ESO program is an indicator that Robyn promotes Wenger's (1998) idea of joint enterprise. However, Robyn mentioned how some faculty members work best in situations where they are

told what to do, and do not necessarily enjoy the level of engagement required for a leadership position. She said,

[S]ome of it is by design; a lot of it happens in the strategy of hiring - so, who we're putting on the team, who's staying on the team, what role they're in on the team. ... I think we've been successful in making changes in where we've needed to. That's some of the hardest work. Right? That's what keeps me up at night. (executive director interview, lines 172-175)

Recognizing the strengths and weaknesses in faculty ESO hires is imperative to the program's success. Discovering which members to place in leadership roles and which members do better in a non-leadership capacity is a balancing act requiring endless conversation.

The Smaller Musical Groups of Practice. During the interview, a group of high school students did not show up for a daily scheduled class period and became the topic of discussion regarding how the smaller groups function and evolve, or devolve. A discussion of how to effectively meet the needs of these older students ensued, and again Robyn mentioned the importance of involving those who are most closely affected by change in structure, and if this small group is to continue or not.

Recognizing how other ESO leaders work with this group directly, she signified that,

“It's going to come from Mike; it's going to come from you; it's going come from Kristen. It's going to come from the high-schoolers themselves and their families”

(executive director interview, lines 214-216). The recognition of how this particular

small community of musical practice has evolved due to demographic changes is an

indication that administration is concerned about joint enterprise. Also, the inclusion of

all stakeholders in the decision-making process, regarding how the group proceeds, indicates the existence of mutual engagement (Wenger, 1998).

Robyn clarified how the smaller musical groups, such as guided practice, fundamentals, strings, chamber ensemble, and sectionals, fit within the larger orchestra, which is where she implied that everything originates. This portion of the interview acutely explored how the program recognizes and fosters these smaller student music communities by way of shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998). Robyn suggested the orchestra is a metaphor for the community and the way the community functions. For example, ESO has different cultures within the program, such as the woodwind culture, brass culture, or fundamentals culture. Robyn mentions how it is the “individual work that keeps these cultures alive and vibrant. And then there's a cultural competence that has to be developed between everybody to function together as an orchestra” (executive director interview, lines 256-258). Robyn also acknowledged that because these cultures are geographically segregated within the building, they spend very little time together, and because ESO operates as a community, she suggested, “you sort of have to see it from a microcosm perspective and we also have all the great things we have in the community and we also have all the deficiencies” (executive director interview, lines 271-272).

Curriculum structure. While numerous opportunities and configurations of settings, or shared repertoire, have been developed for students to experience playing their instruments, Robyn discussed how the curricular approach has always been centered on a three-pronged approach: 1) literacy (theory and aural skills), 2) composition and improvisation, and 3) creative musicianship. Robyn mentioned how

the Director of Teacher Support said, “we're not going to teach instruments, we've got to teach musicians musicianship, and it happens in all of these” (executive director interview, lines 297-298). Robyn also noted how having excellent executive skills, such as a strong background in theory and aural skills, allows students to explore music more creatively.

Both Mike and Robyn have a history of creating small chamber ensembles within their music programs. Robyn believes that these ensembles force the acquisition of executive skills and does not allow students to hide behind the larger sound of the orchestra. Students must take the initiative to practice on their own time and contribute more to the smaller group or risk standing out negatively. On the other hand, Robyn mentions how this chamber ensemble experience allows “Kids who you don't see as individual players have the opportunity to stand out in a very big way and lead in a, in a really big way” (executive director interview, lines 313-315).

Regarding operational perspectives, Robyn recognized that it is much easier to share the spirit of ESO, and logistically more visible in the community, through smaller groups of students who can travel much more easily than the entire orchestra. This also makes fundraising possible, as smaller musical groups are frequently invited to perform throughout the year for financial contributors who have not yet attended an ESO concert. Robyn mentioned:

[B]ecause if you don't know that we're here, you don't have opportunities to support us and at the end of the day, the mission only exists when it's funded... when the string quartet is playing, I typically always have the opportunity to say, I know you love these 4, but there's 216 more. And people's eyes get really big,

and I say... you should come to the site and see how kids are successful at all levels. (executive director interview, lines 323-336)

Robyn believes these traveling, smaller ensembles initiate interest from local community members, who then become long-term supporters of the program after seeing the larger group orchestra perform.

Summary of interview. It was noted throughout the interview that Robyn fully supported a program that cycles through all three dimensions of Wenger's (1998) CoP. Robyn ended the interview passionately discussing the importance of ESO as a place to serve not only the students, but also the faculty and staff as well, which represented the idea of mutual accountability in joint enterprise. While teachers at ESO are quick to know when students need help, Robyn also recognized the importance of having those same needs met within the faculty and staff. She said, "if we believe that about the children, why would we not believe that about the adults in the building as well?" (executive director interview, lines 350-351). Through mutual engagement, members of ESO are encouraged to establish and build collaborative relationships and remain involved in all matters of importance. Robyn likened the ESO family to a Russian nesting doll. While students and faculty members are individuals who bring individual needs, desires, and various layers of contribution to the program, the pieces all fit together. Through this interview, shared repertoire appeared to exist as a culmination of both mutual engagement and discovering identity. According to Robyn, everyone makes a difference but, "Conceptually, it's hard when you think: be an individual, by becoming part of the group ...*one of the mysteries of El Sistema*" [emphasis added by the researcher] (executive director interview, lines 363-365).

Lead Teaching Artists and Orchestra Conductors Meeting

Lead Teaching Artists (LTA) and Conductor meetings are held quarterly to allow faculty members who represent various areas of the ESO program time to inform each other on happenings across the program. There are four LTAs who represent the fundamentals, strings, brass, and woodwind teams respectively. Two of these LTA

members also act as conductors. The conductors consist of one Nueva conductor, two Alegria conductors, and two Esperanza conductors. Many of the more difficult, time intensive concerns, as well as the successes of the program, were addressed at this particular hour and a half meeting, which occurred two days after the Executive Director interview. All five members of the team were in attendance, including the Executive Director and Site Director. All members of the team chose to be a part of the current study and were aware that the researcher, by way of an audio recording and transcription of the recording, was collecting data.

The leadership team meeting exposed the researcher to a much deeper understanding of the inner workings of ESO. This environment also assisted in construction of meaningful analytic memos for future classroom and rehearsal observations for data collection. While the researcher will recognize and present evidence of Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice (CoP) throughout this chapter, the three dimensions of practice will be addressed in real-time, or alongside the timeline, of the actual event. The meeting focused on five topics. Those topics were: (1) instructional support, (2) development of self and identity through community, (3) curriculum and collaboration, (4) evolving pedagogy, and (5) communication.

Instructional support. The Director of Teacher Support, Mike, led the LTA and Conductors meeting. Although many faculty members maintain other time-consuming jobs alongside ESO, Mike mentioned how this ongoing collaboration in and out of meetings is crucial to stay on top of issues or concerns. Even with the quarterly meetings, Mike mentioned, "I'm constantly in this reactive mode right now, and I want to try to get ahead of the game and then find out if we need other support mechanisms

in place” (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 26-28). Many of the members of the team expressed a similar mindset of needing more connected time together to address ESO’s current issues. This desire and need to meet as a community to better the program is an indicator of mutual engagement.

During the meeting, much of what was discussed centered on ways to support less experienced teachers in the program. It was discovered that many student behavior problems stemmed from classes with instructors who were less experienced or who had not been with ESO a significant amount of time. This is not to say these same students did not have behavioral issues in other music classes, or in various capacities of the program, but rather the issues were often magnified in classes with teachers who were new to ESO or had less teaching experience.

As a team, the LTAs and conductors addressed issues regarding both teachers needing assistance as well as struggling students, and discussed which aspects of the program in which they were struggling and succeeding. For example, there was much discussion on generating ways to pull more experienced teachers out of their classrooms or rehearsals to work with teachers needing guidance, and implementing more student leadership opportunities in the classroom. Mike’s years of experience as both a public school music director and professor of music education allowed him to discuss trends seen in less experienced teachers. He said,

One of the biggest issues with... particularly with young teachers is that everything is black and white. Right? And so one of the things I've worked with a teacher is that you've got to find this balance, yes we need to follow the rules, we need to do those things, but if you allow them [students] to predict - or

dictate the pace of the class, they will do that... at one point you've got to move on and at other times you've got to slow down... there's only one way to learn how to do that and finding good models in the classroom to get that. (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 47-53)

Mike explained the importance of providing new teachers with opportunities to watch model teaching or to teach alongside experienced teachers who have learned how to balance the ever-changing pace of the classroom.

The Nueva conductor, Sam, explained how she was able to help an inexperienced teacher by first observing the struggling teacher, while also discovering the needs of a student who was struggling behaviorally. By remaining in the room, Sam was able to offer advice to the teacher after class such as setting up classroom expectations and criteria but also found another time to meet privately with the student. Sam shared with the team her experience working with the student on several repertoire pieces.

Because the child was somewhat reluctant to be pulled out of the typical classroom setting, Sam let the child lead the conversation by asking the student to talk through the music and play parts that were comfortable to share. Sam began working with the student by saying, “ok, we're gonna pick some animals. What are your favorite animals? You know, do you have any animals?” (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 65-66)? The child told Sam about a bulldog that lived at his home, along with various other animals. Sam said, “imagine that your bulldog lives in this area on your violin and I want you to think about the way you're holding the violin? What are you doing to your bulldog (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 67-69)?” Shocked and in dismay of

the possibility of having squished the precious bulldog, the child quickly corrected the way she was holding the instrument. Sam continued this gameplay with other animals, imaginarily placing them on other areas of the instrument and ended with “these animals live here, you know” (LTA and conductor meeting, line 72). This indicated to the child that every time the instrument was held incorrectly, the animals would be squished or unhappy. By playing the instrument with the changes in posture and instrument carriage, the student was able to recognize the difference in tone quality and mentioned being shocked by the quality of sound her instrument produced.

Sam took pictures with her iPhone of the child holding and playing her instrument correctly and then took a picture of the way the child had previously been playing. Sam shared with the team how the student was able to verbalize the differences between the two pictures, mentioning how the student wanted her “picture on the wall in class to show those other kids what they're supposed to look like” (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 82-83). The student initiated a leadership role by maintaining and monitoring this “wall of fame” and encouraged her peers to add to the project.

Sam mentioned how the less experienced teacher saw great improvement in attitude and participation by the student following this experience. As Jaffurs (2014) suggested, teachers should examine deeply the ways in which students learn most naturally within their culture groups and consider creating analogous learning environments. During this short amount of time spent with the child, Sam was able to adjust the child’s posture and instrument carriage in a very creative and fun manner that also allowed the child to return to the classroom as an expert.

While success stories continued throughout the meeting and generated more discussion on ways to help other students succeed and receive positive recognition, it was obvious that time would not permit solving every concern. Because faculty can logistically only observe a limited number of classes per week to help teachers and students, Mike suggested using technology as a method to assist in lessening the necessity of being in too many places at one time. Mike explained how an app called Coaches Eye would let teachers make videos of their teaching episodes and allow him or other seasoned faculty to add voice-overs directly on top of the video. Mike mentioned how, “You can watch them teach and give real time feedback on the video” (LTA and conductor meeting, line 199). It was also mentioned how having this technology would benefit classes who change behavior when Mike walks into rehearsals.

I know. It never fails. I take time off and I'm gonna go see what all the issues are and I walk in and everybody's sectional is just rockin'. So...yeah I've got cardboard cutouts coming. You can just put them in the back. I'll just look like I'm standing back there the whole time. (All: *laugh*, thank you!!) It's not my magic...but, I giggled a little bit when I left all the sectionals, cause I know what they're going to tell me...it's not normally like this. (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 286-291)

While all members of the team laughed about this situation, which also lightened the mood, the idea of finding enough faculty to be available at all times was recognized as an impossible feat. However, Mike suggested the possibility of restructuring the size of sectionals and hiring more faculty members in the future to alleviate some of the issues

discussed. Ideas such as these were prevalent throughout the meeting. According to Wenger (1998), these types of organizational restructuring due to demographic changes or educational needs indicate joint enterprise.

Another concern mentioned at the meeting was the lack of focus and direction at the start of Alegria sectional rehearsals. The Alegria director, Kristen, recognized that students were not coming into rehearsal promptly or prepared. Starting rehearsal was also becoming more of a challenge due to various places students were coming from around the building with subsequent distractions along the way. The team seemed stunned that students were arriving to the rehearsal at different times and began exploring the anomaly. Through discussion it was discovered that there were numerous factors influencing this occurrence, one being that some teachers were late in releasing students to their next class. Another reason was that students come from various chamber ensemble rehearsals across the building, with some traveling farther than others to get to Kristen's sectionals. However quickly or slowly students moved from class to class, deviated from their path, and "if they hit the bathroom on the way" (LTA and conductor meeting, line 319), was a matter of students' personal choices. This prompted the statement, "There's just a lot of things happening during that transition time, which shouldn't be happening. I don't know if that has anything to do with actual classes though" (LTA and conductor meeting, line 322-323). It was discovered and agreed upon that students were not being supervised on their way to sectional rehearsals.

Mike recognized that this was not only a student issue but also a teacher accountability issue and suggested that Chamber Ensemble teachers walk their students

to the Sectional rehearsal in the future. While this was a good solution, it would leave an incoming Chamber Ensemble unattended. Instead of nixing the idea, Mike suggested Esperanza start class on their own since they are the most experienced group, both maturity-wise and musically.

We need to allow more autonomy for our Esperanza students. I mean, I think one of the issues we've got, and one of the reasons we find ourselves running around like crazy all the time, is we're trying to do everything for the kids. And we've got to start handing responsibility to our older kids... we just tell the Esperanza kids get in the room, get started with your rehearsal, and that's our expectation. (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 330-336)

Likewise, Mike mentioned the importance of holding faculty accountable in releasing and bringing students to the Alegria rehearsal on time. While this might not be the most agreeable choice to all members of the faculty, disagreement until a better solution arises and temporarily agreeing to disagree are common features Wenger (1998) includes in his discussion of joint enterprise.

Development of self and identity through community. From the beginning of ESO, faculty members played their instruments alongside students during concerts to act as models and to guide them if needed. As the program grew, students were placed into different orchestras, depending on their maturity and playing level. The more recent learning environment of the ESO program allows for advanced students to move quickly through more challenging repertoire and provides students who are struggling to learn notes on their instruments a slower-paced, novice environment. In the meeting, the Alegria conductors brought up the issue of faculty playing with this intermediate

group. It was noted that while teachers wanted to model a certain sound for their students, the students were becoming more reliant on them to provide the entire ensemble sound or *hiding* in their sound. Josh, an Alegria conductor, mentioned how, “it gets a little deceptive from the podium, ok, I’m hearing this and it’s fine, but in reality, it’s not” (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 408-409). Mike questioned the process of increased autonomy often needed early in the rehearsal process and when students are not as familiar with their parts.

[B]ecause my concern is that you have 105 kids in there. If your 105 kids are all mediocre on their parts, you've got cacophony and it's not going to work... so you need those teachers in there leading them through the process so they can start to latch on to some of those things. But over a period of time, as they get more familiar with the repertoire, they need less of that reliability and we do need...I do understand the point...we need to require them to take the ownership and responsibility for the ensemble sound and pulling the teachers out of the way. I think a little bit is like teaching swim lessons, right? First of all, I hold them and let them swim with support, and then little by little I get out of their way and until they can work their way across the pool. So, you know as Alegria conductors are you ready (Josh: shove them in --*laughing*)...yeah, well sometimes that helps...Are you ready to be on the stage with the Alegria students alone (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 419-430)?

Mike suggested the team continue discussing options and opening the subject up for debate in team meetings, but also suggested that the Alegria conductors define clearly what faculty support and expectation need to be in place before rolling it out to

everyone, mentioning, “Cause if we just kind of let it go at whatever, unfortunately, that's what you're gonna get” (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 435-436). The expectation that members define clear objectives or well-established interpretations of the support needed is an example of ongoing shared repertoire.

Attendance was a big topic discussed during the meeting. ESO offers transportation from the students’ schools to the ESO building daily, yet many students have noticeably been absent. While ESO faculty members cannot change student’s doctor’s appointments or athletic events that occur after school, members can be diligent about helping students realize their critical importance to the program. Mike shared a recent conversation with a student who did not understand the importance of her being present at all ESO functions.

I just looked right at her, [and said] I cannot tell you that you are important and not expect you to be there. If you're not important, then I can be fine with you not being there, but because *you are critically important to me*, you must be there. And that really set her off. I mean, she took a step backwards and just kind of stood there and looked at me. I said the minute I allow you to miss a performance and not come to you and talk about it...I'm telling you, you are not important to the group...and I can't allow that to happen. So, I think we need to continue to...talk about those things, continue to push that with kids, continue to push that with families (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 486-494).

This statement indicated not only the importance of attendance of each individual member of ESO, but also the critical importance of communicating this importance to the families as well.

Mike continued discussing the importance of attendance, and again, emphasized the importance of teachers creating leadership opportunities for students. An example of this strategy was a young student who was given the position of student conductor. The young student woke her parents up at 3:00 AM realizing that she was going to miss a very important ESO rehearsal because of a pre-scheduled family activity. She pleaded her case to her parents and stressed the importance of being there, and her parents rescheduled the event because of their daughter's passion and commitment to ESO. Elliot and Silverman (2015) examined this type of human flourishing and transformation found in social praxis and discussed a type of "valuing that combines and depends on the integration of a complex web of people, processes, products, and contexts" (p. 51). This, too, was evident in Mike's explanation of the critical value of each member participating in ESO. Not only did the student affect the progress of the orchestra because of her presence, she directly influenced potential benefactors who happened to be visiting that day.

Curriculum and collaboration. While a curriculum map is in place for ESO faculty collaboration regarding lessons and ideas, discussion revolved around how the map is failing, or not working as effectively as it could. Mike mentioned, “Two things: we either don't get stuff or the stuff we get in there is so general it really doesn't help us” (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 541-542). While Mike makes time to visit classes, the content of what is learned in each of the classes is not being transferred into orchestra rehearsals. Recognizing that ESO faculty members are professionals and not wanting to push busy work on faculty in order to force more collaboration, he looked to the rest of the team for advice.

This author, who is also the fundamentals LTA, suggested a few reasons why this particular method might not be working as effectively as it could be, particularly with the fundamentals team.

[W]e're not looking at the curriculum map. We want to, we try. We read each other's (fundamentals), so we know what we're doing. Um, we definitely try to ... look at what you are teaching, what you're working on. We try to stay there. But...if they do read shorthand, they don't know what it is, they don't know what you're writing and so we just sort of get lazy. It's not that we don't want to ...we just sometimes don't have the time or know how to look at it maybe in a constructive way” (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 578-584).

In reply, Mike stated, “We have effectively identified the problem” (LTA and conductor meeting, line 588). While this statement introduced a light pause of laughter in a somewhat tense moment, it was evident that the complexity of negotiating shared repertoire depended firsthand on honesty among members, and indicated a sense of trust

often discovered through mutual engagement.

As discussion continued, others admitted feeling similarly about not using the curriculum map in an ideal manner and questioned its value. While Mike acknowledged that planning is personal and varies significantly across the ESO program, he reinforced the importance of clearly having a goal in mind and knowing how and when you have reached the goal. He discussed how this is achieved by preparing students to be successful; helping them put musical ideas into place and working through concepts that can then be applied to their music. Without a conscious decision regarding how to achieve that goal, Mike suggested we are “standing in front of them [students] and basically saying 1,2, ready fail. Keep going until you make a mistake and then I'll tell you that you did it wrong. And then we'll figure out how to fix it. In my mind, that's not high quality education” (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 609-612). At this point, the author offered a possible solution.

I think what would be most helpful is if we were able to meet, not necessarily as Esperanza, Alegria, and Nueva faculty, but let's look at the pieces and see how we can start as a group.... only work on that piece and then the next... And if we can start from beginning, just have one of those PD [professional development] days and just look at the music and you [conductors] can tell us what it is that you're looking for... and then kind of work together and throw some ideas out there... where all the pieces are together at the beginning and then finding a way to reach the goal. (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 635-646).

Rather than working in isolation, the author advocated for cross collaboration and

meeting with all areas of the program to tackle repertoire for each orchestra.

While ideas and suggestions such as extracting rhythms from repertoire and creating rhythm cards shared universally across the faculty, Mike noted how ESO had never actually created a collaborative curriculum map. Mike specified how the cross collaborative model might function during a meeting and discovering, “what are the issues going to be in the violins, in the cellos, the bass, whether there are pedagogical issues at that? What are the connections we make in fundamentals” (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 682-684)?

It was revealed in the meeting, however, that some of the instrumental faculty were hesitant to give up more class time to support the repertoire than expected. This had also been expressed in team meetings as well. “Sometimes we have these attitudes that they're going to come and they're gonna teach their instrument... they're gonna get their kids to play that music, and then they gotta go” (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 706-708). It was agreed that many of the faculty come to ESO completely exhausted from working all day elsewhere and were all occasionally guilty of this mind set and attitude. After much discussion, it was decided to try collaborative curriculum mapping during the next professional development or at least “a step forward with more of a collaborative... for lack of better term...curriculum is not really a curriculum map, but at least a curricular approach...to what we are doing” (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 779-781). Again, the unremitting attempts to move the ESO program forward with ideas and suggestions contributed by each member of the leadership team to help discover what binds them together as a team are indicators of joint enterprise.

Evolving pedagogy. While some collaboration exists across the Nueva faculty regarding repertoire, Sam mentioned concern about conflicting pedagogy and teaching styles. She discussed a particular rhythm in one of the pieces of repertoire and said, “The kids say... the synco-potato thing...potato” (LTA and conductor meeting, line 749)? After an eruption of laughter in the room, Mike explained, “Synco-pa is one rhythm. Ta, ta is another. So they came up with synco-potato. But whatever works, works” (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 758-759). Mike stressed the importance of allowing students to explore rhythms in various ways, bring their current understanding of the piece to class, and then relabeling it in class, if necessary.

While not all pedagogical approaches could be tackled during the meeting, it was evident to the group that various concepts were being approached and taught very differently across the entire faculty, and required further action from each individual on the LTA and Conductor teams. Mike mentioned the critical importance of discovering a solution to this, especially as the program continues to grow.

[W]e've got to figure out how to, how to make these things work. And I'm gonna take the entire blame for this and trying to figure out how do we get from that aural perspective to the page. That's the hardest moment to get us through and that's where are pedagogical focus has got to be...we're going to get to a point, I think where as... an instructional team, we're going to have to dictate some pedagogy in the classroom... I've got to be able to say, this is how we're going to go about getting this to happen, and put that in place so that we can go from there. But I'm going to rely on a lot of your pedagogical expertise to be able to get that to happen. (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 807-816)

Mike's substantial reliance on faculty members' pedagogical expertise to improve the program was echoed throughout the conversation and was a good example of Wenger's (1998) joint enterprise and shared repertoire.

Communication. The remainder of the meeting involved discussion of the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of current communication across the program. There were concerns mentioned of an over-saturation of lengthy emails and how much of the information gets quickly scanned, resulting in essential information being missed by faculty. Robyn mentioned a balance in deciding how to get information out to faculty without having to contact people or schedule more meetings. Simply put, Robyn stated, "I think maybe ... it would be helpful to be clear about that...so it's either lengthy emails or it's more meetings" (LTA and conductor meeting, lines 853-854).

Summary of the meeting. ESO originally started with only nine faculty members and has grown to over 45 members. Mike recognized the importance of allowing the program to evolve but also recognized the vulnerabilities the program would have without a mutual understanding of the mission of the program. Through their actions and discussions, Mike and the Leadership team indicated that mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire are critical to the survival of ESO.

Online Open-Ended Surveys

A total of 12 surveys were completed between February 1, 2017 and March 10, 2017 on the web application, Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com). Through these open-ended surveys, the researcher anonymously investigated overall perceptions from staff and faculty regarding ESO's culture, program, and recognition of existing smaller communities of musical practice within the larger group. The survey was

divided into five sections, with the bulk of the questions nested within Wenger's three communities of practice: mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire. A final question asked participants to expound upon the relationship of smaller communities of musical practice and their importance to the overall success of ESO. The five sections that are the focus of this chapter include: (1) demographics, (2) mutual engagement, (3) joint enterprise, (4) shared repertoire, and (5) small communities of musical practice.

Demographics. The first question asked participants to identify their position at ESO as administrator, teacher, or teaching assistant. The second question asked how long the participant had taught music and in what capacity. An example was provided to assist participants in understanding the desired format of their answers. According to the data, nine teachers, one teacher assistant, and two administrators completed the survey. Music teaching experience ranged from zero years to 34 years of teaching. Seven of the teachers taught in a public school setting, while two teachers had only taught private lessons until employment at ESO. Two participants were still in college. One participant had no music training or teaching experience.

Experience working at ESO ranged from teachers having only one year of experience to those who had been there from the inception of ESO. Music experience ranged from only teaching in elementary music positions to teaching higher education music courses. Of these, three participants had a primary music teaching focus, while five participants had a secondary music teaching focus. Two of these teachers mentioned teaching in both primary and secondary settings. Three of the participants identified as teachers who have taught in higher education.

Mutual engagement. As mentioned in Chapter 3, mutual engagement involves the negotiations, involvement, and engagement of relationships that help define a group, or community. The first question under the umbrella of mutual engagement asked participants if they felt ESO is a place where one can collaborate with others who share a passion for music. From the survey data, the majority of participants agreed that ESO provides a creative place for members to collaborate and that this is a major pillar of ESO's foundation. While the type of collaboration varied in each configuration of orchestras, a majority of the participants mentioned that they were content with the opportunity to collaborate with others who share a common passion for performing and teaching music. An example of this was expressed in a fundamentals team participant's explanation of opportunity and collaboration.

The faculty at El Sistema are all people who are passionate about performing and teaching and constantly striving to learn something new to bring to their students. On the fundamentals side of the staff, everyone has a special niche that they bring to the curriculum (world music, guitar, composition, etc.) and inspire other teachers with unique ideas/teaching suggestions to try throughout their classrooms. We are regularly able to collaborate and share our ideas at weekly faculty planning sessions (and more informally, through email). (survey participant 1, lines 17-22)

Other participants mentioned how ESO not only creates a collaborative space for teachers but also provides an atmosphere for teachers to receive help and an opportunity to teach others to become better teachers and musicians. An example of this idea was noted in a participant's response, "So many opportunities exist where we

can learn new ideas that we might have not yet considered. There is certainly three dimensional learning that can happen for those who are interested” (survey participant 6, lines 17-19).

A Nueva participant mentioned how, as a team, they share ideas on “classroom management, teaching note reading, rehearsal etiquette, and how to make our classrooms more positive environments” (survey participant 7, lines 15-17). This participant also mentioned how sharing praises about students and great moments in teaching are also a highlight in collaboration. The idea of a supportive administration and their encouragement to remain in a collaborative mode throughout the year is important to many participants. This type of support extends through all strands of the program, as a participant discusses.

If I am struggling with teaching a specific concept or if I want to introduce a concept in a different way, I have several experienced music educators nearby with tried and true tips, tools, and immediate feedback. Each strand of El Sistema OK supports the next and it works like a cycle. Fundamentals supports Instrument class and Instrument class supports rehearsal, and it repeats. (survey participant 9, lines 21-25)

The participant suggested that ESO support is recurring and opportunities for collaboration are abundant.

Two participants mentioned concerns in the area of collaboration, and discussed how the potential to collaborate could be better or how the full opportunity has not yet become a reality. While collaboration exists in pockets of ESO, the struggle mentioned was in the collaborative ineffectiveness across all teams, possibly due to size and

schedules. An administrator participant explained how teachers collaborate via a common curriculum but that “lack of detail and even lack of participation from some teachers keeps this from being as successful as hoped” (survey participant 3, lines 20-21).

The second set of questions under mutual engagement asked participants to describe the significance of their teaching and how their leadership impacts the overall goal of a shared learning environment. Participants were also asked if conversations at ESO nurture professional growth, build relationships, and result in more informed practice and improved student achievement. While most participants mentioned the positive impact collaborating with colleagues had on their teaching at ESO, a few participants questioned their individual teaching impact or degree of impact on the overall goal of ESO’s shared environment. Only four of the participants specifically mentioned their importance in the overall goal and one of these participants chose not to take full credit for the impact by stating, “I believe everybody has teaching that impacts the overall goal” (survey participant 11, line 23). Two of the participants mentioned feeling impactful sometimes or to a degree, with one participant mentioning, “I hear stories of these interactions especially on the fundamentals team. We suffer with isolation on the Nueva instrumental team that hampers this type of professional development” (survey participant 3, line 28-31).

However, many participants gave examples of how their classes inspire and provide an environment for students that are interconnected and situated in the best learning settings. For example, one participant suggested how the composition class constructs an environment that emboldens students to “create original musical ideas

while learning how to problem solve, deal with interpersonal conflict (disagreements about musical ideas), and collaborate” (survey participant 1, line 30-32). A fundamentals participant directly addressed the impact of teaching as important to the ESO’s mission by stating, “My teaching and leadership definitely impacts the goals of our environment. The conversations we have in our teams, and as an organizational whole have changed the way I view learning communities. And because we maintain an open and thoughtful environment, our students are given numerous opportunities to shine” (survey participant 9, line 34-38).

The final question in this section asked participants if they believe conversations nurture professional growth, build relationships, and result in more informed practice and improved student achievement. All participants mentioned how conversations and relationships are essential to maintain. One of the administrators mentioned how it is “critical that teachers are able to build relationships so that as students navigate from classroom to rehearsal to free time there is consistency in message and mission. It is critical to accomplished the overall goal at ESO” (survey participant 10, line 23-25).

Joint enterprise. Joint enterprise allows for disagreement and negotiation; however, accountability of members in action is crucial to the success of the community. One portion of the survey asked participants if they felt their music pedagogy/program structure has changed due to the changing needs of students. Another question asked participants if and how their classroom activities connect learning to life and community or provide a sense of belonging.

As Robyn mentioned in the Executive Director interview, the ESO curricular model centers on a three-pronged approach: 1) literacy, 2) composition and

improvisation, and 3) creative musicianship. She also mentioned the importance of teaching musicianship, which occurs through all of these approaches. These approaches are addressed in various configurations of classes and rehearsals at ESO. Ultimately, it is up to the individual teachers how they choose to teach these skills and support the musical repertoire of the orchestra. One teacher mentioned the importance of incorporating "activities to empower students individually and musically" (survey participant 9, line 46-47).

Yearly growth in population, educational needs, and demographic fluctuations initiate change to the music program's design and structure. Several teachers mentioned how their pedagogy never stops evolving and has shifted to a more student-centered approach. A participant explained the transition from being a first-year public school teacher to being in the third year of teaching at ESO.

In the beginning, I think a lot of my lessons were overly structured - every minute was planned for and there honestly wasn't a lot of room for student input. As I got more settled in to the ESO community, I changed my lessons to be MUCH more student centered - I wanted to get them creating, moving, improvising... anything that I could think of to make them feel like they had ownership of the class. I think that having the students feel like they were the ones who decided how their classroom culture would feel helped us create our own MUSE [fundamentals] family. (survey participant 1, line 43-50)

Many participants, similarly, mentioned how their pedagogy has evolved to meet the needs of the students.

Several participants mentioned how becoming more receptive to listening to music from the student's culture group has opened numerous avenues for musical and social connections in the classroom and rehearsal settings. For example, a teacher described how the pedagogical structure of the class had evolved altogether into a more student- and community-centered approach and explained how lessons are now specifically developed and "intended for the student to collaborate with others in order to build a sense of community" (survey participant 12, lines 51-52). Other participants also recognized how the closeness in community has developed over the last year or two, allowing teachers to more easily identify students needing one-on-one assistance with musical guidance or more opportunities to excel through leadership.

In regard to activities that connect learning to life and community, one participant expressed how ESO concerts have endorsed a more high-spirited audience to provide a sense of belonging.

[D]uring concerts we encourage loud cheering and "hoots and hollers" which is not typical of classical music viewing but a part of the community that we serve. You celebrate your loved ones and their accomplishments and that recognition will not be financially grand; it is the way our community communicates their love and for that reason we foster it and do not stifle it. There are many, many times we consider the community we serve over our own personal community (if it is different) because it is critical that they feel they belong. (survey participant 10, lines 34-40).

This participant recognized the importance of embracing the culture of ESO's students and encouraging a more rowdy form of celebration not often typically experienced in a

more traditional orchestra setting. Shared repertoire is indicated in this symbol of change in audience participation.

While most participants perceived ESO's varying pedagogy as positive, there was one participant who mentioned how,

Pedagogical fracture is a real concern for the entire site. We attempt to unify pedagogy in the instrumental classrooms, but only with limited success. My teacher education pedagogy has changed as I work with those who have the 'brightest fire' and attempt to guide them through developing solutions to their issues. I am not sure how we provide a sense of belonging and if that really takes hold. We have had several advanced students leave the program in the past month and there has been no communication from the families regarding the impact ESO had on their children while they were part of the program. That might suggest ESO is not having the impact on families it hopes to have.

(survey participant 3, lines 38-45)

Though this participant's view was not the majority perspective, the participant did bring up numerous valid points and cause for concern. Although the survey was anonymous, the participant provided a title of employment only one administrator has at ESO. Knowing whom the participant was, and because the participant voluntarily gave the author this information, we discussed this issue further via email. To maintain anonymity for this dissertation, the author will not reveal the name but will add how the participant mentioned, "I know we cannot make a difference for every child, but that will not keep me from mourning those who we could not reach while I celebrate those we could" (email, February 9, 2017).

The last few questions regarding joint enterprise asked if ESO provides an environment to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences in cultures, values, and individual beliefs. There is an expressed ideal among all faculty and leadership that providing this type of environment is a priority. Eleven out of the 12 participants expressed belief that ESO provides a place to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences in cultures, values, and individual beliefs, while one participant expressed concerns. The concerned participant believes most people involved with ESO feel accountability to the program as noticed through daily commitments and attendance in extra rehearsals or concerts; however, this participant does not completely agree that ESO provides an environment for students to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences.

I find that this is typical when there is an organization comprised of minorities, but operated and run by the majority. How would someone who never experienced poverty be able to recognize poverty? How would a person who never experienced daily racism and discrimination based on color, creed, nationality, etc., be able to recognize a child who might be experiencing those things? Issues that our students face each day are simply not on the radar of some of the adults in their lives, so those vital conversations never take place. (survey participant 9, lines 60-66).

Again, while this perspective was not the majority perception of ESO's environment, the participant brought up several valid and critical issues that directly affect students and will need to be addressed.

Other participants provided examples of how ESO offers its students numerous opportunities to safely explore differences. The Nueva instrumental teacher mentioned how, “Students are exposed to different cultural beliefs and music styles every semester, and they are invited to learn more about the culture behind the music” (survey participant 7, lines 44-45). Many other participants suggested how ESO is a place where cultural differences are embraced, supported, and cultivated, and mentioned recognizing this support through student activities such as folk dances or other world music opportunities.

Interestingly, most participants focused their comments on if and how students, teachers, and parents feel accountability towards the success of the program. A Nueva instructor explained how accountability is seen throughout the program.

I believe that students, teachers, and parents are the reason the program is still going, and we all know our responsibilities to the program such as teachers being prepared for lessons and knowing their schedule for the days, students learning their music and helping the classroom environment by contributing to the conversations involved in the learning atmosphere, and parents making sure their child attends the program every day and supporting their child's artistic abilities. (survey participant 7, lines 45-51)

While many teachers expressed similar beliefs, the amount of support and accountability varied greatly from student, to parent, to teacher. Most agreed that teachers are highly supported, hold high self-accountability and set high standards for themselves, which in turn provides an environment conducive to acceptance, support,

and encouragement. One participant even mentioned how, “It is truly the best teaching situation I have experienced in this regard” (survey participant 8, lines 46-47).

Student accountability towards the success of ESO is viewed positively among participants and numerous examples to support this success were provided. Most examples included opportunities for student leadership. A composition teacher mentioned how, “The students definitely have accountability for themselves. After a streak of worse than average rehearsals, you can see them rally together and encourage each other to get things back on track” (survey participant 1, lines 66-68).

While many participants expressed contentment and a sense of accountability from parents in regard to the ESO directives, many expressed concerns that parents do not understand the significance of the program. An administrator mentioned, “In that regard I believe we have not been as proactive as we could be in sharing the impact of ESO with families and helping them understand the investment that is being made in their children and families” (survey participant 3, lines 53-55). Another participant echoed this response by explaining how, “It's on an individual basis... we don't pressure that accountability and we have had some issues where there is a disconnect between program success and family/student” (survey participant 10, lines 48-49). One teacher, however, fully believes parents demonstrate support and accountability is witnessed daily through, “their attendance at concerts to the simple act of thanking me each day as they pick up their children is a joy to experience” (survey participant 4, lines 58-59).

Shared repertoire. This section of questions focused on perceptions of the ESO staff regarding the benefits students receive from their experiences in the El Sistema Oklahoma program and possible future benefits from having been in the

program. One of the administrators explained how the benefits are life-long, mentioning that,

The students are receiving a quality music and life education in a nurturing, caring and supportive environment. These kids will have learned to be successful team players, persistent workers and supporters of the arts, and will be able to apply these skills to whatever they decide to do in the future. (survey participant 4, lines 65-68)

According to this administrator, ESO students' needs are being met both musically and socially.

Of all the questions addressed in this survey, this section was responded to most positively in tone and passion. Several participants mentioned how ESO has transformed the lives of countless students and how these students have worked hard to become contributing members of ESO's family. These students are also able to advance more quickly on their instruments than most students their age, "so their chances of going to college for music or joining a professional ensemble are much higher" (survey participant 7, lines 61-62).

Others mentioned ESO does not necessarily focus on creating professional musicians, although some students are showing tendencies in that direction, but rather on the benefits of creating life-long music advocates. A participant who is a newer member to ESO recognized how the "students are practicing self-discipline and hard work, patience and empathy towards others, self-expression and communication skills, which are the basis for a successful work ethic" (survey participant 2, lines 53-55). The consistency of daily routine and spending time with peers and teachers who enjoy

making music together were common themes mentioned throughout. Participants mentioned how some of the social skills students gain from ESO is transferred into their school environments and other areas of their daily lives. A teacher described how, “After being in the program for a while, a lot of our ‘troubled’ kids are able to form positive relationships with their friends and teachers, and I really think it encourages them to make good choices in their behavior and interactions with others” (survey participant 1, lines 82-85).

An Alegria fundamentals teacher mentioned that, “ESO provides opportunities for students they would not have otherwise because of the expense of learning an orchestral instrument but also because ESO is so devoted to the well-being of each student. The ESO program truly reflects their motto: ‘transforming the lives of children through music’”(survey participant 8, lines 53-56). Several participants acknowledged that current societal trends seem to steer away from a community focus, but how that focus on community music involvement has become the crux of success for the ESO program. One participant brought up how children learn to work together at ESO without regard to race, culture, religion, or gender and mentioned how “In neighborhoods and schools, children tend to segregate, but only integration is possible at El Sistema. The future benefits is that children will have more compassion and understanding for all persons” (survey participant 6, lines 49-51).

Another question addressed in this section asked participants if ESO is unique and if there is a common direction or development of shared understandings that improves the program experience for all members. Nine of the 12 participants signified that they fully believe ESO is unique, while three other participants were more or less

undecided. Those who were undecided believe that there are other community programs within the OKC area that also promote musical experiences for students. However, the majority consensus was that ESO is unique in numerous ways. One teacher explained her reasoning.

Having the space to focus solely on music and student well-being is really special (for both students and teachers!). Since there's not a strict curriculum to follow or testing deadlines to meet, teachers have the opportunity to take the time to teach in a way that truly allows each and every student to grasp the concepts presented in class. Our program structure also allows teachers to have the freedom to connect with their students in ways that public school teachers may not have the time to do. (survey participant 1, lines 100-106)

Several participants echoed these remarks by mentioning how fortunate they feel to work in an environment that focuses on the success of each child by assessing the cumulative effects of actions rather than the use of testing as the indicator of success or failure.

Many teachers recognized that ESO not only provides music education, but are also taking care of students' basic needs. This social aspect of the program seems to be the critical factor that most of the participants acknowledged in their comments. ESO provides students daily with a large, nutritious snack, homework tutoring, and positive adult influences.

[With a] warm place to go with adults who keep it safe after school everyday...Since we provide those services as well, we are bettering the lives of families in our communities whose adults need the time to work in order to

better support their children, while also ensuring that once the student goes home they are able to focus on the things a family needs (survey participant 2, lines 66-70).

This participant acknowledges the importance of ESO as a system that provides basic needs for students, which in turn allows families to work without worrying about the safety of their children who otherwise might be left unattended after school.

One participant also mentioned how time to plan and collaborate with colleagues makes ESO unique, recognizing how staff and program leadership meet frequently to “to discuss and develop our common directions and goals and to celebrate our successes and continue to improve in all aspects of our program (survey participant 4, lines 78-79). As many participants are also current public school teachers, they see planning time that administration encourages and creates into the structure of the day or month as a luxury. Many commented on appreciating how ESO administration views their faculty as experts in their fields, without question, and how it allows them to grow even more as professionals.

When participants were asked how success is measured at ESO, a variety of answers was submitted. One participant mentioned how “Success is determined by technique and musical ability on their instruments as well as aural skills and fundamental music theory knowledge” (survey participant 7, lines 89-91). Many participants mentioned how success is not formally measured, but rather determined through observation and anecdotal analysis. While hard data such as student and family surveys and faculty polls are collected frequently throughout the year, success is more frequently measured by the effort and forward progress a teacher notices in students.

Student success is measured one student at a time at ESO and not based against other members of the orchestra but rather on the progress he or she has made within a certain timeframe. From the data, progress tends to be more important to teachers than proficiency.

There is also evidence from data that indicates the uniqueness of ESO in how multiple teachers help multiple students across the program. For example, when instructors address their students' musical concerns, such as music reading or tone quality, they feel comfortable cross-collaborating with other faculty members who work with the same student in a different musical configuration.

Small communities of musical practice. The question that the author listed within the set of questions regarding small communities of musical practice was added to the survey to see how teachers perceived the importance of these communities. Alongside the question regarding the benefits of ESO, this question was also answered full-heartedly, or at least with great detail. Many participants mentioned how small communities of musical practice are the *backbone* of ESO and “allow deeper, sometimes more self-directed, studies of the students' desires. They are what make the program special to the students” (survey participant 2, lines 76-77). Many suggest how these smaller communities are what make the larger groups successful. One participant addressed small communities of musical practice directly by saying,

It is in smaller classroom environments where students are really able to build skills in teamwork, communication, respect/responsibility, and creativity. The smaller classroom environment allows teachers to build strong relationships with each student, helping develop a great sense of trust between the students

and faculty. The skills that the students learn in small music communities transfer over to their large ensembles and allow them to experience great success there! (survey participant 1, lines 116-121)

These smaller communities are where the participant sees crucial relationships being built and a place for teachers to foster the development of students' musical learning.

Most importantly, participants mentioned how the skills learned in these varied small communities of practice are transferred directly into the larger orchestra, which in turn, is ideally the mission of the program. Many also noted how these groups are keys to success, especially in a continually growing program like ESO. A teacher mentioned how the smaller groups “allow deeper, sometimes more self-directed, studies of the students' desires. They are what make the program special to the students” (survey participant 2, lines 76-77). These communities allow for closer relationships between students and teachers, yet also allow for individual students to display their talents in a smaller venue that might often be missed in the larger orchestra environment. The idea that each small community creates a space to reinforce technical and creative musical skills used across the program are prevalent throughout this topic, as one participant mentioned how,

“[E]xpectations should remain the same, consistently, throughout the various ‘ecosystems’ found at ESO. Students have shown improvement both in their executive skills, musicianship, and in-class-behavior during the meetings of these small music communities, thus reciprocating these results [as a consequence] in the larger ensemble.” (survey participant 12, lines 100-103)

According to this participant, just as ESO holds very high musical standards for their students, the social expectations are equally as high across both the smaller and larger communities.

Summary of surveys. The anonymous surveys allowed the researcher to ask participants sensitive or controversial questions that could be answered honestly and openly with little concern of embarrassment or reprisal. While a few participants offered the researcher more information regarding their position at ESO, the researcher attempted to remain focused on cross comparisons and tabulations of answers. Through data analysis, the enormous amount of collaboration and commitment necessary from faculty, staff, administration, volunteers, students, parents, and community for ESO to function effectively was evident. Each member is held vitally accountable for upholding his or her area of the program, as will further be demonstrated in the following section. For the purpose of this dissertation, the author focused research on areas that most directly affected teachers' perspectives.

Categories and Themes

This section is organized and divided into four sections: 1) a discussion of categories and themes that developed, 2) the researcher's modified questions and direction of analysis, 3) observations and interviews organized into categories and themes, and 4) a brief summary of events. Several themes emerged from surveys, meetings, and the Executive Director interview, which allowed the researcher to create categories and organize relevant data: 1) structure, 2) collaboration, 3) community, 4) identity, and 5) expectations. These categories and themes also helped guide the nature of questions the researcher asked during interviews and helped focus observations.

Before embarking on specific details gathered through individual interviews and observations, each category and theme will collectively be discussed.

Discussion of categories and emergent themes.

Structure. Within each of the larger Nueva, Alegria, and Esperanza orchestras, students' schedules are structured to allow students to experience five communities of musical practice weekly: 1) full orchestra, 2) sectionals, 3) chamber ensembles, 4) instrumental areas, and 5) fundamentals. Esperanza orchestra students have two full rehearsals each week, while both Nueva and Alegria orchestras have one full rehearsal. Every student attends Fundamentals classes three times weekly, as described in Chapter 1, rotating between a creative music making class, called Musicians Using Self Expression (MUSE), and a more theory-intense class, referred to as Superior Notable Artistic Performer (SNAP).

Sectionals, which are typically wind or brass section rehearsals, are held twice a week for Esperanza and once a week for Nueva and Alegria. These rehearsals help identify areas of weakness within sections and work on difficult areas in the repertoire. Students also attend instrumental areas twice weekly if they are in Esperanza, but four times weekly if they are in Nueva or Alegria. Instrumental areas allow students intensive practice time on their specific instrument with a teacher who specializes in that instrument and provides support in executive skills and repertoire. Esperanza, Alegria, and Nueva chamber ensembles meet only once weekly and are much smaller musical groups that vary in size and instrumentation. The idea of chamber ensembles is to provide students an opportunity for further leadership and development on their instruments. As mentioned in earlier, these smaller ensembles do not allow students to

hide behind the larger sound of the orchestra and requires them to be more individually accountable.

There are four Lead Teaching Artists who represent the areas of fundamentals, string instruments, brass instruments, and woodwinds. Conductors for the orchestras include one conductor for the Nueva orchestra, two conductors for the Alegria orchestra, and two conductors for the Esperanza orchestra. Student conductors are also chosen each semester to lead the Esperanza orchestra. These teachers and conductors are referred to as the Leadership Team and are expected to facilitate their areas through team meetings, identify concerns, act as advocates or mediators for faculty members, and communicate important information to their teams. This structure of leadership allows workload, responsibilities, ideas, and the evolving mission to be communicated across the entire faculty and has become a mandatory requisite to facilitate the programs' growth in size and function within the community.

Collaboration. Collaboration is essential to ensure that the ESO structure functions productively. While ESO depends on its administration to guide the direction of the overall goals and mission, they have also created spaces for ongoing faculty collaboration. As will be discussed later in this chapter, faculty attribute time spent collaborating as the key factor in ESO's success. There are numerous all-staff meetings and professional developments provided throughout the year, which are typically held at the beginning of the year, the end of each quarter and semester, and the end of the year. Other opportunities to collaborate exist in team meetings, logistics meetings, and LTA and Conductors meetings.

Staff meetings and professional development meetings provide time to collaborate as a large faculty, as well as time to meet in various other configurations of the program needing additional attention. For example, the Fundamentals team typically meets as a group during part of the professional development to discuss curriculum alignment or classroom needs. However, because team planning is now scheduled into the weekly program, the need to meet during professional development decreased, and as a result, allowed more time for other areas of the program to be addressed. As discussed, during the LTA and Conductors' meeting it was suggested how it might be beneficial to collaborate in repertoire groups to focus solely on each piece of music. Since not all of the faculty see each student at ESO, this time would allow teachers who work with the same students to cross-collaborate. This idea of repertoire collaboration was implemented at the following professional development meeting and allowed faculty members to address problematic sections of each piece and suggest other ideas to help implement musical success. Examples of this type of willingness to change structure to benefit the needs of the faculty and students is encouraged by the administration and found throughout the ESO program.

Logistics meetings are held before large concerts to help facilitate loading and unloading of instruments, organizing the students and groups, creating the concert agenda, and communicating other important aspects of the program. As concerts are held at local community colleges due to the size of the orchestras and expected audience, these logistic meetings are critical. As mentioned earlier, team meetings are held each week and structured into the weekly schedule for Alegria and Esperanza faculty. Due to conflicting schedules, not all Nueva teachers can attend team planning;

this is a concern and is considered a serious disconnect within the program, which is mentioned several times throughout interviews and surveys. However, the administration is aware of the situation and continues to address it. While administration ultimately decides how to address these issues, the Leadership Team (LTA and Conductors) meetings are where these problems first surface and as a team, many decisions are made regarding how to proceed.

Community. Communities are formed within these area meetings and are also where strong relationships are built and supported. The crucial relationships found within these area meetings, and similar pockets of self-formed communities found at ESO, create an atmosphere of openness, trust, and forward thinking. Many participants mentioned throughout the data collection process how team meetings serve as communities to share successes and failures, generate strong friendships, and as places to safely express thoughts on current happenings at ESO. In other words, many members see these communities as a support system. During meetings, teachers share curriculum ideas, concerns about individual students or classes, ideas brought back from state conventions, new pedagogy and technology, and celebrate the successes and struggles of being an ESO member. While not all teams function on this level of community, many the respondents from this research mentioned how their teams are functioning similarly.

As friendships are built and flourish from experience and time spent at ESO, other communities occur naturally inside and outside of the program. As mentioned earlier in the Executive Director interview, ESO's smaller chamber ensembles help bring the community to the program. By providing the outside community a musical

glimpse inside what ESO offers students, ESO creates new relationships while also building on the success of shared repertoire. There are too many communities that have formed since ESO's inception to mention here, but at the time of this dissertation, communities function as a pillar of the program.

Identity. Identity at ESO, in the researcher's opinion, is what makes ESO unique. Each member of ESO brings a special passion, drive, and energy to the program. The synergy generated by the ESO family is one that cannot be commonly found. While the identities of members vary significantly, the differences they bring to the group cause conversation, allow for negotiation, and encourage new perspectives.

ESO provides many facets of musicianship for students to experience because of the varied styles of experience and pedagogy that faculty bring to the program. Not only do faculty members bring their professional careers and expertise to classes and rehearsals, but also their life passions, and new ideas of educational methods. For example, many of the ESO faculty members have not taught in an educational setting, as some members are still university students or have only played their instruments professionally. As will be discussed later in this chapter, some of the youngest faculty members bring fresh insight into teaching and often offer new perspectives on the changing needs of our students.

Expectations. There is no doubt that high expectations are hallmark of ESO. Interestingly, these high expectations are modeled by administration, who respect members as professionals and trust that they will provide high quality instruction to their students. Administration does this by encouraging leadership among members, allowing discourse, and by expecting nothing but the best that everyone can contribute.

These thoughts are echoed throughout interviews, surveys, and observations the researcher collected.

Faculty and staff transfer this feeling of trust and high expectations to their students, which was evident through numerous observations of classroom and rehearsal settings. It was common to hear students say things to support peers and prompt others to stay on task. While the researcher cannot specifically identify how this transfer of trust and high expectations exists from administration to teacher to student, it is evident through observation and data that the phenomenon exists. The following section, however, will attempt to address much of this phenomenon through individual accounts and experiences of how teachers recognize and foster the smaller student music communities and to help determine if they are contributing factors to the program's overall success.

Researcher's modified questions and direction of analysis. The following accounts of observations, transcriptions, and survey responses will describe the inner workings and members' daily experience at ESO. Participants acted in ESO fashion by allowing the researcher to delve into the good, the bad, and sometimes ugly parts of their experience, otherwise known as their job. As the themes developed so did the questions.

It was obvious to the researcher that many of the answers to the original questions intended to ask participants were indeed already present. The questions then changed to provide the reader with more adequate and precise information, and to further future opportunities to replicate ideas introduced through the ESO program. The researcher began asking participants "how" and not "if" something exists. For example,

the researcher began data collection by asking if an atmosphere of trust and sense of community existed in a teacher's class or rehearsal. This question then evolved to how did that teacher implement trust and sense of community in his or her classroom or rehearsal.

Observations and interviews. Here are the most personal accounts of experiences of ESO, and from this point forward, this researcher will refer to herself in the first person. I am grateful for the participants who allowed me into their classrooms and into their thoughts and desires for ESO. While a broad approach will first be provided, more detailed examples of classroom occurrences will then follow. The following examples follow the format of the themes recognized in the initial Executive Director interview, LTA and Conductors meeting, and surveys that had been submitted at the time before observations occurred. However, surveys completed after the observations and interviews will also be included in this format of sections as well.

Structure. As described earlier in this chapter, the structure of the smaller communities of musical practice function to support the orchestral repertoire and overall musical success of the group. However, how these communities function at their inner cores varied from each class or rehearsal. How each faculty member chooses to structure his or her class was the largest difference recognized. Some structures observed during the data collection of classes and rehearsals appeared very formal; others were quite casual, but extremely focused. In many of the classes, students were expected to help decide the pace and goals of the class, particularly in guided practice and chamber ensembles.

Both Nueva and Alegria fundamentals exhibited a bit more of a formal structure but allowed plenty of flexibility within the structure of the lessons, as student ownership of the class was evident. From the moment students walked in, they knew exactly where to sit and how to proceed. For example, in Nueva fundamentals, one student took roll while others reset the board for the day. During this time, the Nueva teacher chose still students to help warm up their voices. Students were excited to be chosen to use a slinky and another expanding sphere object to help the class vocalize under their direction. Similarly, the Alegria teacher chose leaders and student conductors throughout the entirety of the class to lead songs and other activities.

Abby, a cello teacher with little experience teaching outside of ESO other than leading a few summer camp music programs, explained how developing structure in her classes starts at the beginning of the year. According to Abby, she gave students the choice of where to sit each day, even if it meant sitting by friends who might not stay on task. The confidence she displayed while sharing details about her semi-structured teaching was observed in her instrumental class. Over the course of the semester, the students chose to move from a scattered position in the room to eventually sitting in a horseshoe or circular fashion with only a couple of students remaining off, or still scattered on their own.

Abby explained how she mentored these students daily with a goal in mind, but allowed students the freedom to choose how they would accept her help along the way. Giving the students authority over the class appeared to have made a difference, as students walked in knowing how to prepare themselves for rehearsal and began practicing repertoire together without Abby's assistance (observation Abby cellos

guided practice, lines 13-18). This semi-structured environment appeared to work very well for both teacher and students.

In a guided practice for trumpets, a young trumpet teacher named Nathan structured his class to allow students to play individually and only added advice when needed or asked. When students asked for help, Nathan quickly helped students by addressing problematic areas in their repertoire or playing technique. While the structure of the environment seemed extremely casual and somewhat nonproductive, closer observation indicated that students were in complete control of their learning environment. This analysis, however, was not apparent until the end of the class period. The following is a description of the observation of this class.

Only two students were present at the start of class. Student 1 practiced a repertoire piece on her own. Another student sat quietly, not playing his instrument for several minutes, and seemed unexcited to be in the class. Both students, occasionally annoyed at each other, seemed content to purely co-exist during the rehearsal. While each student played different pieces at the same time, and quite loudly at each other at times, each student successfully followed their own agenda (observation Nathan guided practice, lines 37-38).

Nathan eventually encouraged the students to play together and helped them get started. While the less enthusiastic child did not play his best and both students struggled to get to the end of the piece, they did end together and seemed somewhat happy with their accomplishment. Student 2 confessed to Student 1 how he was struggling with note names. The teacher, by design, did very little to intercede as they were successfully working this challenge out on their own. Student 2 seemed

appreciative of Student 1's help and they began playing again, this time sounding much better (observation Nathan guided practice, lines 46-48).

Soon other students entered the guided practice community and began playing Student 1 and 2's repertoire, looking over their shoulders to play along even though this was not their repertoire piece. At that point, the change in playing abilities and sound of the group was evident as they continued supporting each other as one community (Nueva through Esperanza) throughout the piece. Eventually, a more experienced student broke away from the group to get individual help from Nathan (observation Nathan guided practice, line 64-66).

The most significant moment of the observation occurred when student 3 decided to help student 4. Not only did she encourage the other student to play with her but also discovered a way to help him in a common language that was taught at ESO. Student 3 sang the part to student 4 in Solfège, counted off to start, and then played together again with success (observation Nathan guided practice, line 58-59). This was significant to me in that both students used skills learned in different classes to solve a problem together. It was evident that structures for students and teachers at ESO are put in place for these types of learning experiences from all communities of musical practice.

Collaboration. Collaboration, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, is critical to ESO's success. Without collaboration, there would be no way of identifying and addressing the needs of our students and continuing to grow as a program. Faculty members are always collaborating to provide best practices for their students and supply a support system for each other. This was evident through numerous classroom

observations and interviews, as well as team meetings and the surveys mentioned in previous chapters.

Alex, an instructor of the fundamentals composition class, and Kayla, a teaching assistant, led the fundamentals composition class three times a week and continuously collaborated on constructed activities that provided multiple opportunities for students to create musical compositions. While students enjoyed the recently purchased composition computer program, this provided only surface level learning. Kayla and Alex recognized this and discovered new avenues for students to explore beyond the limits of the computer program. Using her own strengths, and teaching with her partner, Kayla brought her passion for arranging music to students while Alex helped students appreciate music theory and history. As a team, they discovered ways to bring their strengths into each lesson and through a variety of formats. Not only did students create playable compositions, but also with ongoing collaboration between Kayla and Alex and faculty, several students got to hear their piece performed live. Several students were also advanced enough to play their own pieces. The plan for next semester, which starts after data collection, is for a chime composition to be created in collaboration with another fundamentals teacher for her students.

On a student level, it was interesting to see how Kayla encouraged collaboration among her Alegria chamber ensemble. Similar to Nathan's guided practice environment, her class also appeared to be a very unstructured environment at first glance. The group was in the wake of learning the difficult challenges of collaborating with one another. This class consisted of much younger and less focused students who frequently bickered with each other. While Kayla was there as the expert, she did not

assert herself as leader of the group, but rather offered suggestions as she recognized the group was going to fall apart. Below is an excerpt from the observation.

Teacher lets students play and figure out mistakes, only asking after a few tries, “How are you going to get started today? How are we best going to use our time today?”

rehearsal ownership, while somewhat uncontrolled, leadership is in their hands, if they choose to practice

A few students try to take the lead and get the group started, while there are several other students who would much rather converse about other things. Rather than interjecting, the teacher quietly mentions, “It is your time you are wasting. Is this really how you want to spend it?”

The group then tries to play together, and does get through the piece.

(observation Kayla Alegria chamber ensemble, lines 30-42)

While students negotiated leadership and struggled to complete their chamber ensemble piece, by the end of the rehearsal, the group had not only run through it several times but also had singled out the scale of the piece and worked on playing it together and in various styles and tempos. This collaboration was not an easy process, and as noted in the observation transcripts, several words spoken among the group were not very kind. However, student accountability remained present throughout the lesson and progress often occurred only after these spurts of harsh collaboration.

I asked Kayla to explain the collaboration process I witnessed. She mentioned how, “there are some times where...as classroom management goes, we just have to acknowledge that if somebody is playing around, how can you best use your time”

(playback interview transcription Kayla, lines 103-105)? Kayla described how chamber ensembles at ESO are encouraged to be student-led and interprets this to mean, “students should be doing as much of the rehearsing and decision-making as possible” (playback interview transcription Kayla, line 17). Kayla recognized how sometimes collaboration is a struggle for these students, but felt that by interfering too much, students are not challenged to figure out solutions to their ensemble’s problems. She also explained how this style of collaboration has worked well for her, especially when her ensembles finally discover how to achieve their goals through dialogue and community. Later in this chapter, Kayla explains how her Esperanza group not only decides the structure of the class, but how she expects them to chart out the direction of progress through the end of the semester.

Community. Community is derived from the collaboration and relationships built from working together on projects with a common goal in mind. Through thoughtful negotiations and actions, established norms are formed. While these communities exist across ESO, it is evident how some communities still struggle due to time constraints and scheduling conflicts.

Beth, new to ESO this year, brought several years of public school and higher education teaching to ESO as well as her expertise in research and teaching the Kodály approach to students. During an interview, Beth explained how she was attracted to the program, hearing about the on-going collaboration, sense of community and how administrative support was already in place at ESO.

It's better than I expected. It is. I love it there. I love the support we get as teachers. The whole...not only getting a teaching assistant the whole time, but

then know when you have any problems the administration is right there to back you up. That's very, very helpful. It's been interesting to see how quickly students learn every day, which you know that was part of my study, which is what they have in Hungary - that's why they were so successful. So actually seeing it used here on a daily basis in the United States is cool because they learn so much quicker. I just can't believe it... I was really amazed how quickly they're learning their orchestral instruments and their concerts have been so impressive...so impressive.” (Nueva teacher interview, lines 15-23)

Hesitantly stated, however, she felt somewhat left out of the tight-knit community, which had formed over the year in the fundamentals team area. During our playback interview, Beth mentioned an extremely important bit of information she felt she needed to provide administration that directly affected the structure of ESO. While team planning had been structured into the weekly schedule for Alegria and Esperanza faculty, Nueva faculty was not included due to time constraints and scheduling conflicts. Beth specifically addressed how this inability to communicate with other members of her immediate team was detrimental to the success of her Nueva program and morale. Not having the opportunity to build community, share successes and failures, collaborate music ideas with the rest of the fundamentals team, she felt isolated and unconnected.

Knowing that administration welcomed concerns and suggestions, Beth expressed her need to be a part of the fundamentals team. As a result, Robyn, the Executive Director of ESO, discovered a way for her to attend fundamentals planning time by extending another position at ESO to cover her class while she joined the

fundamentals community. Beth expressed to me how important Robyn's decision was to her in remedying her thoughts of isolation: "I'm just going to say that they should really value what you guys have with the teamwork and how it's allowing that planning" (Nueva teacher interview, lines 142-144). This administrative support in understanding the need for her to be a part of a community made the biggest difference to her overall first year ESO experience.

As other members on the fundamentals team acknowledged, this is the first year where this type of collaboration and community has successfully formed. Although attempts were made over the years for team planning, they were often scattered throughout the year or held in much smaller pockets of involved area members. Because administration continues to refine areas of concern, members on the fundamentals team believed this has been the most successful yet.

Alex: ...I feel like our team is awesome (Susan: I do, too.) I just think our team jives like really, really well. Like I don't...last year, like I kind of hated it because the other Nueva teacher and I were always separate.

Susan: Yeah, that's hard.

Lani: We always met at different times.

Alex: Yeah, and so it was basically me and the other teacher and that was it...so...having a whole fundamentals team ... it's been amazing...like, you know...we share kids in this course that is amazing, too. Because it's like, all right...SOS!!! Help!

Susan: yeah, or this is how I handled this one! So, you know ... here's what you can do if you want to try (Alex: Right, definitely, right... no, I think that's great). (Alegria and Esperanza teacher interview, lines 226-237)

Possibly due to logistics, some area teams of the program have not yet created a cohesive community. However, these cohesive communities do exist throughout the program and are supported and nurtured by administration. As noticed through the fundamentals interview mentioned above, the formation of community did not occur quickly, but rather over the course of several years. Trial and error and communication among members were the significant elements that greatly impacted this change.

Identity. As previously discussed, the ESO community is a network of relationships, not necessarily similar in function or style but that somehow come together as one identity. However, identity within each community is equally important to recognize, particularly in how they exist within the program. When observing classes and asking teachers about the identity and significance of their classes within ESO's larger community, it was evident that each group had a unique character or personality. For example, as mentioned earlier regarding Alex's and Kayla's classes, these composition classes are recognized for creating new composers who share their music with the entire group. Alex even referred to her students in class as composers, instead of students, when getting their attention.

Visiting the Esperanza strings sectional rehearsal, a sense of identity, or more intimately, a sense of family environment, was present and noted in the way students addressed each other's basic needs. For example, during rehearsals, a student walked in late, scrambled around looking for music, and immediately two other string players

jumped up from their seats to help her find music (observation Sam Esperanza strings large chamber, line 57). This type of support for each member of the string team was evident throughout the observation.

Esperanza conductor, Sam, explained to me in a playback video interview why and how this identity might have occurred.

I think it's very special for them to be part of just the strings group and to just work on just strings only repertoire, because it's different. You know, we all know what it's like to be different ensembles and some kids enjoy the full orchestra more than the string ensembles. But I think it definitely helps me connect with them, being a string person. You know, that maybe gives me more of an advantage than like Mike, maybe Kristen, or anybody else that's not...

Because I can just grab an instrument and just play what I want and show them.
(playback interview transcription Sam, lines 31-37)

Sam mentioned how having those skills to play any instrument in the section gives her credibility as the students' conductor and allows a deeper way to connect with them.

There are numerous examples of how fundamentals teams create unique identities as well. Susan, a fundamentals teacher, discussed in an interview how, "What we do in music fundamentals is give the kids the skills to actually put the techniques that they learn in class and put it together so they can work as an ensemble and the ultimate goal is for the performance in orchestra" (Transcription ESO Music Fundamentals Video, line 32-34). While this is true in how the fundamentals group functions to support the larger group, there is evidence that the support is reciprocal. For example, while some of the rhythms introduced in these classes came from

repertoire and was inserted into activities by teachers, the students ultimately crafted the movements in the “Stomp Team” (a body percussion and dance ensemble) or layering of rhythms in “Bash the Trash” (a percussion ensemble) and were given complete ownership in the direction of the ultimate product. Students then not only belong to a large orchestra, but also take pride in identifying as members of the Stomp Team, Bash the Trash, Choir, Chime Choir, or in ukulele and Native American flute groups.

Fundamentals classes are fortunate to have several faculty members who come from diverse backgrounds and are willing to share their culture and world travels with students. An understanding of world music and culture also acts as an identifier within the overall ESO group. Many students have learned songs and dances such as the Indonesian “Dance of 1,000 Hands,” an Indian stick dance, traditional folk songs from Norway, and have explored a multitude of cultures from around the world.

Francisco, an Alegria Fundamentals teacher, explained how sharing his Colombian culture with students and teachers was important.

Well ... first of all, music is such a passion to me that I just can't stop sharing it and especially when it comes to uh a, let's say a community or a group, or even just a single individual, that just has no exposure to certain aspects of that passion of music. So for example, you mentioned, my, my tradition, my culture um, in the music, the music from my country. Well... I feel like I have the role of an ambassador in terms of transmitting and passing along these traditions to other cultures... for them to just get a hint of, at least if possible, a hint of, of what it represents and what the values are and what... or specifically music words... what genres and what instruments and what the music is about. All of

that. I feel that to get that it's important for them to get that closeness to other foreign cultures. Um, sharing what I know musically, it's just what gears, it what drives my passion of teaching - because that's the moment when you can successfully pass the information of you know, this one element...*Boom*, to another person and when the student gets it that is such a reward of course, for the teachers but for the student because they already, they know something that they can use. They have knowledge that that they probably could not have gotten (at least they have not at that point). (playback interview transcription Venegas, lines 65-80)

This type of identity is not only recognized through the Fundamentals faculty contributions, but also through other members and families of ESO. It is not uncommon to see faculty or members of families volunteer to share about their culture to help students and faculty enhance the meaning of a repertoire song.

For example, as a large percentage of ESO's student population is Latino, the conductors chose to focus their orchestral repertoire this quarter on songs in the style of tango, cha cha, mambo, and beguine. A small Mariachi ensemble was also created for students in a piece called "Mariachi Mash-Up," which was arranged by an Alegria conductor. Many students acted as experts in the learning process and teachers mentioned how they observed students displaying a sense of pride and identity when they spoke to peers and teachers about their cultures and how they had seen many of the dances performed. At the concert, it was also noted how students, teachers, and families enjoyed the energy and for some, familiarity in the songs, as was seen through

body language such as smiles, tapping of feet, and head swaying, and tremendous applause after each song.

Identity was also prevalent in the younger faculty community of ESO who often have a keen sense of relating to students in our program. Kayla mentioned in an interview how her identity as a younger member of the faculty creates a bond that is not often created between older faculty and young students.

I think most students have an idea of adults (and probably especially music teachers) as being dismissive of their favorite music -- what they hear on the radio or at home -- as not as valuable as what we listen to, be it classical music or classic rock. Since I'm younger and weirdly passionate about the value inherent in all music, including pop, hip-hop, etc., it's an easy way for me to relate to them on a different level and help legitimize their interests. Second, many of the same rules for writing a catchy tune apply to both popular and classical music, so in my composition class, it's more helpful and convincing if I can use examples they're already familiar with and that they agree is interesting. Third, I think it's important that they see a young person who enjoys popular AND classical music, just to help eliminate the division so many of us envision between those styles of music. Pop music can be musically challenging and classical music can be cool! (playback interview transcription Kayla, lines 63-74)

The closeness Kayla described with her students was evident in classroom observations. The connections that students were able to make with their music in group conversations seemed to flow naturally as they discussed aspects of the musical score.

Expectations. The common theme that presented itself throughout data collection was the exceedingly high expectations that were mutually shared across all members of ESO. While uncertainty that parents truly understand the magnitude of the ESO experience on their child's education exists, the expectations parents have of the program is significant as they continue to pick their students up every day from the program, show up at concerts, and express gratitude to their teachers daily. This is specifically referenced by Participant 4's survey response, stating how, "the simple act of thanking me each day as they pick up their children is a joy to experience" (survey participant 4, lines 58-59).

It was also communicated in the Executive Director's interview, and the Leadership meeting, how high expectations are set for every member of ESO and are the critical pillars of ESO. Because of these expectations set and the unconditional support given by administration, faculty members see themselves as valuable professionals who contribute to making ESO successful in a manner unlike any other profession they have ever experienced. As a result, students are also treated in this manner, as professionals, or as experts in their fields, which was evident not only through the cultural sharing of repertoire but also as student conductors. During an observation with Mike, director of Esperanza and Director of Teacher Support, it was evident that Mike held his student director to the highest of standards and as an expert, which included allowing the student to momentarily toil as a conductor on the podium.

Mike lets the student conductor take the podium to rehearse with the orchestra – nothing more mentioned verbally between Mike and the student conductor.

Once the group completes the first section that was falling apart, Mike asks the student conductor, “Is that tempo too slow? Is that what you want?”

(student shakes his head no **student acts as expert**)

You might die on a vine if you keep it that slow – Mike steps in and conducts side-by-side the student conductor and shows him how to get the orchestra to change their original direction. (observation Mike Esperanza full rehearsal, lines 89-96)

As quickly as Mike stepped in to assist the student conductor, he stepped out as quickly to allow the student conductor to learn from the experience and to continue building a bond between himself and the orchestra. There seemed to be a high level of trust between Mike and the student conductor, evidenced by allowing this student conductor to completely take over the rehearsal with several problematic areas still in place just days before the concert. As a follow up, Mike sat in the front row of the group as they performed during the concert, in case the student needed his assistance, but the student more than successfully conducted the piece, with a standing ovation to receive him at the end of the piece. This was also the case with another student conductor who conducted at the concert, who was given very similar, high expectations.

These high expectations were also observed in the smaller communities of musical practice as well. For example, Kayla, mentioned earlier regarding distressed collaboration in her young Alegria chamber ensemble, shared how her older group collaborated without question or little prompting. While this trio originally started out in different chamber ensembles, she explained how they came to her with the expectation that they would be the best group. According to Kayla, this group was

already self-motivated and set themselves up with high expectations the moment they came to her this semester, which was also evident through my observation.

Kayla not only arranged a piece that met the musical needs of her advanced students and was popular in the student's culture group, but also expected the group to complete the editing of the musical score. She asked her students to edit parts to make them more playable, cut out parts that were not musically interesting, decide who plays each divisi part, and decide who will play each solo. There was a definite expectation that they would accomplish these tasks. These students used musical vocabulary at a much higher level than most students at ESO because they were commonly spoken in her rehearsal and reinforced during full rehearsals.

Beth, the Nueva fundamentals teachers, spoke about expectations being set at the beginning of the school year; this was also expressed from several other fundamentals teachers. Beth mentioned in an interview how her students "set up the expectations and boy, you should have seen the list they had for everybody to do - much more than the what I would have done! So, that idea of empowering them so that they believe it's theirs - their situation, their education..." (Nueva teacher interview, lines 54-57). Just as administration empowers teachers to take charge of their classes and rehearsals, the same empowerment was evident in how students took charge of their learning environment.

Summary of Events

As indicated through numerous surveys, interview, observations, along with the ESO website and handbook, members of ESO indeed recognize, foster, and modify practices to enrich the social and musical needs of students in a smaller non-

performance setting, and improve students' successes while performing in a full orchestra ensemble. As mentioned at the start of this chapter, researcher questions changed from *if* to *how do* ESO members achieve this mission. While this data has presented areas that still need to be addressed, they are also evidence that change is possible and that occur in an environment where negotiation and toil is an accepted form of collaboration. This program seeks to embolden its members through music and community and provides an environment of trust that extends beyond the confines of its building. The persistence, energy, self-discipline, collaboration, and unconditioned support for every ESO member was observed by me and stands true to ESO's motto, "Transforming Lives Through Music." While this phenomenon of transforming lives cannot necessarily be grasped or explained in this short dissertation, it has been documented in regard to multiple teachers' perspectives. It is the author's hope to share these data and research, discover other communities of musical practice in and out of the public school music setting, and to nurture these communities in hopes to provide future models to be replicated.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The goal of this study was to determine how faculty and volunteers of ESO recognize, foster, and modify practices to enrich the social and musical needs of students in a smaller non-performance setting. ESO's program structure and design, logistical and managerial configuration, current music pedagogies, and evolution of such pedagogies, were analyzed to determine *mutual engagement*, *joint enterprise*, and if a *shared repertoire* exists (Wenger 1998). These examples of community also help solidify answers to original research questions, which will be specifically addressed in this chapter. As suggested by Creswell (2013) regarding social constructivism, I listened intently to participants and critically observed their actions in an attempt to interpret participants' understanding of a situation. Data were collected using multiple methods and triangulated over the course of two months during the spring 2017 El Sistema Oklahoma program session. This included an open-ended anonymous survey responded to by 12 participants, 13 class/rehearsal observations by the investigator, three initial semi-structured interviews, one email interview, three audio recordings and transcriptions of faculty meetings, two transcriptions of semi-professional videos featuring the fundamentals team, and six playback videos with interviews capturing teachers' perspectives and pedagogies in the smaller communities of practice within the larger group orchestral setting. All participants were given the assurance that data collected were used for the purpose of research and that their identities would remain confidential or masked as pseudonyms unless they gave the investigator written permission to use their names. The ESO Handbook and website also assisted in triangulation of the data (Ely et al. 1991; Merriam 1988).

I engaged in peer review and debriefing by asking two third-party volunteers to oversee the research process (Ely, M., Anzul, M., Friedman, T., Garner, D., & Steinmetz, A. C., 1991; Merriam 1988). Peer reviewers and debriefing volunteers included the Executive Director of ESO and another person who had no affiliation with ESO directly.

Overview of this Chapter

As a more detailed analysis of data was presented in the preceding chapters, the remainder of this chapter will first present overall conclusions discovered through data collection and analysis. Second, I will provide suggestions for future research and analysis. Finally, I hope to inspire current educators to discover other communities of musical practice in and out of the public school music setting, thereby nurturing these communities in hope of providing future models to be replicated.

Conclusions

While Wenger's (1998) communities of practice guided my data collection, it was evident early in the data collection that all three dimensions of community existed in ESO's program as specifically mentioned in Chapter 4. Being aware of the existence of all three dimensions early in the collection process allowed me to delve deeper into *how* the social processes of musical learning communities were conceptualized and fostered.

Mutual engagement. ESO's program structure and design were analyzed to determine mutual engagement. Special attention was given to the original logistical and managerial structures of ESO, and how these structures were adjusted in order to accommodate continuous growth of the program. Both the Executive Director of ESO

and Director of Teacher Support generated and nurtured a structured foundation of trust, designed to enable all of ESO's faculty members to explore the unfamiliar and to enter open-mindedly into unexplored situations. Each faculty is respected for his or her values and commitment to furthering the common interest. Through participation, faculty members learned how to establish norms in a shared learning environment and to take on roles necessary to effectively embracing the subject matter. This was evident through numerous discussions during faculty meetings, informal meetings, and among faculty in various configurations of program areas. This cross-collaboration of meetings not only gave members opportunities to build stronger relationships across a platform of differing mindsets, but also allowed faculty the chance to explore areas needing more attention, which might not have been recognized before the new configuration of collaboration occurred. These meetings encouraged teachers to examine more closely the functionality of each area of the program, with an opportunity to focus on *why* we are teaching students *what* we teach them. This echoes Elliot's (2012) belief that students and faculty bring varying interpretations of music into the classroom.

According to ongoing conversations with the Director of Teacher Support, teachers, and my own observations, each member's role changed frequently from being the disseminator of instruction to being the facilitator of learning. It is through this social complexity of roles and engagement in the program's mission that ESO's unique sense of identity was created. The same social complexity and identity held true among the students in the sense that the mission was to promote student empowerment, to becoming self-motivated learning musicians. These interwoven relationships of

complexity, discovered within mutual engagement, are what bind ESO together. It is my belief that ESO administration encourages these relationships and does its best to include all stakeholders' opinions and concerns whenever possible.

Joint enterprise. By nurturing these interwoven relationships, ESO analyzed the depth of each learning experience from various aspects, refined practices, and moved forward together as a musical family. From my experience and participation at ESO, I observed that this refining and moving forward as a community typically occurred immediately following a concert, whether successful or unsuccessful, when members continued learning and building on previous schemata. Rather than ignoring mistakes, such as members not pulling their weight or glossing over a less-than-average performance, administration quickly identified problematic areas, and faculty were solicited for input toward improvement the day after the concert. Through ongoing email collaboration and casual conversations at ESO, members were encouraged to offer suggestions or advice on improvements for the next concert. While members did not always agree, arguments were not considered inappropriate if they occurred between other members in a respectful manner. This non-conformity was part of the negotiated space ESO continues to provide and encourage.

It must be noted, however, that most, if not every member who attended the most recent concert on February 28, 2017, considered the program to be a huge success in repertoire performance, logistics, venue, and overall audience reaction. This was noted through numerous positive email conversations, positive feedback verbalized by parents to faculty members, and comments overheard by foundation members and other community supporters.

Current music pedagogies used during small and large group instruction were identified and examined to determine joint enterprise, with special attention given to how fundamentals classes, guided practice, and other communities of musical practice evolved over time. Chapter 4 provided personal accounts of how teachers modified their pedagogies to meet the needs of their students. Many teachers observed and interviewed in this research had never taught young students in a public school setting but were able to create vibrant lesson plans while adding a flair of their own personalities with abundant guidance and encouragement from other members of the program. Sam's example of using an imaginary bulldog, discussed in Chapter 4 (LTA and conductors meeting transcription, lines 63-87), to help a younger student with posture and playing her instrument correctly, was a prime example of a high school teacher whose impromptu modification of pedagogy was playful, chancy, and successful. Sam's willingness to try new pedagogy based on the students' needs was evident, as well as evidence of pedagogy evolving on a daily basis. Not only did Sam help the student musically by correcting the student's posture, he also empowered the student socially by acknowledging her success. The student gained confidence and shared this success with her peers on her newly created Wall of Fame in the classroom. From this data, it is my belief that ESO has evolved structurally to fit the demographic changes and educational needs of its student population.

Shared repertoire. The assessments of events, additions to the program because of outcomes, and evolution of new ideas and practices contributed by all members and stakeholders in ESO were the results of well-established interpretations of ways to better the community and program. According to Bolman & Deal (1991), to be

effective, both smaller units and larger organization must constantly address how members should divide responsibilities across different roles and how they should integrate diverse activities into a unified effort (p. 100). The continuous suggestions and yearly additions of communities of musical practice (chamber ensembles, sectionals, new performance opportunities, etc.), also with social communities (homework time, gym time, etc.), are indicators that ESO continuously modified its practice in the ways in which faculty members function within the larger group. These changes were made in order to foster both the demographic and educational needs of its students.

While data analysis recognized a few issues of concern, such as collaboration not yet being equally constructive across all teams of the program, and the inability to track students who have left ESO, it was evident that the forward progress of moving towards goals addressed these issues. Tremendous changes to structure and mission have occurred over the last five years. How ESO looked at its inception is significantly different compared to how ESO currently exists, and the administration understands that ESO will not look the same in a year from now. Naturally, faculty members move on to different professions, students leave the program for various reasons, and new students continue to enter the program. Due to these factors, support from the community needs to continue playing a significant role in the ESO program, which includes discovering more fruitful ways to include families in this process. Financially, as Robyn mentioned in Chapter 4, if ESO does not continue to discover new and creative ways to share the talents of ESO within the greater community, supporters will not know to, or know how to, support the ESO program. Regardless of these issues, it is my overall belief that

ESO's current music program has not only successfully recognized and fostered smaller music communities within their pedagogies and the larger music program.

Future Research

Delimitations of this research included choosing ESO because I am currently employed by ESO and have been employed by ESO for nearly three years. Ease of access to the music program, faculty, and a supportive administration allowed me to do research without the need for a "gatekeeper" to help explain the collection of data (Creswell, 2013, p. 94). ESO is also closely linked to Oklahoma City University and employs several college students, which was interesting to me as I am looking forward to working as a professor of music education in a university setting in the near future. While participant bias was mentioned from the onset of this dissertation, I utilized anonymous surveys, inserted direct quotes from transcriptions, and solicited third-party disinterested readers, to bracket myself out of the data as much as possible and minimize the effects of bias on the research.

Limitations of the research included only having a short timeframe to gather data at ESO, due to my position as a teacher and active member of the leadership team. While ESO buses students from seven elementary schools and two high schools, only a fraction of OKC's students are represented in this study. Lastly, because funding for the ESO program is supported by numerous private and local organizations that support the arts, this program is not completely replicable in a public school setting.

This research primarily focused on ESO teachers and administration. My future study will focus on students' and their families' perceptions of the smaller communities of musical practice. This student focus will present another side to the research, along

with the musical and social perceptions of effectiveness among students and their families. While ESO's overall music program is successful as a funded organization, implementing an ESO program contained within a public school setting is not feasible. However, replicating flexible teaching strategies, creative, evolving pedagogies, supportive administration, and productive collaboration settings, discovered throughout ESO's smaller communities of musical practice, are possible goals that justify further research.

Because ESO is *El Sistema inspired* and is not solely based on the El Sistema program originally formed in Venezuela, further research is necessary to analyze how other El Sistema inspired programs function in various demographic settings. While ESO serves a large underserved and disadvantaged student population in the Oklahoma City area, demographic and educational needs in other areas of the United States vary and these differences will affect the configuration and make-up of ESO's smaller communities of musical practice. A similar framework, such as Wenger's Communities of Practice, could be utilized to help identify and determine whether communities of musical practice exist, and to help in the organization of data collection. Discovering similarities and differences, as well as successes and struggles among the various El Sistema programs, could prove helpful in starting conversations on the effectiveness of these specialized music programs.

ESO has provided evidence of positive perceptions of structure, community, identity, collaboration and expectations. Other possible research and discussions in music education include how music teachers perceive their roles within their school environment and their pedagogy within the K-12 curriculum. In current research and

manuscript in preparation by Ciorba and Garner, participants indicated positive self-perceptions regarding their teaching abilities, leadership qualities, and ability to provide a non-threatening, non-oppressive learning environment. However, participants were less confident about communicating goals, expectations, vision, mission, and current research with parents, administration, and the rest of the educational community. Further research could examine why these goals and expectations were not being communicated, and explore ways to bridge this gap in communication. ESO is a model of how administration fills this gap by empowering faculty to continuously collaborate with all stakeholders.

An interesting caveat, not addressed within this dissertation specifically, was the number of millennial teachers who mentioned authority serving as a vice rather than a leader who helps facilitate learning. Numerous surveys and interview transcriptions revealed millennial teachers describing music teachers, particularly older teachers, being critical or dismissive of students' musical performance or being unwilling to share control of the music classroom. Whether this was a statement in reaction to adults in general, or only music teachers, was unclear. However, each of the millennial teachers had successful relationships with their students. As mentioned earlier, through observations of classes or rehearsals, while some of classes appeared semi-chaotic, the focus of the lesson was existent. Further study could explore these less formal, collaborative environments, as new teachers bring fresh ideas to the teaching field. I believe that older educators must assist younger teachers in finding a balance between the teacher co-existing within a class and the teacher-to-apprentice style of learning. As discussed in Chapter 2, Green's (2005) study indicated that while many students

expressed displeasure with the more formal structure of the second activity, they nevertheless eventually took ownership of the piece and became excited about playing more challenging styles of music.

Another area to consider for further research lies in the vertical alignment of K-12 music curricula. While ESO does not subscribe to a particular pedagogical approach, it was evident from data presented in this dissertation that implementation of a common musical language has become more desirable. Evidence of success with a common language was observed in guided practice (observation Nathan guided practice, lines 58-59) as a student helped another student to identify notes through Solfege. This hit-and-miss type of musical language has occurred in many public school music programs. For example, while many schools have successfully implemented the Kodály approach in elementary settings, students who moved into the district's middle school program after experiencing Kodály, often had to learn a new language or pedagogy to continue growing and learning in their music classes. Some of this could be remedied through district vertical alignment, if collaboration time could be created into the yearly schedule to include all K-12 district music teachers. If we expect our students to communicate using a vocabulary that is understood across disciplines, we must first be willing to decide on a framework that starts at the beginning of our student's music education that can remain with them as they continue to grow as musicians throughout their formative years.

A Recommendation to Music Educators

Finally, we must consider that we are not preparing our college students for an ever-changing teaching environment. While an example was provided regarding

various millennials' teaching style, I encourage educators to closely examine music teacher preparation programs to determine what elements of the program are effective. The examination of music teacher preparation programs requires researchers to work directly with teachers in the field as experts, creating collaborative spaces to discuss all aspects of the profession (the good, the bad, and the ugly), and to continue ongoing collaboration to encourage suggestions and guidance from all sides of the spectrum regarding the direction of our field of music education.

I am not proposing to lessen the importance of the more formal structures of pedagogy currently taught in higher education; I am, however, suggesting that there is a deeper level of connection that teachers can achieve with their music students.

Allowing music from a student's culture group as part of the music curriculum not only lessens the grip of teacher-to-apprentice style of learning, but also allows students to create music they identify with and more closely understand. This will allow students to build on schemas already learned rather than co-existing side by side with another music language until they are able to make connections.

This student-centered approach is rarely addressed or taught in our current college classes. This type of *informal music* is more commonly taught in community afterschool programs or self-taught in music spaces created by the students themselves in their garages or living rooms. Unless college students have personally created music in garage band type settings or individually discovered ways to create music non-traditionally, they are unlikely to try this style of teaching in the classroom without prior support, as the new approach can be daunting and therefore be left out of the teaching setting altogether. At the very least, college students taught through a classical

approach should be afforded the opportunity to explore using an informal learning process and thereby gather tips along the way to offer future generations of students the opportunity to create music in an informal setting.

It is my belief that we should offer students and teachers the option of exploring and discovering the benefits of small communities of musical practice. As seen in this dissertation, success can quickly be identified in smaller communities of practice such as the chamber ensembles in ESO, and where students are not continuously fighting for the spotlight in their sections. Rather, students are all required to play their best at all times to represent their instrument.

ESO is a model of a music program that is open to variety, adaptation, and modification to meet the changing needs of music students in the twenty-first century in a meaningful and purposeful manner. I encourage music educators within the United States to contemplate the results of this study and to closely examine other music communities experiencing similar results. Numerous opportunities exist to belong to a choir or band in school, but it is the smaller, more specialized music groups that tend to explore music more fully, and thereby allow for growth in a more profound way. Discovering the diverse values and philosophies found within these smaller communities of musical practice would allow for extended reflection of how these small musical communities function to strengthen the overall worth of the larger group, and provide a framework of implementation. The goal of this research is to provide a framework for implementation of effective mechanisms to help facilitate empowerment and self-efficacy within smaller communities of musical practice.

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Appendix A

Letter of Support

Letter of Support

1/13/2017

El Sistema OKC
St. Luke's United Methodist Church
222 NW 15th Street
OKC, OK 73103

RE: IRB Letter of Support
Lani Aloha Garner

Dear Institutional Review Board Chair and Members:

I am writing this letter of support for one of our colleagues, Lani Aloha Garner. It is our intention to support research Ms. Garner's research (described below).

Research Overview:

1. Project Summary:
Research will be devoted to documenting the musical process found within El Sistema OKC's communities of practice and identifying how these communities provide young learners with opportunities to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences in cultures, values, and individual beliefs within the El Sistema OKC ensemble-based music organization.
2. Research and Data Collection:
During the remaining 2017 school year, multiple methods of investigation will be used to gather data, such as video and audio recordings, interviews, surveys, and opportunities for teachers to comment on playback video of a previous lesson taught. From this research, data analysis will focus on the relations or gaps between the El Sistema OKC pedagogies and the students' cultural understandings. Participants in the program include approximately 20 teachers and 5 teacher assistants, the Executive Director, Director of Teacher Support, Site Coordinator, and the primary investigator as a participant observer.
3. Sites for Research:
 - a. Trinity Baptist Church (Main Site)
1329 NW 23rd Street
OKC, OK 73106
 - b. St. Luke's United Methodist Church (Faculty Meetings/Professional Development)
222 NW 15th Street
OKC, OK 73103
 - c. Oklahoma City University (Faculty Meetings/Professional Development)
2501 N Blackwelder
OKC, OK 73106

Sincerely,

Robyn Hilger
Executive Director, El Sistema Oklahoma

Appendix B
Interview Protocols

Executive Director Interview Protocol

(Semi-structured)

Time and Date of Interview:

Place:

Interviewee: Executive Director

Demographic Information:

Name:

Number of instruments played:

Years of teaching:

Questions:

1. What qualities or traits best describe the culture of ESO?
2. Did your musical background and upbringing influence your choice to spearhead ESO? And if so, how?
3. Why did you choose the OKC area as a location to serve students musically?
4. Is it important for you to involve all or a large percentage of the stakeholders of the program when making decisions? Why or why not?
5. As an administrator, do you feel it is important to share the leadership responsibility across your staff and faculty? Why or why not?
6. ESO has numerous small groups of musical practices, including chamber ensembles, guided practice, fundamentals classes, In-ovation's core courses and electives, G.R.O.U.P, and several others. How did these groups get started and have they evolved or changed since the inception of ESO?

Video Playback Interview Protocol

(Semi-structured)

Name:

Date:

Place of Interview:

Setting:

Any perceptions, explanations regarding the recorded lesson:

Mutual engagement (members engage in activities together, share ideas through discussions – create a unique social identity – value in group)

1. Is it important to make your students feel valued in your class/group? If so, how do you do this and why?
2. Does your group have a unique identity?
3. Do you share your musical ideas and interests with your students? Do students share their musical interests with you?

Joint enterprise (members develop new ways to further their field of interest within the group)

4. Do you provide opportunities for students to learn more than just the song (or instrument technique) you are teaching? If yes, how?
5. Give examples of ways you hold students accountable for their learning?

Shared repertoire (members frequently converse and assess what is working or not working within the groups' activities and adjust accordingly. Through evaluation, often

in the form of casual conversations addressing common concerns or tools for success, a repertoire of resources is developed.)

6. Do you have conversations with your students about what's working or what's not working in your music class/group? Do you adjust your lessons, if something is not working well? If yes, can you give an example?
7. Do you feel your students have a voice in the direction of your music instruction?

Email Interview Protocol

(Semi-structured)

DATE: March 11, 2017

TIME: 11:16 PM

PLACE: Email correspondence

INTERVIEWEE: Kristen

1. I enjoyed seeing your “All About Me” wall and sticker board. It is obviously important to make your students feel valued in your class/group? How do you accomplish this and is it important?
2. Does your group have a unique identity? Do they identify as “the flutes” or other name?
3. I didn’t know you liked to sing until I observed G.R.O.U.P! Do you share your musical ideas and interests with all your students? If so, how? Do students share their musical interests with you?
4. You allowed your students to work on areas that were tripping them up or felt they needed addressing individually during guided practice. Do you provide opportunities for students to learn more than just the song (or instrument technique) you are teaching? If yes, how?
5. Such as your sticker board, are there other examples of ways you hold students accountable for their learning?
6. Do you have conversations with your students about what’s working or what’s not working in your music class/group? Do you adjust your lessons, if something is not working well? If yes, can you give an example?

7. Do you feel your students have a voice in the direction of your music instruction?

Alegria and Esperanza Fundamentals Teacher Interview Protocol

(Semi-structured)

DATE: Wednesday, February 15, 2017

TIME: 5:10 PM

PLACE: 3rd Floor, ESO

INTERVIEWEES: Susan and Alex

(Start of Observation)

1. How do teachers from the ESO music program recognize and foster smaller student music communities within their pedagogies and the larger music program?

- What does your class focus on specifically?
- How does your class function within the larger ESO music program? Do you feel others see your class as an important part of ESO? How and why?

2. How do ESO music communities evolve due to changes in organization structure, demographic changes, and the educational needs of the students?)

- Have you had to change the way you teach your group due to any needs your students might have? If so why and how?
- Is it important to keep changing your style or to stay the same?

3. How does the ESO administration encourage inclusion of all of the program's stakeholder's decision-making and action?

- Do Robyn and Mike (administration) include you in decision-making or mission of the program? If so, how?

- Is there anything they could do to help (support) you with classroom issues?
Any support mechanisms?
- How do you communicate with your LTA? Where do the conductors fit in here?
- Is the current Curriculum Map working? If so, how? If not, do you have suggestions to fix it?

Appendix C

Faculty or Staff Anonymous Open-Ended Online Survey Protocol

Faculty or Staff Anonymous Open-Ended Online Survey Protocol

(Survey Monkey Data Collection Questions)

1. Please type your position at El Sistema Oklahoma. (Administrator, teacher, teaching assistant, or volunteer)
2. How long have you taught music and in what capacity? (i.e. 3 years, elementary music or 2nd year college student – El Sistema Oklahoma experience only, etc.)
3. As a teacher, leader, or staff member, do you feel El Sistema Oklahoma is a place where you can collaborate with others who share a passion for music? If so, how does this fit in the overall program structure?
4. Does your teaching or leadership impact the overall goal of a shared learning environment? (i.e. How do you support students in learning a musical repertoire or executive skills? Do you feel you contribute to the overall success of the program?)
5. How has your music pedagogy/program structure changed in regards to your needs or the needs of your students? Can you provide specific examples?
6. Does the El Sistema Oklahoma ensemble-based music organization provide an environment to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences in cultures, values, and individual beliefs? Do students, teachers, and parents feel accountability towards the success of the program? If so, how and why?
7. How have students benefitted from their experience in the El Sistema Oklahoma program? What are possible future benefits from having been in a program such as this?

8. Do you consider El Sistema Oklahoma's music program unique? Is there a common direction or development of shared understandings that improves the program experience for all members?
9. Are small music communities (i.e. creative/musicianship classes, guided practice, chamber ensembles, etc.) within the larger group important to the overall success of El Sistema Oklahoma?
10. How does the current program gather and consider data, new knowledge, and others' perspectives when planning objectives and goals for student enrichment?
How is success determined?

Appendix D

Observation Protocol

Observation Protocol

Time and Date of Observation:

Location:

Class or small group being observed:

Participants:

Possible elements affecting interactions (e.g., special events, weather):

Sketch of space:

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes

Descriptive Notes (continued)	Reflective Notes (continued)

Appendix E

Administration and Teacher Interview

1 **Executive Director Interview**

2 DATE: February 17, 2017

3

4 TIME: 2:30 PM

5

6 PLACE: ESO Main Hall

7

8 INTERVIEWEE: Robyn (executive director of ESO)

9

10 (Start of Interview)

11 Lani: Ok, this is Robyn and I'm just going to ask a few questions about administration
12 and ESO uh, so the first question is what qualities or traits best describe the culture of
13 ESO.

14

15 Robyn: (*Sigh*) are you talking about internally? (*Looks to me and I'm nodding*) OK.
16 Internally, so I think that there is a family spirit of ESO and, you know a lot of people
17 say team and a lot of people say that kind of stuff but I think when you say family that
18 indicates first a couple of things.

19

20 Robyn: Number one with your family, you get irritated at each other and you don't
21 always like each other all the time. You've got the crazy uncle (Lani: laugh) right?
22 (Lani: yeah) All these things and yet you still invite them to Thanksgiving (Lani: um
23 hum). Uh, you never doubt sort of fundamentally where you stand. We're a family.
24 Right? That what, we're not always going in the same direction or agree about how
25 we're going to get there. Um, I think that uh, all, all the people in our family, I think
26 that we fight like brothers and sisters. I think we love each other like brothers and
27 sisters. (Lani: sure) And I think that's different than a team, which kind of indicates uh,
28 that at some point that we leave and we go on about the rest of our business. I don't
29 think it's too far fetched for me to say that the spirit or the work we do sort of permeates
30 kind of all these other areas of our lives outside of the building. And that's what you do
31 with your family as well. You carry your family with you no matter what environment
32 you're in. (Lani: Oh my gosh, that's for sure)

33

34 Lani: Well, we'll talk about like teams and groups here in a second. (Robyn: ok) But
35 how did your musical background and upbringing-, upbringing influence your choice to
36 spearhead ESO (Robyn: uhhh)...if it did.

37

38 Robyn: El Sistema chose me (Lani: I like that). Uh, yeah so I know, I'm accidentally,
39 I'm an accidental executive director. So, it's still kind of startling to me that I'm not a
40 teacher everyday. It feels weird. I haven't been a teacher now more than 15 years.
41 Uh...

42

43 Lani: How long did you teach? (Robyn: almost 10 years) And what was, what did you
44 teach? (Robyn: band and strings, middle school band and strings, 6th, 7th and 8th
45 grade)

46
47 Robyn: The kids are just now getting to my zone. Right? Like, A little 3rd grader, 4th
48 graders, sometimes I'm like (Lani: *laughing*) -babies, dudes - you guys got to get away
49 from me. I'm like 6th graders, 7th graders, yeah! Yeah, like we're finally there. Uh,
50 um. So, I had accidentally gone to work with the Foundation for Oklahoma City Public
51 Schools. You know, I had been teaching and doing all that when I was out traveling as
52 the teacher of the year. I met a lot of community members and I spent a lot of time in
53 the community. And so I found that I had this kind of mixed skill set of, of translating.
54 Kind of standing between these two worlds: the external community and the world of
55 public education. Um, underserved populations of students and those kinds of things
56 and able to navigate between those two worlds. I had a friend who worked at the
57 foundation, and she said oh, we know who we're going to hire for opening. I was like,
58 awww that's so great who are you going to hire and she's like uh, you! I was like (Lani:
59 *laugh*), like I'm not leaving my school. She just kind of kept after me and it was really
60 my principal that encouraged me, uh, and so you know, I didn't know what I was doing
61 when I went to the program's officer. Um, but what I did know was that I had a vision
62 for how to help kids and how to help teachers and what that would...um...mean. So I
63 kind of had to give up what it meant to have my own classroom to kind of think about
64 what I could do from an advoc- being an advocate and a champion for kids for like
65 other people's classrooms (Lani: Yeah, right that makes sense). So I spent a lot of time
66 doing that and then Mark Parker called me. And uh, February of 2013, and its like can
67 we have lunch? And when Mark calls and says can we have lunch (Lani: you go) you
68 go to lunch!

69
70 Robyn: And Mark said we have this idea...El Sistema. He actually wanted to hire me to
71 OCU and I wouldn't go. Um, I didn't feel like my work was done at the foundation and
72 I told him that. I said my work's not done. I've got my hands in too many projects, but
73 I'll ask them to be your partner. I'm really interested in what your doing and what you
74 want to do. Um, and we won't ask them for money. What we'll say is their partnership,
75 is, um, me. So I'll then I'll get my, basically, my bosses blessing to work on your
76 project as much as I want as part of my current job and then I can spend time working
77 on this whole crazy idea of El Sistema. So that's how I started. I started as a partner at
78 the table.

79
80 Lani: So, that's why you have a, an office at OCU? (Robyn: Yeah, yeah) Ok, I was
81 wondering. How the connection was there.

82
83 Robyn: So, um, you know. That's, uh, and then uh, uh, we, I mean we had an executive
84 director at that time. He had come from Boston. He was here for a year, um, he was
85 gone by December the first year. So he started our first class of kids in 2013 and by
86 December he was gone. Mike Raiber, and Laura and I were from the original core team
87 um, and Mike and I begged the board to not hire an executive director and we said,
88 we're holding down the fort. We've been holding down the fort. This is too traumatic,

89 like just let us get through the spring. We'll pull extra weight if we have to but don't
90 hire somebody on top of us. Like, please do not. So, ok, ok, and the board's like well
91 we'll see, we'll see how you guys are doing and whatever and Mike and I were like,
92 phhh, whatever. We're going to be fine. So, then at spring break and Kathy Busey
93 called me and said can we go to lunch? I said well sure, you know, I'm a partner. Can
94 we go to lunch? She says so we're going to hire an executive great. I said *ohhh, that's*
95 *great who have you found?* She said um, it's you. *Laugh-* and I'm thinking to myself,
96 wait a second. I was like I don't how to be an executive director. She was like, you
97 have been. She said you have been being the executive director. Um, at that time, the
98 foundation was going through a board change and I could sense that there was a change
99 in tide about where the board was going to focus - the kind of support that they wanted
100 to give to Oklahoma Public Schools. And I knew that I did not want to go down the
101 path that they were on. I didn't begrudge them their path. I just didn't want to be on
102 that path with them.

103

104 Robyn: Um, I was actually in line to be the principal at Edgemere. (Lani: really?) And,
105 yeah, and to open the community school. And so, I really thought that's what I would
106 um, be doing and yet when you like, you stop ignoring messages that are coming to you
107 and you start saying like, ok...I'm really scared but I hear the message, um then like
108 great things happen. (Lani: yeah) And that's why I ended up here.

109

110 Lani: Ok, and you've talked about how you worked together with your core group. Let's
111 kind of move forward to where we are right now and one of the big questions I have for
112 people with large organizations is...what was, is it important to involve everyone, all
113 stakeholders in the program in decision-making? Why, why not?

114

115 Robyn: Um, this is going to be kind of a strange answer. So the answer is yes, and no.
116 Uh, if there is no wiggle room for flexibility, you don't ask people their opinion.
117 Because when you ask people for their opinion, there is an expectation that you are
118 going to act on that or that they'll have some sort of influence. So I would hope that
119 what the faculty here and people who work with me see as when there's room for
120 opportunity to influence, I ask. What should we do? How should we do it? What are
121 all the opportunities on the table? Um, and if there is something that's sort of
122 uncompromis-able, I just tell it how it is, like this is the way its going to be. We're
123 going to have to deal with and that's it. So yes, and no um....

124

125 ...Because there are some decisions that are just predicated by the amount of money we
126 have to spend, the amount of time we have in the day - um, the limit to our, um
127 resources whether they're mental, physical, emotions capacities. Um, to be able to say
128 we can do this and we can't do this - it doesn't me its not important but you know, uh,
129 we.... you know, a guise of democracy. I think maybe that's what it is. It's not a
130 democracy all the time. It can't be. At some point you have to say, like, ok, we have to
131 make a decision. But I do think, that when the people who are most impacted by
132 whatever is going to happen are able to sort of toil. Um, that toil is important. It's often
133 painful. And you see the pain... That happens like, and I mean like, we see it here from
134 a personal accountability standpoint. Um, it's real easy if I can say well I didn't do what

135 I'm supposed be doing because you didn't tell me to do it. As opposed to me saying I
136 don't know why we don't have a solution for that? We delegated it to you a week ago -
137 laugh.

138

139 Lani: But you do a lot of that delegating and I guess that kind of continues the other side
140 of it that maybe, how, when you are able to give the leadership, you do. You give it to
141 us. There's no question about it (Robyn: yeah, I don't want it. Take it!) Yeah right?
142 (Robyn: I've got plenty of that on my plate) Yeah, how do delegate that...how do you
143 share that, how do you, I mean, it's there? I can, I've always felt that and I feel like we
144 have team that believes that, too.

145

146 Robyn: So, I'm a control freak by nature uh, and a micromanager by nature. Probably,
147 the person that the most is Laura, so I take full.... AND part of the issue with that is
148 because I used be a program's officer. (Lani: ahhhh, ok) So, I used to be a program's
149 officer Right? (Lani: yeah) And actually that's the work I enjoy the most. This...the
150 setting up the chairs, the being with the teachers that, copies, all of those things. This is
151 much more enjoyable work to me than the budget, the finance meeting, the personal
152 issues, the school schedules, tracking down buses. It doesn't fill my cup. I'm a teacher
153 (Lani: heh heh heh) I'm a teacher - I see the necessity, I see the necessity. Right?
154 Those things don't happen, then doors close and the lights go off. Uh, but I can't live
155 that way (Lani: right, right) Um, and, and so, uh, I, I will say, I mean, Mike even said
156 that too. I will step into Mike's zone. Mike will say are you in charge of the faculty or
157 am I? -I don't know!!! I'm just trying to solve a problem here. Um, so we con-, we
158 constantly toil, sort of at the leadership level with that and some of it has to do because
159 I'm still growing as a leader, to, to function at the level that I need to function at. SO, I
160 think we have evidence that that is working, particularly in the last 12 months. I've
161 made strategic decisions about those things. I'm kind of constantly saying, what is it
162 only Robyn can do? What is it only Robyn can do? If it's not falling on that list...I'm
163 probably delegating it to somebody else who is, um, you know, who is the first point of
164 contact or deciding how can we delegate those things.

165

166 Robyn: But not everybody welcomes that level of engagement, because it's a lot of
167 work, right? You know this. You're the LTA. (Lani: Yep) It's a lot of work (Lani: But
168 I love that) Right? But you love it. Um, and you know some people want to be told
169 what to do. Not just come in the door and I want you to tell me what to do. Well, dude,
170 I don't have time what to do. If you need a job like that you're probably going to have
171 to go somewhere else - um, because we have to have just like super high functioning
172 people. So, some of it is by design, a lot of it happens in the strategy of hiring - so, who
173 we're putting on the team, who's staying on the team, what role they're in on the team.
174 Um, I think we've been successful in making changes in where we've needed to. That's
175 some of the hardest work. Right? That's what keeps me up at night.

176

177 Robyn: That's why you drink! (Lani: There's nothing wrong with that. Sorry) - and uh,
178 and then I say, ok you know, but those are the things that ultimately erode um,
179 relationships. Right? We've all been on a team were you're like, why the heck, why
180 won't the boss do anything about this? Right. (Lani: Oh yeah) We've all been there.

181 Why do people have to suffer because one person just causes holy hell? (Lani: It
182 happens it does, it definitely does happen). So I'm not sure that that's, um, that that's an
183 answer. I think people feel better when they've had a voice in the direction, in where
184 they're going. I think that we get a product that is so much better than we could achieve
185 at all in any level, because of the differences in perspectives in faculty. You know? It
186 causes a lot of discord ...um, and yet I really often feel just like the sum transition with
187 the Alegria orchestra. Are we - you know, we started split. We started ready to
188 rehearse, not ready to rehearse. Then we were all together. Then what are we going to
189 do? And even though we went through that toil, um, this like kind of moving.... oh,
190 Robin
191
192 ***A child needed into the building. ** (Lani: right)
193
194 Moving through those ideas was really important. But, you're it today? So fantastic so
195 Lani and I don't have to rush.
196
197 Lani: All right. So that's good because...
198
199 Robyn: So for example, just like this situation with High School. Mike and I are toiling
200 about this. We don't think we can keep the High Schoolers on campus five days a
201 week. (Lani: I know, we need to talk about that)
202
203 Robyn: Right, so Mike and I started talking about it two days ago. Right? So what does
204 it look like? (Lani: right) So what does it look like? What does that mean? That is
205 what I told Mike, uh,
206
207 Lani: This is the first time I've never had anybody.
208
209 Robyn: Yeah, but what does that look like? What does it mean? What does it mean for
210 their education? And I said I actually don't, I don't inherently have an opinion about
211 that. I mean, you know. I need to know what support you need from me. I need to
212 know how much it'll cost. I need to know why we were doing? We might roll it out.
213 But as far as like the direction as far as like the direction on what needs to happen with
214 that is not going to come from me. It's going to come from Mike, it's going to come
215 from you, it's going to come from Kristen. It's going to come from the high-schoolers
216 themselves and their families. Um, so we'll twirl with that (Lani: They have some ideas,
217 too). Yeah, we'll twirl with that a little bit later in the spring about what does it mean?
218 But, when we talk about kids getting older and being able to be with us. We don't want
219 to take them away from their school. I think, obviously, ultimately, somebody will say
220 here's what we think we want to do and why we want to do it. I might have some
221 questions about that...have you thought about what I? What if? What if? But you are
222 the one here with them. Kristen is the one here with them. Lani: uh hum) Not me
223 (Lani: right, right) Not me. I could guess what we should do. I have a sense. But
224 (Lani: and you probably didn't know until you walked in and saw some of the stuff we
225 were doing upstairs until you brought somebody (Robyn: yeah!) Where you saw the

226 group photo album and then you saw the things they are working on Noteflight and
227 those different things (Robin: yeah, yeah) So, it's hard to keep everybody informed.
228
229 Robyn: It is. It is. And there's no, again, only things that Robyn can do...what's
230 happening on Thursday in the High School classroom, (Lani: exactly) um, if it's an issue
231 it's probably going to be on my radar (Lani: well, I mean it's natural. It's normal) Right?
232
233 Lani: that actually, all of this leads into the last question for me, which is what I'm
234 doing... is studying smaller groups (the smaller groups, which is a big part of the larger
235 group). That's what I'm trying to figure out. Is it or is it not? I'm a little biased. That's
236 obvious in my report and dissertation.
237
238 Robyn: So when you talk about little groups you're talking about like, fundamentals...
239
240 Lani: ...guided practice, fundamentals, strings, chamber, small, um, group winds, larger
241 rehearsal. I mean all of those little factors that come into play. And I guess the
242 question is um, first of all how did they get started and then have they evolved or
243 changed or do you think they are a big part of the larger El Sistema?
244
245 Robyn: All the...how the organization (Lani, yes, the smaller groups) Ok, the smaller
246 groups. So, the um, the fundamentals sort of guiding uh, basis for the work of El
247 Sistema happens in the community of the large ensemble. SO, I think that's
248 fundamentally important to understand, that the fact that the orchestra is where
249 everything emanates from. It does not emanate out of woodwinds or strings or the
250 fundamentals team but the orchestra is the metaphor for the community and functioning
251 within the community. Now, with that being said, the only way to achieve the
252 cohesiveness within the community is to, you know, is to bring everybody else along.
253 So if you think about in a community where you have different culture. So maybe
254 we're going to say we have different cultures in our community and our cultures are
255 woodwind culture (Lani: sure, sure), brass culture, (Lani: exactly) fundamental cultures,
256 whatever it is that there is uh, there is individual work that keeps these cultures alive
257 and vibrant. And then there's a cultural competence that has to be developed between
258 everybody to function together as an orchestra. Right? (Lani: right) So, if you think
259 about from a community standpoint again, because that's sort of the fundamental vision
260 that um, and all of these cultures exist within the community. Uh, what does it mean
261 that violin players have 22 people in their culture and tubas have 2?
262
263 Lani: right, yeah - laugh
264
265 Robyn: Right? (Lani: exactly) So we have like, we, I mean in a, we, in the same thing
266 in the orchestra is the same thing that you see in a, a majority, in a minority community.
267 That you see along geographic lines where people are located. Right? So, uh, the brass
268 team spends very little, and the fundamentals teams spends very little time with the
269 woodwind team because you are geographically segregated within the building. It is
270 like that in a community as well (Lani: that's interesting). Isn't it? It very interesting
271 but it's...you sort of have to see it from a microcosm perspective and we also have all

272 the great the things we have in the community and we also have all the deficiencies.
273 That goes both ways. That's because we operate as community. So, the curricular
274 approach was always structured within the three prongs, uh, always. Now, how that,
275 how that has...there have been some changes and then other things that have not
276 changed. So, for example homogenous grouping has always been as the way it is now.
277 You meet an instrument with an instrument specialist. Now the number of days you
278 meet in an instrument has modified. So, for example, Esperanza now only gets
279 instrument only 2 days a week, right? (Lani: um hum) Algeria's 3 days a week, 4 days
280 a week. Nueva's, 4 days a week. So you see a change in the amount of time um, because
281 we did that with Esperanza knowing that now that they've got uh, lot's of executive skill
282 developed where they actually need to spend there time as an ensemble. And so that's
283 why it's structured that way.

284

285 Lani: So when you say the 3-prong, you're talking executive skills...

286

287 Robyn: Yep, so and uh, literacy - so right, (Lani: right) theory and aural skills (Lani:
288 theory...) and then the improvisation/composition, and the creativity strain. (Lani: ok, I
289 just want to make sure that that's...) Yeah.

290

291 Robyn: So, um...those things have always existed. So, from the fundamentals
292 perspectives, I think that we have tried several different things over the last 3 years.
293 This is probably uh; this year has been our best yet at the diversification. So, what is
294 the difference between the literacy strain and the creativity strain? Um, there's a lot of
295 crossover, but there are some things that are not a crossover. Um, I think that we have,
296 um, gotten, but that...they have always um, existed - so that's from a curricular approach
297 and that came from Mike. When Mike said, we're not going to teach instruments, we've
298 got to teach musicians, musicianship, and it happens in all of these. But if you have
299 great executive skills and you have a, a theory and aural skills background that you
300 actually become capable then, of the creative approach and then that, that is actually
301 where the magic sauce is, right?

302

303 Lani: Right.

304

305 Robyn: Right, which you see. Um, the chamber ensembles, so this is only the second
306 year for chamber ensembles. Mike and I have a history of creating chamber ensembles
307 within our programs. For the exact same reason, which is, it forces the executive skills.
308 So, you can hide in a class of 22 - you can't hide in a class of 4 - I always play second, I
309 never have to play a part by myself. I never... I always play in a group, and boom,
310 you're in a chamber ensemble and your life is different, right? So, it uh pushes the
311 envelope on that so that we don't get lazy. I'm always in the orchestra and I always only
312 pull about 70% of my weight. There's no hiding within the chamber ensemble. The
313 other thing about that is, is that other kids get to shine (phone ring tone). Kids who you
314 don't see as individual players have the opportunity to stand out in a very big way and
315 lead in a, in a really big way. (Lani: uh hum, uh hum) So, and that's why, you know,
316 uh...instructionally the chamber ensembles developed up. There's also an operational
317 perspective on that end...you can't travel with 100 piece orchestra everywhere (Lani:

318 *laugh* - although we'll try) So, um, when we need, we need to be visible in the
319 community, it's part of fundraising. People need to see the children who are not going
320 to cross the threshold into the door, come to the concert. So when we're able to play at
321 Rotary, we're able to play at St. Luke's, we're able to play the Wesley Festival, and
322 we're able to do these things, you know. Ultimately, it is uh, fundraising initiatives for
323 visibility overall. Because if you don't know that we're here, you don't have
324 opportunities to support us and at the end of the day, the mission only exists when it's
325 funded (Lani: I mean, right, exactly) at the end of the day. There's lots of people who
326 are proud of what they are doing and there's, there's lots of organizations who are
327 unfunded because people can't see.

328

329 Lani: So you take smaller groups, you bring them out into the community and in a way
330 you bring the community to the entire group as well.

331

332 Robyn: Um hum. Yeah, because you know when the string quartet is playing, I
333 typically always have the opportunity to say, I know you love these 4, but there's 216
334 more. (Lani: *laugh*) And people's eyes get really big, and I say, and you see how great
335 these 4 are? By the way there are 216 that are this great. And so you should come to
336 the site and see how kids are Successful at all levels. Um, and that that is the core work
337 of El Sistema. So it opens a conversation and people, but what we know is when people
338 cross the threshold, they have no idea what's going on here, right? And people just
339 stand around awestruck about um, the amount of work and the amount of time that's
340 happening here.

341

342 Lani: They don't necessarily see the behind the scenes

343

344 Robyn: Yeah, but when you talk about this large group, small group. The other thing is
345 the individualized um, approach, I think from my prospective that this individualized
346 approach um, permeates not only form the children, but also through the faculty. So,
347 often say, if we believe that about our kids, why wouldn't we believe that about our own
348 people. (Passionately) So...if somebody is sick or if somebody is having a trauma in
349 the their life, or if somebody something...but if that was a child they need grace and
350 they need help and they need all of these things and um, if we believe that about the
351 children, why would we not believe that about the adults in the building as well?

352

353 Robyn: So, there's this idea, how, if you only function as an orchestra, how do you
354 become an individual within the orchestra? So it happens in these layers right? It
355 happens in that everybody makes a difference in the orchestra. *...now I'm in my*
356 *instrument.* (Lani: uh hum) And *um, my individual, uh, contribution stands out,* right,
357 *even more in my instrument. Then I go to chamber ensemble and my individual*
358 *contribution stands out even more in my chamber ensemble. Then we get all the way to*
359 *down to, people know when I'm absent. My teachers call me by name.* Right? And
360 soooo it happen in this kind of like, I think almost (Lani: Yes!! *Laugh*) those Russian
361 dolls, you know? You open up the top, and you take one out and then you open up the
362 top, right? (Lani: Awwwww, like that. That's good) Right? That's kind of what we're
363 talking about. But it all fits back in, back in the thing. Conceptually, it's hard when you

364 think, be an individual, by becoming part of the group (Lani: That's awesome)....pause...
365 *One of the mysteries of El Sistema.* Laugh
366
367 Lani: Exactly, well, thank you.... I did not even....
368

1 **Alegria & Esperanza Teacher Interview**

2 DATE: Wednesday, February 15, 2017

3

4 TIME: 4:30 PM

5

6 PLACE: Room E305, ESO

7

8 PARTICIPANTS: Alegria and Esperanza fundamentals teachers, Susan and Alex

9

10 Lani: It is February 15, um, 2017, oh, my gosh, and it is...what time is? (Susan: 4:30)
11 4:30. Hey, this is good. All right, so I just have couple questions. And I kinda of let
12 you look over them a little earlier so you could have something in mind. It's just if
13 something jump out, just talk about it, that's fine. Umm...one of the questions I had
14 already was, "how does your class function within the larger group?"

15

16 Lani: So before we jump into that though, Susan, if you'll, if you could just kind of tell
17 us what your class does specifically?

18

19 Susan: Um, my class specifically...I take a game centered approach... um, to teaching,
20 um, music theory fundamentals. I also try to follow along with their repertoire and try
21 to support that and so, we do a lot of, of games with rhythms from their...what they are
22 currently studying. I also know that they are having a lot of problems with the kids with
23 note reading, so we always try to do a lot of note reading activities and just try (Alegria
24 next room over: vocal warm ups) to make it a fun way to learn - for the most part, lots
25 of games and activities and move around and they work in small groups.

26

27 Lani: And how do you feel like that helps ESO or not help? Do you feel like your class
28 functions...do you feel like your class is important in the larger scheme of ESO?

29

30 Susan: Oh, well I hope so? Laugh...yeah, I feel like it is because I feel like these kids
31 were not just teaching them how to read notes and how to play their instruments, but
32 we're teaching them a lot, a lot more things that are vitally important as musicians and
33 as learning and growing musicians and um, but, we also are working on "how do I, how
34 do I get along with people? How do I learn how to work with, with people that I may
35 not even like, you know, or don't even know very well? And how do I learn to function
36 as a team and think like that which are important for life skills.

37

38 Lani: Um-hum. I agree. Awesome. Ok, and Alex, the same thing. Just specifically
39 what your class does (Alex simultaneously: what my class does). And then kind of...

40

41 Alex: OK, so my class is composition based and we use the Young Composers and
42 Improvisers Workshop program. It's based out of NYU. Um, so the program started,
43 we started using it...I want to say ...middle of last year?? (Lani: that sounds right) yeah,

44 I think so. (Lani: I think so). So basically the kids are divided groups of between two
45 and four, depending on the size of the class and it's, it's basically just their job to kind of
46 just go through this program. Um, learn a little about basically, like the basics of
47 composition. You know, working with resting tones and, and things like that. Uh, so
48 the program is, is just designed to kind of get them, get them starting to write their own
49 original works.

50

51 Lani: Ok, and how often do you meet? I didn't even ask that (Alex: We meet) sorry.

52

53 Alex: ...three times a week. Monday, Wednesday, Friday for the younger ones and
54 Monday...(Susan: I think it's the other way around) ...oh yeah, you're right (Susan
55 simultaneously: Monday, Tuesday, Friday) Monday, Tuesday, Friday for the young
56 ones - Monday, Wednesday, Friday for the older ones.

57

58 Lani: And when you say young ones, that's Alegria.. (Alex simultaneously: Alegria and
59 then Esperanza for the older) and then Esperanza. And that's the same with your class,
60 too, (Susan: yes) right Susan (Alex: um hum) Ok, um, and then how do you or do you
61 feel that your class is an important part of El Sistema?

62

63 Alex: I really do think so. Um, I think a lot of it is what Susan was saying earlier about
64 like the working in groups thing that's hard for them to, to do. Um, and especially in our
65 class, it requires a lot of compromise on some of the kid's parts. You know, you've got
66 four potentially great ideas going on (Lani: um hum) for a composition and you've gotta
67 decide one. And so, for a lot of them, it's a, it's a really, really good lesson in kind of
68 learning how to work with people whose opinions like are not necessarily the same as
69 yours. Um, in the larger scale of things, I think composition you wouldn't, you
70 wouldn't see the effects of it, if you didn't know it was there, I think it's great because it
71 challenges the kids musically.

72

73 Alex:(passionately stating now): It really does and you know and they're not just,
74 they're not just you know playing like the notes that's on the page in front of them given
75 to them by their like their teacher. It's like, ok, you come up with it. You figure it out,
76 like what do you feel like this should be doing? Um, and yeah...and I think like a lot of
77 them haven't thought of that before. So, I think it's, it's really cool. It's a challenging
78 thing for them.

79

80 Lani: Yeah, that's awesome. Um... I'm gonna shift gears just real quickly, because I
81 thought about this earlier. What about your small groups? How does that fit in the
82 larger program and kind of again do you feel it's an important of the larger ESO?

83

84 Susan: Our chamber ensembles?

85

86 Lani: Yep, your chamber ensembles.

87

88 Susan: Well it's been interesting, cause this is the first year we've actually coached
89 them. And I have one, my Esperanza group, which is probably the top group who

90 could, could, and have rehearsed themselves. (Lani:um hum) Um, so I'm there...I, I
91 just look through repertoire for them and help them with the hard spots. They, they
92 don't have to work/figure it out for themselves. The Alegria groups, and they've
93 switched. I had a string quartet first semester and we were really starting to do some
94 things but then attendance issues got us. So, then they decided second semester to put
95 them in like instrument groups. So, I have six cellos and laugh...(Lani: Oh wow!) ...
96 and they go from all the way from really talented to I'm still having to write my letter
97 names and what string and what finger I put it on down at the bottom, which is a real
98 challenge to try to find literature for them that, that the lower guys can play along with
99 the upper, the upper ones.

100
101 Susan: So, that's been interesting this semester trying to, to figure, figure that out (Lani:
102 how to compensate?) um..yeah..but I, I think it's, it is really good because they have to
103 work, they have to work...now, I usually just put them on trio music, so that I've got two
104 on a part. But they have to figure out their parts and then they have to figure out, start
105 figure, how that's going to fit together. And, and, and so, it's uh... different for
106 them/feeling (Lani: laugh) like, they can't hide like they can in a large ensemble cause
107 it's right out there. And, so I think that's awesome experience for them and great. Great
108 challenge. So um, yeah, I, I that's good because it does, it does maybe offer some more
109 challenges to the better students and then provides opportunities for the, the, the less
110 able ones to expand their abilities.

111
112 Lani: Great. How about you Alex? Same thing? Similar?
113

114 Alex: Yeah, it, it really...I found it really depends on the kids that you have in the group
115 and um.....I'm, I love the idea of chamber and I think it's amazing that we do chamber
116 when the kids are, are like as young as they are because that's really, really rare. Um, it's
117 got issues though. I think that lack of continuity perhaps, like we only see them once a
118 week and it's very clear that the kids do not look at that music between the week, you
119 know between the weeks. So, progress is extremely slow. Kids don't treat that chamber
120 time as they would full rehearsal. Um, just honestly, this semester with my Alegria half
121 my kids show up without their music, without their instruments and so like, your
122 rehearsal doesn't start you know for ten minutes, like after it's supposed to. So, I can
123 tell that they are not, they would not do that in orchestra rehearsal (Lani: right) you
124 know and so I think that they don't, they don't think of chamber as an important thing.
125 (Lani:ok) Uh, I want that to change though because I think it's really important to have
126 chamber. I think it's great, um...but...I don't know what the solution is.

127
128 Lani: Ok. So, we're..start..kind of in the process of trying (Alex: yeah) to figure out
129 how to change that
130

131 Alex: ...and I don't know if it's because we're they're fundamentals teachers and they
132 don't think of us as like, uh, instrumental people...
133

134 Lani: Well that's interesting...
135

136 Alex: And they might not realize we are also (Susan: yeah, musicians) musicians.
137
138 NOTE: Have we considered that students might not see these chamber groups as
139 important? Are fundamentals teachers seen differently than other instrumentals
140 teachers?
141
142 Lani: Well, I'll add that as one of the questions when I work with um, Abby. (Alex:
143 Yeah) I'll ask her and see if she has any issues like that (Alex: yeah) that's interesting
144 (Alex: yeah). I never would have thought of that).
145
146 Alex: yeah, cause I play, like I, I like rehearse with my flute always. Like, and so the
147 kids, and so the kids know that I (Lani: um hum)but I think they like, first couple
148 times, they were like oh my God did you play an instrument. I was like, yeah, of course
149 I play an instrument. I mean...laugh (Lani: we are musicians) yeah.
150
151 Lani: OK, well we are going to shift to administration, Um, how, let's see, let's do this
152 real quickly cause we've talked about how your programs have evolved because of the
153 situations that you've had - your demographic changes or educational needs - you guys
154 have obviously changed it. Do you think it's important to keep changing your style or
155 keep it the same or you know, can you give an example of where you really did have to
156 change something for the entire group?
157
158 Alex: Yeah, I think last year, again last year is a little more relevant for me than this
159 year just because my classroom now is really not, non-traditional (Lani: right). Um, but
160 last year when I was teaching more of kind of like a general music class, um there was a
161 class that I really kind of switched things form being like this is a music class but this is
162 to how you be a good person class (All: laughter). - Inaudible -
163
164 Alex: Yeah, yeah. No, honestly there was a couple times that um, it was when Nathan
165 was still here and we were working in that class together and we had the kids, like,
166 actually like, do skits for about a week. About like, kindness, and like empathy toward
167 each other because we were in a real bad place. Um, and, and doing that, I think, I think
168 like taking the time to do that was actually really valuable. You know, we did, we did,
169 definitely learn-loose out on some of that like, let's talk about music kind of time. But
170 that class was totally different (Lani: you could tell a difference) yeah, and, and I really
171 think and that especially, we are so fortunate to teach in this kind of setting because
172 there's not that curriculum deadline, there's not that test deadline or whatever and so you
173 know, you teach what your kids need (All: so true) and I think that's really important to
174 respect that and take advantage of that. (Lani: um hum... that's neat that..yeah..and
175 same thing with you (to Susan)?
176
177 Susan: Same thing...it's try, try to meet the needs of the kids (Lani: um hum) you know.
178 Where they are, and what they need, and where to go from there (Lani: Yep. I agree).
179
180 Lani: And then really the last part was about administration and my question do Robyn
181 and Mike include you in the decision making or the mission of the group? If so, how?

182 Susan: Oh yeah, I think definitely they do and um, well and especially this year. It's
183 been a lot better because it's, it feels like they finally, you know, and I know they have
184 always have appreciated us but it feels like it's starting to hold. Staff is starting to
185 understand that we are not just babysitting and (Alex: yeah) and that we're actually
186 doing things that you know are contributing and um...(Lani: you think they were a part
187 of that, the reasons that that changed?) Oh, yeah. I think so. I think so.
188
189 Alex: Yeah, definitely. They really make you, um, just feel valued (Susan: yes), I feel
190 like. There's no question if they want you there. (Susan: yeah) you know, they
191 definitely do., yeah, which, which I think is really special.
192
193 Lani: Ok, and um and then is there anything they can do to support you and your
194 classroom issues? I know we've had some behavior issues and you've kind talked about
195 how you dealt with it. Are there enough support mechanisms in place? Are there
196 things they might be able to (Susan: I think...) change?
197
198 Susan: I think there's more this year (Alex: uh hum) and it's been better, think. And, and
199 I think maybe the way that they've restructured Alegria (Lani: um hum) is actually been
200 helpful (Alex: I think so, too) because...(Lani: how did they restructure it?)
201
202 Susan: Where we went from seeing the same group of kids all year long (Lani and Alex:
203 Um. Uh huh) to now see, you know, a different group every quarter um, for one
204 extra/more day... but you know and a lot of it is, you can just say but there's a problem
205 kid you can say for you know a quarter (Alex: yeah) and then you get to go somewhere
206 else and try somebody else's way and if you figure that may be better for you, I don't
207 know, you know, and so.
208
209 Lani: They're a little young, too (Susan: yeah) I mean typically. I know (Susan: they
210 are) that it's not all age ranged based but you think it's for the better?
211
212 Susan: I think so. I think it's, it's I wasn't too sure about it but I think, you know, I think
213 it is working out. I think the kids get a change, you know some of them are rather
214 trepidatious about it "I don't know if I want to go to that teacher (Lani: sure) they're
215 gonna love it (Lani: they're gonna love it) and remember it's only for a quarter. (All:
216 laugh)
217
218 Lani: Exactly, and then...this is kinda funny cause I am your LTA (laugh). Because I am
219 your LTA, but, um, (All: laugh) how do you communicate with your LTA? And yeah,
220 just...(Alex: always) (Susan: she just sends us all kinds of emails) (alex: yeah emails)
221 All: laugh
222
223 Susan: I had to get you on that one (Lani: that's so true, I know) (Alex: I love you, you
224 know) ohhh...
225
226 Alex: No, I feel like our team is awesome (Susan: I do, too). Like I just think our team
227 jive, jives likes really, really well. Like I don't, last year, like I kind of hated it because

228 Leah and I were always separate (Susan: yeah, that's hard) (Lani: we always met at
229 different times) yeah, and so it was basically me and Leah and that was it (Lani: ohhh)
230 and so like having a whole like fundamentals team (Lani: Because you were Nueva), I
231 was Nueva last year. (Lani: Oh, yeah) Yeah, so it's been amazing like, you know, and,
232 and we share kids in this course that is amazing, too, because it's like all right...SOS
233 (Susan: yeah) Help! (Susan: or this is how I handled this one!) Exactly! (Lani:
234 Exactly) Yeah
235
236 Susan: So, you know here's, here's what you can do (Alex: right, definitely), if you want
237 to try. (Alex: right, no, I think that's great)
238
239 Lani: Well and this my bias, but I think we are one of the strongest teams (Alex: I agree,
240 me, too) and I'm not quite sure why, but I think it's because we have that time to plan
241 (Susan/Alex: yeah) and we're all on the same page.
242
243 Alex: Yeah, I also feel everybody on the team is open to um, not, I, criticism, that's not
244 the right word, um... suggestion for change (Susan/Lani: Yes, yeah, you know, um
245 hum) And everybody's really, really down to just kind of do like whatever works, you
246 know which I think is great. There's not a lot of ego involved, which is really nice
247 (Lani: Thank goodness All: laugh - yep).
248
249 Lani: Um and then how do the conductors fit in here, because I know I have my
250 thoughts about as far as how do we include them into our group (Susan: umm), our
251 fundamentals team, a little bit more? Or do we need to? I guess that's the question.
252
253 Alex: They don't fit in here at all right now. They are non-existent.
254
255 Susan: Yeah, I mean I try to look at what they've got planned in the lesson plan. I'm
256 trying to read through their stuff and say, ok, this is where they seem to be having a
257 problem, which is what I was doing on the one they videos for St. Luke's because they
258 were talking about this one section about Mariachi Mashup where there's like three
259 different rhythms going at the same time and so we, like, I arranged it out for all the
260 instruments and we worked to clap and counted it. We played it on rhythms
261 instruments, and I had them bring their instruments in and then we had them play
262 through it and they got to switch parts, so they weren't playing the part that they
263 normally did and they were still learning stuff. And so I'm hopeful that that helped out
264 with that section (Lani: sure, Alex: yeah, but the thing is you never hear) Yeah they
265 don't know, yeah.
266
267 Lani: So what would be a way then? Is there a way maybe the conductors can let us
268 know what their hearing? Or (Alex: yeah, maybe so) maybe some kind of dialogue
269 there or maybe a curriculum similarly, where, maybe...I don't know
270
271 Alex: But how do...is like, nobody... I am so sorry to say this (Lani: no don't) be, like,
272 especially on a recording. Nobody uses that curriculum alignment document. (Lani:

273 ok. and that was my next question actually) yeah (Lani: actually was like, was is the
274 current curriculum map working?
275
276 Alex: I really don't think it is. Um....
277
278 Susan: I'm trying to use it, but it's, it's you know. It's, it's hard and I understand. I don't
279 read through everyone's lesson plans (Alex: me either). I try to hit their, the
280 required....(Alex: half the time I glance..) and I kind of glance at you all, see what you
281 all are doing and then you know its, and I'm, you know, and I've gotta do what I've gotta
282 do.
283
284 Alex: Actually really preferred last year when we had to upload lesson plans because I
285 was and I was like, examining all that. I just remember when the kids would be just ok
286 what flute plan, blah blah blah, blah, blah, you can like bullet like, (Lani: right) what is
287 everyone doing in like, detail? Because the bullet point thing, like people like use short
288 hand and I'm like I don't know what that means or I don't know what that is. You know,
289 so yeah, I reall, I really think a change is needed is there. (Susan: laugh)
290
291 Lani: But do think that somebody's really going to take the time to go through and read
292 all the lesson plans? Everybody's detailed lesson plans?
293
294 Alex: I did but I don't know if others would (Lani: would read yours?) Yeah, yeah
295 (Lani: I mean, when I say yours, I mean ours). Yeah, and I think too because, I, I am
296 still a pretty new teacher in the grand scheme of things. And, and, I was looking for
297 inspiration of where to kind of go and I think that I just utilized teachers that I knew had
298 a lot of experiences to guide me. Like grab na ESO (inaudible). So, that is probably not
299 the norm.
300
301 Lani: So that we're kind of up in the air about that. (Susan: umhum) We're going to
302 talk about that on Saturday, too. So that will be, you know, we just need ideas, cause I
303 think it's a good idea but we're not utilizing it. (Susan: as much)
304
305 Susan: Yeah, and I'm not sure don't know, I'm not sure what the answer is. (Lani: How
306 to fix it)
307
308 Lani: Um kay. And then really the last question, and I'm just I kept you longer, and I
309 apologize that I needed to. But if you were to put this style of teaching, this, small
310 communities of practice is what I call it...you know, you each have your own groups
311 and you have that special connections. How can you see the fit in a school classroom?
312 Is there any way to make it work in the school public setting? That you've thought of...
313 or maybe haven't thought of...
314
315 Susan: Yeah, I mean I would love to be able to. I haven't been able to do this but (Lani:
316 well maybe that something I can have you guys thing about and then write it down later,
317 and think "Hey this might work." And specifically the things you are doing in here
318 because eventually I'd love to be able to write this up and say here are some things I

319 could have done (Alex: Sure) with what I'm doing here and use it. ESO is not
320 replicable. You have to have money, funding, (Alex and Susan: Yeah, yeah) and that's
321 no secret. That's what this is about is that yes, we do have funding and support. But
322 there are things we are doing in the classrooms that might be able to..

323

324 Susan: I have always tried to use a lot of game based activities especially when I taught.
325 But the 9 weeks semester dumped on. Um, because you know as that's the easiest way
326 to engage the kids and keep them engaged. (Lani: uh huh) You know my, I even did
327 all/some of them a lot of it with my instrumental kids, too. Because it would do things
328 where because there was only one of me and I needed to get individual time with every
329 kid. So, we would have like a rotation day. One day they did, they practiced their lines
330 and the next day I listened to them. The other day they did a theory or history packet
331 (Lani/Alex: mmm) and the other day they got to play a game in their small group. I
332 mean I'd divide them into small groups, so. I've done a lot of that in the public schools
333 (Lani: and you felt pretty successful with that?) I felt pretty successful with that. It was
334 a way for me to get you, to divide myself better (Lani: divide and conquer) Yeah!
335 Laugh

336

337 Lani: (to Alex): and you...

338 Alex: yeah.....so, I feel like so much of what we teach at El Sistema, is um, is, it's all
339 about building a community with each other. And I think that you can do that in your
340 individual classrooms. Just depending on how you set things up and delegate things to
341 kids and me as well. Um, and I think a lot of it too is, like students being like, owners
342 of their classroom as well. And I think sorta, kinda sorta like Susan was talking about
343 you can just like have kids be in charge of certain things or whatever and I think they
344 have that (Lani:) sense of accountability I think about that.

345

346 Lani: Ok, awesome. Well, thank guys very much. I appreciate your time (Alex: yeah).
347 I really do!

348

Nueva Teacher Interview

1

2 DATE: Friday, March 10, 2017

3

4 TIME: 3:50 PM

5

6 PLACE: The Mont, cocktail hour

7

8 PARTICIPANT: Beth, a few other friends join half way though interview

9

10 Lani: So today is the 10th of March and it is...What time is?...4:04 and this is Beth and
11 she is going to talk to us a little bit about ESO and the first question I have is, tell me
12 about your experience at ESO, as a newcomer, as a...Was it what you expected or was it
13 a little different and how has it changed?
14

15 Beth: It's better than I expected. It is. I love it there. I like the...I love the support we
16 get as teachers. The whole...not only getting an aid the whole time, but then know
17 when you have any problems the administration is right there to back you up. That's
18 very, very helpful. It's been interesting to see how quickly learn everyday, which you
19 know that was part of my study, which is what they have in Hungary. That's why they
20 were so successful, so actually it being used here in the United States is cool because
21 they learn so much quicker. I just can't believe it. Um....what else, so I was really
22 amazing how quickly they're learning their orchestral instruments and their concerts
23 have been so impressive...so impressive so.
24

25 Lani: So, it's a little different than a public school setting that's for sure (laugh).
26

27 Beth: Totally different, totally different. The kids are so proud. I think the kids are so
28 proud to be there. Don't you?
29

30 Lani: I do.
31

32 Beth: And they are...they work hard, even the ones who might have you k
33 now...challenges with their behavior. They want to do it. They really do. I think that's
34 the overall feeling and then the camaraderie with all the people. I mean it's very much
35 there - very much there. I just feel like everybody is working towards the same goal.
36

37 Lani: Teacher wise, student wise or both?
38

39 Beth: I think, I see it in the teachers (Lani: ok) especially, but I even the students. Yeah,
40 they have their own thing they're that they are trying to achieve.
41

42 Lani: They do. The one thing I've noticed...I've been talking to a lot of people and it's
43 about their pedagogy and their style of teaching and they seem to be leading more of a

44 student-centered, leadership and collaboration, instead of teacher being at the head of
45 the class. It's sort of their being part of a team. And I've noticed that...um

46

47 Interruption - A few friends join

48

49 Lani: But I've noticed that type of shared leadership that you gave to your students.
50 Like they had a place to go to. They were...one was taking roll, the other was doing
51 something else. I guess that's obviously something that you think is important in your
52 class (Beth: yeah). How did you achieve that?

53

54 Beth: Well, I think we started from the very beginning. They set up the expectations
55 and boy, you should have seen the list they had for everybody to do - much more than
56 the what I would have done. So, that idea of empowering them so that they believe it's
57 theirs - their situation, their education...

58

59 Lani:...class (Beth nods). Did you feel that way before you came to ESO or was this
60 something that you've always implemented in your classrooms? Or did you feel it was
61 more important or less important at ESO?

62

63 Beth: I've always done that but I think that it's very important in this situation like this
64 because, I think they especially need to feel like they own that. (Lani: right) And then
65 they work harder, um, have high, the have very high expectations for themselves and
66 for each other. So, and then Grace is so great. She is always looking for kids who are
67 feeling left out that are having a problem, like the older kids in that class. She's the one
68 who likes to assign them, like to do the roll one day or something like that. So she's
69 been helpful in that, too, because she notices kids that are not fully engaged or
70 something. But I do believe in that. I think it's very important.

71

72 Lani: Do you ask your class what's working and what's not working? Or do you ever
73 have discussions say, if something just needs to change in the class...do you recognize
74 it? Do you tell them or ask them, I guess, what needs to change to make this a better
75 experience for everybody? Or have you even had to deal with that? I know we have in
76 Innovations and Alegria classes.

77

78 Beth: Have you done that with curriculum-based ideas or more like behavior things? Or
79 what? (Lani: Both) Yeah, I think ours has been mostly behavior...(Lani: I was going to
80 say...mostly for us, it has been behavior) It has.

81

82 Lani: But I've also had to change curriculum quite a bit. I mean you are Kodaly
83 approach, for sure. Do you keep that 100% um, or have you had to modify it a little bit?
84 (Beth: A lot) A lot? Ok

85

86 Beth: I modified it a lot. I still kept the basic premise of singing every day and singing
87 certain melodic patterns, which...but we went a lot faster than we normally would in a
88 classroom setting. But because they were advancing so quickly and because Dr. Raiber

89 really wanted us to work with the Gordon melodic patters and the rhythm patterns, then
90 I changed it quite a bit. I think it's a nice balance. I think it's been very effective.
91
92 Lani: So it wasn't difficult to change?
93
94 Beth: No not at all. I didn't think so. I just...I couldn't just follow the traditional Kodaly
95 learning sequence, teaching sequence, learning sequence as what I call it.
96
97 Lani: And you didn't feel like...I guess the question is um, do you think that they would
98 have supported you if you wanted to continue that direction or did you feel like you
99 needed to change so the students had a similar in your class and orchestra? Or...what
100 was your reasoning to change?
101
102 Beth: Well, I think...because um, I think because Mike really wanted us to focus on the
103 curriculum or the repertoire. That was really the main focus and he really pushed that.
104 And then you know, you can't really establish a traditional curriculum for Kodaly in just
105 one year. It takes more. You start it in Kindergarten and they build and I knew it
106 would have to adjust because of that. But I think also, it's the atmosphere of that. It's
107 very creative and it's not like you have to stick with a certain traditional method. You
108 kind of assess what the kids need and what they're wanting from you, you know, the
109 directors, and then you just create a new thing, which is...I like that. I like that.
110
111 Lani: It's nice. It definitely is. Um, I think that was, those were really the only
112 questions that I had because you know being a newcomer, those expectations are here
113 and you have your expectations and how they can come together. What did you change
114 and what did you not change? And it sounds like you've just gone with the flow of the
115 program (Beth: so true) and it hasn't be a difficult situation? I don't want to put words
116 in your mouth but...
117
118 Beth: Well I wanted to tell you this...(Lani: Yeah, yeah. Please do - no, no, no that's
119 good) The thing I see that could be an issue in the future that helps you appreciate what
120 they've done in the past is allowing for planning time because my, my contract is
121 different because I don't get paid for any planning time and my schedule isn't allowed
122 for me to meet with any of the fundamentals team so I really was off on my own. And
123 then my team, which is the Nueva team, we meet like at our meetings once a semester
124 so...or once a quarter but that's all. And I have Grace and I have Sam who helps me
125 because I can't be there every day. So, that, that really is an essential component,
126 planning time. And that was one thing that I was attracted to about this program
127 because they did allow planning time because that is what makes it successful.
128
129 Lani: Well, and I, how was it that you were able to come to our planning meeting, you
130 know which were there every single time and all the time and so we had...
131
132 Beth: Well, I pointed out that I didn't understand what was happening with the
133 fundamentals team. I didn't even know who was on the planning team. And I think you
134 know it was difficult for me to...I didn't want them to feel bad, but I wanted them to

135 understand that I need to be a part of that team, too. And so Robyn fixed it so Sam is
136 now there are Tuesdays with me. So, (Lani: oohhh) she can take the class as a sub and
137 then I can sneak over for the second hour.
138
139 Lani: But you do get paid for that time?
140
141 Beth: Yeah, I do now. (Lani: That's good) But I think they realized...they were trying
142 to do it without any planning, one fundamentals teacher, and it's not the same. I'm just
143 going to say that they should really value what you guys have with the teamwork (Lani:
144 right) and it's allowing that planning, paid planning (Lani: paid planning, exactly) Yeah.
145 (Lani: and that didn't, well...we didn't get planning until...was it last year?) Yeah, yeah.
146 (Lani: I think it was last year. We just started it.) Yeah, but it's very good
147
148 Lani: it's made such a huge difference for us (Beth: yeah) and I feel like...I love it when
149 you're there. We can finally put the pieces together. And...(Beth: Yeah, I like that) it
150 really makes a difference for me.
151
152 Beth: But that's the only thing. I love that program. I love the kids. I do. They're so,
153 they're so um, they're so hungry to feel, to be affirmed, you know in who they are.
154
155 Lani: And they love you so much!
156
157 Beth: Aw, it's fun to see change.
158
159 Lani: It's just so...it's so cool. Ok, well is there anything else you want to share before I
160 turn this thing of...laugh
161
162 Beth: No.
163
164 Lani: Are you sure? Let's drink!
165
166 Beth: Thanks!
167
168 Lani: Thank you, Beth! (Beth: You're welcome) Well, I might write in here...we need
169 to party. Hey, this is...I got it! This is the end of my collection, right here!
170
171 Cheers!!
172
173 Bill: That's worth celebrating! Congratulations!
174
175 Lani: Data collection - COMPLETE!!!!
176
177 Drinking commences.
178

1 **Fundamentals Meeting – Team Interview**

2 DATE: Tuesday, February 7, 2017

3

4 TIME: 5:10 PM

5

6 PLACE: 3rd Floor, ESO

7

8 PARTICIPANTS: Lead Teaching Artists, Nueva Conductor, Alegria Conductors,
9 Esperanza Conductors, Executive Director, and Site Director

10

11 Mood/context: Francisco and Beth had just been interviewed and classes videoed. Just
12 finished up important information about upcoming events and deadlines. Bobbi joined
13 us a few minutes into the meeting after being interviewed about her class.

14

15 Lani: So, yeah, I mean how did you guys decide on what you wanted to teach? You
16 know Mike's just kind of let us choose...(Francisco....coughs)...to match the style of
17 our students and what you'd like to do. So, I mean you guys have done so many
18 different things and I think that's pretty cool.

19

20 Susan: Like, I took a lot of stuff that I used when I was in the public schools but
21 something that Robyn said to me the first month I was here, she said, this really needs
22 to be like summer camp. I want the kids to enjoy and I want it to be fun for them so as
23 much games, as much things as you can do that they, they can have good time. And I
24 was like ok! I can do that so, but, and then I, you know, I also really feel like that
25 supporting the repertoire is really important, too. So I always try to do activities in a
26 fun way or in games, or whatever. That they're uhmm...using skills that they need for
27 the repertoire.

28

29 Lani: Where do you get all those cool technological games and things...

30 Susan: A lot of Teacher's Pay Teacher's is lovely. (chuckles – Lani: yeah) It's great,
31 cause they, you know a lot of them have already put all the work in and I just have to
32 pay them \$3-8 (Lani: yeah!) to use their stuff and it's great! (Lani: that's ok) So,
33 yeah...

34 And then just ya you know, I, love technology. Mark goes, "My grandma can't
35 understand how to do this, how come you can?!" And I go, cause I'm a technophile!

36 (All: laugh) So yeah, yeah... (inaudible comments)

37

38 Francisco: Mine's very short. There's no long story behind it. I did mainly private
39 teaching, some guitar lessons basically. And then I was looking for a job at the end of
40 college and then, um, and then I would send off for some positions, as a TA or
41 fundamentals and you know, those classes. It was second year and I would think it
42 would seem something I was interested in. So I applied and I had to put together this
43 lesson that I had never done before. So I used everything that I could possibly think of

44 (Susan: laughs) from the private lessons but for a group class (Lani: uh-huh) but I guess,
45 I don't know, this was with Robyn and Mike, it was just them interview. The two of
46 them and it's me and my flash cards with a forte and a piano and like, ok so what does it
47 like say here? It was hilarious. It was crazy. But in terms of the approach, I feel like I
48 learned pretty much along the way. And that's, and that's I think that's one of the
49 reasons why, even though it's very challenging for me because I don't have a
50 background of music education or (poly - indiscernible)...uh, I don't know...group
51 lessons and curriculums for a fundamentals class or a theory class, or something like
52 that. Um, so I struggle because of that, I struggle. Then by seeing, by seeing all of you
53 guys doing (Susan: collaboration, yeah)...exactly...by seeing you, what you are doing
54 (Susan: uh huh) in the class, what you are doing with the themes or topics...or behavior,
55 or what you were doing with world music (to Lani) and uh, sometimes learning together
56 what, with Solveig.. we were, the two of us, just basically not (door slams) knowing
57 what we were doing, but learning from everyday things. So, so it's an interesting, it's an
58 interesting experience. I could not tell you what kind of pedagogy I use (ALL: laugh
59 loudly). I guess the pedagogy I use is the one...(Bobbi: that works! All: laugh Lani:
60 EXACTLY!)...No, is the one, the one that I learned was best for them by, by being in
61 exposure to it.

62
63 Lani: And experimenting maybe a little bit. Francisco: Oh, I still experiment, til this
64 day. (Lani: I do, too) But, but it was mainly that seeing how, how something would
65 have an impact.

66
67 Lani: Well and then that was kind of my next question then. How has your pedagogy
68 changed since you started? Is it the same or has it changed quite a bit? I mean for me, I
69 know it's drastically changed (Alex: uh hum) from when I first started. And it depends
70 which group, too, like if I'm working with Alegria, it's totally different than Esperanza
71 (Alex: yeah)

72
73 Alex: I feel like I'm thinking of more last year than this year, because this year is a little
74 more different for us but I think last year I started the year, I was coming right off
75 teaching public school and so I think I was kind of like teaching El Sistema as if I was
76 teaching public school still. But as that year progressed I think I got a little bit more out
77 of like the, let's learn these, like dorky songs or whatever to, to having them be a little
78 more creativity based. Like I, like it was really important for me to get these kids into
79 improve and like a little bit of you know, really informal composition like as a class
80 together. I really wanted them to have uh, feeling like they had ownership of the class,
81 rather than I was like giving the class to them, if that makes sense. (Lani: It does)
82 Yeah. (Lani: completely)

83
84 Lani: Great, and what do you see (to Kayla), I'm thinking cause you've always (break
85 in audio – "it's ok, don't worry" – door slam, someone comes in and sees the camera
86 on)...you've been as much in that class and have seen it develop, too. And, it's really
87 neat to see how much you've put into getting the composition group started, it's
88 amazing, cause I know you, you worked with XXX last year, too.
89

90 Kayla: Yeah, um, so uh, a lot of like, it's hard to answer questions about pedagogy
91 formally (Lani: yeah), because a lot of the curriculum is already set by the program
92 designers (Lani: Oh, that's right. And what is it called exactly?) Young Composers
93 and Improvisers Workshop (Lani: Oh that's right, that's cool. Alex: Yeah, it really is.
94 Lani: From San Francisco? Alex/Kayla: New York!) NYU. (Lani: OK) Um, but, we
95 have learned a lot about like, um, not just like gaps we where we need to supplement
96 um, but also like how different students react to the curriculum. And what we can do to
97 kind of translate it to every student's learning style. Because that's the weakness –is
98 that it doesn't account for every learning style. It presents the same curriculum to every
99 student. SO, I think the biggest thing that we've done to kind of adapt to that is like,
100 how we present each activity to each individual student. And it changes because they
101 work in small groups all the time. So different, like, combinations of students have
102 different needs (Lani: that's important, Alex: yeah) then they might on their own.
103 (Lani: right, that makes sense. Awesome.)

104

105 Lani: Beth, you're brand new, not brand new, but you've, you've been here. What do
106 you do you think of this kind of style, these different styles we all bring to the table, I
107 guess.

108

109 Beth: Well, I think it's great. I really do. And it's been fun for me because I have such
110 a Kodaly base...in my education. Um, but I haven't been just using Kodaly but it's
111 great for singing. It's been fun to implement that with the newbies and set that um,
112 expectation. But then, I've been, um, you know, Dr. Raiber had us do the Gordon
113 patterns. So, I've been incorporating that into my lessons, too, which I've never really
114 worked with Gordon stuff. (Lani: Mm-hum. But the doo day, doo day..) Well, there
115 are like this melodic patterns that he wanted them to go through as much as possible.
116 And then these rhythmic patterns (Lani: ok) so that we did games with them and they
117 can write the melodic patterns and stuff and today they were um, this week they've been
118 writing. They're composing. So they're using the Gordon melodic patterns and putting
119 it over these musical valentine's for their parents (eruptions of "ahhhh" from all, "oh
120 how fun"). They wrote like a poem and then they picked the melodic patterns to use
121 over them. And it's not, there isn't like the rhythmic part but they're getting that
122 connection of, of, um, how all that fits into creativity but just another way of thinking
123 about the music. So it's been fun, because we can do a lot of different things (Lani:
124 right) not just one approach. (All: duck ring tone - laugh at cell phone, it's everybody,
125 yep)

126

Appendix F
Video Playback Interviews

1

2

1

Playback Interview Transcription Abby

2 DATE: Tuesday, March 7, 2017

3

4 TIME: 6:10 PM

5

6 PLACE: OCU MUED Room, then moved outside of room half-way through interview

7

8 SETTING: After faculty meeting, 6:10 p.m.

9

10 (Start of interview)

11

12 Lani: it is recording...From the moment students walked in they knew exactly where to
13 sit and how to get ready. How did you do this? How did you accomplish this?

14

15 Abby: Well, at the beginning, um, I had them sit facing me and me facing them and that
16 was a good way for me to show them, you know, how to hold their instrument and
17 when we were going over things like that. And then once they got more comfortable
18 with the um, environment and their instruments and everything um, I could get that they
19 were getting kind of antsy where they were. Even though they were allowed to change
20 their seats each day, uh, just sitting in those two rows with me in the front, which is kind
21 of getting like, you know, they can do other things over here, other things over here...or
22 I don't know, they wanted to be next to their friend and there weren't any seats left and
23 so they couldn't...whatever but uh, so I just started saying, "Pick where you pick." Just
24 one day I said, "Put your chair wherever you want and sit there." (Lani: Like
25 scattered?) Well, that's what I thought it was going to be but it ended up being more
26 like a here to here, here -- they were all kind of in something sitting in a more, maybe
27 like a little half-circle. And so, I was like, I'll go with it. Then one girl was over in the
28 corner and I said, "Hey, now you need to try (laugh) you know, let's bring it in a little
29 closer. But uh, and then I had them a few times every once in a while I would just put
30 them facing each other. And then when if I wanted to play something with them, I
31 would pull up a chair somewhere. But um, I just like to change up where they sit. And
32 if I have the, the seats in a specific spot - they leave them there and they just pick one
33 but if I don't then they just bring a chair and they form what they want to form. And
34 then sometimes someone will say can we have a circle? And then other people will say
35 no and I'll say raise your hand if you want a circle, raise your hand if you don't and if
36 they don't I'll say, "Ok so today we'll just sit how we are and next class we'll have a
37 circle for the people who wanted a circle."

38

39 Lani: Ok, well. And I remember you saying something about going outside (Abby: Oh,
40 yeah) because it gets hot in your room, so you're very attentive to their needs (Abby:
41 yeah). That's really cool and I noticed you gave each other high fives and so is it
42 important to them. Do you feel...I mean obviously you value your students? How do
43 you make that happen because I felt like I saw that in your classroom?

44 Abby: Yeah, well a few like, in, in music in general, it's a very competitive
45 environment. And especially when we have such varying ages and differing ability
46 levels. I think it's important that they all remember that they are in the same class and
47 they have all only been there for the same amount of time. Um, and so, just, I don't
48 know, the high five's and the partner work is just kind of create a bit of a more cohesive
49 environment because there are some times, when, when, someone will get a mark on the
50 board and everyone is like, "Oooooo" - you know. And of course this fuels their want
51 to not have that happen again. But, um, yeah, I think it's important that when the
52 environment is so competitive and serious that we just have a little bit of um, you know,
53 we can be fun and we can appreciate when we do things correctly. So...

54
55 Lani: Ok. Cool!! Yeah. Now I noticed on the board...I don't even know what it was
56 that you did but whatever it was you did...something changed. (Abby: Yeah) I thought
57 that was great! Hmmm, ok so I asked you earlier, um, how do you share your
58 excitement about music and how do you encourage them to share their ideas?

59
60 Abby: Yeah so, with some, sometimes when I bring my instrument, I have to bring my
61 bass on Tuesdays...uh, because we use, the other classes use the faculty bass, but um...I
62 will sometimes bring in my orchestra music and show them like, you know in a few
63 years (Lani: ok) you can do stuff like this! Um, and so that kind of gets them more
64 excited about what they can do in the future and as far them sharing with me...Elise
65 plays at Classes SAS so she has all of this other repertoire that the other students haven't
66 had...

67
68 *Interruption - moved to outside of room*

69
70 Abby: And so, if she wants to perform something for everyone and everyone's ok with
71 that, then I of course will say yeah, unless we have a concert in two days we have to
72 work around and get stuff for that but yeah...and usually they always ask, do you have
73 Star Wars? Can we...are you putting Silent Night in our binders? Or, so when they first
74 took their instrument home, I put a few extra thing in there that they didn't know. So,
75 they didn't really know how to read music yet, but some of them...they knew where
76 there open strings were so if they could do that...um, but...Now they ask things like,
77 um, can we play Ode to Joy or can we play Star Wars? And I let them do that during
78 guided practice unless like when you came in. We had just worked the previous day on
79 something really specific and there were a lot of them in there for guided practice that
80 day, so I just used that as a little bit of a review because usually there's only two or three
81 for guided practice but that day they were like 5. (Lani: You had a lot.) Yeah, so I just
82 used that as a little extra class time but...ok...

83
84 Lani: Ok, well cool..and then..yeah, I think I put in there In the middle of the rehearsal
85 you changed rhythms to fit the made up words your students created. Tell me a little bit
86 about the "sausage pizza" because that was great!

87
88 Abby: Yeah, that's sort of with a rhythm the strings use a little in like scale variations
89 and stuff. Like pepperoni pizza - and so I did that one day and they were like ha, ha, ha,

90 and then they just started putting words to all of everything. And so (Lani: Had they
91 heard it before?) No, that was the first time. (Lani: And you heard it from other
92 strings?) Yeah. I heard it from (Lani: I mean instructors) Yeah. I mean the string
93 players. But as soon as I saw that they really enjoyed that...and it helped them know the
94 rhythms better and so, we, I told them one day when we were doing the cha cha
95 rhythm...I was like what words can you put to this? And so they put, I think that was the
96 sausage pizza one or something like that. I don't know which exactly that was. (Lani: I
97 think it was, I was trying to remember...there were so excited about that. I just
98 remember thinking...these are cutest kids ever.) Yeah, they love food. So, and they
99 love the idea of pizza and chicken and you know. It just makes it more fun.

100
101 Lani: Yeah, Did you do that in the next lesson again? Or was that the only time you
102 used it?
103

104 Abby: No, yeah, we use it all the time. Ever since I figured out that they liked the
105 pepperoni pizza thing, I just use it all the time. -Laugh - Any, any, well, first we learn
106 the rhythm, count wise, so they can understand how that fits in with actually counting
107 and then teaches them to just remember it from day to day. The way they, they can get
108 used to it.
109

110 Lani: Well that's awesome. That's....
111

112 Abby: And some of them don't do food. They think about Star Wars or something.
113 (Lani: There is nothing wrong with that I am too!) – Laugh-
114

115 Lani: Um, so, do you have conversations about what's working and what's not working?
116 There was a sweet little girl that stood up and said (Abby: Uh hum), "I don't get it! We
117 can clap it correctly and can we can do this, but we just can't play it." And then you
118 immediately switched it to plucking, I think (Abby: uh hum) and they did a much better
119 job. But they...I don't know. Tell me about the ownership of their learning a little bit.
120

121 Abby: Yeah, that well that, that was tricky because the class before that we also learned
122 almost the whole class on that one section. Trying to get them to pluck together and
123 um, that was really frustrating for them because I didn't make them do it over and over
124 again and not give them feedback and just say no, that's bad let's do that again. I gave
125 them things to focus to on each time, but it was still...that's really hard for beginners to,
126 to do that on a specific beat...and all together (Lani: yeah) and so, and so we worked on
127 that a long time. And so when you were in there, we were already kind of bogged down
128 by it and they knew that it was going to be a problem area for them and they just didn't
129 know how to fix it. And so we clapped it. And clapping it they could do it perfectly.
130 They knew exactly were the beats fell and so they would put it with the box. We put it
131 with the bow because they do it with the bow the whole rest of the piece and they all
132 handled that just fine. So then we put it to pizzicato and it still wasn't working was
133 really frustrating for them and of course, when I see that, I'm not going to go move on to
134 something else and just have questions of "well, why can't we can't do this???" - unless
135 we run out of time. But I will change what I'm doing that day, if they seem distraught

136 or if they seem discouraged or they just have no idea why it's not working. Then I will
137 stop my course of action, and just try to figure out with them what exactly isn't working.
138
139 Lani: um hmm...It sounds like you give them a lot of choice as far as were learning goes
140 (Abby: um hum). Um, how did you create that kind of unique atmosphere of trust or
141 family or... (Abby: uhhhhh.) Do you feel...I don't want to put words in your mouth...
142
143 Abby: I do. I do. I completely feel that way, yeah. I love the environment that my
144 classrooms have and I think it's mostly because um...I don't know if I did anything that I
145 was like "Ooo, you know what this would be good, too," to unify them but I think just
146 letting them make choices on their own. Like their seating, which is something so small
147 that can be very like, in some classrooms, I'm lucky that I have no kids...well, I know
148 some kids that feed off of each other. But usually the marker on the board - indicating
149 that it takes care of the issue - it's not that. I'm lucky that no one is going to fight with
150 each other. And even if that does happen, sometimes I have arguments and then I just
151 say, "We're all, you know, we're all part of one section. It doesn't need to be like that."
152 And so they're like oh, yeah, ok. Um, but I think just letting them have ownership in the
153 class and it's not just me saying, "Do this, do this, do this. You sit here. You sit here."
154 And it makes them feel they are more part of it, and a part of their learning process.
155
156 Lani: Ok, great! Well, those are the questions I had and you answered all of them.
157

1 **Playback Interview Transcription Taka**

2 DATE: Monday, March 6, 2017

3

4 TIME: 3:40 PM

5

6 PLACE: OCU, Practice Room

7

8 SETTING: Before faculty meeting

9

10 (Start of interview)

11

12 Lani: Yeah, I can read 'em...How do you help students feel valued in class?

13

14 Taka: I don't know. I kind of like to walk around. Like making really weird faces at
15 them. Like each individual person and it's interesting to see how they react. I always
16 tell them to pay attention or whatever, but I usually like to walk around and sit next to
17 each person at least one time in class.

18

19 Lani: Good! And not necessarily for behavior issues but just to feel important in the
20 class.

21

22 Taka: Yeah, just to make sure they know they are being watched, I guess. (Lani: ok)
23 Because you know, some kids want the attention and so if I give it to them there, they
24 won't be distracting to the others.

25

26 Lani: Ah! Gotcha! Definitely. Ok, how do you share your musical ideas and interests
27 with your students?

28

29 Taka: Mmm..there's not a lot of that that happens in Francisco's class but uh, I know I
30 taught some vocal accompanying stuff in my choir accompaniment, so I kind of know
31 how to like, run rehearsals I guess. So, like that's about the only kind of experience I
32 have but I'm not like a senior intern, so I don't know. They call (inaudible, Lani: sure).
33 Uh, sometimes there's like uh, more productive ways to run stuff, especially when we
34 only have an hour for our class

35

36 Lani: Yeah, yeah, definitely. Um and how do you think that students share their
37 musical ideas in class? Or are they given that opportunity either in Francisco's class or
38 my class or both?

39

40 Taka: Yeah, for Francisco's class we do a lot of reading but when we did the chimes, a
41 lot of people got to get up and conduct. We had sections and so they were allowed to
42 do dynamics while conducting, and like, cue-in certain sections and take them out at
43 their discretion. So, I feel like there's a lot freedom there and I know that there's not a

44 lot of phrasing right now, but it's not like orchestra or anything. But I think they're
45 getting their fair share of like let's do this and see what it sounds like.
46

47 Lani: Ok, good! Well, what about if you see things that are not working? Do you guys
48 have discussions about how to change it or what have you seen that's been changed or...
49

50 Taka: Yeah, we do some stuff that doesn't seem to always work, um, I know we did the
51 chair thing once, the walking across, um, that ended up being good for one group and
52 the other group wanted to be like original and they wanted to do something else, but
53 they weren't very friendly about it. So, sometimes it doesn't work out, but Francisco
54 and I are like, we're going to power through and then get to the kids who are doing what
55 they're supposed to after the activity.
56

57 Lani: So you guys talk about it. Do you let your students talk about...if they've noticed
58 any changes or ways to change things in class? It doesn't have to be musically, it can, I
59 mean it doesn't have to be behaviorally either, just musically, or anything like that.
60

61 Taka: I'm not sure. I don't know if we do do a lot of like student evaluation stuff. I
62 think it might be beneficial to do a little more, personally.
63

64 Lani: Definitely, and that's something we'll talk about, I think today, in our faculty
65 meeting, too.
66

67 Taka: That sounds good.
68

69 Lani: Yeah, because that's going to help all of us. (Taka: uh huh) And really, that's,
70 those are the only questions I had for you but what else do you want to add? Um, what
71 do you think is unique about either Francisco's class or mine or both? Again, what do
72 you see that we do that is either helping a student or encouraging the student to become
73 more musical or...
74

75 Taka: Ummm, I think there's a lot of throwing kids into a situation. It's kind of like
76 productive peer pressure. We're like, "yeah, let's do this!" and then so the majority of
77 the class is like "Yeah, let's do it!" I think that's definitely a good thing when it comes to
78 music. Like, you really want to pursue a music career - you want to like get your hands
79 on everything before you decide what you want to do. So, I think it's really helpful that
80 we're doing a lot of, a lot stuff in fundamentals. Like in Francisco, we did a lot of
81 ukulele stuff, and chimes, so there's a lot of priority there. And then throwing kids into
82 Musical Theater stuff, singing, dancing, listening to music is not something that a lot of
83 kids get to experience early. So, I think even if they don't decided to do music, I think a
84 lot of that collaborative effort is good especially to kids early on because they know
85 how to react to it and how to work together.
86

1 Playback Interview Transcription Francisco

2 DATE: Monday, March 6, 2017

3

4 TIME: 2:40 PM

5

6 PLACE: OCU, My office (BL09)

7

8 SETTING: Desk, chair (casual interview)

9

10 (Start of interview)

11 Lani: All right, today is March 6, 2017 and I just have 6 questions and in your first
12 video, you reminded students about a story you told the last class to help set the stage
13 for a song. Instead of retelling the story, you asked them to provide details - retell the
14 story and elements they learned. They appeared proud and excited to be able to do this.
15 So my question is, is it important for you to show your students that they are valued in
16 your class?

17

18 Francisco: To me, it's um, it's very, very important that students get from the teacher,
19 um..I don't want to use the words recognition, but attention - in, in, in several different
20 ways. Uh, and that leads to, (cough) to value of their presence - even just their presence
21 there. So for example, uh, the first and most obvious one is when a student raises their
22 hand, when a student wants to communicate something. Um..so for example in the case
23 of the story one, they want to add a specific detail that I might have missed or some
24 information that they might have about the story, about the elements in the story or just
25 something that, that popped in their mind that, that goes along with, with the story. Um,
26 addressing that is super important because it creates a space for this uh, where, where
27 this student has participation first, shares something that is their own with (not just the
28 teacher for everyone else in the class) and that inherently is value. For it's, some kind of
29 a reward even to that student. Uh, because it's rewarding when you are able to
30 communicate something and it's acknowledged. So acknowledging that, that's the most
31 important, say, closing part on the teachers end is acknowledging, then acknowledging
32 the, the input and then repeating so everyone really gets you know, what that
33 information was, umm... or just to, for, for the student to know that that information
34 was taken and was received and is valuable.

35

36 Lani: So that's kind of what you use your points for.

37

38 Francisco: Yes, and so at that point is where I use points and uh... in participation and
39 even if when some, some answer to a question is wrong. Hey, you still get points for
40 trying out. Just raising your hand and wanting to be part of the group and then, then,
41 uh...just being part of the discussion or the story or the activity.

42

43 Lani: So do they get anything for getting points?

44 Francisco: At some point, depending on the activity and depending on the moment of
45 the class, they do get a reward for points. Some of the rewards are a little more tricky
46 than just an instant or a direct um, physical reward. Some of them are, the first group
47 that gets to line up, which in itself is not quite a reward because everyone is going to
48 line up at the same time...but hey, we're the first group that get to line up. That means
49 we did a lot, we got a lot of points. That means we participated a lot. That means we
50 are doing a great job. And I think, and I'm pretty sure there are other people with more
51 studies that can (laugh) that can prove this or not. But I feel like unconsciously um,
52 they, all of the see the repercussion of doing the great job that is acquiring those points,
53 therefor, we get to line up first.

54
55 Lani: I think it's a big deal them, I really do. Even though there's not an immediate
56 reward, the reward is her *I got acknowledged*. (Francisco: uh hum) and again that's
57 exactly what you're talking about. We're going to shift gears just a little bit.

58
59 Francisco: Yes!

60
61 Lani: How do you share your musical ideas and interests with your students? I know
62 you've brought in your guitar, your Colombian background. Oh my goodness, all your
63 travels. How do you share what you like most about music with them?

64
65 Francisco: Well (cough), first of all, music is such a passion to me that I just can't stop
66 sharing it and especially when it comes to uh a, let's say a community or a group, or
67 even just a single individual, that just has no exposure to certain aspects of that passion
68 of music. So for example, you mentioned, my, my tradition, my culture um, in the
69 music, the music from my country. Well, I, I just I feel like I have the role of an
70 ambassador in terms of transmitting and passing along these traditions to other cultures.
71 Uh, and for them to just get a hint of, at least if possible, a hint of, of what it represents
72 and what the values are and what uh, or specifically music words, what genres and what
73 instruments and what the music is about. All of that... I, I feel that to get that it's
74 important for them to get that closeness to other foreign cultures. Um, sharing what I
75 know musically, it's just what gears, it what drives my passion of teaching - because
76 that's moment when you can successfully pass the information of you know, this one
77 element... *Boom*, to another person and when the student gets it that is such a reward of
78 course, for the teachers but for the student because they already, they know something
79 that they can use. They have knowledge that that they probably could not have gotten
80 (at least at they have not at that point)

81
82 Lani: Uh hum. What about your student? Do you like to encourage your students to
83 share their musical ideas with you and if so, what are some ways that you do that?

84
85 Francisco: I love to do that! I love for them to give me as much input as possible.
86 Because that first gives me an idea of what to, to work with or how to develop those
87 more, or what to add, what to integrate into what they know of music. Um, how do I do
88 that? I...in a group class, I try to create activities in which they will be, they will find a
89 place in which to share certain, certain elements that they might not even be fully

90 conscious that they know. Um, for example when we were talking about a culture, I like
91 making comparisons - positive comparisons, of course, more like parallels between
92 cultures. Ok, so if we learn about the culture, the, about the music in Mexico and about
93 the, the tradition of the popular Mariachi Band as a popular ensemble, uh, what would
94 be a counterpart that we can find in American culture. And then right away, even, even
95 if they're ot thinking about that all the time, they just, just they use what they, the
96 culture and what society feeds them and where its based. And they start saying
97 something like "oh, blues band, or a jazz band, or a rock band, or something like that."
98 And that creates first, that creates (Lani: Ok, yeah) the context for them to understand
99 ok, how this Mariachi Band works in the realm of Mexican culture, (Lani: Uh hum) in
100 Mexican tradition.

101

102 Lani: What about in your activities? Like when you do the chimes, I've noticed that you
103 are allowing them to add a few things... not even chimes, but I've seen your rhythm
104 activities where they come up with their own creative ideas. Is that important, do you
105 feel?

106

107 Francisco: It's very important that students, uh, develop that creative part. Um, even if
108 sometimes it seems like it's very limited. What I came to learn here at El Sistema is that
109 that creativity shows in many, many different ways that we usually think of, that we're
110 accustom to see in people. So some, and the perfect example is... the, what, ok, so I
111 put the activity out there, to develop a rhythmic pattern, uh with certain, certain
112 standard elements (Lani: Uh hum). Like, we're going to do 4/4. You can use whole
113 notes, half notes, quarter notes, and eights notes, no more. And um, then you're going
114 to create just one 4-measure line. Ok, all those are set down there, and then you expect
115 people that you know, they, they go crazy and they use only eighth notes and they want
116 everything to go fast, to go fast, no rests, no nothing. But then you find the other side of
117 the spectrum, which is a very minimalistic um, approach to the activity. Sometimes of
118 course, we have the group that just does it because it's easier, but we, you do have the
119 population that really thinks about it and says, "Hey, I want to do something different."
120 And this something different will break from what I see every day. (Lani: Ok) And
121 that's when they come up with, I don't know, multiple very interesting things. Like for
122 example, a whole row of just rests and then the last note just one note (Lani: laughs) at
123 the end. Uh hum. Why do he do that? Well that's the beginning and the end, at the
124 very end. That is an interesting approach and we acknowledge that uh, and if possible
125 we actually we add some you know, some extra information. Like well, this is what
126 minimalism is (laugh) and this is an actual school of thought that took over the 20th
127 Century (Lani: uh hum). All that we can create a whole lesson over just one single
128 create exercise that happened with one student. Uh, so yeah, it's very valuable to do
129 those exercises and, and I like letting them do that. Not just with music, sometimes
130 with like uh, stories or story telling or uh, drawing. Uh, to see where, where their
131 creativity comes from and how, how it is uh, how they (pause) what the mental process
132 is behind what comes out on the paper, in the music, in the story, the singing.

133

134 Lani: Yeah, well that's um, the next question that I had. You weren't sure about a
135 question with um, OKC, how it was founded. And you said, you'd give them 5 extra

136 points if they knew. My question was going to be an example of a way that you allow
137 students the opportunity to learn more than just the song, but you've given me so many
138 examples. So, that's, I mean that's fantastic that you do that. Uh, these are the last, the
139 last two questions really are...uh, do you have conversations with your student about
140 what's working and what's not working musically or non-musically in your class and do
141 you adjust your lessons if something's not working well. And how do you do that if
142 you do?

143

144 Francisco: I try as much (cough) to interact with them...uh, to open the channel of
145 communication. Uh, so that I'm fully aware or so that they are fully aware of what
146 needs to be done or what is happening or if something is not working that you can
147 communicate that, you know, that such things are happening because of this one reason.
148 Of course, if there is from, from student to student. Uh, and so there are even days that
149 you are not fully functional (Both: laugh) and your brain, or language. Especially me,
150 you know sometimes, my, I get a little bit stuck in my English. But it's actually very
151 interesting to see how they come with their own creative ways to communicate when
152 something is not working in that one sense. Um, musically, I've been able to do this uh,
153 to build this relationship more with my chamber ensemble groups (Lani: Ummmm, tell
154 me about that) Because we definitely do more uh, actually music making in chamber
155 music because that's why they're there for. Um, in terms of communicating, I've
156 noticed, there is...it's...there's still quite a little gap in terms of vocabulary, in terms of
157 consolidating a cohesive and consistent vocabulary (Lani: For chamber or
158 fundamentals?) I think in general. Ok this point I'm going to put it as a general thing.
159 (Lani: sure). Uh, because I have two chamber ensembles, so that's to me, that's to me
160 that's already like a good population to say that you know, that is something that it's
161 happening most in the majority of the population. Um (Lani: Do you see that as
162 pedagogical problem or issue?) I see that, I see that just as a...I don't think it's a
163 pedagogical issue. I think it's more of a...I don't want to say an organizational issue but
164 it's definitely a communication break-down (Lani: Uh hum) within the different parts of
165 the, of the full organization (Lani: OK, ok), which can easily, it can easily be fixed. Uh,
166 but it just needs to be addressed. (Lani: Uh hum, uh hum) Consistency is difficult,
167 especially when you have more than 20 faculty, you know, body of, of teachers. Um,
168 but I think that would be the number one difficulty that I, that I notice when it comes to
169 address a specific musical element or, or for the student to communicate that they have
170 a musical idea but they just cannot find the words, how to express it. (Lani: Hmmmm)
171 And it's because we're lacking that, that, that, the consistency in the vocabulary. It's not;
172 it's not completely gone. It's not. It is present. (Lani: ok, ok) Uh, but it's just not
173 consistent. I don't know if I did well from the question.

174

175 Lani: No, that's perfect. That's great. Um, do you feel like your students have a voice
176 in the direction of your overall music instruction? Where you go from, where you
177 started? Even if you think about a long time ago when you first started. Do you feel
178 like you give them the same amount of input or voice into what you teach now as
179 opposed to back then or vice-versa?

180

181 Francisco: Hmm (Lani: How has it changed or has it changed? Is it about the same?)

182 That's very interesting. I don't quite...I know that I'm not as shy as I was at the
183 beginning. Because I was definitely was more shy in terms of interacting with the
184 group. Uh, which led to me just, uh, expecting the classroom and the activities and
185 exercises and everything to go just the way I envisioned it. The way I had it in my
186 brain, the way I expected to have it. And it's not that those expectations have lowered,
187 but they've broadened. There is more room for their participation and for the class to
188 completely turn around if someone presents you know, like uh, any question, or a, a
189 comment that would allow that to happen with the class (Lani: You feel like that's
190 changed a little bit? You feel more comfortable with that?) I feel like that has changed.
191 That has changed. It's way more comfortable with that now and I feel with me being
192 comfortable, the students are more comfortable as well. So, I feel like I can, I can
193 improvise in the middle of the class if someone comes up with the question. Why do
194 they think rhythm or why would they feel like more rhythmic, a rhythmic I don't know,
195 or more rhythmic song or piece would express sadness. That doesn't make sense.
196 Boom. At that moment, with that question, I can almost erase what I have planned for
197 the rest of the class. And turn around and could make a group discussion, which turns
198 out most of the time really, really well. You have to know when to do it though.
199
200 Lani: So how did you learn how to do that? I'm these are things that I talk about with
201 my own students. (Francisco: Yeah) How you know, you get to a point where you feel
202 comfortable and you can switch on a dime like that.
203
204 Francisco: Well, first it's just mimicking what I was taught or what I saw my teachers
205 doing in college. I was very particular when it came to the teacher on call for that class
206 because I would not only take the material, and you know just study what they were
207 teaching, but also I would analyze teaching techniques and just look at how they
208 presented certain information. Many times, I just kind of criticize certain, certain
209 aspects of their teaching. And the things that I liked, and the faculty I admired the most,
210 and say uh, I sort of stole those from them (Lani: Uh huh). And I, and I tried to use
211 them. Tried to apply them as much as possible in my classroom. So, for example, I
212 learned a lot from collaborating with you during our first few years (Lani: I feel the
213 same!) Exact..well, I don't know about that. Uh, I did learn a lot from our experience
214 together, uh, in terms of how to address a group of that age or how to uh, bend the
215 control of the classroom and how to give control to the students and how to me regain
216 of the control. How to, how to be silly, that was the first thing that I know...it's
217 completely unprofessional.... yeah, how to have a more laid back environment in the
218 classroom. That was something I learned during El Sistema only. Um, because before
219 that all I had was my high school and college education, which I want to say, I actually
220 liked that. It was very formal, very scholarly driven. Not much room for, there was not
221 much room for, you know, being silly, making a joke or something like that. Which
222 now, I think it's actually a very important part of the whole experience of learning and
223 teaching. Um, just because it changes the context for a second and allows the
224 environment, the class, even just your brain to just breathe. And then move on to you
225 know, something else. So yes, it has changed, it definitely has changed over the last 4
226 years. Uh, yeah and I really enjoy when the students are mainly in charge. That's what
227 I, that's what I like the most. It's funny but, I used to think if you're in charge, if you've

228 got the whole, every aspect of the classroom and the instruction then everything is
229 going to be fine - and it's the opposite. I feel way better, way more comfortable in..and
230 sometimes the lesson is even more effective when the students are the ones completely
231 in charge, and the ones asking the questions, participating, having, of course, a great
232 behavior - but, but mainly just, their interaction. When they are engaged in that way, it
233 makes the instruction a piece of cake.

234

235 Lani: That's wonderful. Thank you so much!

236

237 *END OF Interview – we continued talking, so I started taping again.*

238

239 Francisco: So I think that works in the classroom, uh, because the student usually
240 expects that whole um, that whole idea of hierarchy. Where the teacher is the teacher
241 and the one that knows and the one that's in control. And the student is kind of
242 subjugated and has to you, just like, has to be submissive and follow, and just follow
243 and take orders and do, uh, it's not that way in reality. In reality, I mean yes, it, but
244 that's like a civilian and a judge or a civilian and a cop, which sometimes, you know for
245 a group, a big group has negative connotations. But the reality is that we are a
246 community. In a community you have elderly people, you have adults, you have young
247 adults, you have teenagers, you have kids, you have children. Well,, and the reality is
248 that when we are out there living our lives even before the academia was established
249 from that normative hierarchy then we were all just together working as a one
250 functional organ...one functional community. Sometimes, I think why, why do we have
251 to make that distinction so strong in a classroom? Because of behavior, because of
252 that...well, yes, but no, there are. I think that the more we find that, that uh, that normal,
253 that natural community setup, then the more or less issues, the less we have to deal with
254 issues like behavior or control of the, you know, of everything that is happening in the
255 classroom, and the more we can let the class run itself. That's the way I see it. The
256 class runs itself and the students have that appropriation, which in reality that's what it
257 is. The relationship with a parent and a child, when they you know, they have room and
258 they can decorate the way they want but you know, some thing that is going to be ok
259 with them but also with their parents, and when the parent acknowledges that ok, well
260 this is what he want to do and I have to acknowledge that, that, that becomes that reality
261 we choose, that which we're living everyday. You know, well that person wants to wear
262 those shoes, then, why would I have to? You know, (laugh) like criticize that or why do
263 I have to point at that person for that? No. That's not how it is!

264

265 Lani: Ok, awesome!

266

1 **Playback Interview Transcription Kayla**

2 DATE: Monday, March 6, 2017

3

4 TIME: 6:05 PM

5

6 PLACE: OCU, outside MUED Room

7

8 SETTING: Busy – everyone is leaving the ESO meeting

9

10 Kayla sent me this information ahead of time via email. This was extremely helpful as
11 finding time to meet outside of El Sistema is difficult. Our interview was live after the
12 second question (**).

13

14 Background:

15 Many of my teaching decisions in my chamber ensembles are shaped by the nature of
16 the ensemble itself. Both ensembles are "student led," so I've interpreted that to mean
17 students should be doing as much of the rehearsing and decision-making as possible.
18 The Esperanza trio in particular took inspiration from another chamber ensemble at El
19 Sistema, GROUP, which operates even more independently than the average student-
20 led ensemble, so I have been pushing them to take even more ownership of each aspect
21 of their music-making. Unlike other ensembles, that trio formed themselves (most ESO
22 chamber ensemble have assigned personnel) and chose their own repertoire.

23

24 Lani: As soon as your chamber rehearsal began, you encouraged your students to share
25 their musical ideas by allowing them to make edits to the score and noting that the piece
26 would take a lot of individual practice. Is this an example of how you make your
27 students feel valued in your class/group? Are there other examples?

28

29 Kayla: Because my ensembles are student-led, I feel that one of my most important
30 tasks is facilitating equal participation and ownership. I've found that students tend to
31 feel uncomfortable unless there is one "leader," so one of the concepts I emphasize is
32 the idea that they are ALL leaders. Asking my Esperanza trio to write down their
33 individual thoughts on the arrangement before they could come together and collaborate
34 was definitely one attempt at making each member feel as though their contributions are
35 equally valuable. In my Alegria ensemble, I usually have to be more explicit in
36 enforcing this concept -- as in, verbally reminding them that everyone's contributions
37 are equal and there isn't just one leader. I make sure to ask for thoughts and ideas from
38 each member of the ensemble, especially those who are most comfortable following
39 instructions rather than giving them.

40

41 Lani: You arranged the version of the piece they are currently playing.

42

43 Kayla:

44 The repertoire selection process for the Esperanza trio was a really fun collaboration
45 between the students and I. It started with me asking broad questions about what kind
46 of ensemble they wanted to be, then asking what kind of music they wanted to play,
47 then narrowing that down to a few songs they would all be interested in playing. From
48 there, I found some examples of the songs from their short list arranged for string
49 quartets, to give them an idea of what worked and what didn't for their approximate
50 instrumentation. Then they picked two songs, one to be arranged by me, and the other
51 to be arranged by a member of the trio, who is also in my composition class. The
52 students were really enthusiastic throughout the process and especially receptive to my
53 thoughts, so I ended up being more involved than I originally had planned, because I
54 usually prefer to be as uninvolved in the decision-making as possible. However, I think
55 having a little bit more guidance gave them more confidence in their final selection.

56

57 ****(Start of interview)**

58

59 Lani: Do you often share your musical ideas and interests with your students? Do they
60 like to share their ideas with you?

61

62 Kayla: I do enjoy sharing my musical taste with students in certain contexts (especially
63 my composition class) for a couple reasons. First of all, I think most students have an
64 idea of adults (and probably especially music teachers) as being dismissive of their
65 favorite music -- what they hear on the radio or at home -- as not as valuable as what we
66 listen to, be it classical music or classic rock. Since I'm younger and weirdly passionate
67 about the value inherent in all music, including pop, hip-hop, etc., it's an easy way for
68 me to relate to them on a different level and help legitimize their interests. Second,
69 many of the same rules for writing a catchy tune apply to both popular and classical
70 music, so in my composition class, it's more helpful and convincing if I can use
71 examples they're already familiar with and that they agree is interesting. Third, I think
72 it's important that they see a young person who enjoys popular AND classical music,
73 just to help eliminate the division so many of us envision between those styles of music.
74 Pop music can be musically challenging and classical music can be cool!

75

76 Lani: After explaining your goals to the students, you told them you were not going to
77 talk unless they asked for help. Why did you choose to do take this student-led
78 approach and have you taken this approach in the past? Do you feel it is an effective
79 approach?

80

81 Kayla: I answered most of this in my preface; these students were specifically chosen to
82 be in student-led ensembles, so I try to take that as literally as I can! In my experience
83 doing these ensembles, those who are able to take the most ownership and feel the most
84 responsible for their own success grow the most, musically and socially.

85

86 Lani: Do you have conversations with your students about what's working or what's not
87 working in your music class/group? Do you adjust your lessons, if something is not
88 working well? If yes, can you give an example?

89

90 Kayla: So because they, in theory, teach themselves and teach each other because they
91 are student-led, um, when I do talk, it tends to be a lot of reflection, and, and, you know,
92 asking them questions about it and give their thoughts. So one fo the things that has
93 been kind of tricky for me this semester is finding the balance between student-led,
94 hands-off for me vs. just like maximizing their time efficiency. Sometimes, I do have to
95 interject with them. "I will give you a hint, something I've learned as a teacher, full
96 runs don't need to happen...you know, sometimes it's more helpful to isolate one or two
97 parts. Sometimes it's more helpful to isolate one phrase, so that kind of thing um, just in
98 like..."so we've done a couple rounds in a row. Have we gotten better?" "No. How, what
99 else can we do?" It's a lot of asking questions.

100

101 Lani: Ok

102

103 Kayla: Um, there are sometimes where just like, as far as classroom management goes,
104 we just have to acknowledge that if somebody is playing around, how can you best use
105 your time? That's not talking or not disruptive, especially with the younger ones. With
106 the older ones, I think, they have more experience and they, when I tell them...One of
107 the things I tell them in the first time I meet, when you go to your rehearsals or your
108 instrument classes this week I want you to think about the kinds of things we teachers
109 do. What kinds of activities do you do? You know, I'll ask them often times, like, "Ok,
110 if your instrument teachers outs this piece on your stand, what is the first things they
111 might have you do? It's probably not a full rep." So, with the older kids, it's cool
112 because they'll come back the next week and say she had me clap it or sing the rhythms
113 or whatever. So they are really good about remembering those specific techniques and
114 sometimes with the younger ones I have to push them to....(Lani: prompt?)..yeah..but
115 uh..

116

117 Lani: Yeah, that's good, I think, that's awesome. Ok, well thank you! I'm going
118 to...*end*

119

1 **Playback Interview Transcription Sam**

2 DATE: Monday, March 6, 2017

3

4 TIME: 6:20 PM

5

6 PLACE: OCU, outside MUED Room,

7

8 SETTING: Less busy – everyone is leaving the ESO meeting and chatting

9

10 (Start of interview)

11 Lani: OK, so this is Samantha Sy and it is March 6th and we are going to go through a
12 couple of questions and the first one is.. Your students knew exactly what to do when
13 they entered the gym and several students seemed to have significant roles in the
14 rehearsal (i.e. tuning, helping other students with questions, sight-reading structures,
15 etc.) Is it important to make your students feel valued in your rehearsal? Are these
16 examples of how you do this and/or are there other ways?

17

18 Sam: Um, I think that well, yes, because obviously it's important for them to feel
19 valued, but I'm not sure that those are all the ways. I mean I just kind of make a point
20 of everybody has a place in this rehearsal, and it, you don't have to be, it doesn't have to
21 be as you know, important as tuning but if you're not in your seat when rehearsal is
22 ready to start, then we can't start without you. So, really just...also in doing that...
23 teaching them real life skills like time management and making sure they are on time
24 and you know responsibility of their roles and making sure they come together as a
25 team towards a common goal. You know, yeah.

26

27 Lani: Yeah, no, that's perfect. Do you feel like your group has a unique identity? Like
28 being in sectionals...I don't know, there was a feeling that I got when I was there - that
29 they took care of each other.

30

31 Sam: Um, I think so. I think it's very special for them to be part of just the strings group
32 and to just work on just strings only repertoire, because it's different. You know, we all
33 know what it's like to be different ensembles and some kids enjoy the full orchestra
34 more than the string ensembles. But I think it definitely helps me connect with them,
35 being a string person. You know, that maybe gives me more of an advantage than like
36 Mike, maybe Kristen, or anybody else that's not you know, because I can just grab an
37 instrument and just play what I want and show them. Um, it also gives me credibility as
38 their conductor to have those skills as an orchestra conductor. Um, so I think it does. It
39 connects within a way, just as you would meet a stranger at a camp and if they play a
40 string instrument...you already have that (Lani: uh hum). So, think yeah, we definitely
41 have a...

42

43 Lani: Ok, yeah. Um, do you share your musical ideas and interests with your students?

44 I definitely wrote in here, in my notes that it was so neat to see their faces when they're
45 doing the sight-reading pieces. (Sam: Yeah, right) Like, "I know what that is!" It
46 wasn't, it was a neat ah ha moment.

47

48 Sam: Right, um we definitely, or I try to leave room as far as discussion for the kids um,
49 what do we want to do, what are we trying to achieve, what um, would you like to hear
50 that is not written in the music. What, you know, what are goals for us? And what are
51 goals for you as a musician and so I that um, I do some of the sharing. They do some of
52 the sharing. You know, it's a very open, well I try to make it a very open environment.
53 There are definitely some of those kids who still don't feel comfortable at that level yet,
54 but that's just trying to get them there and (Lani: Right) Yeah.

55

56 Lani: I felt that when i was there. I just thought that was really neat. And I think I even
57 said how one kid didn't have her music and 2 kids dropped everything and just went
58 over there, ran over there and got the music to her. (Sam: right) I just thought that was
59 adorable. Do you challenge students to learn more than just the piece (or instrument
60 skill/ technique) you are teaching? How do you motivate students to practice on their
61 own?

62

63 Sam: (sigh - laugh)**interruption**

64 I try to challenge them to learn more than just the piece um, and I think it's just as
65 simple as like, you never know what you're going to get when you walk into my
66 rehearsal. You never know what I'm going to ask you to do or it's more than just play
67 the rep, it's ok, play this scale associated with the rep. Ok, now play the you know,
68 where have we seen this rhythm somewhere else? Just connecting lots of former ideas
69 with developing ideas. Sometimes I think the practice is fear-based (Lani: mmmm!)
70 Which is not always the best but I'm not going to say that's the best motivational tool,
71 but definitely uh, I'm not afraid to call out kids in rehearsal. And sometimes I'm like,
72 "Ok, well you play it!" You know, or this stand plays it. Or, I just pick 5 random kids
73 and then I have them listen and then say, ok what do you here? What can you suggest?
74 What is happening with this ensemble? (Lani: uh hum) And well definitely, um, I'm
75 not sure that I use it a whole lot at El Sistema, but at school I'm like, "Well what
76 happens when if the concert day comes and then everybody gets the flu and you're the
77 only 10 people that...cause you know, that a real thing. I mean, maybe not as dramatic.
78 I think that you know, some of it is, I don't want to get caught playing terribly in front
79 of my peers if Ms. Sy calls me out on it, which is hard to find a balance between that
80 and the culture we live in now - and there's a lot of entitlement, and a lot of like, I don't
81 have to practice. (Lani: Uh huh) Mom still let's me have my cell phone, or you know,
82 it's just not on their priorities. But I do sometimes use fear as a real thing.

83

84 Lani: Hey, that's what it is and that was my next question. I noticed that the students
85 hold each other accountable (Sam: Right). So, it's like, "Hey, it's not me. This person
86 over here didn't come in" (Sam: right). I mean literally, "HEY! Get your act together."
87 - those kinds of things, so I'm like that's where that comes from.

88

89 Sam: Well, and it's definitely like I said, I'm not afraid to call them out. We all have our

90 own part. Just like I tell them... if I make a mistake. There's a lot of times I say, ok we
91 have to stop because I accidentally conducted that in 4 or I didn't do the tempo
92 transition like I wanted to or you know, I feel like a lot of the reason I have success with
93 kids is that they know that I'm human. They're human. We all know that and we are
94 going to fix it and move on. It's not life or death. You know, I feel like sometimes they
95 walk to classrooms and they make mistakes and it's like my life is over! You know, and
96 it's like, no you made a mistake. You're not bleeding. We're not dead. Get up. Like
97 move on once we get it together and then we'll go. And I think that's a very real quality
98 that they don't see from a lot of adults, not necessarily at ESO but anywhere in their life
99 - it's just like, I'm the adult, you're the kid. I'm right, you're wrong. You know, in my
100 rehearsals we can all be wrong and I've been there. You know, they know like oh, Ms.
101 Sy messed up because she's tired. You know, like she missed a cue because she was
102 paying attention to something else or you know like, I think that works for me and it
103 works for them and there's no hurt feelings. No kids are crying at the end of the day.
104 It's just you're accountable. I'm going to know all 5 parts; you're going to know your 1
105 part. Come to rehearsal ready to work. So...

106

107 Lani: Awesome, ok, no that's perfect Great! Um, so the last 2 questions I have... one of
108 them is...do you have conversations with your students about what's working or what's
109 not working in your music class/group? Do you adjust your lessons, if something is not
110 working well? And if you do, can you give me an example of how you might do that?

111

112 Sam: Um, I don't think I have a lot of conversations with them about what is working or
113 what is not working, but that is just me. Naturally, I just reflect on my own a lot. (Lani:
114 Um hum) Particularly at the end of rehearsals, when I go home for the day, I'm like
115 what... you know...uh...I think that I'm in a special situation because I have been here
116 since the beginning and I taught a lot of those kids from the beginning. So, I know in
117 depth what their personality is and what, you know, and so it's a little bit easier for me
118 to do that. Um, and luckily for me as well, I've worked with all of the sections
119 throughout the 4 years, so I do a lot of self-reflection. So, we don't talk about that a lot
120 but when I'm on the podium running rehearsal and something is not working, I'm
121 always like...I take a step back, and I'm like why isn't it working? Um, it is a musical
122 thing that we have to break down or is it that they have spent all day testing and they are
123 just out of it. At that point it's like - if it's the second one - take a break from the music.
124 It's like nothing at that point is going to get through their brains, you know, we all
125 know being teachers. If it's a musically thing, it has to be a fast assessment of...if it's for
126 us left-hand, right-hand, a combination of both? How do I break it down? Is it a tempo
127 thing? Um, so definitely it's... I'm processing that all at once and trying to get to where
128 I want to be while keeping the end goal in mind. Um, and this is something I have had
129 to learn over the last few years as a young teacher, when I was a young teacher I was
130 thinking ok, like, let's fix this problem. And then while fixing that problem, another
131 problem comes up and I forget about the initial issue and so now I'm very focused on
132 what my initial goal was. If it was c# out of tune, let's fix the c# out of tune, forget
133 those slurs - you know, that come up in that point. Um, definitely I do a lot of adjusting
134 on the spot myself, but I don't know that I ask them what's working or what's not
135 working because at that point it becomes, I think it would become almost too chaotic for

136 me. (Lani: Uh hum) Because there are so many individual needs.
137
138 Lani: That's true. You have a large group and it's a little more difficult when you do
139 have so many. How many do you have in strings? Just guestimate? (Sam: I don't
140 know...maybe...) I can go look it up, too. It's not...
141
142 Sam: 30ish. (Lani: It's about...ok, yeah that sounds right) Yeah. They're not the
143 biggest. They're definitely not as big as Alegria, but (Lani: ok) not terribly small.
144
145 Lani: Yeah, yeah. Well cool! And then um, how, or do you feel your student in the
146 direction of your music instruction? We kind of talked about that or the choice of
147 repertoire. I know that you choose that but again, do you listen to them do you talk to
148 them or do you solely do what you know is going to work best for their instrument?
149
150 Sam: Um, I definitely, I think I choose repertoire much like I choose it at school. I look
151 at the skills they need, what skills they are good at. For me, I know this not a big thing
152 for a lot of directors, but having the music be enjoyable, you know. I think you always
153 know when you listen to piece if someone is going to enjoy playing or not. Um,
154 because they are not... I mean Esperanza is very skilled but they are not quite at that
155 level of maturity where you put something in front of them like Stravinsky. You can't
156 put Stravinsky in front of them and have them enjoy it. I think some of them would, but
157 you don't want to put them above their maturity level, as far as their mentality. So, I
158 always try to make it enjoyable. I always try to add skills that they need for the
159 upcoming spring concert. I did ask those string teachers, what do you want the to see
160 them work on? Um, because it has been a long time since I've been in a classroom with
161 those kids. You know, it's probably been a full year now and so I did take some input
162 from the teachers but...it's um, it's never like, what do you want to play? It's always
163 like, what would they enjoy, how would they benefit? Finding the balance between
164 pushing them and making enjoyable and still...
165
166 Lani: How do you know that they are enjoying it? I mean, is there something they say?
167 Do they talk to you about it?
168
169 Sam: Um, no. I definitely think once they enjoy it, they practice more. (Laugh) (Lani:
170 Naturally, right?) Naturally and they want it to sound good. You know, uh,
171 because..and that's just something like with public school students, I found when I put
172 pieces in front of kids that don't enjoy it, they don't go home and practice it. You know,
173 it's hard but you can't pull it out of them. Say for instance you're teaching... you want
174 them to learn dexterity in their left hand. There's lots of pieces that you could explore
175 before making that decision. You know, um, I definitely think there are more pieces
176 more pleasant for the younger ears than other pieces and so I consider all those things.
177 Um, and just that moment you know when they've been working on a passage for so
178 long and they get and their eyes light up. That's really, I mean you can't quantify that
179 but seeing that is like... oh, well they like what they are liking what they are doing and
180 they feel accomplished and you know...
181

182 Lani: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Ok, awesome, awesome, awesome....

Appendix G

Meeting Transcriptions

183

1 **LTA and Conductor Meeting**

2 DATE: Saturday, February 18, 2017

3

4 TIME: 10:30 AM

5

6 PLACE: OCU, MUED Room

7

8 PARTICIPANTS: Lead Teaching Artists, Nueva Conductor, Alegria Conductors,
9 Esperanza Conductors, Executive Director, and Site Director

10

11 Mike: Your expectations for them at concert, ok, I think as concert, k, I think we, as, as
12 conductors we can do a little bit more with that as well. I'm going to push Esperanza
13 very hard to be very self-contained, to let them, to, those students should be able to once
14 I explain what's happening, should be able to take care of things themselves. K. So, uh,
15 we're going to work through that. We're trying to in the direction of them being logistic
16 leaders on their own, k, and working through that process.,all right?

17

18 **door being unlocked**

19

20 Mike: All right, uh, all right we need to spend some time and just get caught up and just
21 get caught up with a few things and so you know where this is coming from me. Uh,
22 these are questions that I keep trying to answer and can't answer, partly because I'm on
23 campus 7 hours a week, but right now I'm uh, direct student contact student teaching 6
24 hours a day. So, there's no time to get out and see anything and see what's going on.
25 And then be able to help with things. And I feel like every time I feel like every time I
26 hear about an issue it's after things have finally blown up. And so, I'm constantly in this
27 reactive mode right now, and I want to try to get ahead of the game and then find out if
28 we need other support mechanisms in place and things working the way we need to.
29 Ok, so, individual classroom issues are the biggest place we need to start and uh, I know
30 we've been working a teacher in her second class. One of the meetings going on right
31 now is...this involves both of you guys. Another teacher has got some issues and some
32 of her classes and wanted to remix some students. But because the way we split Nueva
33 because of instrument classes, that gets a little bit more complicated. Ok, so we may
34 reshuffle those violin classes a little bit. Uh, we're also talking about the possibility of
35 splitting violas into two classes, just so we can remix the fundamentals classes. Does
36 that make sense? Because right now, we've got ten violas that have to be in one class
37 because they are in their instrument class opposite of that fundamentals class. So, if we
38 split that into two classes then we've got an option of mixing things a little bit
39 differently.

40

41 ** Discussion on ways to pull a teacher out to work with another teacher needing
42 guidance. Sam also discusses ways she has helped the teacher by offering suggestions
43 and remaining in the classroom with her. Josh also adds how he suggested to the

44 teacher the idea of implementing more student leadership opportunities in the
45 classroom. **

46

47 Mike: One of the biggest issues with... particularly with young teachers is that
48 everything is black and white. Right? And so one of the things I've worked with a
49 teacher is that you've got to find this balance, yes we need to follow the rules, we need
50 to do those things, but if you allow them to predict - or dictate the pace of the class, they
51 will do that. And so you've got a point, at one point you've got to move on and at other
52 times you've got to slow down. Uh, there's only one way to learn how to do that and
53 finding good models in the classroom to get that so that's why Sam's going to be in
54 there.

55

56 ** Mike continues discussing ways to help teachers who are struggling. Discussion
57 turns to a child who is struggling in a Nueva violin class. **

58

59 Sam: After working through several parts of the piece, I kind of let the child lead me
60 through it because I already knew the child was reluctant to be out there with me. Um,
61 so then after that we worked on posture and the child was...you know, not holding the
62 violin the way you should. Um, so I just...the child's young...what is the child a 3rd, 4th
63 grader? (Mike: The child is a 4th grader, I believe)

64

65 Sam: 4th grade - so I said ok we're gonna pick some animals. What are your favorite
66 animals? You know, do you have any animals? The child said, I have a bull dog at
67 home and blah, blah, blah...And I said, ok, imagine that your bulldog lives in this area
68 on your violin and I want you to think about the way you're holding the violin? What
69 are you doing to your bulldog? And the child was like...oh my god...I'm squishing it!
70 So, the child was like real (all laugh) sad and started like...oh I was like, pick some
71 other animals. So we did this area, (Mike: Uh huh) we did this area with a bow and I
72 said these animals live here, you know? Um, and then I ok, I'm just going to take a
73 couple of pictures of you and then I want you to go back to the way you were holding.
74 And so I took a picture of that and then I said then I want you to think about the way we
75 talked about, you know. And we also, put it to sound. Do you see how you sound
76 better? It's, you know and the child's like ...that's amazing, like I didn't even know I
77 could make that sound on my instrument. Uh, yeah, you don't just do that, just because.
78 And so I took a picture of the child before and I took a picture of her after and I showed
79 her both! And I said, which one would you pay to go see. And the child said, well I
80 would go pay to see the second one, you know. That one looks way better. Um, and I
81 said, ok, what do you want to do know? And so, we came up with this idea. And it was
82 more of the childs...uh, and the child was like, I want my picture on the wall in a
83 teacher's class to show those other kids what they're supposed to look like. And so I
84 was like, what do you want to call this area that we're gonna, you know...and the child
85 was like how about we call it the wall of fame. And I said how are we going to help
86 kids get on this? I'm gonna check them. I'm gonna do this, um, I'm gonna help teacher
87 pick who's gonna up there. Uh, and I asked the child, are you gonna be embarrassed to
88 that yours is the only picture on the wall? The child was like NO! (All: laugh!!! Mike:

89 that's the child) Uh, so I've had them (pointing to pictures) on my phone so I'm gonna
90
91
92 Sam shows pictures to all (before and after)
93
94 Sam: ...and you can see the child's wrist is not still perfect...
95
96 Mike: so much better though, so much better. The child can actually see to the child's
97 fingertips, too...
98
99 Lani: and look at the child's expression on the child's face, too!
100
101 Sam: yeah, uh. And I told the child if I come in and you're on the wall of fame and I see
102 you sitting like the first one, I'm just going to take the picture off the wall. (All: laugh)
103 That's not gonna happen, so that's something we're gonna do in another teacher's class.
104 I'm gonna stay afterwards on Monday and help the teacher set that up and we'll design
105 specific criteria.
106
107 Mike: Awesome. That's a great model. I don't know if it works in other places, k, but
108 it's something to consider. I don't think, I don't think our students often get that...excuse
109 me...recognition. So right now we've got, and we're working on the issue in a teacher's
110 class, we're trying to help another teacher with working remixing her classroom. Any
111 other instructional classroom issues that you guys are aware of right now, that are...
112 that are just getting past us? Or past me, I should say?
113
114 David: We see Esperanza twice a week and trumpets in particular and she'll have one
115 kid there on Monday and two kids there on Friday. I mean it's...just been...
116
117 Sam: I feel like I've had maybe 4 total Esperanza classes (All: laugh)
118
119 Mike: That's a big issue for all of us and I tell you it is affecting -sigh- it's affecting
120 rehearsal to a certain amount. I mean I'm having to do a lot, obviously. I'm having to do
121 a lot more just basic construction in the classroom, learning parts, and putting those
122 things together. (Josh: Well I had only half of my kids yesterday...) Well I only had 4
123 cellos on Thursday...
124
125 Josh: When we first rolled that out, I didn't think that that'd be a big deal but it seems to
126 be.
127
128 Mike: Um, and right now I'm thinking, ok, that's the Esperanza class meetings and
129 attendance and this is why I've been pushing Robyn really hard on attendance. I gotta
130 tell ya the first conversation was, well I don't think we're having an attendance
131 problem...and it's like we are. We are (All: for sure, yeah) having an attendance issue.
132 Um, and this is part of the things, and I think we need to continue uh, in each of our
133 areas, to continue to stress this to our kids as well, and why I said in the full meeting.
134 They've gotta know, that if they're not here, it's not just them they're affecting. K, I will

135 predict the only time that I have full Esperanza orchestra together will be on our
136 concert. That will be the first time that they will perform together.
137
138 *inaudible - mumble of shock, dismay**
139
140 Mike: K, so. Uh, we'll see, we'll see how things go there. They're doing, doing well for
141 the most part. Uh, we can get to the performance issues here in a little while, but I want
142 stay on, stay on target... anything else as far as teachers are concerned? I know this is a
143 hard conversation to have but this why we have it as LTA's. Anything else we're seeing
144 in class, you know, we're seeing in classrooms where we need to get more support to
145 teachers?
146
147 Sam: I think as far as the Nueva team, it's just that there are a lot of young teachers.
148 Um, and we had talked about this in string meeting one time of switching, so maybe
149 sending a more experienced teacher to a less experienced teacher's class one day and
150 switching. And uh, I told the less experienced teacher, when I teach it's going to give
151 me more insight on what your kids are doing that's making you crazy. Cause, I can't...I
152 mean, I don't. Sometimes I sit back and watch what's really happening...but you know
153 I'm only there one day a week. (Mike: right) And so I think that for Nueva, maybe
154 consider that possibility of sending Josh to a young teacher and switching (Josh: yeah, I
155 have no problem with that).
156
157 Mike: My sense, right now, is you know, as I've gotten around...and again, snapshots.
158 Uh, what I've seen from the young teacher and actually what I see from rehearsal, looks
159 like they are really on the ball.
160
161 Sam: yeah, well, I was just using her name...but the less experienced teacher...
162
163 Mike: I think, I think they're doing well. Concern I had for the less experienced teacher,
164 one of the issues was they were literally sitting on top of each other, uh, with 10
165 instruments in that room. Uh, so we have switched classrooms and that has helped.
166 (Josh: the less experienced teacher and a more experienced teacher like to switch - I
167 don't know what day they're doing it) OK, good. And again, uh, most of that is
168 sequencing in class. As far as management goes, I think less experienced teacher's
169 doing pretty well, uh just sequencing instruction. The less experienced teacher tends to
170 jump from place to place to place (Sam: right) and take...let's figure out the order in
171 which this needs to work.
172
173 ** Josh continues to discuss concerns about the less experienced teachers teaching
174 instrumental areas they are not yet familiar with. **
175
176 Josh: And, it works for beginners, but like if I were to go switch with a young teacher,
177 (I'm not sure if it was an Esperanza day) what is the young teacher going to do with my
178 students. (Sam: Ah, gotcha) That's kind of one of the reasons I'm like, well, I only get
179 two days a week with Esperanza when they're all there. (Mike: right) I don't want to

180 give up an instructional day that going to be (Mike: yeah, I think that's a legitimate
181 concern)...

182

183 Sam: If you have a block I'm free I could come do your Esperanza cellos (Josh: yeah,
184 something like would work).

185

186 ** Discussion of bow play **

187

188 14:17

189

190 Mike: One thing we could do here, ok, and we can use technology to our advantage.
191 And you know, go in and video teaching, you know, uh, how many of you...have any of
192 used Coaches Eye before?

193

194 Kristen: I've seen it before

195

196 Mike: It's pretty cool and I've used it with our teachers here. I can video, um, with our
197 students here, video there teaching episodes, then you can go in do a voice over on the
198 video. K, so you, you video that then you go in and you click on record on the video.
199 You can watch them teach and give real time feedback on the video. So if we're
200 watching things and if we were to video the young teacher's class for instance and we're
201 working on that and send it to Josh and say we're gonna,..I'm gonna ask Josh to give
202 you some pointers you could address in your instrumental section. K, I think that would
203 be worthwhile. It's going to take more of your time to do that. You know, for a 30
204 minute class period, it'd take me about 45 minutes to do, in doing that but it would be
205 one way we could get feedback to you and you could still manage, you wouldn't have to
206 be (Josh: yeah) in that class. Is that something that would be worthwhile? (Josh, Sam:
207 Yeah, I think so) Um kay, cause we'll have to expand, I'll have to expand our Coaches
208 Eye license. You can, uh you can do it on laptop, on phone, on iPad, whatever. You
209 just download the app and then we just log into the account and we're able to do those
210 things. K? Anything else David, as far as, as brass?

211

212 David: The Alegria horn section is older than the average Alegria section (Mike: right)
213 um, because of the way it's you know...so it's not too big of a deal for them. But they're
214 basically, like we've got a teacher assistant coming in, working on Tuesdays with them.

215

216 ** David continues explaining the logistical arrangements. Josh and Mike also chime in
217 regarding the situation. **

218

219 Mike: Kristen, anything in the woodwind world?

220

221 Kristen: Uh, I think Esperanza is mostly doing well, except attendance, I think is one of
222 the harder things with that. We have new flutes yeah (Mike: K.) that's the exciting
223 thing. Um, Alegria woodwinds, I would like to be able to get around more and see
224 what's going on. I know a teacher has had difficulty with the instrument section (Mike:
225 last report I had on that was it was getting much better) Yeah, that's what I heard from

226 him, too (Mike: And I think another teacher is making some real connections with a
227 student). OK, (Lani: and when they're there) (Mike: yeah)
228
229 Kristen: Ok, last time I talked to the teacher. The teacher said it's a little better; they're
230 playing a little bit more. Um, the teacher also was like...well, this year they grew up a
231 little from last year and maybe next year they'll grow a little from this year! (All: laugh)
232
233 Sam: Is it just behavioral stuff? Or what's the...
234
235 Kristen: They're all pretty young, maturity level is not all that high and I don't know
236 exactly what the issues are but um, I think the teacher has been trying some different
237 things.
238
239 ** Mike continues the discussion of the teacher and other fruitful connections and
240 relationships being made between teachers and students. **
241
242 Mike: I know when I was in sectional this last week, I mean, a student was rockin' it.
243 Man, that kid can play!
244
245 ** Kristen discusses concerns about a student and the student's family issues. Sam
246 discusses issues with "girl drama" at a particular school occurring. **
247
248 Mike: Anything else as far as fundamentals team?
249
250 Lani: No but this might be a good time to talk about this. I told Robyn, I'm gathering a
251 lot of information from fundamentals team and small group. And the biggest thing that
252 I'm noticing is that they don't how to talk to the conductors. We don't know that what
253 we are teaching is actually effecting what you all do in rehearsal. And we don't know
254 how to fix that, but we wish that, you know, maybe we knew if this activities are being
255 noticed or you recognize that there's a difference after like say Francisco talks about the
256 culture of the song or if Susan's working on the rhythms, can you tell a difference? Like
257 when I worked with them, we did stomp stuff with rhythms that you all are using in
258 Esperanza. Those kinds of things, it's not like we need to hear, yeah, yeah, yeah, that's
259 working but the students need to make that connect, too.
260
261 Mike: Yeah, and we've gotta, we've gotta be more um, (Lani: proactive, I don't know)
262 Yeah, we've just gotta more direct in making those connections (Lani: connections).
263 Cause asking a 12 year old to connect what they did in this class to that class is not
264 going to happen (Lani: exactly, but it would be like monumental, if they could see, oh
265 yeah...) Now I see how these pieces go together. This gets us down to the
266 communication piece a little bit latter I want us to talk to (Lani: ok, yeah) about, but I
267 think that's an important issue.
268
269 Mike: Just still staying on teacher issues. Any other teachers that we know right now
270 that we need to be supporting, we need to be helping, we need to be working through.

271 Right now I got, right now, we're working with a teacher, we're gonna try to do a remix
272 with classes, try to help another teacher a little bit here.
273
274 35:37
275
276 Mike: Anything, anything else from a teacher perspective? Thank you for letting me
277 know about those things. This goes to the other thing, let's not assume things have come
278 through us, and certainly don't assume they've come through me. It is flying by, things
279 right now. (Josh: I didn't realize you were vetting)
280
281 Mike: Uh, and you're going to have at times grab by both shoulders and say stop, I've
282 got to talk to you about this. Please don't hesitate to do that.
283
284 37:25
285
286 Mike: OK, section stuff. I know, it never fails. I take time off and I'm gonna go see
287 what all the issues are and I walk in and everybody's sectional is just rockin'. So, uh,
288 yeah I've got cardboard cutouts coming. You can just put them in the back. I'll just
289 look like I'm standing back there the whole time. (All: laugh, thank you!!) It's not my
290 magic, uh, but, I giggled a little bit when I left all the sectionals cause, I know what
291 they're going to tell me...it's not normally like this. (All: laugh) So, is the sectional
292 structure working? Do we need to rethink structure? Here's the issue that we run into
293 with the schedule and it's a faculty issue because we've got other classes going on with
294 the instrumental faculty. I've only got so many people to put in one place. The only
295 way I can free up faculty to do sectionals is to put larger groups of students with one
296 faculty member. That's the only way that works. Um, so, I can always go to my
297 executive director and say hey can we hire a few more faculty to help us with
298 sectionals. She'll tell me yes or no and we'll figure it out from there (All: looking at
299 Robyn – who is busy with something else and does not know we are talking about her -
300 and laughing) but I need to know from your perspective what we need to be doing.
301 How can we, how can we help in that process?
302
303 Kristen: In ours, it kind of comes and goes. Like, I would say most sectionals we get at
304 least something done. Um, but I always feel like I'm pulling teeth. Like, ok guys, we
305 gotta go, we gotta, we gotta go. Or like getting there attention is always hard cause
306 there's all these different...they're wanting to have conversations or um, yeah. And
307 getting started, actually, probably if we could find a way to get started better? I think
308 that would help a lot - just because kids are coming from other places. So they come in
309 at different times and then they have to go to the bathroom, and so, the just getting
310 started is really hard.
311
312 Sam: Are we talking about Alegria sections? When do they end? (Josh: 2nd period,
313 Thursday) (Mike: 2nd period Thursday, while Esperanza is in chamber) Why are they
314 coming to you at different times?
315

316 Kristen: Because they're all coming from different chamber groups. So they have a
317 chamber group before the sectional. So depending on when their teacher lets them out
318 exactly, and when, how far they are from the sectional room (Mike: and how slowly
319 they walk) right. If they hit the bathroom on the way (Josh: but they're not supposed to)
320 (Mike: They're not supposed)
321
322 Josh: There's just a lot of things happening during that transition time, which shouldn't
323 be happening. I don't know if that has anything to do with actual classes though.
324
325 Mike: Would it help a teacher, if Chamber teachers walked their Alegria students to
326 their sectional?
327
328 Kristen: Yes, but the chamber teachers are waiting for another Chamber group (Mike:
329 It's all right, they're, it's an Esperanza group. They should be ok to get in there and get
330 started. And I can charge those students to do that. We need to allow more autonomy
331 for our Esperanza students. I mean, I think one of the issues we've got, and one of the
332 reasons we find ourselves running around like crazy all the time, is we're trying to
333 everything for the kids. And we've got to start handing responsibility to our older kids.
334 K. So, um, that may be one thing we could do. And you know, they walk them there
335 and we just tell the Esperanza kids get in the room, get started with your rehearsal, and
336 that's our expectation.
337
338 Robyn: You wouldn't have to walk everybody. The teachers are in proximity to each
339 other. So if you had four classrooms on the 3rd floor, right?
340
341 Mike: ****interrupting**** I would still, I would still want all the, each, it's so much easier
342 to say take your kids and get them to sectional. Then we don't have to coordinate I'm
343 taking your kids, you're taking mine, I'm staying here, you're going. What's going to
344 happen is every teacher is going to partially be responsible for everybody and therefor
345 nobody is responsible for anybody.
346
347 Robyn: Got it.
348
349 Kristen: Yeah, and that's, I guess that's the other hard part, too, is that we don't know
350 who's there that day. So like, if, they're in a...if say, um, a student is in a chamber
351 group but the student is not there that day, I don't know that the student is not there that
352 day until it turns out that the student just doesn't show up to sectional. But if the student
353 was there, he could be late to sectional I would have no idea (Mike: The student could
354 be hanging out anywhere and we don't know that the student's not there) (Josh: That's,
355 that's what they see. But I don't see it.)
356
357 Mike: Good point. Yeah, but we don't take, we don't take, we don't take attendance in
358 sectionals (All: Yeah, yeah we do) OK.
359

360 **David shares a success with students - silence or focus before class and how it helps
361 them reset and focus. He allows time for comments, questions, and concerns. Other
362 LTA's and conductors share ideas. **

363

364 **Rehearsal suggestions - structure, relay expectations**

365

366 48:45

367

368 Mike: Larger ensemble stuff? Anything, I know Alegria larger rehearsals seem to be
369 going well. (Josh: Fantastic) I've been very pleased with what I've heard and seen.
370 Kids are happy. Looks like things are working well. Last Nueva rehearsal was rockin'.
371 Ok, fact that the only concern I have for the concert is whether Esperanza is going to
372 play Mambo or not. (All: laugh)

373

374 Josh: So on that subject, are we gonna, are we going to split back into the split orchestra
375 structure?

376

377 Mike: Let's get to that in a minute. I just wanna kinda keep us...that is something we
378 need to talk about...let's just do that here in a second. Anything else as far as larger
379 rehearsal goes. I know you request students meet in class and then come down. I think
380 that's wise. I think that works really well. My biggest issue with Esperanza right now
381 is that I normally start an Esperanza with 12 kids. And about 10 minutes in we've
382 grown into an orchestra. So there are many times, and I've gotta tell ya, and this may be
383 an issue Sam, I thought about this the other day, and meant to mention this to you said
384 one of the issues you're having in strings is intonation. We'll that's probably because
385 they haven't tuned their instruments yet. Because if I only have 12 in there yet. I don't
386 tune. I just start. K. And then I get so involved in rehearsal. I don't stop (Josh: You're
387 having intonation issue in Nueva or Esperanza) Esperanza. So, if you haven't stopped to
388 check adjustment, k. that may be part of that issue. Cause I just move....

389

390 Sam: The kids ask for help (Robyn: You see kids coming out of Mike's rehearsal like
391 you might see a student come out and a teacher come out to help) Mike: yuh.

392

393 Josh: Some of the kids aren't tuning with pegs. I mean. (Mike: No). That's just they're
394 just a 9th grader.

395

396 54:22

397

398 ** Discussions about whether faculty should continue playing with the Alegria group.
399 **

400

401 Mike: I don't think they (the faculty) were there to steer the section, k, but they were
402 going to be there as that model. To be able to make that happen. Now I know in the
403 wind sections, in some cases it's critical. (All: agree, it's needed)

404

405 David: I want them to have this model of sound but there's also this, they rely on me
406 then to provide the ensemble sound
407
408 Josh: And it gets a little deceptive from the podium, ok, I'm hearing this and it's fine,
409 but in reality, it's not.
410
411 David: Right, which is my issue. Which is my issue, that's my issue to take care of and
412 I but, but...I'm trying to teach them to play like a trombone section and if, if they're just
413 hiding in my sound rather than....so I go back and forth on that as to...and I think some
414 days, because there are behavior issues it's easier for me to be outside of the section
415 hovering rather than being in the section playing
416
417 Mike: Is this a process of, of increase autonomy, early in the rehearsal process needing
418 the teachers in there to provide the models and play when they are not as familiar with
419 their parts. Uh, because my concern is that you have 105 kids in there. If your 105 kids
420 are all mediocre on their parts, you've got cacophony and it's not going to work. Ok,
421 and so you need those teachers in there leading them through the process so they can
422 start to latch on to some of those things. But over a period of time, as they get more
423 familiar with the repertoire, they need less of that reliability and we do need...I do
424 understand the point...we need to require them to take the ownership and responsibility
425 for the ensemble sound and pulling the teachers out of the way. I think a little but is
426 like teaching swim lessons, right? First of all I hold them and let them swim with
427 support, and then little by little I get out of their way and until they can work their way
428 across the pool. So, you know as Alegria conductors are you ready (josh: shove them in
429 --laughing)...yeah, well sometimes that helps...are you ready to be on the stage with the
430 Alegria students alone?
431
432 Josh: Not woodwinds and brass, no. String, I think they'd be fine.
433
434 Mike: I want you guys to think about this as far as...because we need to define clearly
435 what we want the faculty support needs to be and what the expectations are. Cause if
436 we just kind of let it go at whatever, unfortunately that's what you're gonna get. Ok, and
437 um, I think you guys need to be very clear on exactly what you want from the faculty in
438 there. Define that and then let's, and then let's go at it at that point. Again, that can be a
439 great conversation in your team meetings.
440
441 Josh: Yeah, we talked about that quite a bit in ours.
442
443 Mike: And I know from the early years we wouldn't have had an orchestra sound
444 without faculty playing. (All: yeah) Right, that wouldn't have happened and so that's
445 kind of where I, where I work. But I know that we older students in Alegria now. So,
446 would you guys talk about that? Would you let me know what you're...what you're
447 expectations are because I just want to be able to support that. And
448 transportation...we're working on it. It seems to be getting better (Robyn: getting better)
449 K.
450

451 Laura: Kaiser's really hard, Um, Belle Isle's been on site before 4:10 most every day this
452 week, except for Wed...(Robyn: Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday)
453
454 Laura: Tuesday was good, too. -inaudible- no we weren't..
455
456 Robyn: Wednesday I was on site of Belle Isle and the bus was there and I worked it out
457 with the assistant principle. Like there is not a bus in the parking lot at 3:42 that we're
458 getting notice from Belle Isle.
459
460 Laura: Because the issue is whenever I don't see them at 4:11, I think, are they picked
461 up or not? (Robyn: we need that notice from the school site) I need to know, yeah, I
462 need to know and I have that arrangement with other schools, but with Robyn's
463 connection with Belle Isle, assistant principal - a text if they're not here there within 2-3
464 minutes and I'll have to call bus barn to hopefully expedite the process, but sometimes
465 it's a bus broke down and we're sending another one from the barn right now! And it's
466 like cool!!!
467
468 Robyn: The bus ran out of gas this week (All: uhhhhh)
469
470 Laura: Sometimes it's just transportation being a little chaotic...
471
472 **silly talk**
473
474 59:01
475
476 ** Discussion on attendance issues and possible solutions. **
477
478 Mike: I think continued diligence on you know, helping our kids know they need to be
479 there. Yeah, I know I've had to sit down with a couple of them and you know, and say,
480 and they say, then you know, they say watch that, I can play my part. And I say, that's
481 not what this is about. When you're not there your part's not there and we need it. I think
482 it's an important part and it's a lot of what we can teach at El Sistema is this idea that I
483 am critically important to the group. And you know, I had this conversation, and again,
484 I'm sorry a student's name keeps coming up, but I had this conversation with the student
485 when the student missed a performance. And the student's like I don't know why this is
486 important. And I said, and I just looked right at the student, I cannot tell you that you
487 are important and not expect you to be there. If you're not important, then I can be fine
488 with you not being there but because you are critically important to me, you must be
489 there. And that really set the student off. I mean she took a step backwards and just
490 kind of stood there and looked at me. I said the minute I allow you to miss a
491 performance and not come to you and talk about it,..I'm telling you, you are not
492 important to the group...and I can't allow that to happen. So, I think we need to
493 continue to, continue to talk about those things, continue to push that with kids,
494 continue to push that with families. Um, I don't know if it helps or not, one of the things
495 I did with my, my high school students a number of years ago. I just took a quote...I
496 can't remember what it was...I just took a quote, and what I did was went in and

497 removed all the t's, just blotted, whited out all the t's. And copied it and handed it to
498 them, and it was gibberish. They couldn't make sense of it. And then I said, every time
499 there is a space there, write "t". That's what happens when you're missing in rehearsal.
500 If you turn this wonderful moment of this great quote into complete gibberish because
501 the "t" is not there. So, I think anything along those lines that we can help demonstrate
502 to our kids how important they are, uh, that will help. Obviously, with a student it
503 works! (Lani: At 3:00 in the morning)

504

505 Robyn: But the kids who worry about their attendance, aren't going to be worried about
506 their attendance. We're talking about the bubble kids. There are people who are so far
507 on the other end of the spectrum. If you can even move a percentage of the people who
508 are in the middle (Mike: uh huh), you're way ahead of the curve.

509

510 Mike: Yep, yep. And I think...that will derail us faster than anything. I want you to
511 know, you know, again, I know at the leadership level we talk about this a lot. But the
512 idea is performances. They are critically important to our, to the message we give uh,
513 to the community about El Sistema. Now, we all know that performance is not the end
514 goal of where we were, however, the worst thing that could happen to this organization
515 is for a group of people to say, gosh aren't they doing nice work for "those kids." The
516 minute we hit that...we have lost all respect among anything else. And I can't tell you
517 the number of programs, particularly music programs that have just completely
518 disappeared because they couldn't get over that hump. All right? The last thing we
519 want is for our students to be looked at is being marginally good because of all the other
520 things that they are up against. Nothing is more condescending, and I'm sorry I get
521 really angry when I talk about this, I'm gonna try not to.

522

523 Robyn: No, but it's true. That's, that's, that's where typically music programs or arts
524 programs that serve in underserve communities - the level of excellence is (Mike: Stop
525 talking about a teacher -- a teacher walks in) mediocre. Well, there is a level of
526 excellence because it is mediocre and everybody says, oh that's cool we're doing
527 something special for these kids who didn't have any other thing. What I would tell you
528 is...you might as well have nothing. So...

529

530 Mike: And attendance will derail our performance issues more than anything else, all
531 right? (Sigh) And, and I know how frustrated you guys are about it. I understand it.
532 You know, I can't teach them if they're not there. (Robyn: yeah) So, if you've got other
533 ideas, and other things we can work on, let's continue to work on that...and continue to,
534 to push that. We will do the same with families and go from there. All right?

535

536 Mike: uh, curriculum collaboration and isolation. This is probably what we were
537 talking about. Are we doing things in isolation right now? Or are we doing things in a
538 collaborative effort? I know it is really hard to collaborate on curriculum. It is very,
539 very difficult because of all the other things that we've got going on. That's part of the,
540 part of the hope with the curriculum map, although I'll be honest we have limited
541 success with that. Two things: we either don't get stuff or the stuff we get in there is so
542 general it really doesn't help us. You know, if it just says warm up and rehearse, it's

543 very, it's not very useful. Um, when we're looking at combing those things, uh, and I
544 don't know how often our teachers in fundamentals to see how do I bring that into my
545 classroom. I have an advantage of being able to get up and see what is going on - watch
546 you guys work through rhythms and things like that - so I was able to work with the
547 students and say, remember what you did yesterday up there, works right here. And
548 that's helping clean up rhythms of Mambo, except for a particular student. All: laugh K.
549 We're working on the particular student.

550

551 Robyn: Don't play the last two notes...

552

553 Mike: Just don't play the last two notes!!! Singing - dah, dah, dah (All: laughing)...dah,
554 dah. That'll work; just get out of the way the rest of it. So..(David: but the trombones...)
555 Trombones are coming, uh I rewrote the bassoon part -to David)...(David: I'm trying
556 hard) I know. When they have somebody playing with them they do ok, and I rewrote
557 the bassoon part to match them, so, they're pretty solid players. They will be able to
558 help. (All: laugh, yeah)

559

560 Mike: Uh what else can we do to help with that collaboration? And I got to tell ya, I'm
561 frustrated about this because I just don't know how else to help us do that. I don't want, I
562 don't want to get in do a bunch of busy work. You know, I've looked at other programs,
563 other places requires student- requires teachers to turn in lesson plans every week and
564 do all that um, I don't want to get to that point simply because number 1, I'm not sure
565 I'm not sure I've got the time to look at them, and if I'm not going to look at them, why
566 turn them in? (All: laugh) That was always the issue I, always the issue I had as a
567 teacher. K. Always the issue I had as a teacher. And finally I went into my assistant
568 principal's one day and laid out my lesson plans and said, ok tell me what I'm doing on
569 Thursday because they are all written in short hand anyway. They don't know what I'm
570 doing. It's like, I'm a professional. Trust me, I'm going to teach. K. Uh, but uh, we
571 weren't at that point, we weren't looking at collaboration. What was going on in my
572 classroom didn't have to coordinate with what was going on with an English classroom.
573 I think for our total curriculum, I think we need to look at this possibility of being more
574 collaborative. How can we use those efforts together? Cause then I think we've got a
575 real power in all that we're doing. So, thoughts?

576

577 Lani: Well, I mean I asked specifically these questions to the people who I have been
578 interviewing and talking to and I will tell you there, we're not looking at the curriculum
579 map. We want to, we try. We read each other's fundamentals, so we know what we're
580 doing. Um, we definitely try to do like with Esperanza - look at what you are teaching,
581 what you're working on. We try to stay there. But, yeah, it's like, if they do un-, if they
582 do see shorthand, they don't know what it is, they don't know what you're writing and so
583 we just sort of get lazy. It's not that we don't want to it's just...we just sometimes don't
584 have the time or know how to look at it maybe in a constructive way. And, and it's not
585 uh I don't want to. It's I don't know how, we don't know how to change that. It's all in
586 question...how to make it better.

587

588 Mike: We have effectively identified the problem.

589 Lani: Yes. (All: laugh)
590
591 Josh: Strings are doing something similar and I'm, I'm just as guilty as anyone on the
592 curriculum with being very general with what I'm doing (All: uh huh) uh, but it's kind
593 of a day-to-day thing. I can write down, we're gonna do this and I get out into my
594 classroom and they can play that but they can't play this section. I'm like ok, well, I
595 know that it's good to put that up there but then I'm sometimes like, well, I.... (Lani:
596 right) I have to go by what I'm hearing.
597
598 Mike: Well, yes, yes and no. And, you know. Two parts of this: We're only going to
599 get to where we want to go by knowing where we're headed. (Josh: right) And so we've
600 got to have that clearly in mind. Uh, and I'll be the first one tell you, I have 34 years of
601 teaching. I've never taught a lesson plan the way it was written. All right? But without
602 the plan, I didn't make a conscious decision about where I was going. It was a mindful
603 decision about I've got to address this issue and knowing that this is still over here, I've
604 got to address this issue, and then I'll steer us back to this. So I've got a plan for how to
605 get there. That's the master teacher in the classroom. That's the one who makes those
606 decisions based on all of those other things. Without that plan, and I think with a lot of
607 our young teachers, it's just constantly being reactive. Right? Uh, so instead of getting
608 up and preparing students to be successful and putting things into place and working
609 through concepts that then they can apply to their music. It is standing in front of them
610 and basically saying 1,2, ready fail. Keep going until you make a mistake and then I'll
611 tell you that you did it wrong. And then we'll figure out how to fix it. In my mind,
612 that's not high quality education. I mean quite honest, we could take just about anyone
613 off the street and do that (Josh: yeah) - short of the pedagogy. We could get that to
614 happen. They'll know when it's not right.
615
616 Josh: I find in my section though that sometimes, things that they are not going to play
617 well...they do well. (Mike: sure!) And, I...because they're learning stuff at school, too.
618 They're learning different techniques in the left hand. And so, I can write that we're
619 going to work this dotted eight, sixteenth note, but depending on attendance, depending
620 on who's there, depending on what they are feeling like doing that day, they could play
621 just fine. And so reinforcement, I get the reinforcement is great, uh, I don't know.
622 That's what's been voiced from in my string meetings, too. And I know that the string
623 teachers are looking at your...what you're hoping to do that week. They're making sure
624 they're butts are covered for rehearsal!
625
626 Mike: Sure, sure, and I understand that! (All: laugh)
627
628 Josh: And that's pretty much what they are doing They're just making sure that, ok, he's
629 gonna hit this stuff. (Mike: Let's make sure and prepare) But they're not using it as
630 collaboration with fundamentals.
631
632 Lani: Can I suggest something?
633
634 Mike: Sure, please.

635 Lani: Are you sure. Um, I think what would be most helpful is if we were able to meet
636 not necessarily as Esperanza, Alegria, and Nueva faculty, but let's look at the pieces and
637 see how we can start as a group. Ok, this is what we're working on and only work on
638 that piece and then the next. But just see who's involved. The problem is, is that we've
639 got Alegria and Esperanza teachers, so I'm not sure how to make that possible. You
640 know what I'm saying. We've got fundamentals that really, really want to help. Um,
641 but the planning time is not there. And if we can start at from beginning, just have one
642 of those PD days and just look at the music and you can tell us what it is that you're
643 looking for, what you guys are looking at in each of the pieces and then kind of work
644 together and throw some ideas out there and then go from there. I don't know how to
645 make that happen but I think that would be more successful... where all the pieces are
646 together at the beginning and then finding a way to reach the goal.

647
648 Josh: You extracted rhythms out of...? I don't know maybe sending those to the
649 fundamentals, because we did the beginning of the semester we had rhythm cards and
650 then universally, we'd just do these. And that's definitely the way that we could
651 collaborate. (Lani: I would love that! There are times I've just wanted to grab those
652 rhythms off of the piano - and I'm like, ahhh, they're not mine) Yeah, right.

653
654 Mike: Yeah, and I created the rhythm sheets this time for Esperanza stuff. That's what
655 you guys were working on (Lani: yeah, yep and we printed those out) All the teaching
656 materials I do for the ensemble, I put up there. One of the ideas, based on this, we take
657 our PD, take that we've got...what happens if we do the general stuff, let Robyn and
658 Laura do the things they need to for full faculty and then we let everybody go except for
659 everybody who is involved with Alegria repertoire. Right? And we just have a big
660 planning around the Alegria repertoire that is happening over the quarter. Get the ideas
661 down, do all that stuff (Lani: yeah, exactly). Put that all out there. (Josh: Nueva
662 needs...) (Lani: Yes that will help us so much!!) All that stuff, and the next we do the
663 same thing with, with...well Nueva can go do that anytime because you're an isolated
664 faculty. Ok.

665
666 Sam: Didn't we used to do a curriculum map like that?

667
668 Mike: We have never done a collaborative curriculum map.

669
670 Robyn: We've started talking about this several PD sessions ago about what are the
671 skills that we are extracting. How are we doing that and how does that fit on the map?
672 Whether or not we've gone from the conversation and the idea to the actual doing it.
673 What I hear Lani say is people conceptually get like, yes, we want to do all these things
674 together, blah, blah, blah, but it's (Mike: k) but if maybe the actual working out of how
675 this is going to happen (Lani: uh hum, yeah) uh, whether or not it continues to need to
676 look like everybody sitting in the same room? May be up for debate but at least for the
677 first time through, you end up with kind of um the, the model for how do we move the
678 conversation forward.
679

680 Mike: Well, I could see, in you know my glass half-full brain, uh, I can, you know, with
681 all of the Alegria faculty sitting there with the conductor saying here is the repertoire,
682 here's what we are looking at, here's what we see in this. Now, what are the issues
683 going to be in the violins, in the cellos, the bass, whether there are pedagogical issues at
684 that? What are the connections we make in fundamentals? How do we put that
685 together (Josh: ok), you know how do we work our way through these (Josh: ok, I think
686 that would be a lot more effective than what we are currently doing with the curriculum
687 alignment) (Lani/ Mike: yeah, yeah)
688
689 Sam: From my experience, it just seems like from the fundamentals faculty does a
690 really good job of doing these things for us as conductors and the instrumentals faculty
691 doesn't always understand that they support us. And that's a problem (Lani: that's a
692 good point) and they can't separate what is, whoa, in my case string pedagogy and what
693 is general music concept, uh, expression or things that we can do and also I guess that
694 think that sometimes...our instrumental faculty are uh...(long pause)
695
696 Josh: Sometimes they just think that way...
697
698 Mike: It's Las Vegas here, ok?
699
700 Sam: I think, I think...sometimes they're a little diva like in that they don't want to help
701 us out...
702
703 Mike: laughing
704
705 Josh: Oh my god. (Sam and Lani still laughing and talking) So, in our, our string
706 meetings we, we talked about this attitude, too. Sometimes we have these attitudes that
707 they're going to come and they're gonna teach their instrument and they're gonna get
708 their kids to play that music and then they gotta go. (Mike: right) Uh, I mean that
709 happens to me. I have, we all have a full day. We get to El Sistema, we're gonna teach
710 these kids during this period. They gotta play this music and then on to the next thing. I
711 mean it's just a section of their day, it happens. And so, trying to think out of the box
712 more, I, I don't know...it, it seems like a...I don't know how to say this but...it takes a lot
713 of time and a lot of energy and it, I don't know that it, I don't know
714
715 Sam: But what you're saying about like people understanding this concept of aligning
716 their curriculum. I don't think everyone understands that...I think that...
717
718 Josh: I love this idea of this...this will work...
719
720 Sam: Yeah, totally. And I think that some people think fundamentals is separate from
721 us. (Josh: yeah) Because we've added so many um, difference, from our first year. You
722 know, our first year...was very like...mi, re, do...hot cross buns...
723
724 Mike: Oh it was so – laugh - I would love to go back to year one again and just you
725 know, have the opportunity to do all those things that way.

726 Sam: Well, and I just think ... that people think that Lani's class is totally into it...(Mike:
727 How nice it was when we met with our entire faculty of 9), and it's totally separate.
728
729 Lani: Well, and can I throw something out on the table, since everything is out on the
730 table right now, anyway. Um, I've had several of the fundamentals team think, that or
731 the students don't know that they are musicians. Like they play an instrument, and
732 (Josh: yeah) that we're just classroom teachers. And I don't know where that came from
733 and I don't know why and I'm not saying the other faculty treats us like that... (Josh:
734 That's because they see us play) (Mike: All right) Yeah, and that's why Alex always
735 brings in her flute in all the time.
736
737 Josh: Yeah
738
739 Mike: I think that that's, I think that's really important. Uh, you know, I've tried to do
740 that even with my instruments some. Because I have had kids ask me what did I used to
741 play?
742
743 Lani: Yep and they're really interested and were trying...a lot of us though...that didn't
744 come up until I started talking to them...they didn't realize that either. It's like, oh yeah,
745 students don't see us, maybe as important? (Mike: yeah) I guess?
746
747 Sam: So, um, Nueva's definitely smaller so Beth and I...we don't email a lot, but when I
748 do put new rep, she does say...we do communicate about what skills we want to get
749 across. The kids say.. the synco-potato thing...potato?
750
751 All: laugh
752
753 Mike: Synco-pa, ta, ta
754
755 Sam: There's one kid that always corrects me. They're like, potato, potahto, and I'm
756 like...I don't know which one you learned, just do it!
757
758 Mike: Synco-pa is one rhythm, ta, ta is another. So they came up with synco-potato. But
759 whatever works, works.
760
761 All: laugh - Robyn: It is hard
762
763 Lani: They're young...
764
765 Mike: But there is that revelation moment I was working in uh, a teacher's class. And
766 the teacher wrote the rhythm up on the board and was trying to teach it with 1 te, and
767 you know, all that other stuff. And the kids were saying, that's synco-potato and the
768 teacher kept saying no, and I was like, stop, yes it is. I don't care if they can say 1 te, -
769 te, 3, 4. If they say syco-pa-ta-ta and they're playing, let's bring their understanding to
770 the piece and then we can work out from there and we just re-label it.
771

772 Kristen: Well, I was going to say, the time I felt most connected to the fundamentals
773 was the first year I was TA'ing in Leah's class, so I was actually there to experience
774 what she was doing - because, if you read it on a document (Mike: It's hard), like it
775 doesn't make sense. I don't know she's saying. I don't know what this thing means.
776 (laughing) Uh, but when I was in her class, I could actually use it and do it, and then I
777 use it with my students but that's a lot of time ...again.

778
779 Mike: Well, I'd like stay - to think of stay, with this step of moving forward with more
780 of a collaborative...uh, for lack of better term...curriculum is not really a curriculum
781 map, but at least a curricular approach, uh, to what we are doing. It would at least give
782 us the opportunity to surround the repertoire a little bit and focus some things in
783 there...uh, and give everybody a bit of an opportunity to work our way through that. So,
784 I'll look at that as far as planning time. (Josh: That will help our rehearsals and
785 ultimately our process because if we, we sit down in here in a couple weeks and
786 ok...this is what we're going to be looking like. I mean, it's going to make our job a lot
787 easier, too. (Lani: and you'll know ahead of time by us just talking ahead of time by us
788 just talking through it what we'll try to do to support you.) Yeah, that's a great idea.

789
790 Robyn: Well interestingly enough, from a planning perspective. We typically provide a
791 team instrument like or subject area-like planning during PD, except those things are
792 happening every week now built into the schedule, with the exception of the Nueva
793 team. So you are meeting with your teams every single week, so this time spent together
794 as the full faculty or whatever it is probably a shift...(Mike: uh hum, Lani: right,
795 definitely, Sam: right, Josh: that would be great)

796
797 Mike: All right, and I don't want to spend a lot of time on this other one...on
798 pedagogical continuity vs. pedagogical fracture right now. And this is more...I just want
799 to let you know at this point that is something I'm really working, trying to figure out
800 and see if we can find a solution for. We've got concepts being taught differently across
801 the entire area. Uh, that wasn't as big of an issue when we had a smaller faculty. Now
802 we've got larger faculty and now, we've got a lot of different things on and some of it, to
803 be quite honest, uh, I don't think is effective pedagogical instruction. It's things that
804 we've done over many, many years as instrumentals teachers, but when you go back and
805 you look at it and go, this just doesn't work...and it certainly doesn't work with the aural
806 approach that we're getting. And I think right now we're getting a real fracture between
807 a more rotationally founded approach vs. and aural approach. K? And we've got to
808 figure out how to, how to make these things work. And I'm gonna take the entire blame
809 for this and trying to figure out how do we get from that aural perspective to the page.
810 That's the hardest moment to get us through and that's where are pedagogical focus has
811 got to be, but we're, we're going to get to a point, I think where...as, as... an
812 instructional team, we're going to have to dictate some pedagogy in the classroom. I
813 don't know any other way to go about that. Uh, I just, I've gotta be able to say, this is
814 how we're going to go about getting this to happen and put that in place so that we can
815 go from there. But I'm going to rely on a lot of your pedagogical expertise to be able to
816 get that to happen. So, that is coming on the radar...all right? And things that we're
817 working on right now...but uh... it is very hard. I've seen it happen in Nueva rehearsals

818 where we've got things happening two different ways and kids are coming in
819 approaching things very, very differently. Reading, we're not using the same
820 vocabulary, so kids are getting confused...uh, all of those things. So, and we've just got
821 to figure out the ways that we are going to go about getting that to happen. Because if
822 we confuse them at that level, it's going to take is the next 3-4 years to unpack that and
823 re-pack it. We've got to work our way through that.

824

825 Mike: Communication stuff...I just felt like I haven't communicated with you or you
826 guys with me because it's always a moving target and it doesn't slow down a whole lot
827 in the next few weeks. So...I am not going to China next week....

828

829 ** China discussion **

830

831 1:21

832

833 Mike: So as far as communication goes, what things are, what are we lacking in
834 communication from us to you? K, what do you need more? Less?

835

836 Josh: I feel like, I mean communication is good. We're getting our information. I think
837 and this is what we talked about in our meetings that an over saturation of information
838 sometimes, which is kind of silly to say but, too much information and they're, the, the
839 teachers are just not...they just kind of let it go. They maybe look through the email and
840 keep scrolling and I don't know how to combat that at all but that is something that has
841 been said. (Lani: yeah) And so...

842

843 Sam: I think that um, also yes, the emails are lengthy and we have a lot of them, its' a
844 lot, but also that is the leadership's team way of respecting our time to not call another
845 physical meeting and to not, and also just respecting that we are professionals and
846 should read the emails and hopefully are intelligent enough to discard what information
847 that does not pertain to us, but also respecting that Robyn is smart enough to not send us
848 information that does not pertain to us. (Josh: Right, I'm not saying) So I'm on both
849 sides of it.

850

851 Robyn: Yeah, there really is a balance between how in the world do we get what overall
852 what everybody overall needs to know about what's going on without calling a physical
853 meeting or trying to catch people. I think maybe um, it would be helpful to be clear
854 about that...so it's either lengthy emails or it's more meetings! –Laughing-

855

856 Josh: Yeah, that's what I'm saying. The information is there for the faculty to get. We
857 don't have an issue with that (David: Right).

858

859 Robyn: The other thing, maybe the timing on it. So, for example, some things you
860 know, you need to know today. But is it helpful to get things you know like, is it sitting
861 in our email at 6 am that's a lot better than it coming in at 8:00 at night? Does it have to
862 do with the timing?

863

864 Lani: I tell you what helps me. You tend to send information like, Monday or Tuesday
865 before we have a meeting with fundamentals. So that's what I base our agenda on is
866 what you send us and it gets out and they're listening.
867
868 Mike: Would it be helpful if...I'm speaking for you! (To Robyn)
869
870 Robyn: laughing - I never speak for you. I don't know what you're talking about.
871
872 Mike: Uh, yeah, if we just had you know a Monday, Monday morning (Robyn: Monday
873 morning memo) email that went out just said this week at El Sistema (Lani: yes!)?
874
875 Josh: Right. Because what happens we'll be in our meetings and I'll something, then
876 they'll say which email is that was that the email from Thursday or Saturday?
877
878 Josh: I know sometimes emails have to come out at different times but if it came out at
879 once centralized time... and then they were able..
880
881 Lani: Yeah, yeah.
882
883 Mike: and then we could just highlight, you know hit the... if something changes then
884 it's like here's a quick update.
885
886 All: Yeah
887
888 Kristen: And if we could combine some of those like you said. If Josh and I have
889 information...if we could put in that (Lani: Oh that's good)... I don't know it that
890 would be bad, but it might keep everything together more.
891
892 Robyn: ...in the last 36 hours
893
894 ** More talk about ways to communicate **
895
896 After audio recorder was off, Robyn mentioned how she is applying for a grant to
897 compensate teachers for their extra time spent in professional development at El
898 Sistema. Mike also mentioned wanting to find time to meet individually with LTA's
899 monthly to stay in touch with what is occurring at ESO.
900
901 NOTE: Some of the recording was not transcribed here to protect the anonymity of
902 teachers who did not have an opportunity to sign the researcher's IRB consent form.
903 Student's names and genders were also omitted or written as "a student" or "the
904 student" and italicized.
905
906

1

Nueva Repertoire Planning

2

DATE: Tuesday, March 7, 2017

3

4

TIME: 4:30 PM

5

6

PLACE: OCU, MUED room

7

8

MEETING OBSERVED: Nueva Repertoire Faculty only

9

10

PARTICIPANTS: Nueva Conductor and 7 Faculty members

11

(Start of Observation)

12

Discussion of note names – using Solfège - because of readers in treble, alto, bass clef

13

readers

14

15

****Discovering common terminology****

16

17

Decision: Good balance – write Solfège and note names under both

18

19

Keep Solfège in fundamentals but change in instrumentals or chamber when needed

20

21

Some teachers mention how they would like to use La based minor – bring back minor

22

Hot Cross Buns

23

24

Focus discussion – instrumental faulty: Staccato, pizzicato, instrument carriage (holding

25

bow with clutched fingers is difficult so they allow students to let the bow drop back on

26

shoulder, etc.)

27

28

Need for concentration on dynamics – balance melody

29

30

Decision to create a vocab list on a spreadsheet – in Drop box – curriculum alignment

31

32

Discussion of watching conductor – games suggested, other ideas for teachers

33

34

Social aspects discussed – improve behavior – team spirit – create acronyms, mantras –

35

ownership of their own actions

36

37

**** Common pedagogy, terminology****

38

39

Discussion about flow of issues with students

40

41

Conversation on ways to collaborate since Nueva does not have a common planning

42

time - Shoot an email – grab a person after program – can we chat?

43

- 44 Discussion of a time to meet outside of ESO – dinner, lunch, etc.
- 45 Idea of music bee to motivate students to remember terms!
- 46 Mutual engagement – pride of belonging to a group – building student relationships
- 47
- 48 Suggested for behavior issues - 1st time problem – go to instrumental teacher for minor
- 49 issues - then front desk
- 50
- 51 Addressing students as a united front!!!!
- 52

53

1 **Esperanza Repertoire Planning**

2 DATE: Tuesday, March 7, 2017

3

4 TIME: 5:00 PM

5

6 PLACE: OCU, MUED room

7

8 MEETING OBSERVED: Esperanza Repertoire Faculty only

9

10 PARTICIPANTS: Esperanza Conductor and 25 Faculty members
11 (Start of Observation)

12

13 Discussion of working more towards a student autonomous ensemble – giant chamber
14 rehearsal – take ownership of their own learning

15

16 More student led – Mutual Engagement

17

18 Mike: Just get in the middle of the ensemble and help out

19

20 Discussion of last concert and 3rd quarter:

21 Technically – grew!

22

23 Mike added sectional advice - Trumpet section on and off. – horns, too loud – strings,
24 violin – a few scared in principal roles, violas – strong, cello – rotating them helped –
25 basses – always set up ready to go, tiered of pizzicato ☺ Percussion – challenge for
26 them – ownership from students in section (set up)

27

28 Student conductor was sick – asked, “what do I need to work on. I’ll be ready!” – fixed
29 just a couple days before concert

30

31 ****Praise and positive criticism well taken from faculty - validation ****

32

33 Beethoven repertoire set up – looking at each individual area (fundamentals, strings,
34 brass, percussion, etc.) – potential problems areas

35

36 Members shared ideas, somewhat hesitantly – first time to have a repertoire meeting

Appendix H
Online Survey Responses

1

2

1

Online Survey Participant #1

2 **Q1: Please type your position at El Sistema Oklahoma. (Administrator, Teacher,**
3 **or Teaching Assistant).**

4 Teacher - MUSE

5

6 **Q2: How long have you taught music and in what capacity? (i.e. 3 years,**
7 **elementary general music, 3rd year college student - El Sistema experience only,**
8 **etc.)**

9

10 1/2 year student teaching, 1 full year of teaching in a traditional school setting, 2 years
11 at El Sistema

12

13 **Q3: As a teacher, leader, or staff member, do you feel El Sistema Oklahoma is a**
14 **place where you can collaborate with others who share a passion for music? If so,**
15 **how does this fit in the overall program structure?**

16

17 Yes, absolutely. The faculty at El Sistema are all people who are passionate about
18 performing and teaching and are constantly striving to learn something new to bring to
19 their students. On the fundamentals side of the staff, everyone has a special niche that
20 they bring to the curriculum (world music, guitar, composition, etc) and inspire other
21 teachers with unique ideas/teaching suggestions to try throughout their classrooms. We
22 are regularly able to collaborate and share our ideas at weekly faculty planning sessions
23 (and more informally through email).

24

25 **Q4: Does your teaching or leadership impact the overall goal of a shared learning**
26 **environment? Do conversations nurture professional growth, build relationships,**
27 **and result in more informed practice and improved student achievement?**

28

29 Composition lab has been the perfect place to build a shared learning environment. The
30 students are able to work in teams to create original musical ideas while learning how to
31 problem solve, deal with interpersonal conflict (disagreements about musical ideas), and
32 collaborate. In these classes, I try to keep my teaching as hands off as possible, only
33 stepping in to offer musical suggestions when a group needs help or to mediate a minor
34 conflict if the students are unable to do it themselves. We try to get the students
35 thinking creatively and independently so they are able to express themselves through
36 ideas that are totally their own.

37

38 **Q5: How has your music pedagogy/program structure changed regarding your**
39 **needs or the needs of your students? Do activities connect learning to life and**
40 **community or provide a sense of belonging? If so, can you provide specific**
41 **examples?**

42

43 When I first started at ESO, I was coming out of teaching public school full time. In the
44 beginning, I think a lot of my lessons were overly structured - every minute was
45 planned for and there honestly wasn't a lot of room for student input. As I got more
46 settled in to the ESO community, I changed my lessons to be MUCH more student
47 centered - I wanted to get them creating, moving, improvising...anything that I could
48 think of to make them feel like they had ownership of the class. I think that having the
49 students feel like they were the ones who decided how their classroom culture would
50 feel helped us create our own MUSE family. Even though we're only together for 45
51 minutes or so a few times a week, they always know what to expect when they come
52 into the room. It's important that our classroom feels like a space they can be themselves
53 and feel supported by their friends and teachers.

54

55 **Q6: Does the El Sistema Oklahoma ensemble-based music organization provide an**
56 **environment to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences in cultures,**
57 **values, and individual beliefs? Do students, teachers, and parents feel**
58 **accountability towards the success of the program? If so, how and why?**

59

60 I'm honestly not sure about the cultures/values part of this question - these issues have
61 only come up in my class when we've actively been studying world music, not on a
62 personal "real life" level. I feel that everyone who interacts with the El Sistema has a
63 great deal of investment in its success. From the teacher and parent perspective, it's easy
64 to see that El Sistema is a really special place for our students. It's important to us to do
65 everything in our power to make sure we're offering the best possible place for our kids
66 to learn and grow. The students definitely have accountability for themselves. After a
67 streak of worse than average rehearsals, you can see them rally together and encourage
68 each other to get things back on track. In my two years with the ESO program, I have
69 never once felt that any one person was "dialing in" on their duties. I've only ever seen
70 exceptional work from our kids, parents, and staff, and I think the pride we have in our
71 program is really what keeps it moving forward.

72

73 **Q7: How have students benefitted from their experience in the El Sistema**
74 **Oklahoma program? What are possible future benefits from having been in a**
75 **program such as this?**

76

77 I've seen first year El Sistema students come into the program with really troubled
78 behavior and difficulty interacting with other students make AMAZING
79 transformations after a few months with El Sistema. The consistency of the El Sistema
80 program (routine of seeing the same teachers every day, having the opportunity to spend
81 time with their friends, and have fun learning a new school) provides a great sense of
82 structure that is lacking in some of our students' lives. After being in the program for a
83 while, a lot of our "troubled" kids are able to form positive relationships with their
84 friends and teachers, and I really think it encourages them to make good choices in their
85 behavior and interactions with others. On the other side of the coin, we have some
86 students who are very naturally gifted in school and aren't necessarily challenged by
87 academics. El Sistema provides that extra push for them - they not only develop a new
88 skill through their instruments, but they can also be challenged to be leaders through our

89 student conductor program or in their chamber ensembles. The kids' futures benefit
90 from participating in El Sistema because the nature of the program requires them to be
91 extremely diligent with time management, helping them build great study skills and a
92 solid work ethic. They also have strong connections to local universities (namely OCU
93 and OU) as a result of being in the program and are able to discuss their long term goals
94 with faculty members who can help guide them academically.

95

96 **Q8: Do you consider El Sistema Oklahoma's music program unique? Is there a**
97 **common direction or development of shared understandings that improves the**
98 **program experience for all members?**

99

100 The El Sistema Oklahoma program is definitely unique. Having the space to focus
101 solely on music and student well being is really special (for both students and
102 teachers!). Since there's not a strict curriculum to follow or testing deadlines to meet,
103 teachers have the opportunity to take the time to teach in a way that truly allows each
104 and every student to grasp the concepts presented in class. Our program structure also
105 allows teachers to have the freedom to connect with their students in ways that public
106 school teachers may not have the time to do. In my classes last year, I reserved the first
107 five minutes of class for students to share positive stories from school or their weekend.
108 I really felt like it helped me get to know every student and let them know that I'm
109 really interested in them as PEOPLE, not just students.

110

111 **Q9: Are small music communities (i.e. creative/musicianship classes, guided**
112 **practice, chamber ensembles, etc.) within the larger group important to the overall**
113 **success of El Sistema Oklahoma?**

114

115 Yes, definitely. I really think that smaller music communities are the backbone of the
116 entire El Sistema program. It is in smaller classroom environments where students are
117 really able to build skills in teamwork, communication, respect/responsibility, and
118 creativity. The smaller classroom environment allows teachers to build strong
119 relationships with each student, helping develop a great sense of trust between the
120 students and faculty. The skills that the students learn in small music communities
121 transfer over to their large ensembles and allow them to experience great success there!

122

123 **Q10: How does the current program gather and consider data, new knowledge,**
124 **and others' perspectives when planning objectives and goals for student**
125 **enrichment? How is success determined?**

126

127 It seems like student data and curriculum progress is gathered primarily in our shared
128 curriculum alignment document. Teachers are encouraged to bring new knowledge to
129 ESO when they attend conferences (OMEA, TMEA, etc.) or have an experience that
130 they think could benefit our students/faculty. The administrative team is excellent at
131 assessing long term problems throughout the semester and opening those issues up for
132 discussion at staff professional development seminars. There is always a friendly
133 environment to express concerns, ideas, and future suggestions to improve the program
134 for our kids. Success is determined on a student-to-student basis. Since ESO doesn't

135 administer grades (thankfully!), it can be a little difficult to track a students' growth. For
136 me, a student is successful if I can see that they're putting their full effort into a class. If
137 Student A's work isn't quite as advanced as Student B's, but they're putting in their full
138 effort, I definitely consider that successful.
139

1 **Online Survey Participant #2**

2 **Q1: Please type your position at El Sistema Oklahoma. (Administrator, Teacher,**
3 **or Teaching Assistant).**

4 Teacher

5

6 **Q2: How long have you taught music and in what capacity? (i.e. 3 years,**
7 **elementary general music, 3rd year college student - El Sistema experience only,**
8 **etc.)**

9

10 One year part time general music elementary (first as a long term substitute and now as
11 a teacher)

12

13 **Q3: As a teacher, leader, or staff member, do you feel El Sistema Oklahoma is a**
14 **place where you can collaborate with others who share a passion for music? If so,**
15 **how does this fit in the overall program structure?**

16

17 I feel like we are constantly communicating amongst our classrooms and over dropbox
18 and email what we are doing in our classes, and how we can work across the board to
19 provide quality music education for young musicians. This means in one class we can
20 provide "mile deep instruction on inch wide concepts" and across the board cover a
21 "mile wide of concepts"

22

23 **Q4: Does your teaching or leadership impact the overall goal of a shared learning**
24 **environment? Do conversations nurture professional growth, build relationships,**
25 **and result in more informed practice and improved student achievement?**

26

27 I feel impactful sometimes, other times I wonder if I am more confusing to students
28 than I am helpful. The meetings we have where we talk about what we are doing in our
29 class really help me to gain ideas about how to teach a concept, or how to present an
30 idea or game to my students, not just at ESO but also at my school.

31

32 **Q5: How has your music pedagogy/program structure changed regarding your**
33 **needs or the needs of your students? Do activities connect learning to life and**
34 **community or provide a sense of belonging? If so, can you provide specific**
35 **examples?**

36

37 I'm trying constantly to gain ideas on what music the students are interested in outside
38 of ESO, and how I can bring that music into the class. Just knowing what they like has
39 challenged the way I teach to incorporate time for self-expression.

40

41 **Q6: Does the El Sistema Oklahoma ensemble-based music organization provide an**
42 **environment to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences in cultures,**

43 **values, and individual beliefs? Do students, teachers, and parents feel**
44 **accountability towards the success of the program? If so, how and why?**
45 We learn musical concepts through exploration of folk songs/games/dances of other
46 cultures. Because we explore other cultures through their music we've learned a shared
47 accountability to be accepting of anyone or any thing who walks in the room.
48

49 **Q7: How have students benefitted from their experience in the El Sistema**
50 **Oklahoma program? What are possible future benefits from having been in a**
51 **program such as this?**
52

53 The students are practicing self discipline and hard work, patience and empathy towards
54 others, self expression and communication skills, which are the basis for a successful
55 work ethic. They are practicing ways to be productive members of a creative
56 community, and even if they go on to high school and then college or the workforce and
57 the choose to not participate in the performing arts, they still have those skills to help
58 them in furthering their endeavors.
59

60 **Q8: Do you consider El Sistema Oklahoma's music program unique? Is there a**
61 **common direction or development of shared understandings that improves the**
62 **program experience for all members?**
63

64 This is a very unique program in that not only are we providing music education catered
65 towards the needs and desires of our students, but we also take care of their basic needs
66 (snack, help with homework, adult influences, warm place to go with adults who keep it
67 safe after school everyday...) Since we provide those services as well we are bettering
68 the lives of families in our communities whose adults need the time to work in order to
69 better support their children, while ensuring that once the student goes home they are
70 able to focus on the things a family needs.
71

72 **Q9: Are small music communities (i.e. creative/musicianship classes, guided**
73 **practice, chamber ensembles, etc.) within the larger group important to the overall**
74 **success of El Sistema Oklahoma?**
75

76 These smaller groups allow deeper, sometimes more self-directed, studies of the
77 students' desires. They are what makes the program special to the students.
78

79 **Q10: How does the current program gather and consider data, new knowledge,**
80 **and others' perspectives when planning objectives and goals for student**
81 **enrichment? How is success determined?**
82

83 Success of this program is determined on the community's responses and return to it.
84 We don't do the program for money, but rather for the investment we can make in our
85 students, and the enjoyment of the community to support the work of young artists.
86

87

1

Online Survey Participant #3

2

Q1: Please type your position at El Sistema Oklahoma. (Administrator, Teacher, or Teaching Assistant).

3

4

Director of Teacher Support, Conductor Orquesta Esperanza

5

6

Q2: How long have you taught music and in what capacity? (i.e. 3 years, elementary general music, 3rd year college student - El Sistema experience only, etc.)

7

8

9

10

34 years - 13 in public school - Band, 21 higher education, conducting and music

11

teacher education

12

13

Q3: As a teacher, leader, or staff member, do you feel El Sistema Oklahoma is a place where you can collaborate with others who share a passion for music? If so, how does this fit in the overall program structure?

14

15

16

17

There are some opportunities for collaboration. It works best in the teams, but we

18

struggle with it across the entire program. This is due to size and schedules most often.

19

We attempt to collaborate using a common curriculum reporting document. It is

20

somewhat successful, but lack of detail and even lack of participation from some

21

teachers keeps this from being as successful as hoped.

22

23

Q4: Does your teaching or leadership impact the overall goal of a shared learning environment? Do conversations nurture professional growth, build relationships, and result in more informed practice and improved student achievement?

24

25

26

27

Again, to some degree. As I am teaching in my own classroom most times I am on

28

campus, it is difficult to get to other classrooms and interact with those teachers. I hear

29

stories of these interactions especially on the fundamentals team. We suffer with

30

isolation on the Nuevo instrumental team that hampers this type of professional

31

development.

32

33

Q5: How has your music pedagogy/program structure changed regarding your needs or the needs of your students? Do activities connect learning to life and community or provide a sense of belonging? If so, can you provide specific examples?

34

35

36

37

38

Pedagogical fracture is a real concern for the entire site. We attempt to unify pedagogy

39

in the instrumental classrooms, but only with limited success. My teacher education

40

pedagogy has changed as I work with those who have the 'brightest fire' and attempt to

41

guide them through developing solutions to their issues. I am not sure how we provide a

42

sense of belonging and if that really takes hold. We have had several advanced students

43

leave the program in the past month and there has been no communication from the

44 families regarding the impact ESO had on their children while they were part of the
45 program. That might suggest ESO is not having the impact on families it hopes to have.

46

47 **Q6: Does the El Sistema Oklahoma ensemble-based music organization provide an**
48 **environment to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences in cultures,**
49 **values, and individual beliefs? Do students, teachers, and parents feel**
50 **accountability towards the success of the program? If so, how and why?**

51

52 Perhaps my answer above is more suited here in regard to parents feeling
53 accountability. In that regard I believe we have not been as proactive as we could be in
54 sharing the impact of ESO with families and helping them understand the investment
55 that is being made in their children and families. In regards to exploring differences.
56 There is an expressed ideal among all faculty and leadership that this is a priority at the
57 site. I believe that the focus on this trait in the hiring process is a primary contributor to
58 having faculty on site that value and practice culturally responsive pedagogy in
59 meaningful ways.

60

61 **Q7: How have students benefitted from their experience in the El Sistema**
62 **Oklahoma program? What are possible future benefits from having been in a**
63 **program such as this?**

64

65 Benefits can be many. We have a number of students who have 'worked in' to being a
66 contributing member of the community at ESO. This comes about through a sizable
67 effort from both administration and faculty. The benefits of high quality community
68 involvement is obvious. Many of our students are enjoying musical futures they would
69 not have otherwise without involvement in ESO. I would also consider family
70 involvement as a student benefit. Due to the structure of the program, families must be
71 involved and have one-on-one contact with a member of the ESO faculty/staff every
72 day...There are great benefits to this first hand exchange.

73 **Q8: Do you consider El Sistema Oklahoma's music program unique? Is there a**
74 **common direction or development of shared understandings that improves the**
75 **program experience for all members?**

76 Yes and no. Much of what is done at ESO is really just good music education. That
77 such practice cannot often be accomplished in school settings is more an indictment of
78 the schools than a praise of ESO. The shared vision of meeting both a student's social
79 and musical needs may be the unifying force, but putting that in action varies from
80 classroom to classroom. The action principles are discussed and presented, but there are
81 issues in seeing them in action every day.

82

83 **Q9: Are small music communities (i.e. creative/musicianship classes, guided**
84 **practice, chamber ensembles, etc.) within the larger group important to the overall**
85 **success of El Sistema Oklahoma?**

86

87 The small communities are a key to success and will only grow in importance as the
88 program size grows. It is in these settings that teachers can develop meaningful
89 relationships with the students. This is where the real work is done.

90 **Q10: How does the current program gather and consider data, new knowledge,**
91 **and others' perspectives when planning objectives and goals for student**
92 **enrichment? How is success determined?**
93 Every decision on site is a collaborative effort of the full leadership team. When it is
94 necessary and appropriate, faculty leaders (LTAs) are also consulted. There are times
95 when the entire faculty is polled for their input on decision making. Data is another
96 issue and a weak point in our system currently. We have not been very good at sharing
97 our data outside of our own organization. In my position, I attempt to influence
98 decision making through the most current research and practice, but that impact is
99 limited due to my interaction with the faculty. Success is determined on student at a
100 time...we strive to have high quality musical experiences for each student and cater to
101 their needs while holding each to a high standard of understanding, performance and
102 behavior. Since we measure one student at a time, we have wonderful successes and
103 miserable failures each day.
104

1 **Online Survey Participant #4**

2 **Q1: Please type your position at El Sistema Oklahoma. (Administrator, Teacher,**
3 **or Teaching Assistant).**

4 Music Fundamentals teacher
5

6 **Q2: How long have you taught music and in what capacity? (i.e. 3 years,**
7 **elementary general music, 3rd year college student - El Sistema experience only,**
8 **etc.)**
9

10 34 years in Oklahoma public schools teaching general music 1-8,
11 Band/Orchestra/Chorus 4-12, Music Technology 6-8, 3 years Music Fundamentals at El
12 Sistema
13

14 **Q3: As a teacher, leader, or staff member, do you feel El Sistema Oklahoma is a**
15 **place where you can collaborate with others who share a passion for music? If so,**
16 **how does this fit in the overall program structure?**
17

18 Collaboration is one of the hallmarks of my experience with El Sistema! It is fantastic
19 to be given the opportunity to formally collaborate weekly with my Fundamentals team
20 and several times a year with the entire staff. Everyone at El Sistema Oklahoma seems
21 to take as many opportunities to collaborate as they can find.
22

23 **Q4: Does your teaching or leadership impact the overall goal of a shared learning**
24 **environment? Do conversations nurture professional growth, build relationships,**
25 **and result in more informed practice and improved student achievement?**
26

27 Definitely. The collaboration and feedback from everyone on staff and the students
28 provides me with the opportunities to continue to grow and achieve in all of the above
29 areas.
30

31 **Q5: How has your music pedagogy/program structure changed regarding your**
32 **needs or the needs of your students? Do activities connect learning to life and**
33 **community or provide a sense of belonging? If so, can you provide specific**
34 **examples?**
35

36 My pedagogy/program structure continues to evolve (sometimes on a daily basis) to
37 meet the needs of the students in regards to their individual needs and the needs of the
38 repertoire. I hope that my activities are helping students to realize that learning is fun,
39 persistence is vital, and that everyone can learn or get better at something. Specific
40 examples: One Alegria student told me that she didn't know the note names for her
41 instrument very well, but after playing Staff Wars (a video-like game for practicing note
42 names) she was surprised and excited when she could increase her score each time she

43 played. We discussed how sometimes we don't know how good we are until we try and
44 keep trying.

45

46 **Q6: Does the El Sistema Oklahoma ensemble-based music organization provide an**
47 **environment to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences in cultures,**
48 **values, and individual beliefs? Do students, teachers, and parents feel**
49 **accountability towards the success of the program? If so, how and why?**

50

51 This is one of the main tenets of El Sistema Oklahoma. The students and staff have
52 many opportunities to engage in these discussions. The staff meets regularly and
53 communicates through email about these issues, and the students have opportunities in
54 their large and small ensembles, classes, and composer groups to discuss too. I'm
55 excited when I see students taking leadership roles and providing compassion to their
56 fellow students. I know that all of the staff do their best to hold students accountable
57 and help them learn the skills to become successful in music and life. The parents
58 support from their attendance at concerts to the simple act of thanking me each day as
59 they pick up their children is a joy to experience.

60

61 **Q7: How have students benefitted from their experience in the El Sistema**
62 **Oklahoma program? What are possible future benefits from having been in a**
63 **program such as this?**

64

65 The students are receiving a quality music and life education in a nurturing, caring and
66 supportive environment. These kids will have learned to be successful team players,
67 persistent workers and supporters of the arts, and will be able to apply these skills to
68 whatever they decide to do in the future.

69

70 **Q8: Do you consider El Sistema Oklahoma's music program unique? Is there a**
71 **common direction or development of shared understandings that improves the**
72 **program experience for all members?**

73

74 We are very unique in that we provide opportunities for excellent music performance
75 (ensembles, instrument instruction), excellent musical understanding (Fundamentals
76 classes--theory, culture, creativity), and excellent life skill learning (leadership,
77 social/emotional skills, education and family support). The staff and program leadership
78 meet frequently to discuss and develop our common directions and goals and to
79 celebrate our successes and continue to improve in all aspects of our program.

80

81 **Q9: Are small music communities (i.e. creative/musicianship classes, guided**
82 **practice, chamber ensembles, etc.) within the larger group important to the overall**
83 **success of El Sistema Oklahoma?**

84

85 These are areas where students can discover/develop new skills, build on old skills, get
86 extra help, and have a chance to be mentored, all of which contributes to their
87 individual success and the success of the program as a whole.

88

89 **Q10: How does the current program gather and consider data, new knowledge,**
90 **and others' perspectives when planning objectives and goals for student**
91 **enrichment? How is success determined?**

92
93 Our leadership (Robyn, Mike and Laura) constantly seek formal and informal input
94 from all stakeholders in the program (students, parents, staff, board members, donors
95 and the community). We as a staff formally and informally discuss and review this
96 input as we plan for our students. Some of our success/room for improvement can be
97 determined from the formal data gathered by surveys and other instruments, but most of
98 our determination is anecdotal and observational. I know that we have been successful
99 when I see the excitement on the students' faces after a fantastic performance or even
100 when a student steps out and tries something new in the classroom, on their instrument,
101 or even in their behavior/attitude.
102

103

1 **Online Survey Participant #5**

2

3 **Q1: Please type your position at El Sistema Oklahoma. (Administrator, Teacher,**
4 **or Teaching Assistant).**

5

Violin Teacher (Alegría/Esperanza)

6

7 **Q2: How long have you taught music and in what capacity? (i.e. 3 years,**
8 **elementary general music, 3rd year college student - El Sistema experience only,**
9 **etc.)**

10

11 3 1/2 years at El Sistema, 8 years of private teaching

12

13 **Q3: As a teacher, leader, or staff member, do you feel El Sistema Oklahoma is a**
14 **place where you can collaborate with others who share a passion for music? If so,**
15 **how does this fit in the overall program structure?**

16

17 Absolutely! At El Sistema music is more than just sounds coming out of instruments; it
18 is a meaningful tool that gets us to connect with students in a deeper level. We get to
19 know who they are, help them become their best selves and have a place where they
20 feel valued... all through music.

21

22 **Q4: Does your teaching or leadership impact the overall goal of a shared learning**
23 **environment? Do conversations nurture professional growth, build relationships,**
24 **and result in more informed practice and improved student achievement?**

25

26 Collaboration with colleagues is a huge part for the success of my students. I work
27 along with Mr. Batty and Mr. Rice and all together join our efforts and ideas to make
28 sure our students are getting the best possible instruction

29

30 **Q5: How has your music pedagogy/program structure changed regarding your**
31 **needs or the needs of your students? Do activities connect learning to life and**
32 **community or provide a sense of belonging? If so, can you provide specific**
33 **examples?**

34

35 Yes! I have to adjust my instruction constantly to get students to enjoy and have a
36 meaningful experience in my classroom. For instance, there are some students whose
37 personalities set them up to be the followers. In my classroom I come up with activities
38 where students have a leadership role even in small amounts. For example, tuning their
39 own instrument gets the student to be responsible and in charge as the leader of his own
40 instrument; this also creates awareness of how important each member is regardless to
41 where they seat in the ensemble.

42

43 **Q6: Does the El Sistema Oklahoma ensemble-based music organization provide an**
44 **environment to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences in cultures,**

45 **values, and individual beliefs? Do students, teachers, and parents feel**
46 **accountability towards the success of the program? If so, how and why?**
47 We are all about embracing the differences that we may have and coming together as
48 one through music. That is the magic of music: it's the universal language!

49
50 **Q7: How have students benefitted from their experience in the El Sistema**
51 **Oklahoma program? What are possible future benefits from having been in a**
52 **program such as this?**

53
54 To me the most important acquisition students might gain from being at El Sistema is
55 that they are expected to do their very best, always! If they grow knowing that it is
56 important for them and everyone around them to be their best version of themselves
57 always, whatever the students will end up doing in life will benefit from this valuable
58 life lesson.

59
60 **Q8: Do you consider El Sistema Oklahoma's music program unique? Is there a**
61 **common direction or development of shared understandings that improves the**
62 **program experience for all members?**

63
64 Totally unique! Students needs come before the music needs. Having this common
65 understanding within the members of ESO sets the program in another level compared
66 to other ways of learning music in the area.

67
68 **Q9: Are small music communities (i.e. creative/musicianship classes, guided**
69 **practice, chamber ensembles, etc.) within the larger group important to the overall**
70 **success of El Sistema Oklahoma?**

71
72 Absolutely! It gives a diversity of important knowledge and establishes connections
73 between students that don't play the same instrument or don't go to the same school.

74
75 **Q10: How does the current program gather and consider data, new knowledge,**
76 **and others' perspectives when planning objectives and goals for student**
77 **enrichment? How is success determined?**

78
79 ESO has a shared/aligned Curriculum that is put together as students progress. It
80 considers what students need to learn in order to be successful and it is modified
81 accordingly. Success is determined by growth instead of proficiency. It is extremely
82 important to us at ESO to value the improvement that a students shows in his/her
83 learning process.

84

1

Online Survey Participant #6

2

Q1: Please type your position at El Sistema Oklahoma. (Administrator, Teacher, or Teaching Assistant).

3

Teaching assistant

4

5

6

Q2: How long have you taught music and in what capacity? (i.e. 3 years, elementary general music, 3rd year college student - El Sistema experience only, etc.)

7

8

9

One year. Master student

10

11

12

Q3: As a teacher, leader, or staff member, do you feel El Sistema Oklahoma is a place where you can collaborate with others who share a passion for music? If so, how does this fit in the overall program structure?

13

14

15

Yes. being able to teach and or learn from other staff members, gives us the opportunity to become better teachers and musicians. So many opportunities exist where we can learn new ideas that we might have not yet considered. There is certainly three dimensional learning that can happen for those who are interested.

16

17

18

19

20

21

Q4: Does your teaching or leadership impact the overall goal of a shared learning environment? Do conversations nurture professional growth, build relationships, and result in more informed practice and improved student achievement?

22

23

24

Yes.

25

26

27

Q5: How has your music pedagogy/program structure changed regarding your needs or the needs of your students? Do activities connect learning to life and community or provide a sense of belonging? If so, can you provide specific examples?

28

29

30

31

Absolutely, for example. I find when students appear to have an "attitude" in fundamentals class many times it is simply a matter of the child not knowing the material well enough to participate. So when I work with them one on one, they are able to catch up and rejoin the class. They now have more confidence, the "attitude" is reduced and Last but not least I have built a bridge for a relationship with that student.

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

Q6: Does the El Sistema Oklahoma ensemble-based music organization provide an environment to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences in cultures, values, and individual beliefs? Do students, teachers, and parents feel accountability towards the success of the program? If so, how and why?

39

40

41

42

I think so.

43

44 **Q7: How have students benefitted from their experience in the El Sistema**
45 **Oklahoma program? What are possible future benefits from having been in a**
46 **program such as this?**

47
48 I see the children have to learn to work together with out regard to race, culture,
49 religion, or gender. In neighborhoods and schools children tend to segregate, but only
50 integration is possible at El Sistima. The future Benefits is that children will have more
51 compassion and understanding for all Persons

52
53 **Q8: Do you consider El Sistema Oklahoma's music program unique? Is there a**
54 **common direction or development of shared understandings that improves the**
55 **program experience for all members?**

56
57 I believe the purpose of all children's programs should be for Children to learn how to
58 be better people. The difference in whether a program provides this is in the leadership.
59 Unfortunately there are many groups that focus on results and not on development. But
60 there are also many like El Sistima that focus on the development first. So in this
61 respect no I do not think El Sistima is unique.

62
63 **Q9: Are small music communities (i.e. creative/musicianship classes, guided**
64 **practice, chamber ensembles, etc.) within the larger group important to the overall**
65 **success of El Sistema Oklahoma?**

66
67 Yes.

68
69 **Q10: How does the current program gather and consider data, new knowledge,**
70 **and others' perspectives when planning objectives and goals for student**
71 **enrichment? How is success determined?**

72
73 I don't know.

74

1

Online Survey Participant #7

2 **Q1: Please type your position at El Sistema Oklahoma. (Administrator, Teacher,**
3 **or Teaching Assistant).**

4 Nueva cello and bass teacher

5

6 **Q2: How long have you taught music and in what capacity? (i.e. 3 years,**
7 **elementary general music, 3rd year college student - El Sistema experience only,**
8 **etc.)**

9 3rd year college student-El Sistema and enrichment camp experience

10

11 **Q3: As a teacher, leader, or staff member, do you feel El Sistema Oklahoma is a**
12 **place where you can collaborate with others who share a passion for music? If so,**
13 **how does this fit in the overall program structure?**

14

15 I definitely believe I can collaborate with my fellow Nueva staff members. We share
16 ideas about classroom management, teaching note reading, rehearsal etiquette, and how
17 to make our classrooms more positive environments. We also share praises and great
18 moments we have involving our students.

19

20 **Q4: Does your teaching or leadership impact the overall goal of a shared learning**
21 **environment? Do conversations nurture professional growth, build relationships,**
22 **and result in more informed practice and improved student achievement?**

23

24 I believe that conversations between staff members help make the environment more
25 cohesive and less chaotic for the students, and the students are better able to focus on
26 their learning as a result.

27

28 **Q5: How has your music pedagogy/program structure changed regarding your**
29 **needs or the needs of your students? Do activities connect learning to life and**
30 **community or provide a sense of belonging? If so, can you provide specific**
31 **examples?**

32

33 My pedagogy structure has changed as I have gotten to know my students as
34 individuals, and I can now recognize when one student needs a little more help than the
35 others. I have started using tier 2 instruction for some of my students by grouping most
36 of the class up and working one-on-one with a student, or pairing that student up with a
37 more advanced student in the class in order to decrease the knowledge gap and bring the
38 student falling behind back up with the rest of the class.

39

40 **Q6: Does the El Sistema Oklahoma ensemble-based music organization provide an**
41 **environment to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences in cultures,**
42 **values, and individual beliefs? Do students, teachers, and parents feel**
43 **accountability towards the success of the program? If so, how and why?**

44 Students are exposed to different cultural beliefs and music styles every semester, and
45 they are invited to learn more about the culture behind the music. I believe that students,
46 teachers, and parents are the reason the program is still going, and we all know our
47 responsibilities to the program such as teachers being prepared for lessons and knowing
48 their schedule for the days, students learning their music and helping the classroom
49 environment by contributing to the conversations involved in the learning atmosphere,
50 and parents making sure their child attends the program every day and supporting their
51 child's artistic abilities.

52

53 **Q7: How have students benefitted from their experience in the El Sistema**
54 **Oklahoma program? What are possible future benefits from having been in a**
55 **program such as this?**

56

57 Students have developed musical and personal skills they might not have without the
58 ensemble and classroom experiences provided at ESO. They are able to interact and
59 develop friendships with students from other schools who they may not have met
60 without ESO. They are also a lot more advanced on their instruments than most students
61 their age, so the chances of going to college for music or joining a professional
62 ensemble are much higher.

63

64 **Q8: Do you consider El Sistema Oklahoma's music program unique? Is there a**
65 **common direction or development of shared understandings that improves the**
66 **program experience for all members?**

67

68 El Sistema is a unique program because the students get tie on their instrument every
69 day for multiple hours. The logistical and musical goals that the whole staff share help
70 to make the program and cohesive environment.

71

72 **Q9: Are small music communities (i.e. creative/musicianship classes, guided**
73 **practice, chamber ensembles, etc.) within the larger group important to the overall**
74 **success of El Sistema Oklahoma?**

75

76 The small groups are what make the large ensembles successful. In our instrumental
77 classes, we only have one section of instruments, and the success of these classes
78 determines the success of the large ensemble rehearsals. Without the time with the small
79 groups, the large groups would be more chaotic and less efficient.

80

81 **Q10: How does the current program gather and consider data, new knowledge,**
82 **and others' perspectives when planning objectives and goals for student**
83 **enrichment? How is success determined?**

84

85 The current program involves an assessment in the fundamentals classrooms at the end
86 of the year as well as small assessments done throughout the semesters. The data
87 gathered by these assessments as well as the instrumental ability of the students done in
88 instrument classes is used to determine whether the students have met goals and
89 objectives necessary in order to move on to a more advanced orchestra. Success is

90 determined by technique and musical ability on their instruments as well as aural skills
91 and fundamental music theory knowledge.
92

1

Online Survey Participant #8

2

Q1: Please type your position at El Sistema Oklahoma. (Administrator, Teacher, or Teaching Assistant).

3

4

Nueva Music Fundamentals Teacher

5

6

Q2: How long have you taught music and in what capacity? (i.e. 3 years, elementary general music, 3rd year college student - El Sistema experience only, etc.)

7

8

9

10

Public school - 7 years private piano instructor - 30 years group piano instructor - 5 years university graduate assistant - 7 years

11

12

13

Q3: As a teacher, leader, or staff member, do you feel El Sistema Oklahoma is a place where you can collaborate with others who share a passion for music? If so, how does this fit in the overall program structure?

14

15

16

17

As a new teacher at ESO, I can see the possibility for collaborating with other teachers. But, to be honest, those possibilities have not become realities, yet.

18

19

20

Q4: Does your teaching or leadership impact the overall goal of a shared learning environment? Do conversations nurture professional growth, build relationships, and result in more informed practice and improved student achievement?

21

22

23

24

Yes, my teaching is an integral part of the overall goal for ESO. I believe conversations do nurture professional growth, build relationships, and provide a better situation for students. However, it is essential that the opportunity for those conversations be included in the scheduling and planning.

25

26

27

28

29

Q5: How has your music pedagogy/program structure changed regarding your needs or the needs of your students? Do activities connect learning to life and community or provide a sense of belonging? If so, can you provide specific examples?

30

31

32

33

34

Because this program is designed around the orchestra, students seem to feel a sense of connection or belonging with other members of the orchestra. My curriculum is based on the pieces they are performing in that group, as well as, developing their overall musicianship.

35

36

37

38

39

Q6: Does the El Sistema Oklahoma ensemble-based music organization provide an environment to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences in cultures, values, and individual beliefs? Do students, teachers, and parents feel accountability towards the success of the program? If so, how and why?

40

41

42

43

44 ESO provides a positive environment where cultural differences are embraced and
45 supported. The teachers and staff provide an environment conducive to acceptance,
46 support, and encouragement. It is truly the best teaching situation I have experienced in
47 this regard.

48

49 **Q7: How have students benefitted from their experience in the El Sistema**
50 **Oklahoma program? What are possible future benefits from having been in a**
51 **program such as this?**

52

53 ESO provides opportunities for students they would not have otherwise because of the
54 expense of learning an orchestral instrument but also because ESO is so devoted to the
55 well-being of each student. The ESO program truly reflects their motto: "transforming
56 the lives of children through music."

57

58 **Q8: Do you consider El Sistema Oklahoma's music program unique? Is there a**
59 **common direction or development of shared understandings that improves the**
60 **program experience for all members?**

61

62 ESO is definitely a unique music education program. I have never felt so much support
63 from the administration and so much concern for the well-being of each student and
64 faculty member.

65

66 **Q9: Are small music communities (i.e. creative/musicianship classes, guided**
67 **practice, chamber ensembles, etc.) within the larger group important to the overall**
68 **success of El Sistema Oklahoma?**

69

70 Yes, the smaller communities are important to the overall success of the program.
71 Sometimes it seems the Fundamentals classes are not as appreciated as much as the
72 performance groups. But this issue is being addressed.

73

74 **Q10: How does the current program gather and consider data, new knowledge,**
75 **and others' perspectives when planning objectives and goals for student**
76 **enrichment? How is success determined?**

77

78 The administration welcomes input from teachers and I feel free to share my concerns
79 and ideas.

80

81

1

Online Survey Participant #9

2

Q1: Please type your position at El Sistema Oklahoma. (Administrator, Teacher, or Teaching Assistant).

3

Teacher

4

5

6

Q2: How long have you taught music and in what capacity? (i.e. 3 years, elementary general music, 3rd year college student - El Sistema experience only, etc.)

7

8

9

10

2 years- Kindergarten teacher 2 years-Elementary General Music 1 year- Beginning band, elementary 3 years- secondary vocal music and piano 2 years- El Sistema 3 years- Higher ed, Applied Strings and String Technique

11

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14

Q3: As a teacher, leader, or staff member, do you feel El Sistema Oklahoma is a place where you can collaborate with others who share a passion for music? If so, how does this fit in the overall program structure?

15

16

17

Yes, I fully believe that ESO is a place where I can collaborate with others who share a passion for music. I believe the collaboration that happens across each strand of ESO (fundamentals, instrument class, rehearsal) is the piece that makes ESO so incredibly successful. If I am struggling with teaching a specific concept or if I want to introduce a concept in a different way, I have several experienced music educators nearby with tried and true tips, tools, and immediate feedback. Each strand of El Sistema OK supports the next and it works like a cycle. Fundamentals supports Instrument class and Instrument class supports rehearsal and it repeats.

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Q4: Does your teaching or leadership impact the overall goal of a shared learning environment? Do conversations nurture professional growth, build relationships, and result in more informed practice and improved student achievement?

28

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30

We are strongest when we work together. Each of us has specific responsibilities. If any one of us fails to meet the expectations of a shared learning environment, that failure may not be obvious from the point of view of an outsider, but from the perspective of those of us doing the heavy lifting, there are definite ripples. My teaching and leadership definitely impacts the goals of our environment. The conversations we have in our teams, and as an organizational whole have changed the way I view learning communities. And because we maintain an open and thoughtful environment, our students are given numerous opportunities to shine.

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Q5: How has your music pedagogy/program structure changed regarding your needs or the needs of your students? Do activities connect learning to life and community or provide a sense of belonging? If so, can you provide specific examples?

41

42

43

44 I believe the needs of the students should always come before the needs of the teacher
45 whenever possible. My pedagogy has definitely changed; I believe that the community
46 (our classroom, ESO site, etc) is sometimes more important than the music. I strive to
47 incorporate activities to empower my students individually and musically. Recently, I
48 began using emojis to allow students the opportunity to anonymously communicate
49 with me their emotional needs. This small endeavor has been very successful. I want
50 each student to feel that my space is a safe space where everyone belongs and I believe
51 that this activity helps to fulfill that goal.

52

53 **Q6: Does the El Sistema Oklahoma ensemble-based music organization provide an**
54 **environment to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences in cultures,**
55 **values, and individual beliefs? Do students, teachers, and parents feel**
56 **accountability towards the success of the program? If so, how and why?**

57

58 Unfortunately, I don't believe that the organization provides an environment to safely
59 explore and discuss the diversity of the organization starting from the faculty and
60 ending with the students. I find that this is typical when there is an organization
61 comprised of minorities, but operated and run by the majority. How would someone
62 who never experienced poverty be able to recognize poverty? How would a person who
63 never experienced daily racism and discrimination based on color, creed, nationality,
64 etc, be able to recognize a child who might be experiencing those things? Issues that our
65 students face each day are simply not on the radar of some of the adults in their lives, so
66 those vital conversations never take place. I believe that most of the people connected
67 with ESO feel accountability towards the success of the program. This includes the
68 daily time commitment, the schedule, outside performances, etc.

69

70 **Q7: How have students benefitted from their experience in the El Sistema**
71 **Oklahoma program? What are possible future benefits from having been in a**
72 **program such as this?**

73

74 I don't believe the goal is to create professional musicians. But, I believe that one of the
75 most beautiful consequences of ESO is that we are creating life-long music advocates.

76

77 **Q8: Do you consider El Sistema Oklahoma's music program unique? Is there a**
78 **common direction or development of shared understandings that improves the**
79 **program experience for all members?**

80

81 I fully believe that ESO is a unique music program. I believe that there is a common
82 idea that each of the teachers at ESO feels supported. If I am in need in any capacity, I
83 know that I can find assistance with my colleagues at ESO.

84

85 **Q9: Are small music communities (i.e. creative/musicianship classes, guided**
86 **practice, chamber ensembles, etc.) within the larger group important to the overall**
87 **success of El Sistema Oklahoma?**

88

89 Absolutely! Students create relationships in the smaller classes and ensembles. They
90 support each other through the music. We build on experiences. What we do in
91 fundamentals can be applied to guided practice or chamber ensembles or orchestra.
92 Each smaller area contributes to the success of the large ensembles.

93

94 **Q10: How does the current program gather and consider data, new knowledge,
95 and others' perspectives when planning objectives and goals for student
96 enrichment? How is success determined?**

97 *Respondent skipped this question*

98

1

Online Survey Participant #10

2 **Q1: Please type your position at El Sistema Oklahoma. (Administrator, Teacher,**
3 **or Teaching Assistant).**

4 Administrator

5

6 **Q2: How long have you taught music and in what capacity? (i.e. 3 years,**
7 **elementary general music, 3rd year college student - El Sistema experience only,**
8 **etc.)**

9 n/a

10

11 **Q3: As a teacher, leader, or staff member, do you feel El Sistema Oklahoma is a**
12 **place where you can collaborate with others who share a passion for music? If so,**
13 **how does this fit in the overall program structure?**

14

15 Yes. ESO nurtures collaboration between colleagues through weekly meeting times,
16 high communication via email, text, and online services, teacher and TA collaboration
17 and continued professional development.

18

19 **Q4: Does your teaching or leadership impact the overall goal of a shared learning**
20 **environment? Do conversations nurture professional growth, build relationships,**
21 **and result in more informed practice and improved student achievement?**

22

23 Oh my goodness, YES. It is critical that teachers are able to build relationships so that
24 as students navigate from classroom to rehearsal to free time there is consistency in
25 message and mission. It is critical to accomplished the overall goal at ESO and I believe
26 in all shared learning environments

27

28 **Q5: How has your music pedagogy/program structure changed regarding your**
29 **needs or the needs of your students? Do activities connect learning to life and**
30 **community or provide a sense of belonging? If so, can you provide specific**
31 **examples?**

32

33 Activities and program structure must be student and community focused. For example,
34 during concerts we encourage loud cheering and "hoots and hollers" which is not typical
35 of classical music viewing but a part of the community that we serve. You celebrate
36 your loved ones and their accomplishments and that recognition will not be financially
37 grand it is the way our community communicates their love and for that reason we
38 foster it and do not stifle it. There are many many times we consider the community we
39 serve over our own personal community (if it is different) because it is critical that they
40 feel they belong.

41

42 **Q6: Does the El Sistema Oklahoma ensemble-based music organization provide an**
43 **environment to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences in cultures,**

44 **values, and individual beliefs? Do students, teachers, and parents feel**
45 **accountability towards the success of the program? If so, how and why?**
46 Some classes and ensemble structures do more than others but yes. The smaller groups
47 offer the opportunity to explore and discuss and many of our classes are dependent on
48 it. It's on a individual basis... we don't pressure that accountability and we have had
49 some issues where there is a disconnect between program success and family/student.
50 But I get most of the issues so I see those problems more than anyone else.

51
52 **Q7: How have students benefitted from their experience in the El Sistema**
53 **Oklahoma program? What are possible future benefits from having been in a**
54 **program such as this?**

55
56 I believe the focus on a community is becoming less important in the coming
57 generations but it is the crux of our success and student success. Being able to
58 collaborate with many different people from many different backgrounds will be helpful
59 in their future endeavors.

60
61 **Q8: Do you consider El Sistema Oklahoma's music program unique? Is there a**
62 **common direction or development of shared understandings that improves the**
63 **program experience for all members?**

64
65 Our program's uniqueness and success comes from being direct about missions but
66 giving freedom to accomplish those missions as professionals see fit. We have the
67 confidence that the direction is understood through our continued communication with
68 staff and among staff and that is continually checked through lesson plans and
69 classroom visits.

70
71 **Q9: Are small music communities (i.e. creative/musicianship classes, guided**
72 **practice, chamber ensembles, etc.) within the larger group important to the overall**
73 **success of El Sistema Oklahoma?**

74
75 It is so important that students see that while they are a singular player, they have many
76 many different roles and ways to express themselves within different groups at ESO
77

78 **Q10: How does the current program gather and consider data, new knowledge,**
79 **and others' perspectives when planning objectives and goals for student**
80 **enrichment? How is success determined?**

81
82 We gather data through self-reporting and consider the data both quantitatively and
83 anecdotally. We gain new knowledge from many, many different sources and consider
84 it often through meetings and from observing and contacting other professionals.
85 Success is looked at many different ways from self-reporting of emotional status,
86 academic standing, school contact, family communication, attendance, and return rate.
87 It's hard to say that there is a static success "point" because success is largely dependent
88 on the individual and it's a journey that never truly ends!

89

90

1

Online Survey Participant #11

2

Q1: Please type your position at El Sistema Oklahoma. (Administrator, Teacher, or Teaching Assistant).

3

4

Teacher

5

6

Q2: How long have you taught music and in what capacity? (i.e. 3 years, elementary general music, 3rd year college student - El Sistema experience only, etc.)

7

8

9

5.5 years in public school orchestra

10

11

Q3: As a teacher, leader, or staff member, do you feel El Sistema Oklahoma is a place where you can collaborate with others who share a passion for music? If so, how does this fit in the overall program structure?

12

13

14

I do believe it is a place where I can collaborate and more so, I believe it is a place where collaboration is strongly encouraged. I believe the collaboration allows all of us to work towards the common good and common goals for the kids.

15

16

17

18

19

Q4: Does your teaching or leadership impact the overall goal of a shared learning environment? Do conversations nurture professional growth, build relationships, and result in more informed practice and improved student achievement?

20

21

22

I believe everybody has teaching that impacts the overall goal. Our conversations definitely allow us to nurture all of the above as well as explore new and developing ideas to contribute to better student achievement

23

24

25

26

27

Q5: How has your music pedagogy/program structure changed regarding your needs or the needs of your students? Do activities connect learning to life and community or provide a sense of belonging? If so, can you provide specific examples?

28

29

30

31

Dependent upon the needs of the students musically, repertoire often changes to help them advance in a desired skill set or to help them challenge themselves and get them out of their comfort zones. I believe every skill they receive from their ensemble playing gives them real life skills: timeliness, preparedness, shared responsibility, leadership, etc

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

Q6: Does the El Sistema Oklahoma ensemble-based music organization provide an environment to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences in cultures, values, and individual beliefs? Do students, teachers, and parents feel accountability towards the success of the program? If so, how and why?

39

40

41

42

43 I believe it is a safe place, and if students feel uncomfortable sharing-- it is more of a
44 personality and development issue which in turn becomes our job to help them feel as if
45 they can explore and discuss. I believe everybody involved feels accountability towards
46 the success of the program because everybody involved feels valued and listened to
47 **Q7: How have students benefitted from their experience in the El Sistema**
48 **Oklahoma program? What are possible future benefits from having been in a**
49 **program such as this?**

50
51 One of the biggest benefits is a sense of community they feel when they come to El
52 Sistema. Because of the program, they are connected to peers at different schools all
53 over Oklahoma City metro area. Possible future benefits include continued networking,
54 developing strong music educators and also providing opportunity to college that may
55 have been missed otherwise

56
57 **Q8: Do you consider El Sistema Oklahoma's music program unique? Is there a**
58 **common direction or development of shared understandings that improves the**
59 **program experience for all members?**

60
61 I do consider it unique not only because of the direction and/or development but also
62 because our founders and donors share our vision too

63
64 **Q9: Are small music communities (i.e. creative/musicianship classes, guided**
65 **practice, chamber ensembles, etc.) within the larger group important to the overall**
66 **success of El Sistema Oklahoma?**

67
68 Absolutely. The students would not be able to thrive so quickly and bountifully without
69 reinforcement everywhere

70
71 **Q10: How does the current program gather and consider data, new knowledge,**
72 **and others' perspectives when planning objectives and goals for student**
73 **enrichment? How is success determined?**

74
75 Surveys from students and round table discussions from staff members.

76

1

Online Survey Participant #12

2 **Q1: Please type your position at El Sistema Oklahoma. (Administrator, Teacher,**
3 **or Teaching Assistant).**

4 Teacher

5

6 **Q2: How long have you taught music and in what capacity? (i.e. 3 years,**
7 **elementary general music, 3rd year college student - El Sistema experience only,**
8 **etc.)**

9

10 12 years - total Mostly privately (private guitar studio) 4 years - ESO

11

12 **Q3: As a teacher, leader, or staff member, do you feel El Sistema Oklahoma is a**
13 **place where you can collaborate with others who share a passion for music? If so,**
14 **how does this fit in the overall program structure?**

15

16 I definitely believe that El Sistema Oklahoma is a space of creative learning in which
17 both staff and student body find multiple venues and projects to build and strengthen
18 their shared passion for music making. Collaborations (these being between students or
19 student-faculty) in any form are the result of communal exercises that take place in
20 several different scenarios at ESO. Students collaborate from the moment they arrive
21 and even when they are not immediately in the program itself. El Sistema provides
22 opportunities for the student to be successful, these being: logistical chores,
23 participation in the classroom, or simply by practicing and playing their part assigned in
24 the orchestra. When the student lends a hand to carry materials or organize elements in
25 a room, the collaboration represents a participatory achievement. By actively
26 participating and encouraging others to be involved in small ensembles or music
27 groups, the students show ownership and social growth. Or when the students learn
28 their parts and have previously practiced before a rehearsal, they intrinsically have
29 collaborated with the rest of the ensemble and conductor by being prepared. These
30 collaborations are a clear and direct representation of the mission and vision of the
31 program itself.

32

33 **Q4: Does your teaching or leadership impact the overall goal of a shared learning**
34 **environment? Do conversations nurture professional growth, build relationships,**
35 **and result in more informed practice and improved student achievement?**

36

37 I have experienced multiple situations in which the student-teacher relationship leads to
38 more effective learning and/or behavioral response. In nature, the more familiar the
39 teacher is with the student's individual [learning] profile, the better the message is
40 received. This latter can only be achieved by building solid and meaningful
41 relationships with each student, which eventually would lead to a more informed
42 practice and internalization of class material.

43

44 **Q5: How has your music pedagogy/program structure changed regarding your**
45 **needs or the needs of your students? Do activities connect learning to life and**
46 **community or provide a sense of belonging? If so, can you provide specific**
47 **examples?**

48 In my specific case, its pedagogical structure has evolved in regards of the social and
49 communal approach to it. The student population at ESO is mainly represented by
50 individuals and families who are (in some way) socially challenged. A good number of
51 the activities developed in my classroom are intended for the student to collaborate with
52 others in order to build a sense of community, which eventually would replicate in other
53 social environments (e.g., home, school, etc.) The “Pass the ball, leader” activity, while
54 simple in nature, it works well not just as a warm up, but as an opportunity to show
55 respect and participation with peers. One student makes a pass to another student. The
56 first student must make eye contact and make sure that someone is ready to catch the
57 pass. A pass can be tricky, as long as the receptor understands the nature of the pass. An
58 effective pass starts without verbal communication, shows eye-to-eye communication,
59 is performed aiming for the receptor to be able to catch the ball, and ends with the other
60 student catching the pass accurately. A series of passes are performed until every single
61 student has passed the ball effectively.

62
63 **Q6: Does the El Sistema Oklahoma ensemble-based music organization provide an**
64 **environment to safely explore, discuss, and interpret differences in cultures,**
65 **values, and individual beliefs? Do students, teachers, and parents feel**
66 **accountability towards the success of the program? If so, how and why?**

67
68 It certainly does through its curriculum and the repertoire performed by the main
69 orchestra(s). In my experience, parents, guardians, and other tutors have expressed
70 content and a sense of accountability by means of closeness with the faculty at ESO and
71 the directives. This latter is possibly the result of the inclusive nature of the program
72 and its core beliefs, which are directly reflected in the music performed and curricular
73 activities.

74
75 **Q7: How have students benefitted from their experience in the El Sistema**
76 **Oklahoma program? What are possible future benefits from having been in a**
77 **program such as this?**

78
79 A majority of the students have shown a drastic change in behavioral patterns and social
80 participation, as well as musical skills and their sense of belonging. In essence, ESO
81 students show the capacity of being responsible and mature citizens, socially driven to
82 lead and help others, and most definitely a sense of caring for what brings joy and unity
83 to their lives and the people surrounding them.

84
85 **Q8: Do you consider El Sistema Oklahoma's music program unique? Is there a**
86 **common direction or development of shared understandings that improves the**
87 **program experience for all members?**

88

89 It definitely is a major distinctive force that brings hope and a window of opportunity to
90 the young population of a challenged community. The common understanding of caring
91 for others, being responsible in preparing the material for rehearsals and being aware of
92 the overall expectations at ESO.

93 **Q9: Are small music communities (i.e. creative/musicianship classes, guided**
94 **practice, chamber ensembles, etc.) within the larger group important to the overall**
95 **success of El Sistema Oklahoma?**

96
97 Definitely true. The presence of small communities allow the students to “try
98 themselves” in different environments beyond the large group. Behavior and
99 participation varies regarding the environment in which the student is present.
100 However, expectations should remain the same, consistently, throughout the various
101 “ecosystems” found at ESO. Students have shown improvement both in their executive
102 skills, musicianship, and in-class-behavior during the meetings of these small music
103 communities, thus reciprocating these results [as a consequence] in the larger ensemble.

104
105 **Q10: How does the current program gather and consider data, new knowledge,**
106 **and others' perspectives when planning objectives and goals for student**
107 **enrichment? How is success determined?**

108
109 There is a curricular alignment currently being implemented throughout the various
110 sections within the program (instrumental classes, music fundamentals, rehearsals, etc.),
111 where the faculty involved post in a global file sharing application (dropbox) their
112 lesson plans. These plans contain activities, assessments, repertoire, pedagogical
113 material, goals and chronological application. This aligned curriculum allows each
114 faculty member to implement materials from other sections into their own lessons,
115 consistently reaffirming and globalizing the material taught, and eventually
116 homogenizing it into a whole thorough curriculum.

Appendix I

Observations

1

2

1

Observation Abby Cellos Guided Practice

2 DATE: Tuesday, February 21, 2017

3 TIME: 4:00 PM

4

5 PLACE: A321, ESO

6

7 CLASS BEING OBSERVED: Cellos guided practice

8

9 PARTICIPANTS: 6-7 students coming and going

10

11 (Start of Observation)

12

13 Students walk in to rehearsal and get their cellos out

14

15 Students working on individual parts in Nueva repertoire (Ode to Joy)

16

17 Once a majority of students are in the room, a student asks, "Can we please play the
18 coda part again?!"

19

20 ****ownership of learning and excitement of playing****

21

22 Teacher acknowledges that they can play the coda and keeps helping others tune

23

24 Teacher starts the class by simply saying, "What was it that we worked really hard on
25 last time?" Student immediately respond with, "up bow"!!!

26

27 ****reinforcing past skills, but allowing students to provide the answers****

28

29 Students work through the piece together and then work on their own – as this is guided
30 practice

31

32 Individual students count rhythms out in small groups they created spontaneously, then
33 play on own

34

35 A child yells out, "This measure is a down-bow!!– Teacher is excited that the student
36 recognized this on his own

37

38 ****recognition of success****

39

40 Teacher asks students to play one passage together, then lets them play and practice
41 whatever they need to

42

43 Teacher helps individual students with a longbow style and placement of bow
44
45 Teacher recognizes several students are playing a section incorrectly, stops everyone,
46 fixes individual problems and then allows them to continue working on piece
47 individually
48
49 Teacher continues to walk around room to help various students with other issues
50

51

1 **Observation Abby Nueva Cello Sectional**

2 DATE: Tuesday, February 21, 2017

3

4 TIME: 4:30 PM

5

6 PLACE: ESO, A301

7

8 CLASS BEING OBSERVED: Nueva Cello Sectional

9

10 PARTICIPANTS: Student/Teacher pair along with their band mates

11

12 Any special elements affecting interactions (e.g. weather): VERY, VERY WARM in
13 the room

14

15 (Start of Observation)

16

17 Students enter and teacher helps tune instruments as students find their spots and get
18 ready for the rehearsal

19

20 ****sense of routine and organization****

21

22 Student asks to use his metronome – teacher thanks him but says they are going to use
23 hers for now (Teacher lets him later, but difficult to hear – she knew this, which is why
24 she wanted to use hers at this moment)

25

26 ****wanted to let student feel a part of the community ownership, but knew she needed
27 focus from the group at the beginning – the metronome the student had would have
28 been counterproductive at this point in the lesson****

29

30 Teacher looks at her watch and says – “Start – 30 secs to tell me anything you want to
31 tell me!”

32

33 ****interest in students, creating community****

34

35 Teacher says, “Great! Cha cha style.” Student yells our pizza something rather
36 (inaudible) and teacher goes with their words instead

37

38 ****shared repertoire – the group understands and moves forward with that
39 understanding!****

40

41 Review of last class: What did we work on most of the time last time??? – up bow, use
42 of words like popcorn, etc.

43

44 Students ask to play outside of room where it is much cooler, typically possible, but
45 little time today
46
47 ****Teacher very aware of the warm environment, but also wants to utilize her time as
48 much as possible ****
49
50 Teacher and students clap rhythm
51
52 Group tries to play together – teacher asks students if they are playing together
53
54 ****holds students accountable for learning****
55
56 Students could easily tell her – no, not together
57
58 “Let me listen to it from this angle” – let me hear what it sounds like - Teacher walks
59 around the room and listens to which students are struggling
60
61 Much better the second time around
62
63 Celebrates success with high fives when success occurs
64
65 ****celebration of success is important as seen through hoots and hollers from students****
66
67 Students get 20 seconds to practice while teacher helps a student individually
68
69 Group tries again to play and teacher asks, “Was that together?” – NO that was popcorn
70
71 ****not sure what that meant, but the group had a communication that they understood****
72
73 Teacher asks the students, “What can we do to fix it?”
74
75 ****Kids appear to have pride in accomplishments****
76

77

1 **Observation Beth Nueva Fundamentals**

2 DATE: Monday, February 27, 2017

3

4 TIME: 4:30 PM

5

6 PLACE: 3rd floor, ESO

7

8 CLASS BEING OBSERVED: Nueva fundamentals

9

10 PARTICIPANTS: 23 students, one teacher and one teacher assistant

11

12 (Start of Observation)

13

14 Teacher leads a clapping canon while one student takes roll

15

16 ****Joint Enterprise****

17

18 A student then warms them up with slinky

19

20 ****Mutual engagement****

21

22 Teacher warms them up with Solfège

23

24 Students sing “Love Somebody, Yes I do” and reinforcing syncopa ta ta

25

26 Student conductors conduct 3 part round “What a Goodly Thing”

27

28 ****student leadership and ownership of the class****

29

30 A Ram Sam Sam – New students lead next round song

31

32 ****Shared leadership is evident****

33

34 Dance – Cha Cha Dance

35 A Left right, cha-cha-cha, clap-clap-clap. Right left, cha-cha-cha,

36 B Forward, cha-cha-cha, back, cha-cha-cha - Forward, cha-cha-cha, back, cha-cha-cha –

37 knees, knees, knees, clap, clap, clap, turn around in a circle

38 C – Dance anything! Free style!

39 B Again, then A, C

40

41 ****All look like they are having fun and dancing the cha cha, which supports a repertoire**

42 **song - Shared Repertoire****

43

- 44 Ta ta, cha-cha-cha – rhythm focus
- 45
- 46 Don't Want Your Waverly Wheat – song and dance
- 47
- 48 Naughty Kitty Cat Game - during Chase – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc. sings (with slsmslsm)
- 49
- 50 Doggie, Doggie solo singing game
- 51
- 52 Small groups play song/game
- 53
- 54 St. in middle does solo “meow”, then chases in and out of circle with hands held and up
- 55 Students pick other students
- 56
- 57 ****plenty of opportunity for students to take leadership roles****
- 58

59

1 **Observation Francisco & Taka Alegria Fundamentals**

2 DATE: Monday, February 20, 2017

3

4 TIME: 4:00 PM

5

6 PLACE: ESO, 308

7 CLASS BEING OBSERVED: Alegria fundamentals

8

9 PARTICIPANTS: 13 Students, TA, Teacher

10

11 Any special elements affecting interactions (e.g. weather): dreary, rainy day - A few
12 students with behavior concerns, many absent – 6 more came 8 minutes later
13 (Start of Observation)

14

15 Students walk in and find their spots on the floor

16

17 Teacher picks a class leader and volunteers to help prepare the classroom

18

19 ****ownership of classroom, student leadership****

20

21 Student leader gives points to groups following directions, which helps start the class in
22 a manner appropriate to the instructor

23

24 Students start with a ball passing game to help focus - ****teacher does this to help
25 reinforce structure and rules****

26

27 Teacher sets the stage of the activity by telling a story about Tenochtitlan

28

29 Teacher is very animate with his story telling about a lake, with eagle – the story goes
30 with songs they are learning

31

32 Students listen to story intently – there are parts they have heard, but the teachers asks
33 them to fill in the story with their interpretation

34

35 Students play a game that goes along with the story

36

37 ****teambuilding/community building game****

38

39

1 **Observation Kayla Alegria Chamber Ensemble**

2 DATE: Thursday, February 16, 2017

3

4 TIME: 4:30 pm

5

6 PLACE: Parlor, ESO

7

8 CLASS BEING OBSERVED: Alegria Chamber Violins

9

10 PARTICIPANTS: Teacher and 6 students Student/Teacher pair along with their band
11 mates

12

13 (Start of Observation)

14

15 Teacher helps students tune their instruments

16

17 Other students get music ready – putting on stand – also socializing together

18

19 ****casual setting, although students are attempting to getting ready for class****

20

21 Teacher reminds students to finger music while waiting for everyone to set up

22

23 Another teacher comes in and looks for attendance sheet – teacher takes attendance
24 quickly and gives it to him

25

26 One student practices quietly while others struggle to get ready for rehearsal

27

28 Students eventually prompt each other to engage

29

30 Teacher lets students play and figure out mistakes, only asking after a few tries, “How
31 are you going to get started today? How are we best going to use our time today?”

32

33 ****rehearsal ownership, while somewhat uncontrolled, leadership is at their hands, if
34 they choose to practice****

35

36 A few students try to take the lead and get the group started, while there are several
37 other students who would much rather converse about other things

38

39 Rather than interjecting, the teacher quietly mentions, “It is your time you are wasting.
40 Is this really how you want to spend it?”

41

42 The group then tries to play together, and does get through the piece.

43

44 ****Sounds pretty good! ****
45
46
47
48 Students look to another student to start the song again – she begins and plays for
49 several seconds...
50
51 The group falls apart about 10 measures into the piece
52
53 Another student counts them off and all play again and they try again
54
55 ****leadership is expected and a student does heed the call****
56
57 While they continue to rehearse, one student recognizes another student is struggling
58 and walks across the room to help another student read a passage
59
60 Once the group does finish the piece, the teacher asks them, “So what did we learn from
61 that run-through? Are we all equally comfortable with these parts?”
62
63 Students are unsure about how to fix the song but recognize they are struggling with a
64 passage that has a scale run
65
66 ****teacher lets the students struggle through the process rather than feeding the**
67 **answer****
68
69 One student tell the group to start by playing the scale and practice getting that right
70 first.
71
72 All of a sudden the student recognize I’m in the room writing things down and want to
73 see what I’m writing about them – I let them see but they didn’t really read much.
74
75 ****I’m trying to be unobtrusive as possible, but assured them I’m just there to listen to**
76 **them****
77
78 After the quick diversion, the group tries to get back on task
79
80 Again, the teacher let’s them try to figure out how to work it out but some students start
81 wandering and eventually get back to their spots
82
83 Teacher suggests if their scale is not played together – are they playing their song
84 together?
85
86 ****shared repertoire****
87

88 Teacher asks students to tell their peers what to change (i.e. do it again, pay attention,
89 look up) What do we need to do? And mentions how playing over and over the same
90 piece won't make it better.
91
92 Students start talking about their parts and ask each other about the other parts and what
93 each other plays
94
95 The group attempts to play together again – then all drop out
96 A student accuses another student of playing the wrong notes and the group wrestles
97 with the blaming going on in the group
98
99 A student then says, “HEY GUYS! Let’s take it measure by measure and figure out the
100 pitch”
101
102 **student leadership**
103
104 One student asks teacher for a metronome
105
106 Teacher finds one on her phone. Students give her the tempo marking and begin
107 subdividing notes
108
109 Students try again and play the scale together and in time – the teacher suggest they
110 look at each other and play
111
112 The group attempts playing again
113
114 One student yelled out afterwards, “It’s hard to play and look at everyone!” but they all
115 recognized that the group is playing better
116
117 One student notices how they are better but are still playing slower than metronome.
118
119 A few start losing focus again
120
121 Teacher gently says, “What would be the most productive way to use these last 5
122 minutes?”
123
124 A few suggestions were given on how to practice - shadow play, plucking
125
126 After a few wise cracks and typical silliness...
127
128 The group actually starts again and then offers constructive criticism to each other
129
130 Students play scale all the way through one more time
131
132 One student is trying to help the whole group – very patient, but upset that they are not
133 all doing what they should be doing and gives up the leadership role

134

135 A different student takes the lead

136

137 LOTS of help then follow from peers (to find measure, figure out notes)

138

139 ****When they play, they are truly listening to each other and sound together****

140

141

1 **Observation Kayla Esperanza Chamber Ensemble**

2 DATE: Thursday, February 16, 2017

3 TIME: 5:10 PM

4

5 PLACE: Parlor, ESO

6

7 CLASS BEING OBSERVED: Alegria Chamber (2 violins, cello)

8

9 PARTICIPANTS: Kayla and students

10

11 Any special elements affecting interactions (e.g. weather): one person missing

12

13 Background info: this group originally started out in different ensembles – wanted to be

14 the best at ESO! Taught themselves Heart and Soul – wanted pop tunes (one student

15 made an arrangement of Clocks – Cold Play, Smooth Criminal arranged by Kayla)

16 (Start of Observation)

17

18 Students enter classroom

19

20 A little conversation ensues – jabs about being late and not ready – still seem happy to
21 be there

22

23 Teacher explains how she has arranged a piece for them - Students appear to be excited
24 about the new music

25

26 Teacher assists this group more than younger ensemble – rather than letting these
27 students figure out when to start rehearsing, they do it on their own

28

29 Students start playing casually through new piece

30

31 Student 1 asks teacher for help with a difficult rhythm

32

33 Teacher speaks rhythm while student simultaneously says it with duh, duh, duh sounds
34 – seeing that this is easier for the student, the teacher switches to the duh, duh, duh
35 sounds and corrects the student using those syllables rather than forcing him to count
36 the rhythm out – wanted him to feel it first

37

38 Students look through all parts, including the cello part, even though the cello player is
39 not here.

40 Student 2 plays through first part of new piece alone and off to the side before joining
41 teacher and student 1 counting out rhythms
42
43 Student 1 sings song with original words, then sings his part
44
45 Student 2 chimes in saying “you start out with the melody”
46
47 From there the students discuss together who gets which part (part 1, part 2) and make
48 the changes on their scores
49
50 Teacher gives students the option to cut out sections that are not musically interesting
51
52 Students help each other with fingering for highest notes
53
54 Students continue working through the piece until they run across a few difficult notes –
55 very high – Student 2 looks to student 1 for help figuring out the fingering for the notes
56
57 Together both students figure out the notes and continue playing the piece
58
59 Students stop a quarter way into playing the piece; discover where the melody is and
60 where it shifts – a discussion ensues and a slight argument regarding where and when
61 each section started
62
63 This group uses much larger musical vocabulary and ideas about the piece than other
64 chamber groups (i.e. make edits to parts, arranging – “take down an octave to fit” –
65 aware of ranges suitable for their instrument, discovering difficult parts – referencing
66 specific measure numbers, switching parts – where good or not good)
67
68 Teacher told the students she was finished talking and the remainder of the class was
69 completely left for them to work together and figure out all the parts.
70
71 She did not speak the remainder of the time, except to answer a couple questions
72
73 Students circle parts, played through them individually and occasionally together as
74 they felt more confident about their part.
75

76

1 **Observation Kristen Flute Guided Practice**

2 DATE: Wednesday, February 22, 2017

3

4 TIME: 4:00 PM

5

6 PLACE: 110, ESO

7

8 CLASS BEING OBSERVED: Alegria Guided Practice

9

10 PARTICIPANTS: Teacher, 5 in attendance, 1 comes in late

11

12 (Start of Observation)

13

14 Students casually get ready for class (adjusting flutes, stands, practicing)

15

16 **About me sheets on wall – recognition of students** - students were so proud, they
17 shared the poster with me, taking it off the board to show me their accomplishments

18

19 Teacher gives schedule for rest of the week to group for the concert change

20

21 Teacher plays with them as a model - Flute 101: Mastering the Basics, then play F scale

22

23 **Scale Challenge Students must master each scale to get a sticker, then all scales to get
24 a new flute! **

25

26 “Go Ashley! Go Ashley!” One student get her folder - students wait patiently for one
27 student to play, who is not quite ready

28

29 Tea for Two – Teacher asks, “What notes do you typically forget?”

30

31 The group then play with metronome

32

33 Teacher notices, not in tune - tunes with tuner on phone and lets each student play –
34 students wait patiently (talk quietly)

35

36 Group plays Mariachi Mash-Up

37

38 Teacher asks students to change key in head, sizzle first with metronome

39

40 Once finished, teacher asks students, “Are we getting better?!” Student respond with, “
41 Yep!! We are!” – Teacher agrees

42

43 Teacher asks 2nd flutes finger along while 1st flutes, vice versa after practicing through
44 entire piece.
45
46 Teacher asks students to practice “anything that’s still tripping you up. I’ll walk around
47 and try to help each of you.”
48
49 Students sizzle – with tongue, the rhythm
50
51 2 students try playing as fast as they can, together though! – St. “we just had a race”
52
53 **teacher does not interfere with the race, students are proud of their accomplishment**
54
55 Teacher hears a note not correct, fixes it
56
57 Bathroom breaks as needed
58
59 **feeling of trust and ownership of the class**
60

61

1 **Observation Kristen GROUP Chamber Ensemble**

2 DATE: Thursday, February 16, 2017

3

4 TIME: 2:50 PM

5

6 PLACE: Parlor, ESO

7

8 CLASS BEING OBSERVED: G.R.O.U.P.

9

10 PARTICIPANTS: Kristen Swartley and 1 student

11

12 Any special elements affecting interactions (e.g. weather): Missing 3 other students
13 (bass player, marimba player, drum set player)

14

15 (Start of Observation)

16

17 Discussion of the arranged wedding the student attended in Vietnam for her brother.

18

19 ****casual environment - lying on the ground today****

20

21 Teacher asks student to explain her brother's situation as he is getting married

22

23 ****Student share culture differences, traditions – talk of similarities and differences of
24 American and Vietnamese cultures.****

25

26 ****Difficult to know how to fill time with only one student but allows for time to get to
27 know the student more****

28

29 Teacher suggests looking at words, singing through, sings with her and adds harmony
30 to compensate for missing students

31

32 Student discusses why difficult to memorize - she only likes memorizing songs that are
33 important to her or have meaning. Not her favorite song.

34

35 Teacher asks student "What do you need the most help on? Do you just want to go
36 through some songs?"

37

38 ****student led learning****

39

40 Student discusses her struggles with Titanium, so they looked up lyrics on a video

41

42 Teacher suggests looking at words, singing through, sings with her to help her
43 memorize/run through

44 Teacher and student discover second verse is difficult to memorize
45
46 Student has tried several ways to help (listening over and over, sung over and over,
47 looked over lyrics repeatedly) - Teacher asks student to discuss the story
48
49 Student starts talking through the words and teacher encourages her.
50
51 Teacher finds a video of kid singing it (internet connective issues)
52
53 Student sings through successfully one last time before leaving!
54

55

1 **Observation Mike Esperanza Full Rehearsal**

2 DATE: Thursday, February 23, 2017

3

4 TIME: 5:11 PM

5

6 PLACE: ESO Gym

7

8 CLASS BEING OBSERVED: Esperanza full rehearsal

9

10 PARTICIPANTS: Mike, other faculty members, all Esperanza

11

12 Any special elements affecting interactions (e.g. weather): Strings had just rehearsed
13 with Ms. Sy

14

15 (Start of Observation)

16

17 Winds join strings in the gym already present

18

19 Most of the string members continue to practice individually, only a few choose to
20 converse

21

22 *Mutual Engagement - everyone one knows exactly what to do and how to proceed **

23

24 Entire orchestra warms up and practices individually while others tune

25

26 **Joint Enterprise** - Student conductor helps tune everyone

27

28 Mike raises his hand and all students stop playing – Mentions how a student conductor
29 is sick today and may postpone playing her song today.

30

31 An audible sigh is heard – students were hoping to play that piece

32

33 **Leader shows concern for other member of the community, as do the students**

34

35 Faculty – asked to jump in anytime if needed to assist students

36

37 **faculty are a part of the forward progress and expected to help their instrumental
38 students as needed**

39

40 As students begin playing one teacher immediately helps her violin section by counting.

41 Another teacher nearby also jumps in to help and listens for other problematic areas –

42 Trust in faculty **Shared Repertoire**

43

44 Conductor asks, “ Strings, are we good today?”
45
46 ****Joint Enterprise - let’s students tell him how they are doing – truly listens****
47
48 Conductor runs through parts of the piece, then checks a couple areas by asking sections
49 to replay
50
51 Another teacher stands next to a student needing help with claves and castanets
52
53 Another teacher notices a student is lost and helps a students find her place in the
54 bassoon part
55
56 There is an audible discrepancy in the sound of a section...
57
58 Conductor asks students if the note is it a g# or g natural?
59
60 ****students are held accountable for their learning - expects students to make decisions**
61 ******
62
63 The group plays through the piece again with more success this time
64
65 Conductor says, “Bravo – much improved!”
66
67 Then immediately following...
68
69 Faculty gives advice to individual sections, “trust your left hand, think with your right
70 hand”
71
72 Conductor listening to the teacher and asks, “I trust they understand what you mean,
73 right?”
74
75 ****complete trust in the faculty and the pedagogy they are using to achieve the repertoire**
76 **goal****
77
78 Conductor recognizes the orchestra is not quite together during a difficult passage in the
79 music and says, “Pulse in your body. This is a dance that emphasizes the 2nd beat –
80 style of dance.”
81
82 ****stops to explain background of the dance****
83
84 Conductor again says, “Bravo!” but then asks students to “Talk to your neighbor – find
85 2 spots you liked and 2 spots you did not”
86
87 ****again, students are acting as experts****
88
89 A student conductor takes the podium

90 The conductor lets the student conductor to rehearse with the orchestra – nothing more
91 mentioned
92 Once the group completes the first section, the conductor asks the student conductor,
93 “Is that tempo too slow? Is that what you want? (student shakes his head no **student
94 acts as expert**) You might die on a vine if you keep it that slow – Conductor steps in
95 and conducts side-by-side the student conductor and shows him how to get the orchestra
96 to change their original direction.
97
98 The conductor moved out of the way again, once he saw the student conductor feel
99 more confident
100
101 **conductor encourages leadership**
102
103 The orchestra fell apart again during another section...
104
105 Conductor gently takes over – says, “you’re on the sidelines momentarily, ok? - let me
106 work with them just a bit on this spot”
107
108 The conductor steps in and says, “What’s getting us at 72 - 80? What’s the big issue?”
109 and asks for answers from the group.
110
111 **everyone is responsible for moving forward with progress**
112
113 Conductor suggests that it is not being played in time – “don’t let the aggressiveness of
114 your sound change the tempo” and asks them to relax
115
116 Orchestra is still struggling, so the conductor stops and again, revisits the culture and
117 history behind the word Beguine.
118
119 Conductor asks the students, “in one word – what would you think of to describe it?”
120
121 **students act as experts**
122
123 Students offer words such as...Relaxed, steady, maybe dance-like, slow dance
124
125 This time the student conductor moves too quickly. Conductor reminds student
126 conductor to not move until he wants them to come in – can’t count it out but can
127 remain still!
128
129 Orchestra runs through piece one more time and the conductors seem pleased with the
130 outcome - Much better the next time through and students recognize they did much
131 better
132
133 Conductor says, “Do you see how when it fits in the groove – things start to happen?”
134
135 Conductor looks immediately to the faculty and asks, “Do you see anything?”

136 **faculty were already talking to students about things to fix or change**
137

1 Observation Nathan Guided Practice

2 DATE: Thursday, February 16, 2017

3

4 TIME: 4:00 pm

5

6 PLACE: 2nd floor, ESO

7

8 CLASS BEING OBSERVED: Guided Practice – Trumpet

9

10 PARTICIPANTS: Nathan and 2 students, then 2 more join (Alegria, Esperanza)

11

12 Any special elements affecting interactions (e.g. weather): none

13

14 (Start of Observation)

15

16 Students walk in slowly and get out their instruments

17

18 One student is practicing “When the Saints go Marching In”

19

20 Teacher lets the students play on their own and adds advice when needed or asked - is
21 there for help

22

23 **students decide their role in practicing**

24

25 Teacher provides occasional suggestions on playing techniques to a student

26

27 Other student sitting quietly until he sees me and I mention how I love hearing him play
28 (both students play/practice at same time practicing)

29

30 Student 1 practices another repertoire piece while the other student drops out and seems
31 annoyed by her playing

32

33 Student 2 plays again briefly

34

35 Both students play song individually

36

37 **while each student plays what they want and it seems somewhat chaotic in the room,
38 each student seemed to be following his or her own agenda**

39

40 Teacher encourages them to play together, gets them started.

41

42 Both play – Student 2 not playing best, but struggling to play until the end

43

44 Student 2 discusses note names that he is not getting and student 1 tries to help him
45
46 ****Students work together to help each other without being asked by the teacher****
47
48 Student seems appreciative of the student help and they began playing again
49
50 Student 3 walks in takes out trumpet and starts playing with other players
51
52 Student 4 walks in and plays
53
54 ****a variety of experience exists in the room****
55
56 All students play together momentarily and then begin playing anything they want
57
58 Student 3 helps student 4 – encourages him to play with her (plays it first, counts off for
59 him) – they play together – sings Solfège!
60
61 ****students are using skills learned in other classes to help them with immediate**
62 **issues!****
63
64 More advanced, plays confidently. Not necessarily playing what the others are playing
65 and eventually breaks off from the group to talk to Mr. H for advice – shifting the
66 mouth position helped the student
67
68 At end student 5 plays a solo for Mr. H that he played for All-City
69
70 St. 1 continues to practice on her own contently, while slowly, each person goes out
71
72 ****This is exciting to see! While St. 3 and 2 are playing together successfully, Mr. H is**
73 **working on technique****
74
75 Student 2 becomes more confident and is not upset and there seems to be NO problem
76 with all the sounds going on in the room!
77

78

1 **Observation Sam Esperanza Strings Large Chamber**

2 DATE: Thursday, February 23, 2017

3

4 TIME: 4:30 PM

5

6 PLACE: Gym

7

8 CLASS BEING OBSERVED: Esperanza Strings only

9

10 PARTICIPANTS: Only string players of Esperanza, about 26 students present (2 walk
11 in late)

12

13 Any special elements affecting interactions (e.g. weather): dreary, rainy day - Missing
14 Belle Isle school students

15

16 (Start of Observation)

17

18 Students causally walk in and tune or practice on their own

19

20 **student accountability and ownership** - very much in control on own

21

22 Teacher helps tune violin 1 with tuner

23

24 Student then tunes rest of group,

25

26 Conductor walks around and listens, helps students individually

27

28 Students are sitting in a sight-reading formation – close together, almost facing one
29 another.

30

31 As a group in small pods - violas are in the middle, almost huddled

32

33 Students begin looking over the piece – attempting to go through in small groups

34

35 Entire group begins sight-reading together

36

37 Conductor recognizes trouble spots and asks student students to “notice – tay ta” in the
38 piece Born this Way

39

40 Conductor asks students to count it out as a large group

41

42 Students begin to recognize the song and the conductor says, “You guys know this
43 song?!!!”

44 **students excited about recognizing the piece but also excited that it is a piece they
45 like**
46
47 The next piece was “Radioactive” –students practice individually for several minutes
48
49 Conductor asks students to count first as a large group, then play.
50
51 Group counts through the first portion of the piece
52
53 After a successful sight-reading experience, the group runs through the repertoire
54
55 Conductor reminds students of their performance in a few days
56
57 One person does not have music – 2 students drop everything to get her some music!!!
58
59 **students look after each other’s needs as well as their own – act more like a family**
60
61 A student notices the melody in the other section – says, “Now I recognize this song!”
62
63 **challenges students to listen more attentively to all parts**
64
65 A few wrong notes were played and a few students look at each other and say “Hey “ if
66 they miss something or do something wrong
67
68 **student accountability!!!!*
69
70 Lots of smiles and accountability seen as they continue to look at each other – melody is
71 passed around – students hear the melody being thrown across the orchestra and are
72 excited when their section gets the melody – remind me of a ball being tossed around an
73 arena!
74
75 Students go back to original spots and practice repertoire pieces the remainder of the
76 time.

Appendix J

Fundamentals Video Transcription

1

2
1 **ESO Music Fundamentals Video**
2

3 Compilation of video excerpts from February 10 - 15, 2017
4

5 ****Nueva clip (Beth's class) – students clapping in canon, siren warm ups, using a**
6 **plastic slinky (sound),**
7

8 Bobbi: It seems like people don't know what we do.
9

10 Interviewer: This has nothing to do with instruments, right?
11

12 Beth: No, it has everything to do with instruments!!
13

14 ****Alegria clip (Francisco's class)– students passing a ball around**
15

16 Francisco: They are able to practice certain elements like rhythm, music reading. They
17 are able to practice cues – when to play in time, when to cut off and all of that is
18 transferable to their instrument.
19

20 ****Alegria clip (Mary's class) – students playing a sitting singing game in a circle**
21

22 Mary: It's easy to learn when you're having fun.
23

24 ****Alegria clip (Mary's class) – students playing a sitting singing game in a circle**
25

26 Mary: They're learning more than just the one instrument. They're learning dances,
27 they're learning ukuleles, guitars, drums.
28

29 ****Alegria clip (Susan's class) – students playing their instruments – tuba, cello,**
30 **trumpet, etc. Susan is helping them read their music**
31

32 Susan: What we do in music fundamentals is give the kids the skills to actually put the
33 techniques that they learn in class and put it together so they can work as an ensemble
34 and the ultimate goal is for the performance in orchestra
35

36 ****Alegria clip (Francisco's class) – students are playing chimes**

37 ****Esperanza orchestra clip**
38

39 Bobbi: We do sometimes physical activities, breathing activities, because all of those
40 things can be applied to the end goal, which is the concert.
41

42 ****Nueva clip (Beth's class) – Warm up with expando plastic finger pinchers (for**
43 **breathing ssss, sss, ssss)**
44

45 Beth: I'm a firm believer that all music students need to learn to sing.

46 ****Nueva clip (Beth's class) – sol mi warm ups
47 Beth: When they sing they can internalize the music in a completely different way. The
48 intonation is much better - that they can hear the difference in the pitches. And you saw
49 us practicing the different intervals coming down the scale. They are really listening to
50 the distance between those notes. SO when they're playing their instruments. I think
51 they're more in tune and I think they are more musical.
52
53 Mary: But it's so much more than just the instrument they are learning. It's building
54 relationships and teaching them to love music.
55
56 Susan: That they've heard that rhythm over and over again. They perfumed it over and
57 over again, and hopefully have learned it.
58
59 Francisco: It's a blessing to, to provide them an opportunity where they can be
60 successful at making music. You see it in their faces that reward. It's our reward. It's
61 almost like a miracle.
62
63 **Alegria clip (Francisco's class) – students are playing chimes – laugh
64
65 Beth: I know there was one little girl who one day she gave me a big hug and she said
66 Ms. Mattingly, I don't ever want to leave.
67
68 Beth: They feel accepted here and it's, it's a positive feeling.
69
70 **Alegria clip (Mary's class)
71
72 Mary: But it's so much more than the instrument they are learning. It's building
73 relationships and teaching them to love music
74
75 **Nueva clip (Beth's class) – singing Love Somebody
76
77 Applause!!
78
79 NEW VIDEO shows conceptual knowledge