

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF THREE
TEACHERS AT A SUMMER YOUTH MUSIC
CAMP: “AS POSITIVE FOR THE FACULTY
AS IT IS FOR THE KIDS”

Leah Rachel Belin, Master of Arts, 2009

Directed By: Dr. Janet Montgomery, Music Education

The purpose of this single case study ethnography was to explore the experiences of three music teachers at a summer youth music camp (SYMC) at a large university outside a metropolitan area on the East Coast. This exploration was intended to investigate the following research questions: (a) Why did the participants choose to participate in SYMC, (b) How did the participants benefit from participation in SYMC, and (c) How did the experiences of the participants relate to the professional and nonprofessional aspects of SYMC? Data analysis revealed two major themes: nonprofessional aspects of participation and professional aspects of participation. The professional aspects of camp were of more benefit to the participants and were a stronger motivation for participation than the nonprofessional aspects. The results of the present study held implications for SYMC as a learning community and as an opportunity for professional development for music teachers.

EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF THREE TEACHERS AT A SUMMER
YOUTH MUSIC CAMP: “AS POSITIVE FOR THE FACULTY AS IT IS FOR THE
KIDS”

By

Leah Rachel Belin

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Advisory Committee:
Dr. Janet Montgomery, Chair
Dr. Michael Hewitt
Dr. Bruce Carter
Dr. Melissa Mills

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Chapter 1: Introduction

A Camp Experience

“And did you teach some of the kids that?” asks a university professor.

Several teachers and two university professors have formed a guitar circle in the camp teachers’ lounge and all are playing a simple chord progression.

“I was wondering about the song for those chords. Were those the chords you were teaching the kids yesterday? They need songs,” says a professor. As the camp’s guitar teacher is showing the group a harmonics technique, two university professors begin playing and singing Buffalo Springfield’s *For What it’s Worth*.

“E and A chords,” says the guitar teacher.

“Harmonics,” says another teacher.

“What’s that pattern?” asks one of the professors.

“It’s kind of like a strum and a –” the guitar teacher demonstrates a guitar technique for the circle. “I’m strumming up on the off beats and on the downbeats –”

“The kids would love that. Even if they can’t do it, they can pluck along. It sounds so cool,” says a professor.

“They could be strumming E chord,” says the other professor.

The guitar teacher plays *Smoke on the Water* followed by *Iron Man*.

“That would be really fun. I’d like to see them play a song every day. By Friday they’d have a repertoire of songs. There are so many songs that could be played with three chords: rock ‘n roll, folk songs, just about everything. So I’m thinking, can you do that at the end of class?” asks a professor.

My Camp Experience

It is my first year as a senior staff member at a summer music camp in New England. I sit in the rehearsal hall in the middle of the woods in the back row of violins, a friend's violin in my hands. I wonder briefly what had made me decide to join the orchestra this year. For all of my years as a camper, and as a member of the junior staff, I had played trumpet with the jazz band. Then I think again about running a middle school orchestra all by myself for the first time in the coming year, and decide that a week in orchestra is a good idea. My elementary school violin teacher, currently my stand partner, promises that everything is going to be ok.

“The orchestra is short on violins this year, and you need more orchestral experience. It's a perfect match,” she assures me.

I look at the music. A Hanson Symphony, Beethoven's Fifth, Star Wars. I don't even know what some of the notes are. Four lines above the staff? Trumpets don't play that high!

The conductor walks in and the rehearsal begins. During the two hour rehearsal, my elementary school violin teacher writes bowings in all the violin parts, changes fingerings, and even runs a short sectional. After the rehearsal I ask the orchestra director if he has any suggestions for music to build a middle school orchestra program.

“Sit with me at lunch tomorrow and we can talk about it,” he answers.

After a week of lunches with the orchestra director, seven hours of rehearsal a day, and the chance to ask my former violin teacher tons of questions about violins, I felt much more prepared to begin a year of middle school orchestra.

Rationale

The present study was inspired by experiences in a summer youth music camp in New England. At that camp, fifty people volunteered a week of their time each summer to teach music to high school students. They were not being paid, and yet many of them had taught at this camp for their entire adult lives. Why did these people come back each year? How did they benefit from participation? How did the experiences of these people relate to the professional and nonprofessional aspects of the camp?

The present study takes place at another summer youth music camp on the East Coast. The teachers at this camp are paid employees of the camp, but the questions posed above remain relevant.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of three participants at the Summer Youth Music Camp (SYMC) to investigate the following research questions:

1. Why did the participants choose to participate in SYMC?
2. How did the participants benefit from participation in SYMC?
3. How did the experiences of the participants relate to the professional and nonprofessional aspects of SYMC?

Definition of Terms

The present study explored the experiences of three music teachers who participated in a week of summer youth music camp (SYMC). The following definitions are intended to clarify terms in the exploration of related literature.

Collaboration

DuFour and Eaker (1998) stated: “individual learning does not ensure organizational learning or an enhanced ability to achieve a common purpose” (p. 262). Dufour and Eaker therefore emphasized the importance of collaboration.

DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many (2006a) defined collaboration as:

A systematic process in which educators work together interdependently to analyze and to impact their professional practice in order to achieve better results for their students, their team, and their school. (p. 98)

Musical Achievement

According to Gordon (2000), “Music aptitude is a measure of our potential to learn music... By contrast, music achievement is a measure of what a student has already learned in music” (p. 135). By this definition, music aptitude is a fixed amount of knowledge that a student may potentially acquire, whereas music achievement is the amount of knowledge a student has acquired.

DuFour et al. (2006a) cautioned that student aptitude cannot be an excuse for low student achievement. DuFour (1997) wrote that if teachers, parents, and students work collaboratively together to support the achievement of high standards, the standards will be met. DuFour et al. asks, “What is it we want our students to learn? How will we know if each student has learned it? How will we respond when some students do not learn it?” (p. 91). In the present study, student musical achievement is defined as what we want our students to learn.

Professional Development

According to DuFour and Eaker (1998), a professional is “someone with expertise in a specialized field, an individual who has not only pursued advanced training to enter the field, but who is also expected to remain current in its evolving

knowledge base” (p. xi). A professional is someone who is expected to remain current in their field, therefore it follows that professional development is the pursuit of remaining current in one’s field to improve student achievement. If student achievement is what teachers want students to learn, then professional development is what teachers do to ensure that students achieve.

Speck and Knipe (2005) summarized the philosophy of professional development that focuses on collaboration with colleagues and student achievement:

High quality professional development is a sustained learning process that systematically nourishes the growth of educators (individuals and teams) through adult learner-centered, job-embedded processes. It focuses on educators’ attaining the skills, abilities, and deep understandings needed to improve student achievement. (pp. 3-4)

Significance of the Study

Several authors criticized the professional development opportunities available to teachers in the schools describing professional development using terms and phrases such as “underresourced,” “un-sustained,” “undifferentiated,” planned without the needs of teachers in mind, and unrelated to everyday teaching (e.g. Fullan 2001; Guskey, 2002; Hoban, 2002; Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love, & Stiles, 1998; Miles, 1995; Reid, 2007; Rich, 2004). The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996) stated that, “District staff development is still characterized by one-shot workshops... These offerings often bear little relation to what teachers want to study” (pp. 40-41). Other researchers also concluded that teaching practices will not be affected by onetime workshops (e.g. Joyce & Showers, 1995; Lieberman & Miller, 2001).

This criticism of professional development practices led researchers to call for further research on professional development. Speck and Knipe (2005) stated that, “A

broader and more complex approach to professional development needs to encompass ongoing sustained research...” (p. 52). Rich’s (2004) research on the professional lives of instrumental music teachers suggested that additional research must be performed in the area of professional development for school music teachers. Rich also suggested that, “it is also reasonable for music educators at the collegiate level to investigate ways to support music teachers who are currently working in schools” (p. 210). Gruenhagen (2008) suggested further research related to why music teachers choose to participate in professional development activities and how they collaborate in these activities. Conway (2007) suggested

Research on professional development for music teachers has really just begun, and yet we are in the middle of policy discussions regarding the definitions of “highly qualified” teachers and “high quality professional development” to support them (United States Department of Education, 1999). All members of the music education community must come together to gather the necessary information to provide policy makers with evidence regarding music teachers and professional development. (p. 59)

Authors criticized professional development practices and suggested further research regarding professional development. The present study adds to the body of information about professional development for music educators. In the following chapter, a review of literature related to the present study is presented to communicate with readers about research which has already been done in the field of professional development. The chapter also identifies areas where additional research is needed, and describes how these areas by the present study.

Chapter 2: Related Research

The present study was an exploration of teachers' experiences at a summer youth music camp (SYMC). SYMC was a two week summer music camp held on a university campus in a metropolitan area on the East Coast for students going into grades six through nine. The first week was for string and vocal students and the second week was for band students. Local music teachers were paid to work as coaches for sectional rehearsals and as electives class teachers. This staff was chosen by university professors in the music education department. The present study was intended to explore the teachers' motivations for participation as well as how participants benefited from participation. Participation included teaching, interacting with colleagues, learning, and observing. In this chapter, related research in professional development, professional learning communities, and professional development in music education is described.

Professional Development

In 1950s post-war America, at the beginning of the "Cold War," schools were criticized for not keeping up with the technological and educational innovations of the Soviet Union, prompting a rise in educational research (Lieberman, 2005). Schools were also criticized because cities were no longer able to fund education properly due to the post-war population boom. This prompted federal funding for the first time, and with federal funding came a new accountability to the federal government, also stimulating educational research (Sarason, 2005). In 1957, The National Society for the Study of Education sponsored *Inservice Education for Teachers, Supervisors, and*

Administrators, a text that questioned the prevailing idea that professional development needed to be provided by outside experts.

Now, more than 50 years later, these same issues are appearing again in research studies of professional development (DuFour et al. 2006a; Guskey, 2002; Hoban, 2002; Lieberman, 2005; Speck & Knipe, 2005). For instance, accountability and federal funding for educational reform is again an influential part of American education due to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. DuFour et al. (2006a) currently state that professional development should consist of more collaborative support among colleagues instead of workshops from outside experts. Miles (1995) states, “A good deal of what passes for ‘professional development’ in schools is a joke ... [it is] radically underresourced, brief, not sustained, designed for ‘one size fits all,’ imposed rather than owned, lacking any intellectual coherence...” (p. vii).

Educational researchers Speck and Knipe (2005) write:

The traditional professional development model of onetime training workshops delivered by an outside expert with no follow-up is outdated. In fact, it never was an effective approach to adult learning. (p. 52)

According to the Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, (2000) professional development should provide the opportunity for teachers to decide what information they need. Professional development should give teachers the opportunity to understand why, when, where, and how to use new information. Professional development should give teachers the opportunity to judge whether they have successfully influenced student achievement. And lastly, professional development should be accompanied by continued support in the form of ongoing communication with colleagues about new information. One of the central concepts of Bransford et al.’s theory of teacher learning is that teachers need to rethink the nature of their

disciplines, changing their fundamental beliefs about teaching. Learning new teaching techniques or acquiring better understanding of content area concepts, while important to improvement of teaching, is not enough to change practice.

Researchers agree on many aspects of professional development. Professional development is a long-term process (Garet, M., Porter, A., Desimone, L., Burman, B., & Yoon, S., 2001; Harland et al., 1999; Neil & Morgan, 2003). Professional development must improve student learning (Hibbard, 1996; Speck & Knipe, 2005). Professional development must “be comprehensive, multidimensional, collaborative, and interactive” (Hibbard, 1996, pp. 9-11) and similarly, professional development must be “linked to teachers’ other experiences, aligned with other reform efforts, and encouraging of professional communication among teachers” (Garet, M., Burman, B., Porter, A., Desimone, L., & Herman, R., 1999, pp. 3-54 – 3-55).

Professional Learning Community

One model of reform in professional development is the philosophy of the professional learning community (Lieberman, 1992; Lieberman & Grolnick, 1996). This philosophy encourages professional communication among teachers (DuFour et al., 2006a). The term “professional learning community” has come to encompass the culture of entire schools (Lieberman, 2000). DuFour et al. (2006a) proposed that schools should be organized in such a way that all the teachers in the entire school are focused on student learning. In their words, a learning community is:

A focus on and a commitment to the learning of each student. A PLC is composed of collaborative teams whose members work interdependently to achieve common goals linked to the purpose of learning for all. (p. 3)

Roland Barth stated, “Such a school is a community whose defining, underlying culture is one of learning” (2001, p. 13). The school-wide focus on student learning leads to the central questions of the professional learning community:

1. What is it we want our students to learn?
2. How will we know if each student has learned it?
3. How will we respond when some students do not learn it?
4. How can we extend and enrich the learning for students who have demonstrated proficiency? (DuFour et al., 2006a, p. 91)

School communities address these questions through collaborative teams.

DuFour et al. (2006a) offered two suggestions for integrating specialists (e.g., teachers of music, art, and physical education) into collaborative teams: grade-level teams and vertical teams. The former solution involved adding specialists to grade-level teams. DuFour et al. gave an example of the outcome of the addition of a music teacher to a grade-level collaborative team: “A music teacher we know joined the fourth-grade team and wrote a musical based on key historical figures students were required to learn that year” (p. 94). In this way, the music teacher supported student achievement in the history curriculum. Anderson and Wilson (1996) suggested that general education teachers attend summer music institutes comprised of collaborative teams of music teachers, administrators, and other general education teachers to learn to integrate music into their classrooms. In this way, the general education teachers could support the music curriculum.

The latter collaborative team solution, the vertical team approach, involved creating a team of subject-alike specialists at different levels, such as elementary, middle, or high school. DuFour et al. (2006a) suggested that:

An elementary school art teacher could work with the middle school teacher to clarify the prerequisite skills students should have acquired as they enter the middle school art program. (p. 94)

DuFour et al. (2006a) wrote predominantly about professional learning communities within schools, but Lieberman wrote about learning communities involving school-university partnerships, collaborations between several schools or school districts, and encompassed more than the confines of the school building (e.g. Lieberman, 1986, 1992, 2000, 2005; Lieberman & Grolnick, 1996; Lieberman & Wood, 2000, 2002).

The professional learning community is an educational philosophy that encourages teachers to work together collaboratively to improve student achievement. If a school's culture is focused on student achievement and colleague collaboration, the school may be identified as a learning community. This label also applies to broader communities that use the philosophy of collaborative focus on student achievement, such as school districts and partnerships between schools and universities.

Professional Development in Music Education

Much of the writing about professional learning communities encourages collaborative communication for learning; so too, much of the writing about professional development in music education encourages collaboration between teachers. At the preservice level of music education, researchers recommend the professional development partnership model of music teacher preparation due to the limited number of music teachers per school. In this collaborative partnership, preservice teachers are paired with various practicing teachers and a university advisor. The preservice teachers participate in observation and apprenticeship-style teaching opportunities (Conkling, 2007; Wiggins, 2007).

Conkling (2007) advocated the professional development partnership as a successful way for preservice teachers to learn to teach, yet she advised against the “medical school type rotation” (p. 44) often seen in professional development partnerships. In the “medical school” model, a preservice teacher based in one school works with many teachers in that school allowing the preservice teacher to experience the school’s culture more completely. There may not be more than one or two music teachers in a school, thus the “medical school” model may not offer a preservice music teacher sufficient opportunity to work with enough teachers to experience the school’s culture completely. Instead, Conkling suggested altering this form of education to include internships at several schools over the course of several semesters for each preservice music teacher. According to Conkling, professional development partnerships “prepare preservice teachers for the realities of contemporary schooling through significant field-based experiences during the initial stages of learning to teach” (2007, p. 44).

Wiggins (2007) described the importance of collaboration between music teachers in the statement, “Knowledge is not passed on or transferred. Learning is something that individuals do, most often with the help and support of other people” (p. 36). Considering that there may be a limited number of music teachers in a school (Rich, 2004), collaboration between music teachers is not as accessible as is collaboration between general education teachers (Conkling, 2007).

Both Wiggins and Conkling cited the professional development partnership programs as successful because they prepare preservice teachers to think as music teachers and are not just for acquiring skills (Conkling, 2007; Wiggins, 2007).

Similarly, Wiggins affirmed this concept with the statement that preservice teachers must “formulate understandings of what it means to teach and learn music” (p. 36).

Thompson (2007) wrote that “[pre-service educators] must have ongoing opportunities for uncovering, examining, reflecting, and refining beliefs” (p. 33).

Research in professional development in music education has focused on collaboration between teachers and encompassed more than a single school. The following studies explored collaboration, professional communities of practice (learning communities), and music camps as part of professional development.

Related Studies

Bottoms (2007) studied an extensive school-university partnership including 12 districts and 35 schools. The perceptions of participating teachers were used to explore professional development within the partnership community. Results indicated that participants perceived of the community as a resource for professional growth. Bottoms concluded that this study was significant to education because:

Participation in a community of practice provides both structure and opportunity for professional growth and development. Teachers are able to interact and collaborate within a common practice and share their own practice and to learn from practices of others. . . The interactions and collaboration of the community [of practice] is student-centered with a common theme of improving individual practice to help support student learning. (p. 104)

Bottoms acknowledged the need for additional research related to professional development as a community of practice, and suggested that a community of practice may provide a framework for teachers to engage in professional development opportunities that may not be available to them in more traditional settings.

Hall (2000), unlike Bottomsn (2007), did not directly research professional development, but did refer to it while chronicling the success of the International

Music Camp (IMC). Hall attributed the success of the camp to many factors, including the founders and the faculty. Of particular relevance to the present study were Hall's interviews of current and former IMC faculty members, in which Hall asked the question "Why did you return to the camp?" (2000, p. 188). Their responses included:

'I always pick up new ideas for my own teaching situation' ... 'When I am there, I have the opportunity to visit with the faculty and conductors and thus revitalize my own ideas' ... 'I look forward to meeting and talking to the band people in particular. Since I am retired, I am out of the band field, and contacts are few and far between. I enjoy dropping in on a conductor and watching a rehearsal...' (p. 198)

This indicates that opportunities for professional development were among the reasons faculty returned to the camp.

The next two studies, those of Rich (2004) and Jacobs (2007), unlike that of Bottoms (2007) and Hall (2000), relate directly to professional development in music education. Rich interviewed two music educators about various influences on their professional lives, and explored the areas of mentoring, colleague interactions, professional development opportunities, and teaching environment. Much of the data from Rich's study suggested that professional development opportunities were lacking for these teachers, and that the participants felt isolated and marginalized in their roles as music teachers in the public schools. Rich's interview with a school band director, however, indicated that "teaching at a summer music camp is indeed an excellent opportunity...to engage in professional development" (pp. 181-182). The summer music camp gave the band director the opportunity to teach, attend master classes, and get ideas for music to use with his band during the school year.

In Jacobs's (2007) multiple case study, five first-year band directors and their mentors were observed and interviewed over six months to explore the effects of mentoring on first-year high school band directors. Findings indicated that pairing between mentors and mentees was done in a "haphazard" way and pairings were not always successful. Mentors and mentees did not have enough contact with each other and did not have enough time during their busy school schedules for mutual observations. Mentors were not sure their mentoring was successful. Mentees, however, felt they were helped by the mentors. Jacobs's (2007) study suggests a lack of time and a lack of structure for the professional development of first-year band directors. Lack of time and structure has been an issue in professional development at all levels of teaching experience (Miles, 1995; Speck & Knipe, 2005).

Jacobs (2007) suggested long term studies of band director mentoring as well as investigation into different types of mentoring programs in order to improve band director mentoring:

Studying the participants longitudinally would provide more developed perspectives from participants, which could change considerably over time. Additionally, the inclusion of participants from a wider variety of positions might further illuminate the mentoring programs...Exploring the similarities and differences of these band directors' mentoring programs might identify the most important components necessary for effective mentoring. (pp. 101-102)

Bottoms (2007) concluded that participants perceived the community they participated in to be a resource for professional growth. Bottoms suggested further research into professional development within professional communities:

The results of this study have implications for additional research related to professional development as a community of practice...This study suggests that community of practice as a framework for professional development provides teachers with an opportunity for professional growth and

development that may not be available to them in other more traditional forms of professional development. (p. 104)

Hall (2000) concluded that professional development opportunities were among the reasons faculty returned to IMC:

Respondents cited professional reasons for returning that included new generated by being associated with the other faculty members and conductors. These new ideas in turn helped strengthen their own music programs. (p. 198)

Rich (2007) stated that summer music camp may have been an excellent professional development opportunity for a band director. Rich's study did not however discuss why summer music camp was an excellent opportunity for professional development.

For further research, Rich recommends:

Another avenue for future research could be to examine ways for practicing teachers to increase communication both within their own schools and with colleagues working in other school districts. It seems that there is a great deal of underutilized expertise that remains untapped in the form of music teachers themselves. (p. 210)

In summary, these studies suggest that more research is needed regarding professional development for music teachers, including investigations about communities of practice (specifically, learning communities), types of mentoring situations, and music camps as an opportunity for professional development of music teachers.

Chapter 3: Purpose, Theoretical Framework, and Methodology

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of three participants at SYMC to investigate the following research questions:

4. Why did the participants choose to participate in SYMC?
5. How did the participants benefit from participation in SYMC?
6. How did the experiences of the participants relate to the professional and nonprofessional aspects of SYMC?

Theoretical Framework

Qualitative researchers are concerned with understanding meaning, situation, context, and phenomenon in natural settings (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990; Yin, 1994). To best provide a rich description of teachers' experiences at SYMC, an ethnographic case study methodology was employed.

Case study methodology is generally applied when a researcher studies a single unit such as a group, program, or individual over a period of time (Hancock & Algozinne, 2006; Merriam, 1998), and when “interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation” (Merriam, 1998, p. 18). An ethnographer is generally concerned with the culture of a community (Merriam, 1998; Wolcott, 1994). Creswell (2005) states:

Ethnographers learn from studying a culture-sharing group....In the study of a group, ethnographers identify a single site...locate a group within it...and gather data about the group....A culture-sharing group in ethnography is two or more individuals who have shared behaviors, beliefs, and language. (p. 443)

The present study utilizes the theoretical framework of an ethnographic case study to gather data in exploration of the experiences of three participants in the culture-sharing group SYMC.

The Researcher in Context

Ethnographic studies involve the researcher becoming aware of and often integrating into the daily activities of the community being studied (Hancock & Algozine, 2006; Merriam, 1998), and “the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis” (Merriam, 1998, p. 7). As a qualitative researcher, I conducted interviews, took notes, and observed participants. Therefore, it must be noted that all data collected have been filtered through the lens of my experiences.

I have two lenses through which the data have been filtered – one is the lens of a teacher, and one is the lens of a member of a music camp community. I am a fifth-year teacher in a large school district outside of a major metropolitan area on the East Coast. I teach band and orchestra instruments to students at four elementary schools and also have experience teaching middle school and high school band and orchestra. I have also participated in several summer music camps as both a student and staff member. I have spent three years as a teacher at SYMC and seven years as a staff member at a music camp in New England. The data collected in the present study have been considered through those lenses.

SYMC through the Researcher's Lens

Perhaps because my first year of SYMC was the first year of SYMC, and I have been away from SYMC for several years, I have noticed many changes in SYMC. I initially decided to work at SYMC because I had very positive experiences

as a faculty member at a long-established music camp in New England. I also was about to enter my senior year of college, and knew that SYMC would not only be good teaching experience, but would be something I could add to my resume when I was looking for a job over the next year. I returned for two more years to work with students, see friends I had made at camp in previous years, learn, and because camp was fun. This year I came back to SYMC as a researcher.

My role in SYMC has changed over my years of participation. The first year, I escorted a group of ninth grade campers from band to electives classes and ran trumpet sectionals. I came back a second year and assisted with trumpet sectionals and the jazz improvisation class. The third year, I co-ran the Beginning Instrument Lab (BIL) with the current leader of the beginning instrument lab.

I had started on the periphery of the camp teacher community, assisting in classes and helping with sectionals as a junior faculty member. I learned by watching rehearsals and electives classes, trying out teaching techniques in trumpet sectionals, and speaking with other teachers. My second year provided similar opportunities. In my third year, I was a co-teacher of the BIL. As I became a more experienced teacher, I was given more responsibility.

This year, SYMC provided me with a chance to observe many teachers. I watched band rehearsals, electives classes, sectionals, and sat in the Music Education Resource Center (MERC), the camp's teachers' lounge, for hours listening to teachers talk about their teaching experiences. Although I was supposed to be a non-participant observer, I could not help but be a participant because I was learning from the other teachers. I also could not help becoming a participant because I knew so

many of the teachers socially. Although I did not get the same kind of direct teaching experience as I had in the previous years, I still believe I learned.

Throughout my experience at SYMC, I have gained experience and knowledge, met friends and colleagues that I would be working with for years, and realized that the camp experience affected my teaching during the school year.

Participant Selection

Participant selection was performed in two stages, a practice that is often required in case study research (Merriam, 1998). The first stage of selection determined the case, which is the bounded phenomenon to be studied. In the present study, the case is SYMC. The second stage of selection is from within the case. Unless a researcher plans to interview all the people involved in the case, it is necessary to limit the number of participants (Merriam, 1998). The present study was a single case study ethnography because the community in one music camp was studied, and a multiple participant study because three participants were chosen from within the case.

SYMC was chosen as the case and the site for the study for several reasons. First, the mission statement of SYMC suggested a high quality music camp. The mission of SYMC is to:

Provide participants with heightened musical experiences to enhance school and/or private instruction

Develop musicianship and advance instrumental and vocal technique through ensemble and solo performance

Offer elective classes that will promote awareness of multiple methods for expressing music

Bring together students from throughout the ... metropolitan area to share a unique musical experience. (University of Maryland School of Music, 2008)

Second, I have participated in SYMC as a teacher for 3 years. Because of my association with the camp, I was able to identify the camp as an information-rich case. I am also familiar enough within the community to have unfettered access to participants and observation opportunities.

The participant selection within the case was purposeful. Merriam (1998) suggests that qualitative case selections should be made on the basis of their ability to provide needed information for the study. The participants in the present study, staff members of SYMC, were chosen by a technique that Patton (1990) refers to as network sampling. Patton describes this technique as “cases of interest from people who know people who know people who know what cases are information-rich, that is, good examples for study, good interview subjects” (p. 182). The participants for the present study were recommended by university professors involved in teaching at, organizing, and securing staff and faculty for SYMC. A participant size of 3 was decided upon in order to maximize information without creating redundancy. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), “*redundancy* is the primary criterion” when considering selection size, meaning that a researcher will likely gather the same information from a concise selection of participants as from a large selection of participants (p.202). The researcher recruits enough participants to ensure sufficient information, but not so many participants that the information gathered is widely repeated. The participants were chosen so that the overall selection represented a variety of geographical areas within the state, diverse teaching levels and situations, and wide-ranging jobs at SYMC. Selecting in this manner also allowed for within-case data comparison.

The names of participants, schools, and locations in the present study have been changed to protect privacy. Names of teachers who were not participants in the present study have been removed entirely and replaced with labels such as “university professor” or “teacher A.”

Procedure and Data Collection

Observations of classes, band rehearsals, and participant interaction in the MERC were an important form of data collection for the present study. Data collection consisted of observations, field notes, and interviews. Video and audio recordings were made of classes, rehearsals and teacher interactions in the MERC. Field notes consisting of the time, the setting, and descriptions of teacher interactions were taken during all observations. Video recordings were utilized to ensure the accuracy of observations as well as to help provide details or clarifications to field notes taken during observations. Field notes were descriptive and structured only by general research questions and observational reminders. In addition to enabling the researcher to observe behavior that may not be discovered during an interview, observation notes were compared to interview notes, providing a means of triangulation.

Interviews were conducted with the three participants during their preparatory periods or at the end of the camp day. Interviews were conducted because they enabled collection of descriptive and personal information, alternate perspectives, and information that cannot be observed (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). A semi-structured interview protocol was developed to guide the interviews. A semi-structured interview approach, as described by Hancock and Algozzine (2006),

involves researchers asking predetermined questions and following up with questions designed to allow the participants to express their own perspectives. Main interview questions were as follows:

1. Why did you first decide to participate in SYMC?
2. Why have you returned to SYMC in multiple years?
3. Please describe your interactions with your SYMC colleagues.
4. How have your perceptions of SYMC changed over time?
5. How have you benefitted from participation in SYMC?

Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. All interviews were reviewed by participants to ensure completeness and accuracy.

Data were collected over the one-week period of SYMC. Data from Sunday and Monday consisted of unstructured general observations of interactions and setting. Data from Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday consisted of observations of participants as well as semi-structured interviews. Greg was observed all day Tuesday, Luke on Wednesday, and Sarah on Thursday. Classes, rehearsals, conversations, and interactions were observed. Teacher interactions during lunch were observed, during which time notes were not taken. The half-hour period directly following lunch was used for writing down notes from the lunch period observations. Friday served as an additional day for general observation and follow-up for unanswered questions. Follow-up questions remaining after the end of camp were asked as soon as possible after the conclusion of SYMC through phone conversations and email correspondence.

Data Analysis

All interview and observation transcripts were analyzed thematically (Creswell, 2005; Hancock & Algozinne, 2006; Merriam, 1998). According to Hancock and Algozinne (2006), thematic analysis occurs when “information is examined in light of a particular research question in order to construct a tentative answer to the question. Tentative answers are categorized into themes. This process continues until themes emerge that are well supported by all available information” (p. 61).

To provide trustworthiness in the data analysis, I transcribed field notes and all audio and video recordings. Nothing was presumed to be important or unimportant to the study until all data were considered. This was done to ensure that the researcher did not impose themes on the data before full coding was completed. During transcription of spoken words into written data, spoken words were edited for grammar and readability. To ensure the validity of the data, all interview transcripts were reviewed by the participants and all data were reviewed by a faculty member of a university music education department.

Coding began with six pre-conceived codes based on the research questions. The transcripts were reviewed and words and phrases relating to these initial codes were assigned a specific color:

Professional Reasons for Participation (light grey)

Nonprofessional Reasons for Participation (dark grey)

Professional Conversations (yellow)

Experiential Learning (purple)

Observational Learning (blue)

Professional Environment (red)

For instance, conversations about orchestra music between Luke and the teacher of the composition class were color-coded yellow because those conversations were about professional subjects. Social conversations having no bearing on professional matters were coded dark grey. Any references to teachers observing other teachers or talking about teachers observing them were coded blue. For examples of coding see Appendix A and Appendix B. All data were coded and the transcripts were cut and pasted into an organizational table grouped together by code and then by participant. After all data had been added to the table, the data in the table were reviewed for major themes and sub themes:

Nonprofessional Aspects of SYMC

Professional Aspects of SYMC

Professional Environment

Monetary

Student Focus

Colleague Collaboration

Learner-Centered Environment

Professional Development

Professional Conversations

Experiential Learning

Observational Learning

The sub-themes under professional development were part of the preconceived themes with which I began the coding process. The sub-themes under professional environment were emergent themes. I had not expected to find this differentiation between the aspects of professional environment.

In Chapter 5, the data collected from observations and interviews are discussed in regards to the a priori and emergent themes. In Chapter 6, the implications and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Limitations of the Study

The present study was limited by several factors. The present study consisted of only one case, the single music camp, so no comparison could be made between cases and did not allow for non-conforming cases. The present study was not meant to be generalized to other populations.

The time frame of the present study was also limiting. Observations occurred over only one week. No data were collected from participants before or after the week of camp, so no comparison of perceptions prior to, during, and after camp could be made. No comparisons between different seasons of camp could be made.

The researcher has previously been employed by the camp and has worked with many of the staff members in the past. This made it impossible for the researcher to remain a non-participant in the study. Although this factor could have been a potential limitation of the study, the researcher chose instead to embrace this aspect of the study, considering researcher context and perceptions in depth.

The research questions in the present study refer to teacher perceptions. Although ideally this research would have directly gathered teacher perceptions

through journaling or extensive interviewing, the scope of this research did not allow for these options. Instead, teacher perceptions were gathered through the words and actions of the teachers, and then analyzed through the lenses of the researcher. Consequently, the results will be limited to interview data and the researcher's perceptions of the teachers' experiences.

The present study was meant to be an initial exploration of SYMC. Even though these limitations exist, this research is as complete as possible within the confines of the time frame and purpose of the research. The results are not meant to be generalized to other populations though there may be similarities in situation that may make limited application of findings possible.

Chapter 4: A Typical Day at Camp

General music teachers, middle school and high school band directors, elementary instrumental music teachers, university faculty, undergraduate and graduate music education students, and volunteers worked at SYMC this year. These teachers came from several states, sometimes driving more than an hour and a half each morning to teach at SYMC. To explore the experiences of these teachers and the benefits of participation, descriptions of the camp experiences of three participants are presented in this chapter. These sections deal with the experiences of the teachers. In order to give the reader a cohesive account of the camp itself, a presentation of a typical day at camp from the point of view of the researcher is also presented. The data are based on interviews, conversation, and observation. These narratives were pieced together from information gathered throughout the week and are meant to describe a typical day at camp.

A Typical Day

Introduction

It is the seventh season of SYMC. Beginning as a week-long camp for students going into sixth through ninth grade, it has evolved into two separate weeks, one week for orchestra and vocal students, and one week for band students. The week of band camp was the focus of the present study. Each student is assigned to an age-level grouped band that rehearses twice per day. Students also attend three elective classes, a sectional, and a noon-time recital. Each instrument is assigned a sectional coach. At the end of the week, students participate in a final concert. Faculty consists of junior faculty, sectional coaches, electives teachers, assistant teachers, conductors,

and university faculty. The camp includes several hundred students and nearly forty teachers.

SYMC is held in the performing arts building on a university campus, so students attend band rehearsals in large, well equipped ensemble rehearsal areas. Electives classes are held in university classrooms. The camp utilizes most of the music wing of the building, so the students navigate two floors of maze-like classrooms and rehearsal areas to attend their classes each day. Noontime recitals are presented in the university's state of the art recital hall and the end-of-the-week concert is presented in the university's concert hall.

Researcher Vignette

I walk into the seventh and eighth grade rehearsal hall, video camera and audio recorder in my hand. I place the audio recorder behind the conductor and the video camera in the back corner of the room. In the trumpet section, the campers comment on the "crazy hat and hair day" costumes.

"What kind of a hat is that?" a student asks one of the trumpet staff members.

"This is called a demi-bowler."

"Do you know what this is called?" asks a student with long blonde spikes.

"Wacky, horrific hair?" responds the trumpet staff member. The other trumpet players offer their opinions of the student's hair as the band set up to play. As the trombonists warm up and the flutes players take their seats, two staff members play through tambourine and snare drum parts with percussion students. The conductor approaches the conductor's stand, and everyone finds their seats. Several staff

members play in the sections with the students, while several more watch the rehearsal from around the room.

After the rehearsal, the campers loudly pack away their instruments. Some talk about what they are going to wear tomorrow, others discuss their electives classes and lunch. Campers pour out the doors of the band room, some with instruments, some without, heading for improvisation, rock 'n roll class, camp chorus, guitar, or one of several other elective classes.

I walk down the hallway and stairs from the band room to the orchestra room amid a sea of students, heading for Improvisation class. Staff members are also in the hallway, talking, carrying equipment, and directing camper traffic.

“Have I told you the cow joke yet?” asks one staff member.

“Yes, but tell the bear one again, Sarah hasn’t heard that one yet,” answers a second staff member. Also in the hallway, Greg speaks with several staff members about holding a jam session later that day.

As I walk into the orchestra room I am met by more students leaving the room. These students have just finished rehearsing with the sixth and seventh grade band. A second band director talks with the teacher of the composition class in the front of the orchestra room while several percussion staff help campers clean up the percussion section. Greg and several students move chairs and stands into a semi-circle in preparation for the improvisation class. A saxophonist plays the blues scale up and down several times, and a trombonist soon joins him. Students slowly file into the improvisation class, and class begins.

After improvisation class, the students head to the outdoor courtyard to eat their lunch. They eat quickly because one of the conductors has promised to play football with them after they finish eating. Some staff members eat outside with the students while others eat either at tables inside the courtyard overlooking the building, or in the MERC. After lunch, I watch a performance with the students and staff in the university's recital hall. All attention is on the stage as the musicians talk with the students, answer questions, and perform. After the performance, I continue to videotape and take notes for the rest of the day, following the students and staff to classes, sectionals and rehearsals.

Greg's Typical Day

Introduction

Greg is a high school orchestra, band, and jazz band director at a high school in Johnson County, a large suburban school district outside a large East Coast metropolitan area. He earned his Master's degree in music education from a university bordering a major metropolitan area on the East Coast. This will be his second year participating in SYMC. As he did last year, he taught the camp's improvisation elective class. The following narrative is descriptive of a typical day at camp for Greg.

Greg's Vignette

“How are you guys feeling? You guys feel like you're ready to swing today? You guys ready to kick it up a notch?” asks Greg.

“That's Emeril!” exclaims one of the students.

“That is Emeril, one of my favorite chefs. Bam! I have trouble making his stuff because he uses so many ingredients,” says Greg. “What we’re going to do right now, I learned from Emeril. I was trying to make hamburgers at home, and I took the ground meat, put it into a burger patty, and cooked it. When I ate it, it didn’t taste very good.” The students laugh at Greg’s Emeril analogy. “I was watching Emeril, and his whole countertop was full of spices. He was chopping up onions. He had cayenne pepper, jalapeno, some cheese, and all this stuff. I stole Emeril’s ideas and bought some ground meat. But this time, I chopped up an onion, put in some cayenne pepper and oregano,” Greg says as he pretends to chop and mix ingredients. “I put all these seasonings in, and it made my hamburger taste so much better. We’ve just learned how to take the ground meat and put it into patties. What we’re ready to do, we’re going to kick it up a notch.” Greg brings out a stack of papers. “I went to the store last night and bought the chopped peppers, oregano, and all this good stuff, and I put it right on this sheet.”

Greg holds up a blues scale sheet from an Aebersold book. He helps the students find the correct blues scale for their instrument’s key, and has the students play the scale in half notes, then quarter notes. He then has the students play the scale up and down in swing eighth notes with the rhythm section playing a blues accompaniment.

“I would like you to try to repeat my rhythm, but you can use any notes in any order you like. All these notes are the different seasonings for our burgers. You have oregano, fresh thyme, basil; you even have some mint leaves. I’m not sure if that one’s going to sound good or not. You can add a little bit each time, to see if you like

the taste. Maybe you don't like it as spicy as me with cayenne. I might play something fancy, but you might say, 'Whoa! I don't know all those ingredients yet. I'm just going to take two ingredients.'" He demonstrates for the class, playing a complex pattern, and then repeating it with just two notes. "See what I'm saying? Just two notes. Maybe you're brave and you want to try the brown mustard seed." Greg plays a complex improvisation. "You guys are going to repeat my rhythms, because the rhythms are the burger. Everybody has to have the burger, but the different notes that you choose, those are the different flavors. Here we go." The rhythm section plays a blues progression and then Greg leads the students in another improvisation activity.

Sarah's Typical Day

Introduction

Sarah has been teaching elementary instrumental music in Jefferson County, a large suburban school district located outside a large East Coast metropolitan area, for seven years. She is pursuing her Master's degree in music education from the university and previously earned her Bachelor's degree in music education there as well. She has participated in four to five years of SYMC as the oboe sectional coach, and has now completed her first year as a Beginning Instrument Lab (BIL) instructor. The following narrative is descriptive of a typical day at camp for Sarah.

Sarah's Vignette

The leader of the beginning instrument lab, Sarah, and two other teachers are setting up the BIL. Against each wall are numbered stations. Under station one is a

violin, a trumpet, a bassoon, a trombone, a flute, and an oboe, all assembled and sitting in open cases. The other stations are set up similarly.

“Here’s how the BIL will work,” says the leader of the beginning instrument lab, “Students will come in. We’ll take attendance. I’ll give them the spiel about how you need to take care of the instruments because they don’t belong to the camp. We’ll do introductions. Then we’ll read off what instrument they’re going to play, and I’ll say ‘Ok, today with Allison will be the flutes.’ And they’ll get their instruments. And you lead them out. Then bring them back about five minutes before the end. They’ll sit down and we’ll say, ‘Hey, did you like your instrument?’ It’s so ridiculously easy. It’s literally trying to get *Hot Cross Buns* before time’s up.” The students come in and Sarah takes a group of bassoon players to the room next door.

“You put the strap down first. Put the ‘grippy’ side down like I have it. Let the strap out as much as you need to so the reed lines up with your face.” Sarah shows the BIL bassoonists where the reed should be. She then turns her chair around so she’s facing the same direction as the campers. She helps each bassoonist set the strap up correctly and make sure all the reeds are easily accessible to the student’s mouths.

“Can you get all that stuff to come out? If you can already noodle like that,” she says to one of the campers who is playing lots of notes already, “can you tongue?” She keeps talking with the kids and moving from student to student adjusting their postures as they “noodle” on the instruments.

“The back of the bassoon has crazy buttons, and this one right here,” Sarah draws the buttons on the board, “is the one you want. Right side, very bottom one. Perfect.” After the bassoons find the correct thumb key, she has the students hold

notes out, making a contest out of long tone exercises. The students eventually meet their goal of *Mary had a Little Lamb* and *Hot Cross Buns*. After class, Sarah walks back to the MERC.

“This is Vin,” a camp administrator says to Sarah, leading her over to the table in the back. “He just got hired in Jefferson County.”

Sarah asks Vin, “Where are you teaching?”

“Adams Elementary and Polk Elementary. I’m at three schools, but I only remember the names of two of them,” Vin states.

Sarah says excitedly, “Oh my gosh, you’re teaching at Adams? I have a clarinet player that’s going to go there. He is the hardest worker you’ll ever get. He has a language learning disability, but he’s an amazing kid. He has problems reading the music. He got a lot better, but sometimes I have to write names of notes in for him. What’s your other school?”

“I don’t know,” answers Vin.

“You teach around me. Wilson? Coolidge?” Sarah guesses.

“Coolidge!” exclaims Vin. Sarah and the camp administrator shriek. The leader of the beginning instrument lab tells Vin that Sarah had been a student at Coolidge. Sarah and Vin talk about the administration at Coolidge, and Sarah gives Vin information about the instrument inventory of the school and advice about recruiting students in that neighborhood. Sarah tells Vin to be organized and have the second year students help recruit new students. The conversation continues around the table, the talk turns to principals, consulting teachers, and county music supervisors.

Luke's Typical Day

Introduction

Luke teaches band in grades five through eight in a private school in a suburban district outside a large East Coast metropolitan area. He graduated from the university three years ago with a Bachelor's degree in music education. During the orchestral/vocal week of SYMC Luke taught in the BIL. This week he was trumpet sectional coach. The following narrative is descriptive of a typical day at camp for Luke.

Luke's Vignette

A trumpet player in the eighth and ninth grade band had been lying down in rehearsal and talking back to the camp's flute teacher, so Luke is asked to work with the student during the remainder of rehearsal. Luke pulls the student out of band and speaks with her in the doorway. After establishing that she would like to stay at camp and is having trouble with the music, Luke runs a private lesson for her in the hallway. Luke has her play through the band music and corrects several parts, then sends her back to the rehearsal.

At the back of the room, Luke and the teacher of the composition class talk about the student's behavior in composition class and band rehearsals. Luke speaks with the trumpet student again and then he plays his trumpet with the trumpet section.

After band rehearsal, Luke runs a sixth and seventh grade trumpet sectional in the chamber music room, a small room filled to bursting with brass instruments. The class warms up and then they begin working on the music they played in band rehearsal that morning. They work on dynamic contrasts, accents, and counting long

notes for about twenty minutes when there is a knock at the door. A student opens it and one of the conductors walks in.

“Can I listen for a little bit?” the conductor asks. She talks briefly with Luke and the students about what songs they will play for the concert and the students groan as they realize that she has cut their favorite song from the program.

“Let’s see what you guys are doing with *Hambone*,” the conductor requests. Luke leads the students through a difficult passage in *Hambone*. Luke plays a few notes and has the students echo him. He then plays more notes and has the students echo him again. After this, he has the students play the passage with air only. They blow and finger the notes, but don’t buzz. All their tonguing and breathing can be heard.

“You guys are doing great work. I like that air thing. I need to try that. I’ve never heard that. Thanks for the tip, Luke,” says the conductor.

“You’re welcome,” says Luke.

Luke spends his preparation period in the MERC talking with other teachers.

“Did you always know you wanted a doctorate?” Luke asks one of the conductors.

“Heck no! I didn’t even like teaching until I was 28,” answers the conductor. “My student teaching elementary assignment I liked and thought, ‘I can do this.’ But I was still going to graduate school and played for a while after graduate school. I ended up in a different field to try to make some money, and ended up bored. So I ended up in teaching just to get out of that other field.”

“Yeah, I like it more every year. First couple days of school ever, you’re like,”

Luke makes a sour face.

“There was this god awful music job that I know nobody in the county wanted. It [was] so bad it was worse than the filth underneath the carpet,” said the conductor. “We didn’t even have drums. We got boxes from the cafeteria. Those were our drums forever. So it wasn’t that I didn’t want to be in teaching. It was that I didn’t want to be in that music department. I guess I was four years into it when I decided to become a PhD [student].”

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to explore the experiences of the participants at SYMC to investigate the following research questions:

1. Why did the participants choose to participate in SYMC?
2. How did the participants benefit from participation in SYMC?
3. How did the experiences of the participants relate to the professional and nonprofessional aspects of SYMC?

Data collected during the present study suggest that the professional aspects of SYMC were beneficial to the participants and factored strongly in participants' decisions to participate in SYMC. A priori themes describing the professional aspects of the SYMC experience included: (a) professional environment and (b) professional development. Professional environment was further separated into the emergent sub-themes of: (a) monetary compensation, (b) colleague collaboration, (c) student focus, and (d) learner-centered environment. Professional development was further separated into the a priori sub-themes themes of: (a) professional conversation, (b) observational learning, and (c) experiential learning. Nonprofessional aspects of SYMC (e.g., eating, checking email, social conversations, and leisure activities such as crossword puzzles) factored more weakly in participants' decisions to participate in SYMC and provided less benefit.

Professional Environment

Monetary Compensation

The teachers at SYMC are performing a professional function. Their work is in a specialized field in which they have pursued advanced training. Therefore, they

are professionals (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). As professionals, the participants received monetary compensation for their work. Monetary compensation emerged as an important theme in the professional environment at SYMC.

Greg and Sarah minimized the importance of the monetary compensation from SYMC. Greg joked about the monetary compensation from the camp, “You make so much money that you could go and buy a house.” Sarah said, “It’s not so much how much we get paid, but it almost feels like a fellowship.” Although Sarah and Greg might participate if not paid, being paid is a sign that the staff members of SYMC are professionals. Luke stated that one of the reasons he participated in camp was because he needed the money, so he may not have participated if there was no monetary compensation. Although the majority of the SYMC staff members were paid, two unpaid volunteers worked at SYMC in the Beginning Instrument Lab (BIL).

BIL leader: I brought a friend of mine along today. He’s a music ed. guy...He’s been stuck in his house. He can’t drive, he can’t do anything. He loves teaching music...He asked if he could come volunteer...Thursday I have a private student coming, she just got accepted [to the university].

The presence of the volunteers suggests that even though SYMC is a professional environment and the staff members are monetarily compensated, there are also non-monetary motivations for participation in SYMC.

The importance of the monetary compensation varied among the participants. Greg joked about the money, Sarah said it wasn’t the money that inspired her work at SYMC, but Luke said he came to SYMC in part because he needed the money. Although varying in importance to the participants, the monetary compensation was part of the professional environment because being paid was an acknowledgement

that the staff members of SYMC were valued and viewed as professionals, not volunteers.

Colleague Collaboration

Colleague collaboration emerged as a second theme regarding the professional environment at SYMC. Lieberman and Grolnick (1996) wrote about the importance of collaborative environments due to the isolation felt by many teachers. More recently, Scheib (2002) wrote that tensions in the professional lives of music teachers may lead them to leave music education. In research concerning the professional lives of two secondary school music teachers, Rich (2004) found:

The teachers I observed in [the secondary school setting] rarely find time to engage in anything but the most superficial conversation, such as simply saying hello or discussing mundane logistical issues, with their fellow music teacher colleagues. Intensification and the resulting tendency for it to isolate teachers from their colleagues simply precludes teachers, and especially music teachers, from engaging in professional dialogue with their colleagues, cutting them off from yet another avenue of ongoing professional development... (p. 184)

Findings from the present study suggest that the professional environment at SYMC is important to the participants to help ease the tensions and isolation of being a music teacher. According to Sarah:

It's so easy to work with everyone here...the atmosphere and the rapport we have with all the people on staff is such a comfort, when so often during the school year you never have that at some of your schools...You know, you walk to a class room and [are met with a] stone face, and you go to talk to somebody in the office and they don't have time for you, but everybody here has time to listen.

Luke stated, "All my friends are here... It literally is like a college reunion and you get to teach with your professors...Even people I didn't go to school with who aren't terrible [are here]." Greg said that because he went to school at the university, there were a lot of people he knew at the camp from his classes. He also first came to camp

because a colleague did. Several times during the week, Greg introduced himself to people he did not know.

In a professional environment, many teachers collaborate to support the students and their colleagues (DuFour et al., 2006a). Wiggins (2007) says “Learning is something that individuals do. Most often with the help and support of other people (p. 36).” The support of students is shown by the following instances:

[Greg showed me a note on his music stand that he received from one of the camp administrators telling him to keep an eye out for a trumpet player that was struggling in band rehearsals and electives classes.]

Greg: It looks like this was sent out to all of his electives classes. He’s been having a tough time in his classes...It looks like I don’t have him until sixth period.

To support this student, Greg involved the student in a conversational improvisation exercise demonstration for the class and at the end of the class commented on what a good ear the student had for copying musical ideas. Luke received the same note as Greg and had the student demonstrate several musical phrases during sectionals. He also complimented the student on his trumpet playing.

Luke was asked to support a second struggling student, a trumpet player in the eighth/ninth grade band who was lying down in rehearsal and “talking back” to other staff members. Luke thought the student was having attitude problems because of difficulty playing the music. He asked her to join him in the hallway outside the rehearsal hall and gave her a short private lesson on one of the pieces of music. Both her behavior and playing changed when she returned. Later, Luke discussed this student with teachers of the composition class and rock ‘n roll class who had also been having trouble with her. They exchanged ideas for how to support her. Luke

said, “I’ve had...problem student[s] in both trumpet sections, but I haven’t been the only one that’s had to deal with them. That’s always nice.”

Not all collaborative teams were formed to support struggling students. Some directors and sectional coaches worked together on improving student performance of the band music. Whatever musical ideas the band director worked on during band rehearsal, the sectional coaches worked on during sectional rehearsals. The collaboration proceeded both ways, however. The band directors watched sectionals and talked with the sectional coaches to gather information about what needed to be rehearsed in band.

Director: We’re going to work on – the composition teacher was very instrumental in helping me hear this better – having the kids not rush to beat four, really wait for it.

Luke: The eighth note’s longer.

Director: Yes. So we’re going to work on that, and also – this is all the composition teacher, not me, give credits to him – [she sings measure 35, 37 rhythm]. Then the next person has to come in immediately, so that there’s no break-

Flute Coach: Talking about break, when the instruments come in after the – [she sings measure 35, 37] – I made my kids sing the trumpet part in their heads, because they come in right after them.

Electives teachers and their assistants formed collaborative teams to support the electives students in various ways. Although the leader of the Beginning Instrument Lab organized the classes and gave guidance to his co-teachers, the co-teachers taught their individual BIL classes separately.

BIL co-teacher: When I do flutes, do you want me to do C, D, and E, or can I do G, A, and B?

BIL leader: We never play together as a group.

BIL co-teacher: Oh, ok.

BIL leader: So you can teach them whatever notes you want.

BIL co-teacher: Ok. I don't like C, D, and E personally.

Another example of collaboration occurred when Greg discussed his plans for improvisation class with his assistants, involved his assistants in class, and looked to his assistants to provide special support for certain groups of students. For instance, Greg frequently asked his percussion assistants questions about percussion technique, and had the assistants work with the percussion section during class.

Greg: We're going to do a jam session today.

Asst: Alright.

Greg: I wanted to talk about some other stuff too. I'm going to let the kids pick which song they want to play a solo over. Some like the blues and some will want *Cantaloupe Island*...I'm thinking in the second class where we have the drummers, for *Cantaloupe Island* we'll use the CD, and then let them all play on the swing one...

Asst: With the Latin they could play with the CD.

Greg: Yeah. Maybe we can do something like that. So we can just kinda play it by ear. This way it gives them a last experience like actually playing something...I'll talk about some more concepts a little bit here and there. And then, I'll hand this out [shows the paper to the assistant] and explain the Aebersold CDs.

Luke and the teacher of the composition class did not communicate in advance about composition class. When asked about his role in composition class,

Luke responded:

Well, I don't really do composition. I'm just sort of like the extra faculty member there, so I sort of watch. I don't even know what [the teacher of the composition class]'s going to teach before I go in there. So I sort of watch his class...and then I help the kids out.

When asked how he felt about having another teacher watch and assist in his sectionals, Luke answered, "I don't really mind it... [my assistant] said a couple of things that helped and that I used."

Another collaboration among colleagues occurred to support a teacher whose curriculum did not meet the expectations of the camp administration. Garmston and Wellman (1999) suggest that:

Successful groups know how to fight gracefully – they embrace the positive aspects of conflict and actively minimize the negative aspects....Conflict is an important resource for forging better practices. (Garmston & Wellman, 1999, p. 183)

The teacher of the guitar class was not open to transparent suggestions for improvement in the guitar class curriculum. Two university professors and several teachers collaborated in an informal guitar sharing session to model creative new teaching methods for the teacher of the guitar class. DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many (2006b) stated that it is the responsibility of teachers to help a struggling colleague, even if that colleague is resistant to help:

One of the most important ways a school's core values are reinforced is by thoughtful, professional confrontation. We must be prepared to confront those who act in ways that are contrary to the priorities of the school and the collective commitments of the staff. (p. 35)

Collaboration among colleagues was an important factor to the professional environment of SYMC. Collaborative teams formed to support students and teachers who were faced with challenges. The participants valued the social and collaborative aspects of SYMC, which included “talking behind the scenes” with other teachers, being part of collaborative teams to support students, and having a rapport with the other staff members.

Student Focus

A third theme relating to the professional environment of SYMC was the student-focused nature of the camp. From the first year of SYMC, a catch phrase of the camp was “it’s all about the kids.” This phrase means that the students are the

main focus of the camp. Teachers at SYMC are focused on the whole student – each student’s behavior, socialization, emotional well-being, and accomplishment in music.

Sarah stated that the camp is like “a school of music for middle schoolers,” and that “[SYMC is] not too intense, but is enough that we achieve something in the week that the students feel like they’ve accomplished something here.” Luke said, “It’s a really positive camp...Even when [the students] mess up, they aren’t afraid to try it again...It’s a safe environment. Even the ones giving you funny looks were trying new things.” Greg’s philosophy of his role at camp clearly shows a student focus:

It is an honor for me to be able to come and share jazz music with these students...I take a lot of pride that I am passing on ..jazz knowledge to a younger generation....

SYMC provides an environment that is student-focused because it supports the whole student in exploration of different avenues of musical achievement.

Learner-Centered Environment

In addition to the emergent themes of monetary compensation, colleague collaboration, and student focus, the final theme of professional environment, learner-centeredness, emerged. The present study indicated that participants chose to make learning opportunities for themselves. Sarah taught at various elementary schools in Jefferson County for seven years, and although she considers herself an experienced teacher, she strongly believes that there is a lot more for her to learn.

I’ve had a lot of elementary gigs, but I’m only going into my seventh year of teaching. Even though someone like [BIL teacher], who’s just finished her first year, is like, “Wow!” I still feel there’s so much that I need to do and that there’s a wealth of knowledge here.

According to Bransford et al. (2000), “Environments that are learner-centered attempt to build on the strengths, interests, and needs of the learners” (p. 192) and teachers should be given the opportunity to tailor professional development to their needs. The participants chose to pursue learning activities, such as professional conversation and observation, based on their strengths, interests and needs. The learning activities were not chosen for them. An example of the participants choosing their own learning activities occurred when two of the university professors encouraged the electives teachers to talk with each other and watch each other’s classes. The participants chose which classes and teachers they wanted to observe.

Professor A: Go to each other’s classes and just take notes for your own benefit, because you’ll probably end up teaching it at some point.

Professor B: And sometimes I know on the back of your schedule you have prep. You can be here for prep of course, and other places watching people as well.

Although Sarah did not choose to use this option, Luke and Greg did observe rehearsals and classes. Sarah did not observe classes or band rehearsals, but she did converse professionally with the other teachers. The participants were not asked to participate in these learning opportunities, but instead chose to become involved on their own.

In regards to SYMC giving him the opportunity to teach and learn, Luke stated that SYMC is “as positive for the faculty as it is for the kids.” Bottoms (2007) found that “teachers are able to interact and collaborate within a common practice and share their own practice and to learn from practices of others” (p. 104). Similarly, the participants in the present study interacted and collaborated to share their practice and

learn from the practice of others. In the following section, the professional learning of Sarah, Luke, and Greg is explored.

Professional Development

High quality professional development is a sustained learning process that systematically nourishes the growth of educators (individuals and teams) through adult learner-centered, job-embedded processes. It focuses on educators' attaining the skills, abilities, and deep understandings needed to improve student achievement. (Speck & Knipe, 2005, pp. 3-4)

The participants in the present study were involved in several different aspects of professional development. These aspects included professional conversation, observational learning, and experiential learning.

Professional Conversation

The first a priori theme relating to professional development was professional conversation. According to Conway (2007):

Music teachers should continue to advocate for professional development options that allow them time and settings to interact informally to share ideas and stories of teaching. (p. 58)

When discussing professional development, Sarah focused heavily on conversation with colleagues. The fellowship of the staff was a predominant reason Sarah participates in camp. She values the knowledge of the other teachers, and appreciates the rapport she has with them. "I just pick people's brains before we all go off to our own little zip codes again." Throughout the week, Sarah referred to "stories of experience," and talked about how important it was for her to have an exchange of ideas with other staff members: "It's like I was saying in the beginning of camp, you're not the only one in your building at camp."

Sarah comments about the rapport she has with the camp staff, and mentions the loneliness of her profession, but she also talks about the rapport she has with the

Jefferson County instrumental music staff. She stated, “We’re always hanging out, we’re always asking ‘What are you working on?’ ... We do have an exchange [of ideas] in our county, there is a rapport...” Throughout the week, this rapport appeared to carry over into the camp setting. Jacobs (2007) cited a lack of time and lack of structure as problems to the mentoring relationships in his study. Sarah’s relationship with the other Jefferson County teachers during SYMC provided time for informal mentoring. For instance, Sarah was able to act as an informal mentor to a new Jefferson County teacher:

Sarah: Be organized. Meet second-year kids at the end of the first week. See them right away and use them to help recruit.

New Teacher: How involved are the principals in the music programs? Should I be in contact with them now?

Sarah: The principal will always ask for your schedules and tell you what day you’ll be on.

New Teacher: Will [the county instrumental music coordinator] help me with my schedule? Should I be contacting principals now? What kind of prep work should I be doing now?

Sarah: Prep work? Well, you have pre-service week. You’re going to need to hunt down your inventory. A lot of the instruments on inventory don’t have official paperwork, so you might have to hunt for some of them. I can email you the information I have.

Several other Jefferson County teachers and Sarah spoke regularly amongst themselves during SYMC. They discussed Jefferson County’s instrumental music supervisor, music staff meetings, the transfer and job hunt process, students and parents, and the schools and communities in which they teach.

Although the majority of Sarah’s professional communication appeared to be with Jefferson County Teachers, she did speak regularly with the leader of the beginning instrument lab. Sarah and the leader of the beginning instrument lab had

both experienced working in a school with a disorganized and unsupported PTA. In both schools the PTA held meetings before concerts, something that was both understandable and disturbing to Sarah and the leader of the beginning instrument lab. They also discussed student discipline, parent conferences and interactions, problem students, and the communities in which they teach.

Similar to Sarah's stories of experience, Luke spoke about several conversations related to teaching that he had with colleagues. Luke and one of the directors discussed having students listen to music at home. Luke said:

We played a couple of FJH things. I put them online for the kids to listen to. They'll tell me [whispering loudly] "I listened to it last night. I fingered along," Fantastic!

Although Greg had wanted to improve upon orchestral techniques, something he considers a weak point in his teaching ("I'm not a string person, and I'm teaching orchestra"), he had not realized in advance that the week he taught at SYMC would consist of band students only, not orchestra students. Therefore, Greg did not get to observe any orchestra rehearsals, but he did benefit from the availability of string resources in the MERC and staff who were knowledgeable about strings instruction.

Teacher A: [*Curse of the Rosin Eating Zombies*] is a cool piece for orchestra. Then there's *Curse of the Rosin Eating Zombies from Outer Space*, which is the sequel to that. The kids do all these neat orchestra pieces ... they like it, and there're a lot of different techniques. It's challenging ... but it's one that they'll work towards because it's cool ... There's a score for it right up there. I've got the other one at my school if you want to check it out.

Teacher B: If you want a neat one that has a unique flavor, check out *Sahara Crossing*. It's got that whole harmonic minor thing happening. It's only a 1 1/2, but it's something that the kids love. It's got a finger cymbal part and a wood block part for two kids, so it adds a little percussion.

Another way that Greg learned through conversation was in his communication with colleagues who taught elective classes he could not observe:

I would like to check out the other elective classes, but they're at the same time as mine, so I can't check them out. I've been noticing that each morning or afternoon I can go up to each one of the teachers and say "How's rock 'n roll going?" and they tell me. This morning we were sitting around and they were telling me about "rock 'n roll" and "playing by ear" class. The teacher of the play by ear class was asking me some questions, we were almost comparing. The teacher of the composition class, we were almost comparing some of the things that we were doing, because the classes lend themselves to each other.

Greg considers his position at the camp important not only for the students, but also because he is helping the teachers.

A teacher was speaking to me this morning about how he's been working on a way to incorporate [jazz] into his classroom and never knew how. It's a shame, because they want to, but everybody's afraid to teach it. That's why students don't learn it. They see that there's nothing to be afraid of once you get familiarized with it. To me it's a real privilege to be able to do that.

The learning Greg acquired through professional conversations was similar to the learning of the participants in Hall's (2000) study. The participants in Hall's study stated "I always pick up new ideas for my own teaching situation" and "When I am there, I have the opportunity to visit with the faculty and conductors and thus revitalize my own ideas" (p. 198). Greg considers the colleagues he met at camp to be valuable resources, and has kept in touch with them.

Meeting a lot of these people ... lends itself to more professional resources. Somebody might be an expert on trumpet, and I'd know during the year if I have a trumpet question— last year there was a violinist, he was really nice and he taught me some ideas to use in my classroom....

The three participants engaged heavily in conversation. Much of their conversations were nonprofessional conversations on topics such as weddings, movies, pets, and food, but all three participants valued professional conversations as

well. Sarah called this type of conversation “stories of experiences” and communicated how strongly she felt about the staff rapport at SYMC. Greg considered his colleagues to be great resources and spoke with them at length about their classes and teaching in order to learn all he could from them. Luke also had many professional conversations with his colleagues.

Observational Learning

The second a priori theme in relation to professional development was observational learning. In regards to observing the band rehearsals, Greg stated, “I popped in with the band, and even if I learn a new warm up or a new joke to say to the kids, it’s something that I can bring to my own classroom.” During one eighth and ninth grade band rehearsal, Greg and the teacher of the guitar class stood at the back of the band room and watched the beginning of the band rehearsal. The conductor stopped the band and spoke about posture. He had the students stand up and sit down several times. Greg and the teacher of the guitar class looked at each other and laughed at this exercise. About this, Greg said:

With posture, he had them all stand up, bend your knees and sit down, but everything else has to stay standing. Even little things which I know, they come back in my head, and will probably be in the tip of my mind when I start teaching this year, so I can start using some of those ideas in my band classes.

Greg used ideas he learned during last year’s camp season in his band classes. “Even last year [there were] some things that I saw the band conductors doing that I’ve used in my class this year.”

Although Greg was not able to observe any other elective classes, many teachers watched and participated in Greg’s improvisation class. The university professors also watched the class, and one even took notes and asked for Greg’s

lesson plans. Greg says, “I think it’s fun that they come in checking [the class] out. I try to get them all participating.”

In one conversation, Sarah and the teacher of the rock ‘n roll class spoke about the importance of seeing their professors teach:

Sarah: I don’t think I’ve ever seen [the band director] teach kids before.

Teacher: I remember seeing [last year’s orchestra director] teach, and then I knew what it was all about.

Luke also watched the band rehearsals, stating:

It’s nice to teach with your professors because you don’t see them teach when you’re an undergrad ... It’s nice to see them make mistakes and fix them. It’s nice to see them try new things.

Greg and Sarah taught electives classes, so due to their schedules, they were not able to observe other electives classes. Sarah did not mention wanting to watch other electives classes, but Greg was disappointed at not being able to observe other classes. Luke was able to watch the composition class with which he assisted: “I watch his class, and actually take notes because I like it and I’ll probably use it in my school this year.”

The participants benefited from observational learning to different extents. Luke was able to observe band rehearsals and an electives class, both of which he claimed were beneficial to his teaching. Greg observed band rehearsals, but was not able to observe electives classes, which he talked with the electives class teachers about instead. Sarah watched band rehearsals, but did not seem interested in watching or conversing about other electives classes.

Experiential Learning

The third a priori theme relating to professional development was experiential learning. Experiential learning included opportunities to teach, to try different teaching techniques, to work on lesson plans, and to experience different teaching situations.

Luke spoke about the different experiences of being a sectional coach and teaching BIL. He described the two teaching experiences, saying that the BIL was very mechanical, a “for fun” class, while the trumpet sectionals had a musical goal. Luke stated that he taught mostly the same lesson for each BIL class, consisting of:

Who could hold the note longest, put their fingers down [correctly], and learn three notes. Then we had a recital at the end for each other. If they did really well, we went on an attack, and attacked a faculty member with *Hot Cross Buns*.

In contrast, Luke studied his notes from band rehearsals and previous sectionals to prepare himself for sectionals throughout the week.

This was Sarah’s first year teaching the BIL. In the past, she worked as an oboe coach and appreciated the chance to expand her camp role.

Oh, I loved [teaching different instruments from class to class]. I liked not doing the same thing every time ... [the leader of the beginning instrument lab] did a fantastic job setting up flexibility in this class.

She also stated:

It’s really fascinating seeing how versatile the kids can be on all the instruments. For instance, the last three horn kids, especially that really little kid that’s obviously going into sixth grade...Teaching this class this year, and going into my seventh year of teaching, it gives me a perspective on what kids can do when you give them the chance to do it....

Even though the basics of Sarah’s BIL classes were similar, she tailored each class to the instruments and the students she taught. In some classes, the students learned to

hold the instruments, had a note-holding contest, and learned to play several three note songs. In other classes, the students were able to learn *Hot Cross Buns* with piano accompaniment, and even learn more advanced songs such as *Ode to Joy*.

At first, Greg said his teaching experiences this year were very similar to the previous year, but then he withdrew that statement and spoke about how much his teaching had changed between last year and the current year.

I've actually written out lesson plans. I had for last year too. Even from last year to this year, they've totally changed, because the students are different and each class lends itself to something different... I use my lesson plans as a kind of guide, but it just continuously changes in the classroom.

So although Greg asserts that his experience was similar in both his years at camp, SYMC has enabled Greg to try out different teaching techniques for his lessons. Greg admitted that even though he had written out lesson plans for his improvisation classes, he rarely followed them. In his classes he constantly tried new teaching techniques and would often say after class why he changed his lesson plan from one class to the next.

Greg: All right, I think that went well.

Me: Yeah. I noticed you changed up the class order a bit.

Greg: Yeah, you know what? It looks like I didn't have enough time to do it...I just kind of went with the flow. I realized [during] the last class...it might be nice to play through the scale with the rhythm section...so they could hear how that went along with it... You'll notice I do that a lot. I'll subconsciously notice things that'll work a little easier and then I just do it.

On Tuesday, Greg taught four improvisation classes in a row. Even though he had started with the same lesson plans, similar groups of students, and ultimately taught the same concepts, implementation of the classes was different. During the second class on Tuesday, he skipped certain exercises he had done with the first class,

and was able to get farther in the lesson than he had with the first class. After the first class he said: “I just made it, there was one more thing I wanted to do, but I didn’t get to it ... If I started the next [activity], I would have been way too late.” In the third class, Greg streamlined his lesson even more and had time to add in a continuing Emeril analogy. During the fourth class, Greg had the students echo his improvisation, then the students asked to give him improvisations to echo, resulting in a different lesson from the other classes.

The participants seemed to learn from experience at SYMC. They taught classes and age groups with which they had little experience and they experimented with different teaching techniques.

Nonprofessional Aspects

The participants also engaged in nonprofessional activities such as purely social conversations, completing crossword puzzles, and checking email (unrelated to school or camp). Although Greg states how important professional conversations about classes and teaching are, he also comments on the importance of social conversation with colleagues.

It’s just kind of talking behind the scenes... That’s always nice because we all have a common interest. So it’s nice to just share stories... it could be about anything really... just learning about different people is cool to do. But most of it is chatting behind the scenes about whatever comes up.

Many nonprofessional conversations were recorded including subjects such as evening happy hours, pets, weddings, gossip, movies, jokes, and food.

All the participants engaged in nonprofessional activities during the week of camp, such as engaging in nonprofessional conversations and doing crossword puzzles, yet not nearly as frequently as the professional activities. When asked why

they participated in SYMC, the participants spoke more about the professional aspects of SYMC than the nonprofessional aspects. Therefore, the professional aspects of camp were a stronger influence on the experiences and perceptions of the participants.

Summary

The participants showed through words and actions that their experiences at SYMC consisted of nonprofessional and professional aspects of participation. The professional aspects of SYMC included a professional environment consisting of:

- a. Monetary Compensation
- b. Colleague Collaboration
- c. Student Focus
- d. Learner-Centered Environment

The professional aspects of SYMC also included professional development consisting of:

- a. Professional Conversation
- b. Observational Learning
- c. Experiential Learning

The professional environment and professional development opportunities of SYMC are suggestive of a professional learning community. Although each participant engaged in the nonprofessional aspects of camp, reasons for participation and benefits to the participants were dominated by the professional aspects of SYMC.

Chapter 6: Summary, Implications, and Suggestions for Future Research

Summary

The purpose of this single case study ethnography was to explore the experiences of three music teachers at a summer youth music camp at a large university outside a metropolitan area on the East Coast. This exploration was intended to investigate the following research questions:

1. Why did the participants choose to participate in SYMC?
2. How did the participants benefit from participation in SYMC?
3. How did the experiences of the participants relate to the professional and nonprofessional aspects of SYMC?

The three participants, selected through a technique that Patton (1990) referred to as network sampling, included: (a) Sarah, a teacher in the camp's beginning instrument lab; (b) Greg, the camp's jazz improvisation teacher; and (c) Luke, the camp's trumpet sectional coach. Each participant was interviewed, and their classes, rehearsals, and preparation periods were observed and videotaped. Interviews consisted of the following questions, with additional follow-up questions to clarify and expand responses:

1. Why did you first decide to participate in SYMC?
2. Why have you returned to SYMC in multiple years?
3. Please describe your interactions with your SYMC colleagues.
4. How have your perceptions of SYMC changed over time?
5. How have you benefitted from participation in SYMC?

Data analysis revealed two major themes: nonprofessional aspects of participation and professional aspects of participation. The participants engaged in nonprofessional activities during the week of camp, such as doing crossword puzzles, having nonprofessional conversations, but not nearly as frequently as the professional activities. When asked why they participated in SYMC, the participants spoke more about the professional aspects of SYMC than the nonprofessional aspects. Therefore, the professional aspects of camp seemed to be a stronger influence on the experiences and perceptions of the participants.

The professional aspects of SYMC included the following sub-themes:

1. Monetary Compensation
2. Colleague Collaboration
3. Student Focus
4. Learner-Centered Environment
5. Professional Development
 - a. Professional Conversation
 - b. Observational Learning
 - c. Experiential Learning

Although varying in importance to the participants, the monetary compensation was an important part of the professional environment because being paid was an acknowledgement that the staff members of SYMC were professionals performing professional work. The participants valued the social and collaborative aspects of SYMC which included “talking behind the scenes” with other teachers, being part of collaborative teams to support students, and having a rapport with the

other staff members. All three participants (teachers) in this study found opportunities for learning at SYMC, and were able to tailor these opportunities to their needs.

The learning the participants engaged in included professional conversations, observational learning, and experiential learning. The three participants valued professional conversations. Sarah called this type of conversation “stories of experiences” and communicated how strongly she felt about the staff rapport at SYMC. Greg considered his colleagues to be great resources and spoke with them at length about their classes and teaching in order to learn all he could from them. Luke also had many professional conversations with his colleagues. The participants benefited from observational learning to different extents. Luke was able to observe band rehearsals and an electives class, both of which he claimed were beneficial to his teaching. Greg observed band rehearsals, but was not able to observe electives classes; instead he talked with the electives class teachers. Sarah watched band rehearsals, but did not seem interested in watching or conversing about other electives classes. The participants seemed to learn from their experiences at SYMC. They taught classes and age groups with which they had little experience and they experimented with different teaching techniques.

Implications and Suggestions for Further Research

In this section, implications for additional research related to professional environment and professional development in summer music camps are discussed, including SYMC as a learning community and SYMC as professional development.

SYMC as a Learning Community

The professional environment and professional development opportunities of SYMC suggest the presence of a learning community. The concept of learning community is a change in educational philosophy from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning (DuFour, 2004). DuFour et al. (2006a) proposed that schools should be organized in such a way that the entire school and all the teachers are focused on student learning. Roland Barth states, “Such a school is a community whose defining, underlying culture is one of learning” (2001, p. 13).

In a learning community, there are collaborative teams and a student focus, aspects important to the functioning of SYMC. In a learning community, professional development is for the purpose of affecting student achievement (DuFour et al., 2006a). The participants spoke about their learning at SYMC in terms of how it would affect their students at camp as well as students at their schools. Greg spoke about using concepts he learned from the teacher of the composition class in his jazz improvisation class during the school year. Sarah spoke about finding out how much middle school students could achieve to better help the middle school students in her county during the school year. Luke spoke about the musical goals on which he worked with the camp students to better prepare them for band rehearsals.

Based on the collaborative teams and the student focus that was observed during the present study, SYMC fits the definition of a learning community. This type of professional, collaborative environment may be an important opportunity for music teachers when the isolation and tensions of the music teacher position (Lieberman & Grolnick, 1996; Rich, 2004; Scheib, 2002) are considered. Barth (2001), Lieberman

(2000), and DuFour et al. (2006a) stress the importance of learning communities in education. Learning communities encourage collaborative teams, a student focus, and create a positive learning environment. Future research could investigate further encouragement of collaborative teams at SYMC.

Conway (2007) suggests that “as a profession, we need to explore what a community of practice [the interaction of teachers within a learning community] might be or look like for music educators” (p. 58). Conway also suggests questions for exploration of informal professional development opportunities for music teachers. These questions could be applied to further research concerning the learning community at SYMC:

What do informal professional development experiences look like? How do teachers engage in these experiences? What do they talk about and spend their time on in these experiences? How can informal professional development inform the design and implementation of more formal professional development programs for music teachers? (p. 58)

SYMC as Professional Development

Speck and Knipe (2005) suggest that professional development should be job-embedded, sustained, learner-centered, and should support student achievement. The results of the present study suggest that SYMC is learner-centered. The participants chose the learning opportunities that met their strengths and needs. The learning at SYMC was job-embedded. The job of the participants during this week was teaching at SYMC, and all the learning that occurred during SYMC occurred while the participants were doing their job. They observed rehearsals and classes, they held professional conversations with their colleagues, and they learned through the experience of teaching at SYMC.

A question arises from Speck and Knipe's suggestion that professional development be sustained: Is the learning at SYMC supported throughout the year? In other words, will the participants have the chance to ask for help from colleagues if they have questions about concepts they have learned at SYMC? Greg's statements about keeping in touch with colleagues from SYMC and asking them questions throughout the year indicated that this is possible. Further research over a longer time period may allow further exploration of this topic. For instance, future research may include a longitudinal study of professional communications between SYMC staff members outside of the SYMC setting.

Speck and Knipe's suggestion that professional development should affect student achievement indicates a need for future research exploring the effects of SYMC on student achievement.

Importantly, research on the relationship of music teacher professional development to student achievement is essential. There is currently no extant research in this area. Ultimately, for the professional development of music educators to be considered a success, it should positively impact the learning of students. (Bauer, 2007, p. 20)

No formal assessment of student achievement was completed at SYMC. Further study, including assessment of student achievement, may provide a clearer understanding of SYMC's effect on student achievement. Further study may also be conducted to determine if the students whom the participants teach during the school year are affected by the participants' involvement in SYMC.

Guskey (1999) also has suggested that professional development opportunities need to be evaluated:

Over the years, a lot of good things have been done in the name of professional development. So have a lot of rotten things. What professional developers have not done is provide evidence to document the difference

between the good and the rotten. Evaluation is the key, not only to making those distinctions, but also to explaining how and why they occurred (p.92).

The present study suggests that professional development opportunities are available at SYMC. Further exploration into the quality of these professional opportunities is recommended. Questions for future research relating to the professional development opportunities at SYMC include: (a) what types of activities at SYMC are most effective for professional development? and (b) in what ways can the professional development opportunities at SYMC be expanded?

The results of the present study suggest that the nonprofessional reasons for participation, although important, would not have been enough to keep the participants engaged in the camp. All three participants emphasized the importance of their learning at camp and the importance of the student-focused nature of the camp. Future research might explore additional ways to investigate the professional aspects of the camp. Teachers might complete a survey, keep journals, and arrange for scheduled conversations with various members of the camp faculty.

Summary

SYMC was “as positive for the faculty as it was for the kids.” Luke’s statement focuses attention on an essential aspect of the present study. SYMC was a positive experience for the participants. Professional development has been characterized by onetime training workshops that have little to do with actual learning needs (Joyce & Showers, 1995; Lieberman & Miller, 2001; Speck & Knipe, 2005). SYMC was positive as an adult learner-centered environment for professional development. Professional learning communities, exemplified by collaborative teams and a focus on the students, are an important philosophical movement in professional

development and school reform (DuFour et al. 1998, DuFour et al., 2006a; Lieberman, 1992; Lieberman & Grolnick, 1996). SYMC was positive as a setting for colleague collaboration and as a student-focused environment.

With non-participant staff members making statements such as, “I haven’t had this much fun since [pause] last summer at camp,” and, “This is one of my favorite weeks of the year. I look forward to it all year long,” there must be many reasons for participation, and many benefits left to explore.

Appendixes

Appendix A: Transcript without Coding

Sunday, 3:50 MERC

Admin is standing near the food cart, talking with Sarah.

Teacher A, Teacher C and Teacher B are sitting at a rectangular table in the middle of the room.

Admin: This is Teacher A; he just got hired in Jefferson County.

Sarah: Teacher A?

Teacher A: Yeah.

Sarah: Where are you teaching?

Teacher A: Uh, Elementary 1. Um, Elementary 2.

Sarah: Oh my gosh, you're teaching at Elementary 1?

Teacher A: Yeah

Sarah: I have a clarinet player that's going to go there, and he is the hardest worker you'll ever get. He's not the sharp end of the. . . He's not going to be in the top reading group or anything like that. He has a language learning disability, but he's an amazing kid. I was so mad when he was going to go.

Teacher A: Don't worry, I'll—

Teacher B: The only problem is he blows into the bell of the clarinet instead of the mouthpiece. Once you get that straightened out you should be good.

Sarah: He has problems reading the music. He got a lot better. But sometimes I have to write notes in for him at least initially. But he's a great kid. What schools are you at?

Teacher A: I'm at three schools. I always remember the name of two of them.

Sarah: What's the other one?

Teacher A: I don't know.

Admin: You only said one of them.

Sarah: You teach around me.

Teacher A: Elementary 1, Elementary 2, and one more.

Sarah: Um Elementary 3. Elementary 4.

Teacher A: Elementary 4!

Sarah: Oh! Oh! [shriek!]

Admin: That's her school. Sarah went there, now she likes you.

Admin needs to leave, and takes Sarah with her.

Teacher A: That was a good shriek, or a ...?

Teacher B: Yes, that was a good shriek. That was a connection to my youth kind of shriek.

Teacher A: I was hoping that's not like a hiiiiii [makes face and breathing in sound]

Teacher B: like "you're going to go in and screw up everything I got right sound." You went to Jefferson County. Ooh brave.

Teacher A: Where do you teach?

Teacher C: I'm at K-8 School 1. It's a K-8.

Teacher B: I like K-8. I think K-8 is sweet.

Teacher C: The school base is smaller, in terms of each grade. So there's more, you can work with the kids better. And for articulation, I have my kids for five years. And I start them in fourth grade, so I don't have to break anybody's bad habits. No bad habits at all.

Monday, late in the day MERC

Teacher D, Teacher B, Teacher E, and Greg are sitting around a rectangular table. Band rehearsals are going on right now, but the three of them have a prep period at the end of the day.

Teacher D: That's a cool piece for orchestra. Then there's the *Curse of the Rosin Eating Zombies from Outer Space*, which is the sequel to that. The kids do all these neat orchestra pieces.

Greg: I saw your orchestra do that. [to Teacher D]

Teacher D: Oh yeah, they like it, and there's a lot of different techniques and stuff. It's a challenging...

Greg: What grade is it?

Teacher D: Three. But it's one that they'll work towards because it's still cool. Especially since I've got a recording of it. There's a score for it right up there. And then I've got the other one at my school if you want to check it out. There's even a part in it where they can make munching sounds.

Greg: Do you give out popcorn before the concert?

Teacher D: It's fun because you can have some crazy discussions about you know, what to do for that. The one kid wanted to have everyone have a bag of potato chips. I don't remember what we did. And then we have auditions for the person who screams at the end.

Teacher B: If you want a neat one that just has a unique flavor, check out *Sahara Crossing*. It's got that whole harmonic minor thing happening. It's only like a 1 1/2, but it's something that the kids love. It's got a little – it may have a finger cymbal part and a wood block part for two kids, so it adds a little percussion.

Teacher D: It's like a grade one and a half

Teacher B: Yeah, I think it is.

Teacher D: I'd definitely check it out.

Teacher B: The melody's [singing] [moves like he's riding a camel] What's really cool, I do the obligatory riding of the camel. They love that piece.

Greg: All right, I'll check it out.

Wednesday, 9:08 6/7 Band Rehearsal

Luke is standing behind trumpets, watching the band rehearsal.

A percussion teacher is reviewing percussion music. Two other teachers are also in the section. Another teacher is in the trombone section.

9:12 Luke needs to pull a trumpet girl from 8/9 band – she’s giving the staff attitude – apparently lying down in rehearsal. Talks to her in doorway – she decides to stay in rehearsal. He brings her into the hallway. I’m sitting at a table in the hall. They don’t notice me. [I left the camera downstairs].

They’re going to look at some of the music

Luke: What did you tell me your favorite piece was? The train one? I know there's a tough part in that; let's go over some of it. [Pauses] Have you played at all yet this morning? (she shakes her head) ok, let's start off with a G, nice and soft.

They play G. then Luke plays and has her repeat. They do this several times.

[who had asked Luke to come down here? It is probably on the video tapes].

Luke continues with lesson. The student seems to be doing a lot better.

Luke: Let's go inside so we don't miss too much rehearsal. If you start feeling too bad, we'll call your parents so you can go home.
They go back to rehearsal.

Luke and composition teacher talk about student. Composition teacher says something about her in composition class.

A university professor is watching the rehearsal [Dr. Garfield Conducting]

[The other band director keeps mentioning how she hasn't conducted in 3 years because she had kids – wonder how this helps her in getting back into the swing of things?]

The composition teacher leaves, Luke walks around the trumpet section.

Appendix B: Transcript with Coding

Sunday, 3:50 MERC

Admin is standing near the food cart, talking with Sarah.

Teacher A, Teacher C and Teacher B are sitting at a rectangular table in the middle of the room.

Professional Environment

Real

Admin: This is Teacher A; he just got hired in Jefferson County.

Sarah: Teacher A?

Teacher A: Yeah.

Sarah: Where are you teaching?

Teacher A: Uh, Elementary 1. Um, Elementary 2.

Sarah: Oh my gosh, you're teaching at Elementary 1?

Teacher A: Yeah

Sarah: I have a clarinet player that's going to go there, and he is the hardest worker you'll ever get. He's not the sharp end of the . . . He's not going to be in the top reading group or anything like that. He has a language learning disability, but he's an amazing kid. I was so mad when he was going to go.

Yellow

Teacher A: Don't worry, I'll—

Teacher B: The only problem is he blows into the bell of the clarinet instead of the mouthpiece. Once you get that straightened out you should be good.

Sarah: He has problems reading the music. He got a lot better. But sometimes I have to write notes in for him at least initially. But he's a great kid. What schools are you at?

Teacher A: I'm at three schools. I always remember the name of two of them.

Sarah: What's the other one?

Teacher A: I don't know.

Admin: You only said one of them.

Sarah: You teach around me.

Professional Conversation

Teacher A: Elementary 1, Elementary 2, and one more.

Sarah: Um Elementary 3. Elementary 4.

Teacher A: Elementary 4!

Sarah: Oh! Oh! [shriek!]

Admin: That's her school. Sarah went there, now she likes you.

Admin needs to leave, and takes Sarah with her.

Teacher A: That was a good shriek, or a ...?

Teacher B: Yes, that was a good shriek. That was a connection to my youth kind of shriek.

Teacher A: I was hoping that's not like a hiiiiii [makes face and breathing in sound]

Teacher B: like "you're going to go in and screw up everything I got right sound." You went to Jefferson County. Ooh brave.

Teacher A: Where do you teach?

Teacher C: I'm at K-8 School 1. It's a K-8.

Teacher B: I like K-8. I think K-8 is sweet.

Teacher C: The school base is smaller, in terms of each grade. So there's more, you can work with the kids better. And for articulation, I have my kids for five years. And I start them in fourth grade, so I don't have to break anybody's bad habits. No bad habits at all.

This is a great opportunity for meeting new colleagues in the county

Monday, late in the day MERC

→ have choice of conversing with colleagues or watching rehearsal.

Teacher D, Teacher B, Teacher E, and Greg are sitting around a rectangular table. Band rehearsals are going on right now, but the three of them have a prep period at the end of the day.

Teacher D: That's a cool piece for orchestra. Then there's the *Curse of the Rosin Eating Zombies from Outer Space*, which is the sequel to that. The kids do all these neat orchestra pieces.

professional conversation orchestra

Red

Yellow

Greg: I saw your orchestra do that. [to Teacher D]

Teacher D: Oh yeah, they like it, and there's a lot of different techniques and stuff. It's a challenging...

Greg: What grade is it?

Teacher D: Three. But it's one that they'll work towards because it's still cool. Especially since I've got a recording of it. There's a score for it right up there. And then I've got the other one at my school if you want to check it out. There's even a part in it where they can make munching sounds.

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Teacher B: The melody's [singing] [moves like he's riding a camel] What's really cool, I do the obligatory riding of the camel. They love that piece.

Greg: All right, I'll check it out.

about literature

Wednesday, 9:08 6/7 Band Rehearsal

observational learning

Blue

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Red

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Professional Environment

They're going to look at some of the music

Luke: What did you tell me your favorite piece was? The train one? I know there's a tough part in that; let's go over some of it. [Pauses] Have you played at all yet this morning? (she shakes her head) ok, let's start off with a G, nice and soft.

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A university professor is watching the rehearsal

[The other band director keeps mentioning how she hasn't conducted in 3 years because she had kids – wonder how this helps her in getting back into the swing of things?]

The composition teacher leaves, Luke walks around the trumpet section.

Collaboration for the support of a struggling student

observational learning

experiential learning

*Blue
Purple*

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