

THE FAMILY ORCHESTRA PROJECT: EXAMINING ADULT-CHILD BONDING
DURING ADOLESCENCE THROUGH GROUP MUSIC MAKING

by

Gabrielle Halko

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SIGNED: Gabrielle Halko

APPROVAL BY THESIS DIRECTOR

This thesis has been approved on the date shown below:

Tami J. Draves
Professor of Music Education

December 17, 2014
Date

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my daughter Simone Grace

You are the song of my heart

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this multiple case study was to examine the experiences of adolescent students and their adult relatives participating in The Family Orchestra Project, a program designed to promote family bonding through shared musical study and performance. Participants of this study were four adult-child dyads. Data collected included field notes, a questionnaire, a focus group interview, adult-child pair interviews, audio recordings, written prompts, and a video recording. Five cross-case themes emerged during coding and data analysis: Role Reversal, Patience, Practice, Bonding, and Group Music Making. The findings of the study reveal that a shared music making experience such as The Family Orchestra Project can facilitate adult-child bonding and communication during early adolescence while also challenging the individuals to grow as they assume nontraditional roles in their relationship. Implications for practice in the music education of adolescents are discussed and recommendations for future research are provided in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

First Rehearsal of the Family Orchestra Project

Four pairs of chairs plus an accompanying stand for each were carefully placed in a small semi-circle facing my classroom white board. I had written “Welcome to the Family Orchestra Project!” in a large, friendly font on the board and straightened up the remains of the teaching day that had ended only a few hours before – miscellaneous orphaned papers were stacked and wayward instrument cases returned to their proper storage racks. The music room of Sanderson Middle School was big with a terraced floor and gray, stained carpeting that was nearly threadbare in many places due to the hundreds of students who had tread over it through the years. The ensemble I was expecting that first night of the Family Orchestra Project (FOP) would hardly fill the main floor of the room, but my hopes were high that all eight chairs would soon be occupied.

Admittedly nervous about the task I was undertaking, I breathed a sigh of relief when my trusty colleague and research assistant Ms. Walsh walked through the door. Together we surveyed the room and the instruments we had available for our participants to borrow. I chatted with her about our plan for the evening and we waited anxiously for the pairs to arrive.

Fortunately we did not have to wait too long. First to arrive were a father-son pair who would be learning bass together. Immediately my mood lifted as we welcomed them to our first FOP rehearsal and I led them to the back storage room where their

basses were housed. In what would become our weekly ritual, this pair would arrive about ten minutes early while the three remaining pairs would trickle in over the next thirty minutes. Much to my relief, however, tonight all four adult-child pairs (father-son, mother-son, aunt-niece, mother-daughter) arrived almost on time and were outfitted with instruments, seated and working together within fifteen minutes.

Once everyone was situated, the student participants quietly introduced themselves and the adults they had invited to participate in the Family Orchestra Project. Then with my guidance and the assistance of Ms. Walsh, the students jumped right into teaching the adults how to hold their instruments and bows. Gradually, we practiced counting simple quarter note and quarter rest rhythms, plucking and bowing open strings and we even tackled the D Major scale. As I surveyed the scene of students tentatively sharing their musical knowledge with their relatives that evening I was struck by two observations: (a) In spite of the wide range of musical abilities in the group, all pairs were actively engaged in the learning process and (b) I was going to learn just as much from the FOP experience as my participants!

Research within music education that explores the dyad relationship between parent and child has been dominated by early childhood musical experiences. Existing studies cover such topics as maternal bonding with infants through song (Byrn & Hourigan, 2010; Creighton, 2011), musical interactions between fathers and infants (O'Neill, Trainor, & Trehub, 2001), musical parenting and singing within families with young children (Custodero, 2006; Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2003), facilitated musical

play between preschool children and their parents (Berger & Cooper, 2003; Cooper & Cardany, 2008), the effects of parent-child group music activities on toddler development (Standley, Walworth & Nguyen, 2009; Walworth, 2009), the role of parental influence and home environment on musical aptitude and ability as demonstrated by elementary students (Brand, 1986), and the role of parents in the music education of young beginning instrumentalists (Bushong, 2005; Davidson, Sloboda & Howe, 1995/1996; McPherson & Davidson, 2002). A child's first nine years are considered the most critical for musical development (Gordon, 1997), so consequently this period receives special attention from researchers.

Comparatively fewer studies in music education have involved parents and their adolescent children during secondary school. Researchers have explored the impact of parental involvement, attitudes, and musical background on children's musical cognition and performance outcomes in the secondary grades (Zdzinski, 1992; Zdzinski, 1996), practice habits (Berg & Austin, 2006), and adolescent attitudes towards learning and studying music including the decision to persist in music lessons (Davidson, Sloboda, & Howe, 1995/1996; Vispoel & Austin, 1998; Sichivitsa, 2004). The results of these studies have varied in their conclusions regarding the significance of parental factors on adolescent music learning. There remains a need for additional research to further understand the effects of family dynamics and parental influence on the adolescent experience of music learning, particularly using qualitative methodology.

Rationale for Study

A gap in music education literature persists in regard to the role music-making may play in facilitating family bonding with early adolescent-aged (11-14 years) children. Early childhood research in music education focuses primarily on the parental role of fostering a rich musical environment so that infants (0-12 months), toddlers (1-2 years), pre-school children (3-4 years) and elementary (5-10 years) students may develop their musical skills to the fullest extent. Furthermore, the potential for parent-child bonding through shared musical experiences during early childhood has been given substantial attention. Researchers who have studied adolescents have investigated the influence parents may possess in shaping a young person's trajectory in studying music, but the territory of shared music-making experiences as a vehicle for family bonding during adolescence remains unexplored.

Purpose and Problems

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to examine the experiences of adolescent students and their adult relatives participating in The Family Orchestra Project. The Family Orchestra Project was designed to promote family bonding through shared musical study and performance. I explored the following research questions:

1. How does participation in a common musical activity influence adult-child communication and bonding during adolescence?
2. How do the adolescents describe the experience of teaching their adult family member?

3. What are the main benefits and challenges of The Family Orchestra Project as identified by the participants and instructor?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MUSIC RESEARCH WITH PARENT-CHILD FOCI

In the following chapter, I review literature related to early childhood musical experiences and elementary music learning. Studies regarding musical interactions between parents and children during infancy and preschool are addressed first. These research topics include parent-child bonding through singing and other musical interactions in the home environment (Byrn & Hourigan, 2010; Custodero and Johnson-Green, 2003; Custodero, 2006) and music programs designed to facilitate musical interactions between parents and infants, toddlers and preschool-age children in small group settings (Standley, Walworth, & Nguyen, 2009; Walworth, 2009; Berger & Cooper, 2003; de Grätzer, 1999). Research topics at the elementary level of music learning in grades K-6 are then addressed. These include the effects of the home environment and parental influence on a child's musical aptitude and ability and the motivation to learn and practice music (Brand, 1986; McPherson & Davidson, 2002; Bushong, 2005). A summary of the research concludes the chapter.

Parent-Child Musical Interactions during Infancy and Preschool

Music often plays a significant role in the lives of infants and their parents. The mother-child relationship and bonding through song have been of particular interest to researchers. Byrn and Hourigan (2010) conducted a qualitative comparative case study and examined the musical interactions of five mothers and their infants (aged 4-12 months) in each pair's home setting. The researchers investigated which musical activities the pairs naturally incorporated within daily life (i.e. singing, movement, and

musical play) and the importance of early childhood musical experiences in the home as reported by the mothers. The mothers, having musical backgrounds, made conscious efforts to include music activities in their daily routines to promote learning and development. They also identified music as an important bonding tool. The mothers “used music to serve a purpose because it appeared to be an effective tool in building solid relationships” (p. 75). Based on the authors’ findings it appeared the mothers’ positive musical experiences contributed to their desire to create a musical home environment for their children, one in which they hoped to promote learning, development, and family bonding.

Possessing a personal musical history may be a key factor in whether parents choose to incorporate music in their parenting. In a survey of parents of infants ages 4-6 months ($N = 2,250$), Custodero and Johnson-Green (2003) reported that parents’ musical background impacted their tendency to musically parent their children: “Parents with specific music educational experiences as well as memories of being parented musically were much more likely to sing and play music with their infants than those without those experiences” (p. 109). They also observed that parents with personal musical experiences of playing an instrument or singing in a choir felt more comfortable singing made-up songs as well as lullabies and popular songs to their infants.

For parents of toddlers and preschool age children, singing can be an important ritual of family life: accompanying daily routines, making important occasions more meaningful, preserving family traditions and starting new ones, as a teaching tool, and as a means for fun, spontaneous collaboration between parent and child (Custodero, 2006).

Custodero studied the singing practices of ten families with young children through qualitative research. She discovered that while each family's backgrounds and routines were unique, music served as a consistent form of communication and connection between parents and children in the categories of Routines, Traditions, and Play (p. 40).

In addition to family musical interaction, group music programs that facilitate parent-child interaction and promote infant/toddler development have also been the focus of recent research. Cognitive, social, and musical effects emerged as a result of music interaction among parents and children. The effects of regularly attended group music sessions included cognitive and socialization gains for both premature and full-term infants, in addition to opportunities for parents to positively engage with their children (Standley, Walworth, & Nguyen, 2009; Walworth, 2009). Preschool age children and their parents also may experience benefits from facilitated parent-child music programs. Berger and Cooper (2003) conducted a qualitative case study of preschool children (ages 2-5) and their parents who participated in a ten-week music education program. The children were observed playing alone and with others (their parents and fellow participants) in both free and structured musical play. Three themes emerged: unfinished play, extinguishing play, and enhancing play.

Observations of free musical play in this study revealed how adults, through behavior and attitude, promoted free musical play. Children's musical play was enhanced when adults refrained from correcting children's nontraditional playing during free musical play and when adults valued children's play through descriptive and encouraging comments. (p. 162)

The adult presence directly influenced, both positively and negatively, how the children made sense of the musical environment surrounding them.

de Grätzer (1999) designed a music education program for three-year olds and their parents in Buenos Aires. The pairs met for a weekly one-hour music class during a four-month period. Class size was limited to 6-9 children and their accompanying adults. The researcher's initial intention of providing a shared musical activity for parents and children evolved into an opportunity for interpersonal connection beyond music: "Communication became one of the most important – although underlying aims – of this programme" (p. 51). Additionally, through follow-up surveys, parent participants reported several positive outcomes: parent-child bonding, improved communication, more time spent together, and more singing and shared musical activity at home.

Parental Influence on Music Learning in Grades K-6

At the elementary level, research topics shift from parent-child bonding through music to an examination of how home musical environments and parental influence may affect a child's musical aptitude, ability and motivation. Brand (1986) studied the relationship between the home environment of second-grade students ($N = 116$) and their tonal and rhythmic perception. Data collection tools included the Gordon Primary Measures of Music Audiation (PMMA) and the Musical Achievement Assessment Form (MAAF). Music teachers' assessment of each student via MAAF included observations and informal and formal evaluations in four areas: musical knowledge, skill in performance, music reading, and music initiative (p. 115). Parents of the children used a self-reporting measure called the Home Musical Environment Scale (HOMES) to

describe “four dimensions of home musical environment: (a) parents' attitude toward music and musical involvement with child; (b) parental concert attendance; (c) parent-child ownership and use of record/tape player, records, tapes; and (d) parent plays a musical instrument” (Brand, 1986, p.115). Brand found that the HOMES scores did not significantly correlate to musical aptitude as measured by the PMMA, but there existed a strong relationship between some factors of the home environment and musical achievement as measured by the MAAF.

An important finding in this study is that not all home musical environmental variables are related in the same degree to musical achievement. The strongest relationship found was between musical achievement and overall parental attitudes toward music and musical involvement with the child....Based on the results of this study, the fact that a parent had played or presently plays a music instrument is not related to a child's music achievement. (p.118)

Brand suggested a parent's attitude toward music affected the way in which one interacts musically with one's children at home. Thus, he concluded, that parental attitude and the musical interactions between the parent and child were far more important contributors to a child's musical achievement than whether or not a parent played a music instrument or was musically trained (Brand, 1986).

During instrumental learning, parents play an important supporting role. In much the same way as children need a parental guide through school to encourage responsibility with homework assignments and learning exam material, most young instrumentalists need a constant adult presence encouraging them to maintain a consistent

practice routine (McPherson & Davidson, 2002). McPherson and Davidson (2002) studied the mother-child dynamic for 7-9 year old beginning woodwind and brass students ($N = 157$) and found young students needed parental support when establishing a practice routine during the first year of learning a new instrument. The researchers learned that the participating mothers had such an intuitive knowledge of their children that many “were able to make judgments about whether or not their child would practice regularly before they began instruction” (p. 151). The mothers adjusted both their frequency of reminders to practice and the approach to supervising practice sessions based on the child’s attitude and self-motivation as the novelty of learning an instrument waned. While children viewed practicing their instruments equal in importance to homework, the majority needed continual reminders by their mothers to do so.

Bushong (2005) created the Parent Instrument Program (PIP) to train adults how to play the same musical instruments their children were learning in hopes of promoting musical interaction and support for students at home and ultimately improving retention rates. Bushong explored the factors that motivated some beginning band students in grades 4-6 to persist in music lessons after the first year of playing while others did not, particularly the impact of parental involvement. Students met for a 30-minute music class each week during school. Parents who chose to participate in PIP met for a weekly 60-minute music class to learn similar music lessons and receive information about practice strategies and troubleshooting ideas to aid their children’s home practice. Data collection tools included field notes, a researcher-designed questionnaire, and individual interviews with 35 band students and their parents. An interesting result of the study was that 70%

of the students with parents in PIP chose to continue playing their instruments beyond year one whereas only 27% of the other students continued their instrumental studies. Bushong noted: “Parental help comes in many forms – providing praise, providing encouragement, and providing musical knowledge – but parents might be able to offer more help if they are given the opportunity to learn how” (pp. 158-159). Varied and successful practice strategies taught by the child’s music teacher and then supported by the parents at home may be a contributing factor in fostering self-motivation in young musicians and inspiring them to persevere in their music studies (Bushong, 2005).

Summary

Numerous researchers examined the benefits of musical interactions between parents and children during early childhood. Bonding can occur between a parent and an infant through activities such as singing, movement, and musical play. However, Byrn and Hourigan (2010) and Custodero and Johnson-Green (2003) discovered that parents who have a background in music, or remember being “musically parented” as children, may feel more comfortable incorporating music into their parenting routine than those not musically inclined. Custodero (2006) found that musical interactions continue to play an important role in the home lives of families with toddlers and preschool-age children. Music programs designed to promote parent-child interactions in a small group setting may have multiple benefits for infants, toddlers and preschool-age children: parent-child bonding, cognitive and socialization development, and opportunities for musical exploration that may be transferred to the home (Standley, Walworth, & Nguyen, 2009; Walworth, 2009; Berger & Cooper, 2003; de Grätzer, 1999).

As children enter elementary school, music researchers' interests appear to change to how home environments and parental influence may affect a child's musical aptitude, ability and motivation to study and practice an instrument. Brand (1986) discovered that a parent's overall attitude towards music learning and the musical interactions between parent and child influenced the child's musical achievement more than a parent's level of musicianship. McPherson and Davidson (2002) learned that beginning instrumentalists benefited from the supportive presence of a parent when establishing their home practice routine. Bushong (2005) found beginning instrumentalists were more likely to persevere in their musical studies if they had learned various practice strategies at school that could be reinforced by a knowledgeable parent at home. Bushong created the Parent Instrument Program (PIP) to train adults how to play the same musical instruments their children were learning in hopes of promoting musical interaction, student home practice support, and improving retention rates. In all of these studies, parents substantially influenced the musical experiences of their children.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW OF SECONDARY SCHOOL AND ADOLESCENT MUSIC RESEARCH WITH PARENT-CHILD FOCI

Music education researchers examining students at the secondary level have reached varying conclusions about how parental involvement and support influenced adolescent musicians in secondary school. In this chapter, I review literature on the following research topics: the influence of parental support on the adolescent and pre-adolescent decision to persist in music education (Davidson, Sloboda, & Howe, 1995/1996; Sichivitsa, 2004); the effect of parental attitude towards music on the development of a child's musical self-concept (Vispoel & Austin, 1998; Sichivitsa, 2004); and the relationship of parental involvement to musical aptitude, musical achievement and performance achievement (Zdzinski, 1992; Zdzinski, 1996). At the conclusion of the chapter, I summarize the research and present the need for this study.

Parental Involvement during Middle and High School

In a study with participants ages 8-18, Davidson, Sloboda, and Howe (1995/1996) determined that young musicians who persisted in learning their instruments over time had significant parental support. The young musicians' initial enthusiasm to play an instrument was bolstered by the extrinsic motivation of parental interest, which laid the foundation for intrinsic motivation. An important finding was that parents needed not be proficient musicians to have had a salient impact on their child's music education:

The results reported here support that family involvement is vital to child progress. It is important, therefore, that parents understand that it is their

commitment to assist their child that is more important than a high level of musical competence (p. 44).

Consistent parental support is a crucial factor in fostering a positive self-concept in young musicians and forming positive habits in music making. However, measuring parental impact on secondary students' musical aptitude and achievement has proven to be more challenging.

Zdzinski (1992) studied parental involvement (as reported by middle school students) and its relationship to musical aptitude, musical achievement, and performance achievement and reported mixed results. Brass and woodwind musicians ($N = 113$) in grades 6-8 completed the Parental Involvement Measure (PIM), a Likert-scale survey that gauged their perceptions of their parents' involvement with various aspects of music learning. Students were then evaluated using portions of Gordon's Music Aptitude Profile (MAP), Colwell's Musical Achievement Tests (MAT) and the Watkins-Farnum Performance Scale (WFPS). Zdzinski reported statistically significant results from MANOVA analyses were found a statistically significant, but that a weak relationship existed between musical achievement and parental involvement (p. 122). Zdzinski concluded the following:

For middle school instrumental music students, other factors such as teacher influences, music aptitude, grade level, and gender seem to have stronger relationships to musical achievement than parental involvement. Although parental involvement may enhance musical achievement more successfully at

earlier ages, parents should be encouraged to be involved with their children at all levels. (p. 122)

Zdzinski (1996) expanded his research of parental involvement with young instrumentalists in a study of 406 woodwind, brass and percussion players in grades 4-12. Students were assessed for musical achievement using Colwell's Musical Achievement Tests (MAT) and the Iowa Test for Music Literacy (ITML), for performance achievement using Watkins-Farnum Performance Scale (WFPS) and the Performance Rating Scale Supplement (PRSS), and for musical aptitude using Gordon's Music Aptitude Profile (MAP). Participants were asked to rate parent involvement using the Parental Involvement Measure (PIM). New to this study was the addition of measures to assess affective outcomes including the Zorn (1969) Music Attitude Inventory (MAI), the Asmus Motivational Factors measure (AMF) and the Asmus Magnitude of Motivation measure (AMM) (p. 37). Zdzinski found the effect of parental involvement varied greatly by focus area and grade-level. For students at the secondary level, in particular those in senior high school, parental involvement was significantly related to students' affective outcomes. Only at the elementary school level was parental involvement significantly related to students' performance and cognitive musical outcomes.

Parental Influence on Adolescent Self-Concepts towards Musical Ability

Vispoel and Austin (1998) found that two familial factors may impact an adolescent child's music experience: the value parents place on music and how parents foster that attitude within the family. Their study participants were 153 seventh grade students who completed two to three years of private instrumental music study and were

enrolled in classroom music. Using a questionnaire that included items about music self-concept and attributional beliefs about success and failure in music and standardized music achievement tests, the researchers discovered that “students who perceive that they have low ability and lack a history of family involvement in music may have particularly fatalistic expectations about their ability to succeed in music that culminate in learned helplessness” (p. 41). If an adolescent believed music ability is an inherited trait and there were no musicians or music enthusiasts in the family, and musical activities were not endorsed outright, an individual may have developed a low self-concept of his/her musical abilities. This, in turn, may result in or be related to lower achievement in music classes. Conversely, higher-achieving students with positive self-concepts attributed their success in music to ability and family background.

Sichivitsa (2004) found that parental influence played a key role in the development of pre-adolescent and early adolescent students’ self-concepts in music. Ninety-nine music students in grades 4-6 completed the researcher-designed Music Participation Survey to measure the effects of multiple influences on their intentions to continue their music education beyond elementary school. Sichivitsa indicated that students generally developed a higher self-concept of musical ability when their parents were also involved in music and provided consistent support of their musical endeavors. However, the number one predictor of a student’s decision to persist in music education was the personal value they placed on music (p. 35). Sichivitsa noted that while musical parents tended to provide their children more music training opportunities, “children who show independent interest in music may motivate their parents to participate in musical

activities with them” (p. 36). Whether parent or child initiated, families who possessed an interest in music had the potential to connect with one another in a unique way.

Summary

Researchers have arrived at various conclusions regarding how parental support and involvement during adolescence and pre-adolescence impacted music learning. Davidson, Sloboda, and Howe (1995/1996) determined parental involvement was a key factor in a young musician’s decision to persist in music, but parents need not be proficient musicians themselves. Sichivitsa (2004) found parental support and family involvement in music to positively impact self-concepts of musical ability, but concluded the primary predictor of a pre-adolescent’s decision to continue musical study into secondary school was the individual value placed on music. Vispoel & Austin (1998) discovered that parental attitudes toward music learning and the family’s musical background may significantly affect the development of an adolescent’s positive or negative self-concept of musical ability and attributional beliefs towards musical success and failure. Zdzinski (1992) found a statistically significant, yet weak, relationship between parental involvement (as reported by middle school students) and musical achievement of early adolescent students, but noted that other factors such as music aptitude, grade level and teachers may have a greater impact on musical achievement. Zdzinski expanded his research in 1996 to include instrumental students in grades 4-12 and found parental involvement had a high and significant impact on performance and cognitive outcomes at the elementary level whereas parental involvement significantly contributed to students’ affective outcomes largely at the high school level.

None of the aforementioned researchers assessed the potential bonding that may occur between adolescents and their adult family members through a shared experience of group music making. Therefore a need remains in the field of music education to further explore this aspect of parental influence and family bonding in the musical lives of adolescents, particularly through qualitative analysis. As Creswell (2007) states, “Besides dialogue and understanding, a qualitative study may fill a void in existing literature, establish a new line of thinking, or assess an issue with an understudied group or population” (p. 102). Parental involvement in a child’s music education can be expressed in many ways, but The Family Orchestra Project, the forum for this multiple case study, provided multiple opportunities for participating adults to experience music learning *alongside* their adolescent relative. The qualitative methodology of my study enables me to share, in detailed narrative form, the stories of related individuals who chose to connect with one another through playing music.

CHAPTER 4

THE FAMILY ORCHESTRA PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Design

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to examine the experiences of adolescent students and their adult relatives participating in The Family Orchestra Project, a program designed to promote family bonding through shared musical study and performance. In addition to enabling myself to study adult-child dyads in a musical research setting, I created this program to provide my middle school orchestra students the opportunity to share their love of music and instrumental playing skills with an adult relative in a safe, comfortable learning environment. My active role in the project was to teach small group lessons tailored to fit the needs of the study participants and to help the pairs troubleshoot musical challenges, but my overarching responsibility was to empower my students to become teachers for the adult relative they had chosen to participate with them in The Family Orchestra Project (also referred to as FOP throughout this paper). I explored the following research questions:

1. How does participation in a common musical activity influence adult-child communication and bonding during adolescence?
2. How do the adolescents describe the experience of teaching their adult family member?
3. What are the main benefits and challenges of The Family Orchestra Project as identified by the participants and instructor?

FOP ran from September-December 2013 for eleven weeks, during which time data were collected. Rehearsals were 1.5 hours in length every Tuesday, with two exceptions: one rehearsal was canceled due to a district governing board meeting at which budget cuts being addressed included music programs and another was shortened to one hour due to a press conference regarding the same topic.

Participants

Adolescence “may be roughly divided into three stages: early adolescence, generally ages eleven to fourteen; middle adolescence, ages fifteen to seventeen; and late adolescence, ages eighteen to twenty-one (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2014).” For this study, I narrowed my research focus to early adolescence to correspond with typical middle-school-aged children, the population that I teach.

Participants were recruited from a large southwestern school district in which 81.6% of the students were Hispanic and 76.7% of the student population was eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (SUSD Student Demographics, 2013-14). Students in grades 7-8, who were current members of their school orchestra program, had the opportunity to invite an adult relative to join FOP with them. The adult was their mom, dad, step-parent, aunt, uncle or grandparent. The invited adult did not need to have any prior musical experience, just a willingness to learn a bowed string instrument and a desire to interact with their adolescent relative in a school setting and at home. Study recruitment fliers were distributed at two middle school sites to all 124 of my students in grades 7-8 along with an Institutional Review Board (IRB)-approved and scripted verbal invitation to consider inviting an adult to attend the advertised informational meeting with them. I

chose to disperse the FOP recruitment materials to the children, and not directly to their parents, because having courage to invite a relative to participate in FOP would be the child's first step toward investing in the research process. It would be indicative of their self-motivation and willingness to communicate with an adult. Per IRB requirements, it was clearly communicated to all students during recruitment that participation in FOP would not affect their grade in class. Interested pairs attended an informational meeting with my thesis advisor to avoid coercion and to receive the formal consent/assent documents. Ultimately four students plus their adult relatives became participants of the FOP study for a total of eight musicians: one father/son pair, one mother/son pair, one mother/daughter pair and one aunt/niece pair. Participants chose pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. I also recruited a fellow music teacher to participate as a FOP co-instructor and research assistant.

Analysis Procedures

“Case study data collection involves a wide array of procedures as the researcher builds an in-depth picture of the case” (Creswell, 2007, p. 132). Thus data from FOP included field notes, a questionnaire, interviews, audio recordings, written prompts and responses, and a video recording of a mini-concert held during the final meeting of the study. I took detailed field notes following each FOP weekly rehearsal. Observations of the pairs' interactions, as well as musical progress and evident challenges, were noted. I also took regular field notes regarding my own experience as a FOP instructor and facilitator. A researcher-created Initial Questionnaire for Participants was administered at the first rehearsal to assess participants' prior musical knowledge and experiences. The

questionnaire also included items that addressed family dynamics: how much time the adult and child spend together on a weekly basis; their favorite activities to do together; and how they would rate their current level of communication and satisfaction with their regular interactions. Finally, the questionnaire included items asking what motivated the pair to become members of FOP, what they anticipated the greatest participation benefit would be and what aspects of FOP they thought would be most challenging. Participants were also asked to complete written prompts during the final ten minutes of rehearsal for six of the eleven weeks of FOP. The prompts regarded what they learned that week, the challenges they faced, the best thing that happened that week, and what they hoped for the upcoming week of learning.

To ensure appropriate participant protection according to IRB regulations, my research assistant conducted the interviews. The FOP participants were interviewed in two contexts: one focus group interview with student participants and two separate interviews with each adult/child pair. The student focus group interview occurred during the fourth week of the study and the adult/child interviews took place at the study's mid-point and end. Interviews were audio recorded for transcription purposes using a Tascam DR-03 recorder. Audio recordings of FOP rehearsals, including the adult/child pairs practicing together, were collected as data during the final two weeks of the study. Per IRB requirements, all interview recordings and transcripts were inaccessible to me until final semester grades for my students had been posted.

Once FOP ended and semester grades were posted, I immersed myself in the data over the course of several months. Data assessment included the following: listening to

the participant interviews; transcribing and reading transcripts of the interviews; reviewing field notes; reading the participants' written responses; listening to recordings of the pairs making music together; and watching the video recording of our culminating mini-performance. Data were then analyzed and coded based on emerging patterns and trends from participant interviews and written responses, as well as my field observations. In-vivo codes were derived from the participants' key words to describe their FOP experiences, such as patience and time together. Other internal codes were based on my interpretation of the participants' interview responses and my field notes of interactions during rehearsals. These included the desire for empathy, acquired understanding and appreciation of partner's journey, and group dynamics. External codes were applied to the data based on my research questions and the literature review. Examples of coding included bonding, role reversal (adult's perspective and child's perspective), and teacher-role/teaching strategies. Less important codes were later dropped as focus was directed to recurrent codes and emergent themes. Ultimately, five cross-case themes were identified: Role Reversal, Patience, Practice, Bonding, and Group Music Making. The deductive theme of Role Reversal will be addressed in Chapter Five following the participant profiles and their motivations for joining FOP. In Chapter Six I will discuss the challenges and benefits faced by the participants. The challenges include the inductive themes of Patience and Practice, while the benefits include the deductive theme of Bonding and the inductive theme of Group Music Making.

Trustworthiness

I established trustworthiness through three methods: data triangulation, peer review, and member checking. Data triangulation of my field notes, the participants' written prompts and the interview transcripts allowed me to search for confirming and disconfirming evidence and affirmed the coding results. Two music educators who had experience with qualitative research and experience working in the public school setting reviewed my coding and confirmed it accurately reflected the data collected. Participants were given a hard copy and an electronic copy of their interview transcripts to read and respond with corrections if necessary. No changes were requested following member checking.

Researcher Lens

After eight years of working with adolescent students in the public school setting, I became interested in fostering connections between my students and their adult family members through the forum of group music making. I sought an opportunity to promote music education in our community through experiential learning. I also believed that students reinforced their own musical knowledge by sharing it with others, and therefore I designed FOP as a program that would be student-driven.

I was the teacher of all of the student participants of FOP during the time of the study. Three of the student participants were entering their second school year as my pupils. The fourth student participant was entering his fourth year as my pupil. Thus, I was already aware of their basic level of musicianship before the study started. I also knew two of the adult participants prior to their participation in the study. One adult

became familiar with me through the involvement of both of her children in my school orchestra program. A second adult participant had interacted with me at his child's orchestra performances. I was not aware of their musical backgrounds prior to the study nor did I speak to them about FOP until after they attended the informational meeting and consented to participate in the study.

In the following chapters, I introduce each adult-child pair and discuss the five emergent cross-case themes of the study: Role Reversal, Patience, Practice, Bonding, and Group Music Making. In the final chapter, I summarize the findings of the study, organized by my original research questions. I also discuss implications for practice and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 5

THE FAMILY ORCHESTRA PROJECT PARTICIPANT PROFILES

In this chapter, I introduce each pair of participants. Detailed descriptions of the individuals and each person's musical background are provided. I also present evidence of what the primary motivations were for each participant to join FOP. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the first cross-case theme of Role Reversal, first from the adolescent perspective and then delineated by each pair's experience.

Cases

Bruce & Bo: Father-Son Pair

Bo and his dad Bruce jumped right into playing, with Bo on the tune and his dad on the bass line. Bruce is at the point where he doesn't need much tutoring from his son except to mark in some fingerings. He is comfortable reading basic rhythms and understands the mechanics of playing his bass. Father and son are really enjoying themselves, even moving and grooving a bit while they play, giggling and having fun. Bo to Bruce: "Hey Dad! After this should we see if they (the other pair) want to put it all together?" (Field Notes, Sixth Rehearsal, 11-5-13)

Bruce (Father) had a shaved head, light green eyes, a stubbly face, and was muscular with many tattoos on his arms. A typical outfit for Bruce was a black t-shirt with a logo, black track pants with three white stripes down the sides, and his white Asics running shoes. Bo (Son) was in the eighth grade. He had short brown hair, big brown eyes with long eyelashes, fair skin with dimples when he smiled, and was of average stature for his age. A typical outfit for Bo was a gray striped t-shirt, black casual shorts with white stripes down the sides, ankle socks, and Vans slip-on deck shoes.

Bruce did not have any formal musical training growing up, but he dabbled in teaching himself guitar and electric bass. He learned music by ear and was very interested in learning to read musical notation during FOP. Bruce had an extroverted personality. He could strike up a conversation with anybody and he liked to joke around. He was the “class clown” of FOP, yet he was also extremely perceptive and intelligent. He quickly learned musical concepts and often asked insightful questions regarding music theory and playing technique. Due to his FOP experience, he reported he understood how to count rhythms and had a grasp of note-reading but he still wanted to improve his musical literacy.

Bo was more introverted than his dad Bruce. He could be talkative and friendly, but was notably more reserved. Bo was an excellent young musician; he was proficient at reading music and self-motivated. Bo played cello in his school orchestra, but decided to learn bass for FOP because he knew it would interest his father more. Bo believed his dad wanted to learn more about music and he figured that learning bass together would be beneficial to them both: Bo wanted to learn bass in order to join the school jazz band and his dad would learn skills that could be transferred to the electric bass. Thus, Bo had a unique FOP experience in that he was both a fellow bass student with his dad as well as his dad’s teacher of musical concepts. I allowed this for Bo knowing he already read bass clef and that the playing positions for cello and bass are quite similar. I also trusted that he would quickly pick up the new instrument.

Bruce was recovering from leg surgery and thus was off of work for the first 7-8 weeks of FOP. This opening in his personal schedule enabled him to make a commitment

to the study. There was a marked difference in his energy level and a drop in communication between him and his son once he went back to work, but he still remained committed to the FOP experience. Bruce and his son Bo were the only pair of participants who attended every FOP rehearsal and accepted the invitation to speak to the district's governing board about the importance of music education when FOP rehearsal was canceled during the fifth week of the study. Bruce also wrote me a heartfelt 'thank you' note following the conclusion of FOP.

In response to the open-ended questions on the Initial Questionnaire for Participants, Bo anticipated that the greatest benefit of being a member of FOP would be getting to play in an orchestra concert with his dad. Bruce indicated that bonding with his son would be the greatest benefit. Both Bo and Bruce anticipated that learning a new instrument would be the greatest challenge they would face in FOP.

Nancy & Billy: Mother-Son Pair

Billy and his mom Nancy spend a lot of time reviewing the harmony part on violin. Nancy needs much more guidance and they seem to appreciate some intervention from Ms. Walsh. She gives them some strategies to try: Billy pointing to the notes while his mom plays; saying "rest" while they play together; Ms. Walsh coaches Nancy about gluing her eyes to the music and trusting that the bow knows what to do because it is already on the right string; marking "1" when the fingering changes to B (otherwise it is open A the entire time). Nancy and Billy appear most comfortable when Ms. Walsh plays along. The pair responds well to verbal encouragement. Still quiet in his approach, Billy is starting to explain things more confidently to his mom. Nancy is demonstrating more understanding of rhythmic concepts. While playing violin is definitely a challenge for her, she sticks with the task at hand and asks her son, "Are you ready to try it again?" (Field Notes, Sixth Rehearsal, 11-5-13)

Nancy (Mother) had long, wavy reddish-brown hair and big, light brown eyes. For the final weeks of FOP she wore manicured fake nails from her daughter's quinceañera for which her son chided her (*"Those nails!"*). A quinceañera is a special celebration of a girl's fifteenth birthday – considered her passage into womanhood in Mexican culture – and the event is often as extravagant as a wedding. A typical outfit for Nancy was a gray collared t-shirt, blue jeans, and brown flip flops. Billy (Son) was in the seventh grade. He was tall and lanky with shaggy dark brown hair, big brown eyes, and black-framed glasses. He sat with a nice playing position, was highly attentive to his mom's needs, and tended to be soft spoken. A typical outfit for Billy would be a white t-shirt with black jeans and black, blue, and white Nike high-top sneakers.

Nancy had no musical background and did not know how to read music, but she was intrigued by the possibility of learning to play the violin like her two eldest children. She struggled with note reading throughout FOP, but made progress in rhythm reading. She would sometimes chew gum while she played her violin during rehearsal. Nancy's son Billy was a strong violinist and, while an introvert, was considered to be a leader of his school orchestra. Billy was inspired by his older sister to learn violin. Both siblings were also very involved in mariachi. He wanted to share his love of music with his mother, but also had an underlying desire for her to understand how much work it took to become a good musician.

Nancy worked full time in addition to being a mother of three during the course of the study. She was also planning her fifteen year-old daughter's quinceañera, a huge undertaking that was the cause of some of the pair's absences during the study. Her eyes

often betrayed her level of exhaustion as she tried to remain committed to FOP for her son Billy, and to organize the many details of her daughter's quinceañera, while also balancing work and her household responsibilities. The party was held in mid-November, just a few weeks before the end of FOP. Nancy's energy level increased considerably after the event.

In response to the open-ended questions on the Initial Questionnaire for Participants, Billy wrote that the greatest benefit of being a member of FOP would be teaching his mom to do what he does, but he also anticipated that teaching her to have a good bow hold and good position with the violin would be his greatest FOP challenge. Nancy also felt that the musical aspects of FOP would be her greatest challenge, especially understanding and learning how to read music. She identified the opportunity to bond with her son as the greatest potential benefit of FOP.

Melitza & Arianna: Mother-Daughter Pair

Melitza and her daughter Arianna worked together on the violin back-up (harmony) part for "Cripple Creek". Later Arianna switched to the tune.

Melitza: "I think I got lost right there."

Arianna: "Mom! What are you doing? You're on the wrong string!!"

They practice together again, reviewing the harmony part with pizzicato, saying "rest" aloud to help them along. Arianna gets exasperated frequently (approximately every 10-15 seconds).

Arianna: "No you rested too long."

She tries pointing to the music (rather than playing along) while her mom Melitza plays. It definitely seems to help.

Although bouts of impatience from the daughter are still pervasive, this pair demonstrated significant progress in working together as a team this week. Not once did Arianna seek my intervention with explaining or demonstrating the music to her mom. (Field Notes, Seventh Rehearsal, 11-12-13)

Melitza (Mother) had long, straight brown hair with golden highlights and brown eyes with brown-framed glasses. She was near-sighted which caused an issue with her playing mechanics. A typical outfit for Melitza was her work uniform of a green collared shirt and black jeans plus her black Converse sneakers and silver bracelets. Arianna (Daughter) was in the seventh grade. She often wore her long brown hair pulled back in a ponytail and had brown eyes. Usually she came to FOP after cheer practice so she did not have time to change out of her school uniform clothes. A typical outfit for Arianna was a white collared t-shirt, black pants, and her gray cardigan plus bright orange ankle socks and black Converse sneakers (identical to her mom's shoes).

Melitza did not have an instrumental music background, but did participate in choir during grade school. She did not know how to read music and struggled with that skill throughout FOP. She had more than one child who knew how to play violin; thus, was intrigued to give it a try herself. Due to some vision issues, Melitza struggled with the mechanics of playing the violin, such as maintaining bow contact with just one string at a time. Her daughter Arianna was a determined violinist with a strong personality. She was the most extroverted child participant in the study. Arianna was very excited about the chance to be in the teacher-role for her mom. She also took pride in participating in a unique family orchestra program.

Melitza worked full-time in addition to being a mother of four during FOP. Divorced, she had joint custody of her children and had to make special arrangements for her and Arianna to participate in FOP on Tuesday nights. The two households for Arianna made it more challenging for the pair to find time to practice together.

In response to the open-ended questions on the Initial Questionnaire for Participants, Arianna noted the benefit of being in one of the few family orchestra projects in existence. Melitza identified the greatest anticipated benefits of FOP as spending time together with her daughter and also having Arianna's help to learn the violin. Both Melitza and Arianna predicted that patience would be their biggest struggle during FOP. Arianna also believed that because of her impatience, a great challenge of FOP would be teaching her mom the basics.

Savannah & Marisa: Aunt-Niece Pair

Savannah and her niece Marisa were given time to work in a separate space. When I checked on them they were practicing the advanced violin counter melody of "Cripple Creek" at a pretty slow tempo. It was obvious that they hadn't practiced it much since their last attended rehearsal two weeks ago. Savannah admitted that she had only practiced on her own just before rehearsal today and Marisa may not have practiced at all. She was too shy to admit it! Savannah also confessed that while they were supposed to be practicing "Cripple Creek" this evening, she had gotten sidetracked by trying to play "God Bless America" by ear. (Field Notes, Seventh Rehearsal, 11-12-13)

Savannah (Aunt) had brown shoulder length hair with bangs, brown eyes, and brown-framed glasses. You will see Savannah referred to as tia Savannah. Tia is the Spanish equivalent for the word aunt. She was a teacher in my district and would usually come to rehearsal still in her professional work clothes. A typical outfit for Savannah would be a stylish blouse with dress pants, dangling earrings, and trendy flats for shoes. Marisa (Niece) was in the seventh grade. She was a shy student and her body posture—whether standing or sitting—tended to reflect her introverted nature. However, she had proper playing position when holding her violin. She had long straight brown hair, brown

eyes, and black-and-purple-framed glasses. She would often come to FOP rehearsal in her school uniform clothes. A typical outfit for Marisa was a white collared t-shirt and slim khaki pants plus a navy hooded sweatshirt and brown leather boots.

Savannah worked full-time as a teacher as well as being a mother to two sons during FOP. She was invited to participate in FOP by her niece Marisa for two main reasons: Marisa knew they had a common love of music (both were violinists who dabbled a little in cello) and she also felt her own parents were too busy to participate. Marisa was a strong violinist, but was also the most introverted and quiet participant in the study.

This was the only pair in which both participants had previous formal classroom training in string playing. Thus their FOP experience was quite different than that of their peers and they were considered an outlier pair in the study. Marisa was not able to embody the role of teacher as much as her peers; rather she was more of a “practice partner” for aunt Savannah. Possessing a positive history as a member of school orchestra programs growing up, Savannah was able to encourage her niece musically in ways the other adult participants could not for their children. Their verbal interactions were not as noteworthy as the other participant pairs, but Marisa clearly enjoyed having the opportunity to make music with her aunt. Savannah used the FOP experience to encourage her impressionable niece to continue to strive for excellence in her music education.

This pair was often given time to work in the back practice room when the FOP pairs had one-on-one practice time. They were generally able to master their group

assignments quickly and would then move on to play other pieces that I had given them, including selections of their choice from a Disney solo violin book. Marisa would also often play some of her orchestra pieces from class for her aunt. They were sensitive to the fact that the other pairs needed to concentrate on learning the basics, so if I failed to offer them a separate practice space they would attempt to play their music very softly.

In response to the open-ended questions on the Initial Questionnaire for Participants, Marisa anticipated that the greatest benefit of being a member of FOP would be the opportunity to create music. Savannah expected the greatest benefit of FOP would be sharing the experience with Marisa and watching her niece become more confident. Marisa believed that learning to read more advanced music would be her greatest challenge in FOP, while her aunt Savannah predicted that keeping up with her practice time would challenge her most.

Motivations for Joining FOP

A primary point of exploration with the FOP study was the potential bonding that may occur between an adolescent and an adult relative in the context of shared music learning. *Bonding* can be defined as the “process of forming a close relationship with someone, especially through frequent or constant association (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).” Most striking about this definition is the inclusion of the key words *process*, *relationship* and *frequent association*. FOP drew participants who were motivated to engage in the *process* of bonding. This process required commitment from both the child participant and the adult participant to initially say yes to the study and to continue saying yes on a weekly basis to showing up for rehearsals. It was a process that facilitated *frequent*

association in a secure, small group setting of adult-child pairs all intent on two things: sharing a musical experience and deepening their existing *relationship*. Understanding the specific motivations of each participant to join FOP provides further insight about the pairs' existing relationships at the time of the study.

The FOP participants provided a wide range of responses to the open-ended question about what motivated them to join the project on their Initial Questionnaire for Participants. Bo wrote that he was motivated to join FOP because he thought his dad Bruce might be interested in learning how to read music and to play the bass, so he told him about the program. Bruce wrote that his primary motivation to join FOP was to spend more time with his son. Billy was motivated to join FOP with his mother Nancy because he wanted to get out of the house and have fun. Nancy wrote that she was motivated by the opportunity to learn and understand playing an instrument. Arianna wanted to see how her mom Melitza would react to playing and learning the violin. Melitza expressed interest in learning to play the violin since Arianna was her third child to play the instrument, so she wanted to give it a try too. She also wanted to spend time with her daughter. Marisa's primary motivation was to spend more time with her aunt Savannah. Savannah summarized her motivation to join FOP this way: "*It's a great opportunity to combine two things that I truly enjoy – family and music.*" (Initial Questionnaire for Participants, 9-24-13)

Because the recruitment fliers for the study had been distributed to my students during school, it was their responsibility to disseminate the information to their parents and adult relatives. Thus, the adolescents initiated the process of joining FOP through the

conversations they had at home. Perhaps the adolescent participants felt comfortable approaching their relative of choice with an invitation to join FOP because they already enjoyed spending time together doing various activities (reported on their initial questionnaires as cooking, shopping, watching TV, etc.) and they wanted the opportunity to share one of their personal passions with an adult relative. Additionally, in response to a multiple choice question on the initial questionnaire, every study participant rated the current level of communication with their relative as *“Good – we have conversations frequently and can talk about most topics”* with the exception of Melitza, mother of Arianna, who rated their communication level as *“Excellent – we have conversations every day and can talk about almost anything!”* During their group interview with Ms. Walsh, the students’ responses also revealed that they believed their relatives had an underlying interest in music before joining FOP.

Ms. Walsh: Okay so today we’re going to be asking you some questions about The Family Orchestra Project. And this is just to find out a little more about how your experience is going. The first question is: I would like you to tell me about your experience with FOP so far.

Bo: Um it’s pretty good so far, I mean, I really enjoy it because I’m learning with my dad, he’s actually learning how to play something so I mean, I think it’s a pretty fun experience, ‘cause um just being able to play an instrument with my dad would be awesome so...

Ms. Walsh: Thank you. Anyone else?

Arianna: It was-- I think it was a good experience because my mom has seen a lot of her kids have played [violin] for like years. So she's finally learning how to play and finally seeing the challenges, facing the challenges that we've faced ourselves.

Ms. Walsh: That's great, so she's getting to experience what you and your siblings have experienced.

Arianna: Um hm.

Ms. Walsh: Marisa, Billy?

Marisa: Well I guess to spend more time with my family 'cause I really don't spend time with adults that much.

Ms. Walsh: Great.

Billy: Yeah the same 'cause my mom's always working and taking care of us but you know, it's good to spend some time with her.

Ms. Walsh: Cool, those are great answers you guys. So tell me who your stand partner is and why you invited that person to join the orchestra with you and let's just go down the line, we'll start with Bo.

Bo: Um my stand partner is my dad and I invited him to come because I know he wanted to – I thought he might be interested to play something. Plus he's going to be off for like the next month because he got the surgery. And um I chose to play bass instead of cello because my dad was really interested in that and I'm trying to do jazz band at my school and I knew it would help me out so that's why I invited him and I changed the instrument. But I mean like it's the same clef so I can read it.

Ms. Walsh: Thank you. Arianna, who is your stand partner and why did you invite them to join with you?

Arianna: My stand partner is my mom and I invited her to join the FOP with me because all of the concerts she's been to, she has always talked about learning how to actually do what we did, to play, so it was good for her to actually learn how to play.

Ms. Walsh: Thank you. Marisa, who did you invite to play with you?

Marisa: I invited my tia because my mom is you know always busy cleaning or doing dishes or something um and my dad barely gets out of work by 6 so he's kind of tired. So my tia is a teacher so she gets out of work a little earlier.

Ms. Walsh: Great, thank you. Billy...

Billy: I invited my mom 'cause I wanted to and she's seen how hard we work on the stage and performing and so I wanted to show her how hard we try.

(Student Focus Group Interview, 10-15-13)

The students' responses to these questions were indicative of their underlying motivations for committing to The Family Orchestra Project. Bo was enthusiastic about finding common ground with his father, so much so that he was willing to compromise and learn to play bass alongside dad Bruce rather than cello. Arianna wanted to give her mother Melitza the chance to be a violin student like all three of her daughters had been over the years and hoped to gain her empathy during the learning process. She felt that her mom would only understand the struggles she experienced as a beginner when she faced them herself. Billy wanted time with his mother Nancy away from their daily household routine and he also wanted to demonstrate to his mother how much effort goes

into learning the violin. Marisa decided to avoid asking her parents to join FOP, assuming they would not have time. From Marisa's perspective, it may have felt safest to invite her aunt Savannah to join FOP because they already had a common interest in music. Both reported on their initial questionnaire that they enjoyed having conversations together about school and music. Of the four student participants, Marisa likely demonstrated the most courage when inviting an adult relative to join FOP because she had to really step out of her comfort zone. She may not have imagined that her parents could find time for her in their busy schedules, but she did have to obtain their consent to join the study and that conversation would have been an act of courage for her too.

It was on the evening of our fourth FOP rehearsal, while the students were involved in their group focus interview, that I had the opportunity to share my musical background story and then hear firsthand from the adult participants how each child approached them with the invitation to join FOP:

This was one of my favorite rehearsals thus far due to the conversation I had with the adults while their young relatives were in a separate room for their group interview with Ms. Walsh. I shared with them my personal musical origin story: Growing up I was a very shy girl who rarely wanted to join in any extracurricular activity for fear of having to interact with strangers. In the fourth grade I miraculously decided to try out the cello after hearing its beautiful low sounds at a school recruitment assembly. My parents were pleasantly surprised! Now, twenty-some years later, I still consider myself to be a friendly introvert who can be intimidated to stand in front of my huge classes or an even larger concert

audience, but I do it for the love of sharing music with young people and their families.

The adults then shared how the children informed them of The Family Orchestra Project and invited them to participate. Bruce told us that his son Bo was shy and somewhat awkward in his approach, but once his dad showed interest in learning more about FOP he really perked up. Bruce did a perfect impression of his son's mannerisms. Nancy then shared that her son Billy was also quiet in his approach, but he seemed genuinely interested. So, in spite of her busy schedule, she agreed to try it. Melitza's daughter Arianna, on the other hand, was very enthusiastic when she informed her mom about FOP and said "they had to do it!" Savannah's experience with her niece Marisa was unique as the pair does not live together. Marisa is the oldest grandchild by a few years and often seeks refuge in her aunt's presence during family gatherings. She was quiet and shy when approaching her aunt about FOP, but she expressed interest in sharing a musical opportunity with her "tia" who she knew also loved music – both knew how to play violin and had also learned a bit of cello in school. (Field Notes, Fourth Rehearsal, 10-15-13)

It became clear from this candid conversation that all the adult participants of FOP elected to participate in the program out of love and respect for the children who had the courage to invite them to join. For the three participating adults without previous formal instrumental instruction, Bruce, Nancy and Melitza, this required a level of trust in their child that they would successfully fulfill the teacher-role in helping them learn to play

music. Each child, on the other hand, had to believe their parent or relative would be receptive to the musical knowledge they had to offer. Ultimately, both members of each pair had to say yes in order to enter the process of potential bonding through making music together.

Role Reversal

The Adolescent Perspective

As members of FOP, typical roles for the adolescent children and adults were essentially reversed: Child became Teacher while Adult became Student. Outlier pair Marisa and her aunt Savannah did not completely fit this category, as they were already classroom-trained instrumentalists before joining FOP. However, Savannah consciously gave her niece opportunities to exercise her communication skills. Bo and his father Bruce were also a slight variation of this theme as Bo was learning a second instrument alongside his father. He was simultaneously a student and a teacher in the study. However, Bo was still the “musical expert” of the pair and embodied the teacher-role for his dad Bruce on a regular basis.

The adolescents shared their impressions of being in the teacher-role at the focus group interview held after the first month of rehearsals:

Ms. Walsh: What does it feel like to be a teacher for your parent or relative?

Bo: It's weird. I'm used to learning and not teaching so I've found that when you're teaching you have to have a lot of patience 'cause if you don't you're just going to end up quitting. But I've found just to take my time and, uh, help my dad so that I don't quit

'cause it's hard being a teacher to my dad. I'm not saying he's a really hard person to teach, it's just weird being the teacher. I'm not used to it.

Ms. Walsh: It's a different position for you to be in.

Bo: Yeah it's like being the parent to the – it's like vice versa.

Ms. Walsh: Okay. Arianna, want to answer that question? How does it feel to be a teacher for your parent or relative?

Arianna: I think it feels good to be a teacher because they're, instead of them teaching us something, we're finally getting to teach them something. And it's like, it's like you have to have a lot of patience because usually you see the teachers or your parents when they're teaching you something, they're very patient with you and they wait 'til you get it but I'm not a very patient person so it's kind of hard for me, but I think I'm getting better.

Ms. Walsh: Thank you. Marisa.

Marisa: Well I think it's just a weird feeling too 'cause we're used to listening to the teacher but like it's also good practice 'cause then when you get older you know you're gonna have kids and you're gonna kind of be mostly prepared for it.

Ms. Walsh: Awesome, thank you. Billy.

Billy: Um...

Ms. Walsh: So how does it feel to be the teacher for your parent?

Billy: It's kind of awkward 'cause they will be teaching you something but you teaching them, and then you don't know how to explain the right things to them and it's kind of hard doing that.

(Student Focus Group Interview, 10-15-13)

Each student's response during the group interview accurately depicted the personal stresses that resulted from the new experience of embodying the teacher-role during FOP. Throughout the course of the study Bo maintained a positive attitude, but struggled with being in the teacher-role for his dad. During the student focus group interview Bo was hesitant to admit that it was difficult to be his dad's teacher. He summed up a common sentiment for most of his adolescent peers when he concluded that being the teacher "felt weird" because it was a foreign experience. Meanwhile Arianna relished the novel opportunity to be her mother's teacher and liked the reversal of roles and the chance to finally be the expert. She also stated that being a teacher required a great deal of patience, a trait that she readily admitted was lacking in her, although it had improved over the first month of FOP. Billy felt that teaching his mother was awkward due to the reversal of roles because he felt at a loss with teaching strategies and explanations. Marisa also noted the peculiarity of being in a modified teacher-role, but anticipated it would be a good experience for future child-rearing.

The Pairs' Experiences

The role reversal experience manifested itself differently for each participant pair. They reported diverse accounts of interpersonal conflict, understanding and growth over the course of the study, in addition to various musical lessons learned in their new roles.

Bruce and Bo

Bruce and Bo, the father-son pair, grappled with finding a balance of power in their musical relationship. Bo's dad Bruce was forthcoming about his struggle to be the student in his father-son pair:

And for me I do find myself getting a little, like, I'll catch myself getting irritated because he knows more than I do, a lot more. But I catch myself—like you know, he's helpful and everything. Every time that I make a mistake, he goes to correct me or whatever and uh I guess, I guess it just puts me in a weird position you know reverse roles, but it's good. (Bruce, First Pair Interview, 10-25-13)

Bruce had the more dominant personality of the two and sometimes seemed to resent his son Bo's more relaxed teaching style. Bo appeared to be somewhat intimidated by the task of explaining new concepts to his dad and felt more comfortable modeling concepts for him. Interestingly, his dad was the most advanced of the parent participants who were new to their stringed instrument during FOP, so they worked through their personality differences and their distinct learning styles by becoming deeply engaged in the process of making music. They spoke about their challenges with Ms. Walsh during their first pair interview:

Ms. Walsh: Bo did you, have you had any challenges in teaching so far? Or have you found it to be a pretty easy adjustment for you to step into the teaching role?

Bo: I mean like yes and no because I mean it's easy to say the things, but when you actually have to explain it into words and show it, it can be kind of difficult sometimes.

'Cause I mean you're talking to someone who hasn't really done this before so it's hard to be in that position 'cause I'm used to being the student instead of the teacher.

Ms. Walsh: Right, okay, so that might be just one of the challenges that you've faced, not necessarily the playing aspect of it but in the teaching aspect.

Bruce: I think it's a matter of testing the boundaries and being assertive as an instructor, because of the roles being reversed. Like he'll show me something and then I'll be like just wait and right there—I don't know out of respect or whatever—I but instead of being a teacher he just kind of sits back and you know whatever. If I was instructing someone—like I've taught different sports and coached and what not—I'd say 'no don't just wait, I'm the coach, this is what you need to do, now let's try it again.' You know this is his first chance and I mean he's really good with showing kids, other kids, you know when he helps out with whoever needs tutoring. I see him helping the girls or with music, so...

Ms. Walsh: So it might just come naturally to you (Bo) to sit back and let him have his space, but would you (Bruce) like him to be more assertive toward you?

Bruce: With respect.

Ms. Walsh: With respect? Okay, maybe we can observe you guys a little more.

Bruce: Maybe like you know 'Bruce, um I could help you to do this right, this is what you're doing wrong. You don't have to sit there and keep playing it incorrectly and figure it out. Like I know what I'm doing' ... And I know that, I trust him, I'm just stubborn as well.

(Bruce-Bo, First Pair Interview, 10-25-13)

Bruce had a strong opinion of what good teaching or coaching should look like and his son Bo was not fulfilling those expectations. He acknowledged that his stubborn nature was impeding his ability to place his trust in his son's style of teaching. He seemed to be imploring his son to be more assertive and direct with their interactions, while also cautioning him to take a respectful approach.

In spite of their challenges with the reversal of roles, this father-son pair remained actively engaged in the learning process throughout FOP and a respect for each other's differences in learning and teaching developed over the course of the study. Communication, however, did not dramatically improve and in fact, I observed that it became minimalized once Bruce returned to his full-time work schedule during the final three weeks of FOP. As noted earlier, this pair was able to overcome deficits in verbal communication through making music together. During their final interview with Ms. Walsh at the end of the study, Bruce and Bo once again addressed the issues they faced with role reversal as they discussed what they learned about each other and the challenges they encountered as participants of FOP.

Ms. Walsh: What has participating in FOP taught you about each other?

Bruce: I'll start. I knew that Bo is talented but he's also a good instructor when he, whenever I would give him the opportunity. I mean just being, reversing roles or whatever he felt comfortable, he could be. Some people don't teach as well as others and I think he could be a good instructor as well. Which kind of surprised me 'cause he's a little reserved like, but whenever he would actually take the opportunity to show me something, you know, he knew what he was talking about and he approached it in a way that it was easy for me to learn.

Ms. Walsh: That's great that he was able to help convey what he needed to, to you in the correct way, that's awesome. What about you Bo?

Bo: I feel that I've learned that my dad, he can absorb the knowledge that I give him. Like I um, I didn't try to be mean or whatever if he got something wrong. I would just try

to help him out the best way I could, like politely just nudge him and he would accept that. And I would give him a couple minutes to figure it out and he would do it. So I felt that if I just gave him time and that I was polite, he could learn anything that I'd try to teach him.

Ms. Walsh: That's a really great approach and it sounds like you were really positive the whole time. Okay um what were some of the greatest challenges that you faced as a pair?

Bruce: I think for me I really enjoyed the whole experience so as far as challenges it would just be getting familiar with the instrument and the techniques. I mean I didn't feel like I was in a stressful environment or anything like that, so it was probably just becoming familiar with the notes. And I mean it was all new to me you know so that was about it for me. I could see him getting maybe a little frustrated and stuff but I wouldn't—I mean he was good about it but I could see like you know he's so far ahead that I can't think of a time or whatever, but I think I was the biggest challenge for him.

Bo: Um a big challenge for me, like my dad said, was getting used to the instrument because when I would go to school I'd go to my orchestra class and I would play my cello and I'm so used to that because that's the instrument I usually play. Then on Tuesdays I'd come here I'd have to transition to bass so for playing G it'd be 4 on the D string now I have to go to a whole new string and it's just kind of one set up so that was hard for me. And then also um, but not to be a jerk to my dad or whatever, but when I'd try to teach him something and he told me to just hold on one second that was kind of frustrating but I didn't want to show it, so that would kind of be hard.

*Bruce: And it was an adjustment for me as well. I'm not sure if you know this but I'm actually, I have a few didgeridoo albums and transitioning from didgeridoo to the bass was complicated. Strike that last comment that was a lie. *Laughter* Sorry. I tried, you're right I can't be dishonest.*

(Bruce-Bo, Second Pair Interview, 12-3-13)

While laced with some humor, this interaction between the father and son underscores the communicative tension the two faced throughout FOP. From an outside perspective the pair was jovial and fairly easy-going during most rehearsals, but their interview responses revealed they possessed a level of guardedness as they attempted to navigate unfamiliar roles. Bruce conceded that Bo, despite his reserved nature, was a good instructor when his dad cooperated. He may have realized that Bo could only take the opportunity to flex his teaching skills when his father relinquished his authority. Bruce even identified himself as Bo's biggest challenge during the study. Interestingly, he preempted Bo's response to the question of "greatest challenge" with his assumption. Bo, in turn, diplomatically responded that similar to his father, one of his challenges was learning the new instrument. And then he added the response that his father anticipated: although he did not want to show it, Bo got frustrated with his dad when he was trying to teach him and he was told to wait or hold on. Bo learned that the best way to teach his dad was to be polite in his approach and to remain patient as they worked through their distinct learning styles.

Melitza and Arianna

Melitza and Arianna, the mother-daughter pair, found their mutually strong personalities created quite a bit of interpersonal friction as roles were reversed for FOP. Arianna's innate confidence allowed her to immediately adapt to her teaching role, but she was not quick to empathize with her mother's struggles as a beginning violinist. During the first interview at the midpoint of the study, when asked by Ms. Walsh how it felt to be stand partners, Melitza responded: *"It feels great to be able to just have the opportunity to do it."* She was willing to endure her daughter's teasing and fussing for the sake of spending time together and learning a musical instrument that she had been curious to try. In her response Arianna addressed the reversal of roles that accompanied the FOP experience of adult-child pairs: *"It feels a little weird because usually she's the one that's teaching me not, not like the one learning from me. So she's standing, sitting next to me and she's asking me questions instead of me telling her what – her telling me what to do."* The novelty of being the musical expert did not daunt Arianna though. She enjoyed the teacher-role of the FOP experience: *"It's been a good experience because I get to, I get to teach my mom to do things that she doesn't know how to do and that I know how to do for once."* Arianna savored the opportunity to share her musical knowledge with her mother, especially since she had the advantage of knowing more in this realm. (Melitza-Arianna, First Pair Interview, 10-29-13)

On multiple occasions, this pair expressed differences in what they valued most about the FOP experience. Melitza emphasized togetherness whereas Arianna highlighted her new role in the relationship.

Ms. Walsh: What are you guys enjoying most about FOP?

Melitza: I think spending one on one time with her. Yeah I've got three kids still at home so she's, it's, that's what I like and what I'm enjoying the most.

Ms. Walsh: Good. What about you?

Arianna: Um I'm enjoying being a teacher.

Ms. Walsh: It's fun for you?

Arianna: Yeah.

Ms. Walsh: Good.

Melitza: She likes to be in charge.

(Melitza-Arianna, First Pair Interview, 10-29-13)

Arianna embraced her teacher-role during FOP even though it tested the limits of her patience with her mother. Meanwhile, Melitza treasured the quality time with her daughter and thus tolerated her adolescent ambitions to “*be in charge.*”

Melitza and Arianna sought empathy from one another over the course of the study, but often felt frustrated with each other during rehearsals. Communication was frequent and neither mother nor daughter was shy about expressing her feelings. This led to some mildly heated, yet also comical, interactions between the pair including a suggestion made by Arianna to her near-sighted mother Melitza that she should solve her eye sight issues (which were impeding her ability to read the music and clearly see which string she was bowing) by wearing an eye patch to become a “music pirate.” They were generally able to infuse their banter with humor, yet they frequently sought intervention from the instructors when patience expired. Arianna eventually learned how to

demonstrate greater patience, and requests for instructor intervention diminished, but it remained an apparent weakness as she grappled with her newfound authority as her mother's primary violin teacher. Melitza and Arianna addressed the issue of patience during their final interview.

Ms. Walsh: What has participating in FOP taught you about each other?

*Arianna: That she can't play an instrument. *Laughter* Well she has a really hard time playing an instrument but that she'll, she eventually gets it, it just takes a while.*

Ms. Walsh: Okay.

Melitza: Um it's just, I think it's just a challenge to me. It's something I probably would have been better at when I was in school and you know in high school. It probably would have been a lot easier to learn than being as an adult I think.

Ms. Walsh: And then what has it taught you about your daughter?

*Melitza: That she has no patience for me. *Laughter* But it was um challenging for both of us. I think she, at times she, I think she enjoyed it, but the patience is what I feel like she doesn't have for me.*

Ms. Walsh: Arianna, do you think it's taught you any more patience?

Arianna: Yes it has because she takes longer than most people – well that I've ever taught – so it's taught me that I have to be more patient because there are some people that need to take more time to learn things.

(Melitza-Arianna, Second Pair Interview, 12-3-13)

Even at the close of the study, Melitza felt her daughter still did not possess enough patience for her, but confessed it remained a challenge for both of them. Arianna joked

her mother still could not play an instrument, but she recognized that Melitza had made slow but steady progress towards that end.

By participating in the study together, Arianna wanted her mom to gain insight into her effort to learn the violin, stating in the pair's second interview with Ms. Walsh at the close of the study that what she enjoyed most about FOP was "*teaching my mom how to play it because then she knew all the struggles that I went through and when she said I didn't sound very good then she knows how it feels.*" (Arianna, Second Pair Interview, 12-3-13) Her wish was granted as Melitza explained at length her new appreciation for her daughters' learning journey:

I think this experience helped me realize how difficult it was for my kids to learn an instrument—I mean what a challenge it was for them. Because she's my third daughter playing the violin and I've gone through so many performances, through the high school—I mean junior high and elementary school and I think that I look at it differently now. I wish I would have been able to experience this a long time ago. I think I would know exactly how they, how, what they go through. Yeah it's more, it is a challenge. It's really hard. It's not something that you can just do once a week and I mean that's why I told her that 5 days a week that they are able to do it, it does help. But I think it helped me realize how hard it was for them to learn. (Melitza-Arianna, Second Pair Interview, 12-3-13)

Not only did Melitza express empathy for her children's struggles to achieve musical proficiency, but she suggested that having had an experience like FOP during the early stages of their music education would have given her valuable insight.

Nancy and Billy

Nancy and Billy, the mother-son pair, discovered that their expectations for learning music together did not fully align with the challenges that FOP would present to them individually and as a team. Nancy may have underestimated just how much work learning to play an instrument entailed while her son Billy may have overestimated the rate at which his mother could acquire violin fundamentals. Yet they remained outwardly positive and quietly determined to problem solve throughout the study. They spoke about their initial impressions of FOP with Ms. Walsh during their first pair interview.

Ms. Walsh: So the first question is: Tell me about your experience with FOP so far.

Billy: Um our experience has been really good like to play with my mom. It's been really fun. And I learned a lot with her.

Ms. Walsh: Cool cool, what about you?

Nancy: I'm learning um what Billy has learned to play the violin and that it's not easy, learning all the notes and all the strings and that so.

Ms. Walsh: Okay.

Nancy: It takes a lot, a lot of work, to get it.

Ms. Walsh: Yeah. That's great. Um okay how does it feel, what does it feel like to be stand partners in the same orchestra?

Billy: Um it feels kind of awkward 'cause it's my mom and you wouldn't expect your mom to be stand partners in the orchestra.

Ms. Walsh: Okay so it's a little awkward to be not only with an adult but maybe just with your mom. And what do you think?

Nancy: It is awkward because it's something I'm learning from him, it's usually me teaching him stuff, but it's different.

Ms. Walsh: Okay. Different -- not necessarily in a bad way though.

Nancy: No.

(Nancy-Billy, First Pair Interview, 10-24-13)

The pair enjoyed learning together, but noted that the role reversal took some adjustment. Nancy also alluded to a growing appreciation for Billy's learning journey over the past three years of studying violin. This appreciation grew as Nancy continued to struggle with coordinating the many aspects of reading music and violin mechanics throughout the study.

Billy gained new insight and appreciation for the teaching aspect of music making. Unlike his FOP peer Arianna, who regularly and openly lost her patience when frustrated with her mother's lack of coordination, Billy was more introverted and approached difficulties in an understated fashion. He, too, sought instructor intervention when necessary but his even temperament kept his concerns about teaching hidden to the casual observer. His internal conflict with patience was slowly uncovered through the interviews and weekly written prompts.

Ms. Walsh: Alright then what are some of the challenges you've faced so far in the FOP?

Nancy: Um for me it's been a challenge to remember the names of the strings and trying to figure out where your fingers go when you have to use your fingers and read the notes.

Ms. Walsh: So remembering the notes on the page as well as putting it on the instrument. Okay.

Billy: Some challenges for me is like teaching her because I have to wait and we have to practice more 'cause nothing's perfect you have to work hard at it.

Ms. Walsh: Yeah, yeah. Do feel like that's something that you've learned so far that maybe it's not as easy to be on the teaching side of string playing?

Billy: It could be stressful sometimes.

Ms. Walsh: Yeah that's definitely a good observation. But I feel like just seeing you guys together that you've been really patient. Do you feel that you've been patient, Billy?

Billy: Um a little bit but sometimes I just want to go on instead of being left behind.

(Nancy-Billy, First Pair Interview 1, 10-24-13)

As one of the excelling students in his regular school orchestra, Billy struggled with the idea of being “*left behind*” because he had to attend to his mother’s learning needs and found that teaching a beginner could be a stressful experience. However, Billy truly enjoyed the one-on-one time with his mother and eventually understood it was a matter of patience and practice in order to teach her the basics. When asked by Ms. Walsh if he would like the FOP instructors to demonstrate more teaching strategies to him to help his mother, Billy responded that a little help would be beneficial because “*I’m not the best teacher but you guys are a little more experienced.*” (Billy, First Pair Interview 1, 10-24-13) As a result of this feedback, Ms. Walsh alerted me that the students were interested in more guidance with their teacher-role. In subsequent rehearsals, we made sure to address

specific strategies that the children could use when working one-on-one with their adult relative and to troubleshoot alongside them when necessary.

In their final interview with Ms. Walsh, Nancy and Billy revealed what participating in FOP taught them about teaching and learning music, as well as what they learned about one another.

Ms. Walsh: So we're here with Nancy & Billy to talk about the Family Orchestra Project. What has participating in FOP taught you about music?

Billy: It's taught me about music that you can't rush in songs, you have to like look at them more, at the music and study it so you can play it right with the right [intonation].

Ms. Walsh: Okay.

Nancy: It has taught me that this is something that you can't just fake, you have to practice to be able to learn it and to get better at it otherwise you're not going to advance and you're going to be lost.

Ms. Walsh: Great, those are great answers. What has participating in FOP taught you about each other?

Billy: That my mom works really hard and this is the one thing that she needs practice to do. She makes dinner and it's all, she does it all fast but then the instrument, she does this, it's like, uh, the thing she needs to work at.

Ms. Walsh: So was that surprising to you that you know she didn't just pick it up right away?

*Billy: *Laughter.**

(Nancy-Billy, Second Pair Interview, 12-13-13)

Participating in FOP taught Nancy and her son Billy how to work through preconceived notions about one another and to make adjustments. Billy had assumed Nancy, being an adult with many other skills, would easily learn how to play the violin. He was surprised that his mother did not acquire music skills quickly. Outside of Tuesday night rehearsals, Nancy found little time to practice the violin and it affected her perspective on how much more effort learning music requires than she may have originally imagined. Her lack of practice resulted in her feeling lost during many FOP rehearsals. Nancy also gained insight into the hours of effort both her son Billy and his older sister had committed to mastering their instrument.

Savannah and Marisa

Savannah and Marisa, the aunt-niece pair, did not have the same family dynamic issues that the parent-child pairs encountered. Marisa did not have the daunting task of teaching her aunt how to read music nor how to play the violin because Savannah grew up playing the instrument. Savannah had not played violin for several years at the time of the study, and no longer owned one, so returning to an orchestral setting required some review, but she adapted quickly. Thus Marisa was less in the teacher-role than her peers and more of a practice partner for her aunt. Savannah was cognizant that her timid niece benefited from her attention and gravitated towards the role of “encourager” during the study. She gave her niece opportunities to answer her questions about the music and engaged her in shared problem solving when they encountered a tricky rhythm, thereby prompting Marisa to exercise her communication skills. Marisa confessed during the student group interview that her aversion to speaking to adults affected her FOP

experience with her aunt: *“the greatest challenge I’ve been through is like communicating because I don’t really talk to [adults] that much. It just seems a little awkward for some reason.”* (Student Focus Group Interview, 10-15-13) However, she remained committed to the experience and did her best to overcome her shyness.

Savannah and her niece Marisa did not live together, but they had a family routine of seeing one another Wednesdays after school and every other weekend. Committing themselves to Tuesday evening rehearsals for FOP became treasured time together because it was a chance for the two musicians to spend time sharing a passion they both possessed.

Ms. Walsh: Okay, so we’re here with Savannah and Marisa to talk about the Family Orchestra Project, and the first question is to tell me about your experience so far with the Family Orchestra Project.

Marisa: Um, I really like the Family Orchestra Project because I get to spend time with my tia.

Ms. Walsh: Awesome.

*Savannah: Um, I like it because it’s time that we had set aside, but this way it’s kinda set aside for us so we have no way to escape it. *laughter* We get to actually spend time—sometimes you want to, but you can’t get to it. And this way it’s for sure that we’re going to spend that at least, you know, the hour and a half a week.*

Ms. Walsh: Awesome. That’s great. Um, and then what does it feel like to be stand partners in the same orchestra?

Savannah: Um, for me it feels a little intimidating because it's been such a long time. And so it's good for me and her that there's a lot of things that I've forgotten so she's ahead of me in a lot of things. So it's good.

Ms. Walsh: Okay. Cool.

Marisa: So kinda the same thing but... Yeah, kinda the same thing.

Ms. Walsh: So it feels intimidating to you too? (Marisa: Yeah.) Can you explain that more?

Marisa: Um, sometimes it feels a little nervous, like trying to explain something.

(Savannah-Marisa, First Pair Interview, 10-29-13)

Both Savannah & Marisa reported that sharing a stand for FOP felt somewhat intimidating, but for different reasons. Savannah was slightly concerned about how much musical knowledge she had forgotten over the years, whereas her niece Marisa admitted that trying to explain things made her nervous. They were able to work through their early trepidation, however, and soon were sharing musical tips and working together to master many more pieces than the other three pairs of FOP participants were able to complete. At the time of their second interview with Ms. Walsh, Savannah expressed contentment with the musical knowledge she had regained and Marisa noted she was able to transfer many of the rhythm counting strategies practiced during FOP to her regular orchestra classroom learning.

Ms. Walsh: Okay, so we're here with Savannah and Marisa for our second Family Orchestra Project interview. The first question is what has participating in the Family Orchestra Project taught you about music?

Savannah: Um, it has taught me that I have forgotten a lot of it, but there's a lot of stuff that I didn't so it was fun relearning things from high school, from being in school.

Marisa: Um, it taught me like in school, like counting rhythms and stuff, so it helped me during class. And then remembering to count, how to count the notes.

Ms. Walsh: Okay, so reinforcing things that you already knew? (Marisa: Yeah.) Great!

What has participating in the Family Orchestra Project taught you about each other?

Savannah: It taught me that she wasn't just messing around with the violin, that she's actually very good. And she's got a really good chance. And now it helps me to kind of know where to guide her so that she's not okay with being last chair but to be comfortable with making first or second chair and maintaining it. 'Cause she's really good.

Marisa: I guess the same way. Getting tips...

Savannah: It makes it a trade.

Ms. Walsh: Yeah. Anything else about maybe her playing, or just in general as learning about each other?

Savannah: (To Marisa) I think you're pretty dedicated. Like, you know, when she comes in it was impressive to see how she has the music that we're playing. You know I have whatever time to look at it, but she's already gone through YouTube and she's looked at the videos, she's heard it. And we're practicing at home and I'll play the first violin and she's playing behind me and she already memorized the second violin part. So it's taught me a lot about her that she's very determined. She knows what she wants and she goes

and gets it. Like she's not waiting around for me, thankfully, you know. She knows where she's going and she's very determined and all that.

Ms. Walsh: That's great. Do you have anything to add to that, Marisa?

*Marisa: No. *Giggle**

(Savannah-Marisa, Second Pair Interview, 12-3-13)

Savannah poured accolades upon her niece Marisa during the final interview, taking the opportunity to make a lasting impact on Marisa's self-concept. She described her niece as "very good," "dedicated," and "determined" – extremely encouraging words for any adolescent musician to hear. Marisa's effective music-preparation habits were also highlighted by her aunt: researching music recordings online, learning both the first and second violin parts, and memorizing the parts. Participating in FOP with her aunt motivated Marisa to uphold her end of the musical partnership. However, when asked during the final interview whether she would chose to participate in FOP again, Marisa provided a surprising response.

Ms. Walsh: All right, given the chance, would you participate in the Family Orchestra Project again or would you recommend it to others?

Savannah: Yes, both.

Marisa: Maybe.

Savannah: Ohhh (sigh).

Ms. Walsh: Which one do you say maybe to?

Marisa: I would probably like my mom or you know...

*Savannah: (Interjects) Someone you could actually teach. *Chuckles**

*Marisa: Yeah, someone I could actually teach. *Soft laughter**

(Savannah-Marisa, Second Pair Interview, 12-3-13)

Evidently, Marisa may have felt she was missing out on the full FOP experience by not having the chance to embody the teacher-role for an adult beginner. She obviously enjoyed playing music with Savannah, but as she witnessed her peers taking a more active role with a parent's learning process she may have wondered how her own mother or father would have fared given the opportunity to learn alongside her.

Summary

Role reversal resulted in fresh perspectives for both parties. Children realized they had knowledge to share and that their parent/relative was receptive to learning from and with them, even if it felt unusual to be the musical expert and teacher. Parents who were new to instrumental music gained an understanding and appreciation of the child's musical journey and the required effort to learn how to play an instrument and read music. In conjunction with Role Reversal, Patience emerged as a cross-case theme during data analyses and will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS

Each pair's experience in FOP was impacted by their preexisting relationship dynamics, individual personalities, prior musical knowledge and ability to adapt to the reversal of traditional adult-child roles. Yet common challenges and benefits also emerged as the following cross-case themes: Patience, Practice, Bonding, and Group Music Making.

Challenges

In this section, I address the challenges of maintaining patience and finding time to practice. Impatience was an issue for three of the four adolescent participants, while practicing outside of our weekly rehearsals appeared to be an elusive goal for every FOP participant.

Patience

Patience emerged as a common challenge for the three adolescents, Bo, Arianna and Billy, whose parents were their adult partners for FOP. Their struggle to maintain patience was correlated to their teacher-role experience, but it was also affected by their general predisposition towards patience or impatience. Marisa, the fourth adolescent participant, is excluded from this discussion. She did not have the chance to embody a teacher-role for her aunt nor did she mention patience as a personal challenge during any interviews or written responses. Rather, Marisa's main obstacle was overcoming her timidity to communicate her ideas clearly to an adult partner.

Bo, Arianna, and Billy realized early in the study that teaching requires patience, more than they may have initially anticipated. As they reflected on their teacher-role during their student focus group interview after one month of FOP, Bo and Arianna both identified patience as a trait that good teachers (and parents) possess. Bo reasoned that his inexperience with teaching was the source of his insufficient patience and resolved to increase his patience with himself and his father so they could continue learning together. Arianna also recognized that patience was imperative to teaching well, but did not think of herself as an inherently patient person. She did, however, believe her patience with her mother had grown since FOP began. Billy acknowledged that maintaining patience while teaching his mother was a huge personal challenge because he lacked confidence with how best to explain things to a beginner and he was not sure which strategies to use to help her succeed.

Impatience affected each parent-child pair in varying degrees. For Bo and his father Bruce, it remained an underlying issue that never really surfaced during rehearsals. Bo tended to be calm and reserved when working through their music. He never spoke about losing his patience during his father-son pair interviews, but he did admit he had to fight feelings of frustration when his dad did not immediately respond to his instruction during pair practice. Contrarily, impatience was pervasive in the learning journeys of Arianna and her mother Melitza and for Billy and his mother Nancy. Both mothers demonstrated the least natural instrument playing coordination and required the most attention when learning new musical concepts. Thus, these factors likely contributed

additional pressure on their children who were responsible for helping them learn and who found themselves in an unfamiliar teaching role.

Melitza and Arianna found impatience to be their constant companion throughout the study. They recognized it as a family trait that made their FOP partnership more difficult and Arianna believed it impeded her ability to effectively instruct her mother. They openly discussed this challenge in their first interview with Ms. Walsh.

Ms. Walsh: Are there any challenges that you may have faced so far in the Orchestra Project?

Arianna: One challenge for me is that I'm really impatient with my mom so it's hard for me to teach her when I'm like that.

Ms. Walsh: Okay.

Melitza: She gets the impatience from me. We're both impatient. But for her to not understand – this is her third year playing violin so she's got a lot more experience but she doesn't have very much patience when I don't catch on to something.

Ms. Walsh: Right, do you feel that you've gotten better throughout the rehearsals that we've had?

Arianna: Yeah because the first rehearsal, the first time that she couldn't do something I kind of got frustrated but now it takes me a while to get frustrated.

Ms. Walsh: That's good! So you're gaining patience. That's really good. And what do you think has helped you the most with that? What helps you be more patient?

Arianna: When she yells at me to be more patient.

Laughter

Melitza: I don't yell! You don't understand you've been doing this, this is your third year and I'm barely starting!

Ms. Walsh: Yeah so have you thought about, Arianna, how you were when you first started playing.

Arianna: Yeah.

Ms. Walsh: Can you think back to that?

Arianna: I was like that but I had a better teacher, I'm not used to teaching so I'm sure the teacher was more impatient than I am—more patient than I was.

(Melitza-Arianna, First Pair Interview, 10-29-13)

This animated interchange was representative of the pair's weekly interactions. They regularly lost patience with each other and did not attempt to hide their frustrations. Fortunately, both individuals possessed a sense of humor and a determination to make things work. Although Melitza and Arianna recognized impatience as their arch nemesis during the FOP learning process, they also longed for reciprocal understanding. Arianna wanted to earn her mother's empathy for her struggles over the years of learning to play while Melitza longed for her daughter's empathy with her current learning struggles, noting that Arianna had also been a beginner at one point. Their strong-willed natures and their tendencies towards impatience made the road to mutual appreciation a long journey, but they eventually accomplished that goal.

Billy and his mother Nancy had a more subdued experience with impatience during FOP, yet it still colored their partnership. Billy anticipated that teaching his mom how to play violin would be a challenge, but he may have underestimated how much

patience teaching a beginner required. He appeared to remain calmly supportive of his mother during all rehearsals, but his responses to our weekly written prompts and during interviews revealed that maintaining his patience was his biggest struggle throughout FOP. Nancy and Billy addressed the issue of maintaining patience during their final interview.

Ms. Walsh: What has FOP taught you about each other?

Nancy: It kind of tests your ability, you know, to teach other people and um you sometimes lose your patience because you can't get it or you can't pick up on the notes but it's not that easy. If you don't, like I said if you don't practice you're going to be left behind.

Ms. Walsh: Yeah so what about in terms of Billy, was he, what did it teach you about him? Was he patient with you, were you surprised by how he taught you? Or was he as you expected him to be in the project together?

Nancy: Um I didn't expect him to lose his patience; I thought he would be able to keep calm, but it goes to show you that not everybody can be a teacher and teachers have a lot of patience to teach so many kids and you know when it's just one person and it's, it's even then it's not that easy for them.

Ms. Walsh: Okay yeah great. So what were some of the greatest challenges that you faced as a pair?

Billy: Patience. Uh most of the time um it'll be hard teaching 'cause like what Nancy said.

Ms. Walsh: Anything else?

Nancy: Patience is a big factor and it um you know, it goes to show you that we were trying to fit in or cram in all these things and these are things that he learned when he was in 5th grade. And he kind of forgot that he was there.

Ms. Walsh: Yeah that he had been there at one point too.

Nancy: He didn't really know how to talk about it, to help me advance. I mean he did well in teaching me and helping with the bowing, he did really good.

Ms. Walsh: Do you think his patience improved over the course of the project?

Nancy: Yeah it did. He was getting used to it and he knew that he had to hold back so that I could catch up.

(Nancy-Billy, Second Pair Interview, 12-13-13)

Nancy assumed her mild-mannered son Billy would maintain his patience when teaching her to play violin. Billy agreed that patience was his biggest challenge during the study, but his mother acknowledged that it improved over the course of FOP as he learned how to wait and adjust his pacing to meet her learning needs.

Like her fellow novice violinist Melitza (Arianna's mother), Nancy anticipated more empathy from her child because he, too, had been a beginner not too long ago. While consistently attentive to his mother's needs during the learning process, Billy had trouble recalling his own beginnings and the foundation of basic skills that every new musician must build, regardless of age. Likewise, Arianna grew in attentiveness to her mother's learning needs over the course of the study, but she too found it difficult to regain the perspective of her early days of playing. Both Billy and Arianna were

challenged by the task to extend the same amount of patience to their mothers that their beginning strings instructors had shown them in elementary school.

Practice

Along with navigating unfamiliar roles and maintaining patience, another challenge faced by the FOP participants was finding time to practice together outside of regularly scheduled Tuesday evening rehearsals. The expectation outlined in the consent/assent documents was for each pair to commit to 1.5-hour weekly rehearsals plus a recommended additional hour to two hours of practice between rehearsals. This turned out to be an ambitious goal due to household, school, and extracurricular responsibilities.

When questioned about their practice routine, every pair stumbled over their answer and many offered non-musical factors as reasons they had not met their personal practice goals. Nancy and Billy, the mother-son pair, had difficulty finding time to practice because as Billy described it: *“We actually haven’t had time ‘cause we have a lot of stuff to do. And if we do get a chance to practice, we’re either relaxing or like she’s asleep.”* (Billy, First Pair Interview, 10-24-13) When Ms. Walsh followed up with them during the final interview, Nancy admitted that it remained pretty challenging to find practice time at home throughout the entire study: *“In a way it was because, yeah, of my work hours and then by the time we were going to practice it was time to do something different.”* (Nancy, Second Pair Interview, 12-13-13)

Arianna’s mother Melitza was quite thorough when describing the complexity of adding instrument practice to their home life routine. When asked about her FOP experience so far, Melitza responded: *“I find it hard to find time to put aside to practice,*

but um, actually it's been a good experience I guess with the little bit of time that we've had together." She then expounded as the interview continued:

Ms. Walsh: Have you been able to find time together to practice at home? And if so, please describe your home routine.

Melitza: Well it's kind of hard because by the time we get home, dinner, if they have, if they're not done with their homework, which they're normally done with, shower, everything, get ready for bed, it's really hard to find time. And by that time, bed time, I'm already exhausted anyway from working all day. But it is, that's the biggest challenge that we've come across is our routine.

Ms. Walsh: So have you been able to practice together at home?

Melitza: A couple times, a couple times but the routine, I mean our week is pretty much routine.

Ms. Walsh: But nothing...right, so slipping this in is the challenge.

Melitza: It has been the challenge because there are not enough hours in a day.

Ms. Walsh: Okay so when you have practiced it's been kind of when you have an extra minute or...

Melitza: Late at night, yeah right before bed.

(Melitza-Arianna, First Pair Interview, 10-29-13)

Melitza also noted that she found the one-on-one time during our evening rehearsals to be extremely valuable because she and her daughter Arianna could devote their undivided attention to making music rather than feeling distracted by the nagging responsibilities of their everyday lives: *"I think it is better in class when we're able to*

concentrate more and be able to practice more and just forget about everything else that is going on and just be able to concentrate on it.” (Melitza-Arianna, First Pair Interview, 10-29-13) Arianna and her mother Melitza once again spoke about the challenge of finding time to practice in their final interview.

Ms. Walsh: Okay. What were some of the greatest challenges that you faced as a pair?

Arianna: Being able to practice and getting time.

Melitza: Yeah with our busy schedules just, just coming up with a little bit of time to practice every other day or a few times a week was really a challenge for us.

Ms. Walsh: Okay and was that something that got easier or harder or maybe just varied throughout the whole project?

Arianna: I think it stayed the same the whole time but we still got some practice in.

Melitza: Yeah, it's just with me being as the mom having to get everything done. That's why I say it would have probably been quite easier as a child to learn than now. I have a lot going on and not a lot of time with the kids we still have at home. It was a challenge. It was hard to find time before it got too late working and taking care of the kids. It was hard.

(Melitza-Arianna, Second Pair Interview, 12-3-13)

Similar to their fellow FOP participants, Bruce and Bo struggled to establish an effective practice routine at home. They addressed the matter during their initial pair interview:

Ms. Walsh: Have you been able to find time to practice together at home? And then if you could describe your routine for me if you have had that chance to practice.

Bruce: We've uh, we have but not as much as we should. Um just I'll ask him to show me something or like when I'm home by myself I've been trying to do um just practice the packet but uh, we really haven't put in as much time as we should have been I don't think yet.

Ms. Walsh: So what would you say on average your time has been?

Bruce: You know just here and there you know

Ms. Walsh: So maybe 10 minutes...maybe when you just have the time?

Bruce: Yeah, 10-15....just whenever. Yeah we haven't, yeah... What I think we should do is just set like a designated day you know, like a Wednesday to review what we went over on Tuesday and that way it's scheduled.

Ms. Walsh: That's a great idea, you know, especially since you guys get out early for school. Do you want to add anything to that, to your routine of what you do?

Bo: It's just, um, well we work on the stuff; we just work on it until we get it right. It's not specifically set up a certain way. But I mean, like, I guess the Wednesday schedule thing works better because when I get off I do my homework and then I have more time to practice with him. (Bruce-Bo, First Pair Interview, 10-25-13)

Bruce expressed a realization about practicing that echoed the one expressed by Billy's mother Nancy. Both of these beginners gained a new appreciation for the value of practicing to reinforce what they were learning during weekly FOP rehearsals. Bruce shared his opinion during the first pair interview as he recounted an attempt to teach himself to play guitar when he was younger:

“It was kind of a half attempt so I just thought ‘I’ll never need this’. I find myself catching on now, like it makes sense now, like at a very basic level. But it’s going to take a lot of practice and this is one of those things that you have to put the time in, you know the muscle memory and everything, uh the finger placements while you’re reading, you know. It’s like anything else, you know. It’s up to me to put the time in so if I’m falling short it’s on me, it’s not on anyone else.” (Bruce, First Pair Interview, 10-25-13)

Having gained a greater appreciation for the effort learning music requires, Bruce recognized the direct correlation between practicing and progressing musically. He also accepted responsibility for “*falling short*” within this aspect of the learning process.

Aunt-niece pair Savannah and Marisa also identified finding time to practice as their greatest challenge during FOP. As Savannah put it, “*Once we got together, we played and it was fun and we got it done. But it was just getting there.*” (Savannah, Second Pair Interview, 12-3-13) This pair had a structured practice routine that they attempted to follow since they did not have the convenience of living under the same roof. They described their practice routine to Ms. Walsh during their first pair interview.

Ms. Walsh: I know you don’t live together, but have you been able to find time outside of this to practice? And then if you have, can you explain that routine?

Savannah: On Wednesdays when she comes over she brings her violin and then mine’s there. So we practice at least 10-15 minutes on Wednesdays and it’s a little more on every other Saturday when she comes over for the weekend. (Ms. Walsh: Okay,

awesome.) So it's every other Saturday and then 15 minutes or so on the Wednesdays that she's there.

Ms. Walsh: So on average you would probably say about maybe an hour every two weeks?

Savannah: Yeah, and then whatever she does individual. (Ms. Walsh: Okay.) And then we have the apps so we send each other like pictures of the music if we have questions and stuff.

(Savannah-Marisa, First Pair Interview, 10-29-13)

Savannah and Marisa demonstrated creativity in their practice strategies, occasionally using technology to overcome being separated.

Navigating the teacher-role, maintaining patience, and effectively communicating with an adult were common challenges for the student participants of the study. For the adults, mastering a new instrument and learning how to read music – or in the case of Savannah, relearning musical knowledge from grade school – and working with an adolescent partner were the greatest challenges faced. All participants faced the difficult task of coordinating practice time in addition to our weekly rehearsals with varying degrees of success. Yet, in spite of these many reasons to opt out of FOP, all four pairs remained committed to the eleven-week learning process and stated they would potentially participate in the future because: (a) time together and bonding were valuable and (b) group music making was fun.

Benefits

In this section, I discuss the benefits of adult-child bonding and group music making. Pairs dedicated themselves to the FOP experience in order to have exclusive time together playing music, and gradually discovered the gratification of ensemble playing.

Bonding

The FOP adolescent participants rarely used the word “bonding” when discussing how much they enjoyed spending one-on-one time with their adult relative, but it was the sentiment they expressed. It gave them great satisfaction to have had the opportunity to share their love of music with an interested parent or relative. They also felt valued that an adult would take time out of their busy schedule to commit to the nearly three month project. Once they adapted to the unusual learning situation, most even appeared to appreciate the novelty of being “the expert” for a change. The participants spoke to Ms. Walsh about what they were enjoying most about their FOP experience during their focus group interview at the one month mark of the study.

Ms. Walsh: Now what are you enjoying the most so far about the Family Orchestra Project?

Bo: Um I feel that I'm enjoying just learning something new with my dad because it's not like he knows more than I do – or I know more than he does – it's like we're both learning at the same pace, so we're overcoming challenges together. Um instead of me just telling him what to do or him telling me what to do. So I just enjoy the fact that we can do something as father and son and just have that good experience.

Ms. Walsh: Thank you.

Arianna: I think I'm enjoying all the time that my mom and me have spent together practicing and teaching her the strings and how to play.

Ms. Walsh: Thank you. Marisa.

Marisa: I think it's a good experience because I don't really get a lot of humor at home so I guess it's a little more better than at home, like we can get a lot of humor by just saying things.

Ms. Walsh: Alright. Billy. What are you enjoying the most so far?

Billy: Oh yeah, that I can spend more time with my mom and have fun 'cause she's always working at home and making dinner and so this is a good opportunity to spend time with her.

(Student Focus Group Interview, 10-15-13)

All of the participants expressed the feeling that FOP was an enjoyable experience. Bo enjoyed having father-son time, learning bass with his dad Bruce and working through musical challenges together. Arianna's mother, Melitza, often noted during the pair interviews and in written responses that her greatest benefit of being in FOP was spending quality time with her daughter. Arianna, on the other hand, consistently mentioned how much she enjoyed being in the teacher-role, partly because of the time spent together with her mom. Billy was especially glad to have his mother Nancy's undivided attention. Marisa, it seems, was enjoying the positive environment and lively banter among the FOP participants. Her answer also implied that she may have experienced some stress in her home life at the time of this study. While not mentioned

during the focus group interview, Marisa was quick to point out during her initial pair interview how much she enjoyed spending time with her aunt Savannah. The interpersonal factor of FOP was of great importance to the adolescent participants.

During both pair interviews each adult and child participant was asked to address what they enjoyed most about FOP. As was the case with the adolescents' focus group interview, bonding through time spent together was the emergent theme.

Bruce & Bo

Father and son pair Bruce and Bo emphasized the importance of spending time together as well as the musical benefits of being in FOP. During their initial interview, Bruce highlighted the fact that the pair benefited from finding a common interest: *“I think the best part of it so far is just finding a, uh, a common point between my son and I. We don't have a lot of the same likes, so it's built a pretty nice bond.”* He understood the opportunity for bonding that the forum of FOP provided. His son Bo summed up his feelings about combining father-son time with music making succinctly: *“Just getting to hang out with my dad and play music. It's pretty cool.”* Bruce elaborated on his son's comment: *“Yeah and likewise I get to spend some one-on-one time with him. You know we have a full family here so it's not very often that I do something just with him. And then learning an instrument correctly—I've been interested in music forever and so I'm a little old to start learning, but you know I'm starting to pick it up a little bit.”* (Bruce-Bo, First Pair Interview, 10-25-13) Father and son had actually shared an interest in music for quite some time, but had not found an outlet for making music together prior to FOP.

Bruce and Bo reinforced their opinions during their final pair interview when asked once again to identify the most enjoyable aspects of the study.

Ms. Walsh: What did you enjoy the most about participating in FOP?

Bruce: I think for me, I thought that spending one-on-one time with my son was the best part. You know, you get so busy doing this and that and when you have a whole family—there's 5 of us—you rarely get that opportunity to spend one-on-one time with each of them, so this is a good opportunity for that that was really cool. I mean learning the instrument was great, playing was great, but for me that would be the biggest benefit.

Ms. Walsh: Cool.

Bo: I like the overall experience. Getting to try out a new instrument and getting to do it with my dad so it was really cool for us both to learn at the same level. I mean, I've had experience reading the notes but I haven't played it on a bass so figuring that out with him was pretty fun.

(Bruce-Bo, Second Pair Interview, 12-3-13)

Bruce and Bo entered FOP seeking common ground and an opportunity to connect through music. The learning process challenged them interpersonally, but each noted the importance of being together. For Bruce, spending devoted time with his son trumped the musical experience, though he thoroughly enjoyed that too. For Bo, learning a new instrument was equally important as sharing the experience with his dad.

Melitza and Arianna

Mother and daughter pair Melitza and Arianna reported disparate benefits from participating in FOP. Melitza valued the rare opportunity to spend quality time with her

daughter. She stated she enjoyed “*spending one-on-one time with her. Yeah I’ve got three kids still at home so...that’s what I like and what I’m enjoying the most.*” Arianna, however, reported “*being a teacher*” as what she was enjoying most. (Melitza-Arianna, First Pair Interview, 10-29-13) The pair reprised their responses when asked to address the topic again during their final interview.

Ms. Walsh: Alright, what did you enjoy most about participating in the FOP?

Melitza: Spending time with my daughter, just one on one. We never get to do that with two other kids still at home, yeah that was, that was it for me.

Ms. Walsh: Great. Cool.

Arianna: Um what was the question?

Ms. Walsh: What did you enjoy most about participating in this project?

Arianna: Um I enjoyed teaching my mom how to play it because then she knew all the struggles that I went through and when she said I didn’t sound very good then she knows how it feels.

(Melitza-Arianna, Second Pair Interview, 12-3-13)

An interesting finding was that Melitza never mentioned the experience of learning to play music when asked to identify what she enjoyed most about FOP. Spending one-on-one time with her daughter was of paramount importance, regardless of the shared activity. Arianna’s satisfaction with the FOP experience appeared to be contingent on gaining her mother’s empathy and embodying the teacher role.

Nancy & Billy

Mother and son pair Nancy and Billy reported enjoying time together and Nancy voiced a deeper appreciation for the hard work it takes to become a proficient musician. She also felt she and Billy had gained common ground by participating in FOP together. For Billy, gaining his mother's respect for his effort and determination to become a good musician was significant, plus he felt that spending devoted time with his mother Nancy was "really fun." They addressed the benefits of the project in their initial interview.

Ms. Walsh: What are you enjoying most about FOP so far?

Nancy: I feel we have something else in common and um I kind of understand what he's gone through to learn where he's at and how hard they have to work and practice to get better and to learn.

Ms. Walsh: That's great.

Billy: If you know how hard we work you should see the mariachi conference. It's really hard too.

Laughter

Ms. Walsh: What do you think you've been enjoying the most Billy?

Billy: Spending time with my mom 'cause she's always working and doing stuff for us but we haven't spent that much time together.

(Nancy-Billy, First Pair Interview, 10-24-13)

Billy could not resist the chance to articulate how much effort he put forth to learn his mariachi music. He seemed to want his mother to validate the dedication he had displayed to learn violin over the years. He felt gratified to receive Nancy's undivided attention in a musical setting like FOP.

During the final pair interview, Billy again reinforced the importance of spending time with his mother and Nancy expressed enjoyment from the experience of learning how to play violin from her son.

Ms. Walsh: What did you enjoy most about participating in FOP?

Billy: Spending time with my mom. Um like we're always doing something but not like, not together like this.

Ms. Walsh: Cool.

Nancy: It was fun. I enjoyed it because it's something that he taught me. He was teaching me and where it's mostly me teaching him, so I learned something from him.

(Nancy-Billy, Second Pair Interview, 12-13-13)

Savannah & Marisa

Aunt and niece pair Savannah and Marisa also enjoyed spending time together during FOP. During their initial pair interview Savannah spoke about how she treasured the common bond of making music with her niece. For Marisa, just spending time with her aunt was the greatest benefit of the project.

Ms. Walsh: What are you enjoying most about the Family Orchestra Project so far?

Savannah: Um...other than playing together? Finding somebody who likes the same things that you like in the family, other than you know the basic food and whatever. I think it's just cool that we have that in common 'cause not everybody in the family likes instruments – or they started but they didn't continue, but at least this way we have something in common. (Ms. Walsh: Cool.) (To Marisa) What do you think?

Marisa: To be able to spend more time.

Ms. Walsh: You like that a lot? That's good.

(Savannah-Marisa, First Pair Interview, 10-29-13)

During the pair's final interview, Marisa identified the musical benefit of learning new pieces, while her aunt Savannah addressed the joy of playing again. The group dynamics created by including both early adolescent children and adults in FOP were lauded by Savannah.

Ms. Walsh: What did you enjoy the most about participating in the Family Orchestra Project?

Savannah: (To Marisa) You answer.

Marisa: So learning new songs that I had never known.

Savannah: I like playing, I like playing again. And then seeing other parents too, it's like it's not just for kids. And just seeing them and us...it was a good experience.

Ms. Walsh: That's great. Yeah, it's funny how I think we forget that instruments are for everybody. You know once we become adults that, you know, I as a musician, it's hard for me to find time, but it is fun to play still. That's why we started in the first place, you know, as younger students, because it's fun and because we like it.

Savannah: And age doesn't really matter. I mean the parents are, you know, already of that age, you know they're adults and they were able to play. I mean we sounded really good.

(Savannah-Marisa, Second Pair Interview, 12-3-13)

Savannah, although the most experienced musician of the adult participants, appreciated the opportunity to make music in an intergenerational ensemble with her niece and noted “*it’s not just for kids.*”

Spending time together and bonding through playing music were mutual benefits noted by the FOP participants. They especially treasured the opportunity to have one-on-one time outside of the home, a rarity for many families with multiple children. Over the course of the study the participants also developed an appreciation for the group music making aspect of FOP.

Group Music Making

Consistently, week after week, the group really responds positively to playing together as an ensemble. It’s amazing to see the illumination of the parents’ countenances as they realize why their children love being in Orchestra so much and why they wanted to share the experience with their family members: It’s FUN! Making music is even more fun for this crew when we’re all in it together.

(Field Notes, Eighth Rehearsal, 11-19-13)

Fifth Rehearsal of FOP (Sixth Week of Study)

Tonight was our first rehearsal attempting to play as a true ensemble with players on melody and harmony parts. Ms. Walsh and I discovered an ideal teaching tool for ensembles like FOP with members at multiple ability levels: Fiddlers Philharmonic by Andrew H. Dabczynski and Bob Phillips. From this music book we worked on Cripple Creek (in D Major) and each musician had the option of learning the Tune (main melody), the Break (an advanced countermelody) or the Bass-line/Back-Up (Harmony).

I began by asking the students to teach their relatives the tune, but soon realized that we should start the adults (with the exception of the more experienced Savannah) on the back-up/bass-line. I grabbed a violin to help model the part for the mothers of Arianna and Billy. Arianna had requested my assistance as she was already getting frustrated with her mother Melitza's lack of coordination. To simplify the line further we divided the double-stops (a bowing technique that requires players to bow two strings simultaneously). Billy and Arianna played the bottom notes and their mothers Nancy and Melitza played the top notes which only required them to play open A string or first finger 'B' and to count a basic quarter note and quarter rest rhythm. Together the mother-son pair and mother-daughter pair practiced counting the rhythm and saying "rest" when time. With some coaching from their children and the instructors on how to count the rhythm and when to switch pitches, Nancy and Melitza got the hang of it!

Meanwhile the remaining FOP pairs were working together to learn their parts for "Cripple Creek". Ms. Walsh checked in with them to see if they needed any assistance, but each pair seemed to be content to work independently. Bruce and his son Bo easily mastered the bass-line after about fifteen minutes of pair practice and then began learning the tune. Savannah and her niece Marisa were given time to learn the break part in the back room. This gave them the freedom to play louder; otherwise they tried to keep their playing soft in the main room so as not to disturb the other pairs. Learning the advanced part gave the pair a fun and attainable musical challenge that would be more suitable to their skill level, plus it would enhance the ensemble's sound when we reunited.

For the final thirty minutes of rehearsal we had fun fitting all of the parts of “Cripple Creek” together as an ensemble. We began with everyone playing either the bass-line or back-up part. Then the students and Tia Savannah moved to the tune while Ms. Walsh and I stayed on the back-up/bass-line to help the adults stay on track with the harmony part. Finally, Savannah and Marisa moved to the break line and we had every part covered. The energy of the room changed dramatically and the pairs buzzed enthusiastically after each run through, chatting and laughing as the music grew in complexity. And as they grew more comfortable and excited to play, we even successfully tried taking an allegro moderato tempo. It was a great accomplishment for our FOP crew!

As rehearsal came to a close I made recommendations for other pieces to attempt from the book during their home practice. We also discussed the possibility of an intimate performance and celebratory dinner for our final meeting in December. Participants completed their written prompt forms and I got the feeling that tonight’s ensemble experience would inspire a wee bit more practicing this week. One participant commented, “This was the most fun yet!”

While the participants enjoyed making music as pairs, they especially enjoyed the time spent playing music as an ensemble. Child and adult participants found camaraderie and a fresh enthusiasm for learning when everyone was involved. Arianna noted that it was comforting to the youth to witness other pairs working together and to observe how their peers’ relatives adapted to the unfamiliar learning situation: *“I think it’s good to have kids and adults in the same orchestra because you can see how – not only how your*

parent or relative – but how others react to learning an instrument and going through all the challenges.” (Arianna, Student Focus Group Interview, 10-15-13) Knowing they were not alone in this endeavor may have motivated the adolescents to continue to evolve as teachers and practice partners.

The adults, especially those new to instrumental music, appreciated knowing they also had peers embarking on an uncharted learning adventure. More importantly, once playing the instruments began to make more sense and the interesting fiddle tune arrangements were introduced, the adult participants had a greater understanding of why their young relatives persevered with their orchestral music education: group music making was fun! Bo’s dad Bruce effusively shared his enthusiasm for the ensemble experience in his weekly written prompt responses and in his final pair interview.

As for me, I learned a lot of um actual technique. I mean, I didn’t have any background like [Bo] did so um all the techniques and everything was nice to learn. But I think what I enjoyed most – what I learned about playing was how much fun it was. I actually look forward to it every week. I was excited to start this but um I wasn’t really sure what to make of it and when we actually started putting the little songs together, you know, it really was a lot of fun to be able to actually play through a song. So as far as learning to play with people and enjoying it – that’s what I took from it. (Bruce, Second Pair Interview, 12-3-13)

The sentiment expressed by Bruce was shared by the entire group; it was just more of a revelation for the beginners.

All of the participants displayed enthusiasm when we began learning ensemble music with harmony and melody parts during the second half of the study. Many noted the positive experience in their written responses to the weekly prompts. Parents with no prior orchestral experience seemed to understand what it meant to be a part of something larger than one-on-one music lessons. The rehearsal room became energized when it was time to play multi-part fiddle tunes. Each participant found they could contribute something important to the whole, regardless of age or experience. In short, the FOP members discovered the joy of making music together.

Summary

Common challenges reported by the FOP participants and observed by the researcher were the cross-case themes of Patience and Practice. Common benefits emerged as the themes of Bonding and Group Music Making. The challenge of maintaining patience affected the adolescent participants with parental partners who were just starting their instrumental education. Bo was afflicted to a lesser degree than Arianna and Billy, both of whom struggled with impatience on a regular basis. Finding time to practice in addition to weekly rehearsals was a huge obstacle for every pair of participants. Bonding within the adult-child dyads was evident as the participants invested themselves in the process of strengthening their existing relationships through dedicated time together playing music. Group Music Making became a significant aspect of the FOP experience once the collective pairs started playing ensemble pieces with multiple parts.

Final Rehearsal and Mini-Concert of FOP (Eleventh Week of Study)

Three pairs of chairs plus a pair of bass stools and an accompanying stand for each were carefully placed in a semi-circle facing the terraced steps of my classroom. On the white board behind the musicians was the cheerful greeting ‘Welcome to our Family Orchestra Project Performance!’ There was also an outline for how we would be performing our three pieces: Jingle Bells in unison, then the fiddle tunes Cripple Creek and Bile ‘Em Cabbage Down with each person assigned to play the tune, break (advanced countermelody), or bass line/back-up (harmony) parts.

A couple of rehearsals ago we discussed as a group how we would like to celebrate our musical accomplishments and, while there was a little trepidation from some about having an audience, in the end we decided to invite family members to a casual “mini-concert” followed by a reception. I noticed group dynamics were a little different this week due to several factors: siblings of the student participants were in the room while we conducted our pre-performance rehearsal, staggered arrival times caused several of us to worry that we would not have everyone in attendance tonight, and certainly the idea of performing for our audience generated both nervous energy and excitement. In spite of these factors, everyone appeared to be in a good mood and positive energy infused the night.

The first ones to arrive, the mother-daughter pair began warming up together on Jingle Bells. Arianna told me that they had been practicing it together the night before and that her mom Melitza got all of it except the ending. Melitza: “I told her it would be okay if I dropped out at the end because no one would notice with everyone else

playing!” After a few minutes of no other musicians in the room, Melitza displayed a bit nerves as she asked me, “Did anyone call in to say that they weren’t going to make it tonight?” I could tell that she did not want to perform as just a duet: too exposed!

Little by little, the other pairs arrived, carrying instruments and delicious treats to share following our performance. In the chairs neighboring Melitza and Arianna, Nancy and her son Billy also began to warm up independently. Nancy’s high-school-aged daughter, an accomplished young violinist herself, was leaning over her mom to guide her bow while they played Jingle Bells. Nancy was still having trouble with the rhythm but she good-naturedly accepted the assistance. Billy was content to let his older sister take over a bit of the tutoring responsibilities.

Bo and his dad Bruce seemed to enjoy socializing with our guests as their preferred method of “warming up” before our performance. Soon Nancy’s daughter moved over to chat with Bo. They had both been members of my top middle school orchestra last year and he was talking to her about our upcoming holiday party gig. As he listed the pieces he was learning for the gig, she responded with “learned that” several times. Meanwhile Bruce demonstrated that he is just as silly interacting with his daughters who were in our audience tonight as he can be witty and wise-cracking during our FOP rehearsals. Once father and son made it over to their spots for the performance, Bruce noted the foreign set up of our chairs facing away from the white board and toward our audience: “Does everything feel the same on this side of the room?”

Last to arrive were Savannah and her niece Marisa. As I went into the hall to meet them Savannah confessed that she had completely forgotten that our final meeting

and mini-concert were tonight. She thought that it was the following week and her soft-spoken niece whom I had spoken with earlier in the day didn't remind her. She was bummed they didn't bring any audience members nor food to share. I assured them that it was fine and ushered them into the room. I truly was relieved when they arrived and though secretly disappointed that they didn't have any relatives in attendance, I made sure to share the video of our performance so that they could show family later (per Savannah's request). Before the night was over, Savannah showed the group her senior picture from high school in which she was posed holding her violin. Music was obviously a significant part of her childhood.

Once everyone was situated, Ms. Walsh pulled up a chair right behind the violinists who would be playing the back-up on our fiddle tunes and I grabbed my cello and sat on a stool facing the group. We divvied up parts for our fiddle tunes and then ran through everything. All of the FOP musicians were concentrating and working hard to give their best effort for our final ensemble experience together.

Our official concert was a rousing – albeit lightly attended – success! Ms. Walsh and I played along with the group and I stood to speak to our young audience before each selection. Small mistakes were made here and there; intonation bordered on the minor side of D Major at times; playing positions for our beginners were lax with technique. But no one cared! Every musician, including myself, was grinning from ear to ear and we were making MUSIC! As we stood to accept the applause of our audience following the final note of our performance, I turned back to the FOP musicians

absolutely beaming with pride. I thanked them saying, "You accomplished so much in just eleven weeks. Congratulations!"

Following our performance we celebrated with a delicious potluck feast of pizza, pasta salad, pumpkin bread, brownies, cookies and drinks. Everyone stayed well past our usual 7:30pm dismissal time chatting and enjoying each other's company. Before we disbanded, a group picture was taken and hugs and "thank you's" were exchanged. At one point during the reception, Bruce turned to me and inquired with a gleam in his eye, "So Mrs. Halko, what are you going to be up to next Tuesday night?" Chuckling I responded to the group as a whole, "I don't know. You guys wanna hang out?" While it was going to be nice to have my Tuesday evenings back, I sure would miss spending time with this great group of people!

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to examine the experiences of adolescent students and their adult relatives participating in The Family Orchestra Project (FOP), a program designed to promote family bonding through shared musical study and performance. FOP enabled middle school orchestra students to share their instrumental knowledge with an adult relative in a secure, semi-structured learning environment. Participants of this eleven-week study were four adult-child dyads: a father-son pair, a mother-son pair, a mother-daughter pair, and an aunt-niece pair. Data collected included field notes, a researcher-designed questionnaire, a student focus group interview, adult-child pair interviews, audio recordings, written prompts and responses, and a video recording. Five cross-case themes emerged during coding and data analysis: Role Reversal, Patience, Practice, Bonding, and Group Music Making. Each of the four adult-child pairs of participants had a distinct experience with the program, influenced by their pre-existing relationship with their partner, individual personalities, and the level of previous musical experience each person brought to the group. In this chapter I discuss conclusions based on my original research questions which were as follows:

1. How does participation in a common musical activity influence adult-child communication and bonding during adolescence?
2. How do the adolescents describe the experience of teaching their adult family member?

3. What are the main benefits and challenges of The Family Orchestra Project as identified by the participants and instructor?

Then I discuss implications for practice for music educators and provide recommendations for future research.

The findings of this qualitative study cannot be generalized to the population as a whole. It has been my goal to tell the story of these four diverse pairs of participants as a means of sharing our experience with those interested in learning more about family dynamics and potential bonding during adolescence, and the potential benefits or challenges that could arise from an intergenerational music ensemble. The story of The Family Orchestra Project and its participants is unique. However, music educators who work with adolescent-aged children may find some similarities between my students and their own. Parents or relatives of adolescent children may also gain some insight about what matters most for some young musicians during this stage of instrumental learning so to better support them.

Conclusions

Participation in a common musical activity can promote communication and facilitate adult-child bonding during early adolescence while also challenging the individuals to grow as they assume nontraditional roles in their relationship.

Based on the findings of this study, it appears that an intergenerational music ensemble, such as The Family Orchestra Project, can be a source of potential bonding and relationship building for adolescent children and their parent/adult relative. An important aspect of my study's design was that of role reversal. For three of the four FOP pairs, the

adult participant was a novice string player. This meant a reversal of traditional adult-child roles: Child became Teacher and Adult became Student. Savannah and her niece Marisa were the outlier pair of the study. Both were violinists prior to the study and thus did not experience a change in typical adult-child roles but more of an equal musical partnership. Although musical backgrounds and interpersonal dynamics varied, communicative growth and engagement in the process of bonding were key elements of each FOP pair's experience.

I designed FOP as a student-driven program that would foster my middle school students' communication skills, reinforce their musicianship, and facilitate familial bonding through sharing musical knowledge with an adult relative. My students' willingness to communicate with an adult was tested before the study began because the responsibility to invite a parent or relative to participate alongside them in FOP was solely theirs. Only those seventh- and eighth-grade students with sufficient interest in the program and enough motivation to speak to a parent or adult relative would proceed to the next level of commitment and full participation in the study. Admittedly, it may have been easier for me to recruit participants via a mass email sent directly to orchestra parents or a general announcement made during an orchestra concert, but I wanted participation in FOP to be student-initiated, theorizing that this would be indicative of an adolescent's voluntary investment in the study and not the result of parental coercion. FOP's recruitment design effectively illustrated Sichivitsa's (2004) assertion that "children who show independent interest in music may motivate their parents to participate in musical activities with them" (p. 36).

In response to the Initial Questionnaire for Participants, every pair indicated they already felt comfortable communicating with one another on a regular basis about various subjects. This meant that the baseline for frequent communication was already very high at the start of the study. It also meant that FOP attracted participants who wanted to strengthen already positive relationships. The child participants also revealed during their focus group interview that they believed their adult partners already possessed an interest in learning music prior to consenting to join FOP. It follows, therefore, that each adolescent would feel most comfortable working with an adult whom they believed cared about them and about music. Parental attitudes toward music, and a willingness to engage musically with a child, have a more salient impact on a child's musical achievement, musical self-concept, and decisions to persist in music study than the adult's personal level of musicianship (Brand, 1986; Davidson, Sloboda, & Howe, 1995/1996; Vispoel & Austin, 1998; Sichicitsa, 2004). Thus, regardless of their musical background, the adult participants of FOP had an opportunity to positively influence their adolescent relative's music education.

Diverse individual personalities and relationship dynamics contributed to the varied communication styles I observed between the adolescents and their adult partners. Of the four young participants, only Arianna could be categorized as an extrovert. She was unafraid to "speak her mind" and struggled with impatience. This led to some interpersonal conflict between her and her mother Melitza, who was equally as outspoken as her daughter. Arianna often vocalized her frustrations with Melitza's lack of coordination when playing the violin. Melitza then often vocalized her desire for her

daughter to demonstrate more patience and understanding towards her. Communication was strong for this mother-daughter pair, but it was important for them to learn how to temper it.

Fellow adolescent participants Bo and Billy also experienced some frustration with their parents during FOP, but as introverts they handled it discreetly. Bo was far more introverted and reserved than his father Bruce. Whereas Bruce believed a teacher should act like a respectfully assertive coach, Bo approached teaching as a guide who would give his student time for independent exploration and problem solving. This led to some communicative stress for the two of them, but they generally appeared to be rather jovial during FOP rehearsals. I observed early in the study that immersing themselves in the music often became a strategy for Bo and Bruce to overcome their personality and pedagogical differences. When Bruce returned to work during the last four weeks of the study, his energy level dropped and communication between father and son was minimized.

Billy was more introverted like Bo, but dealt with frustration and impatience with his mother on a regular basis like Arianna. Due to his even temperament, he appeared to remain calm when working with his mother Nancy, but his written prompts and interview responses revealed he struggled with maintaining his patience. Billy lacked confidence in his communication skills when explaining concepts to his mother which affected his patience. He had to learn to adjust his pacing to meet her needs. Nancy was as mild-mannered as her son, so she consistently demonstrated patience with Billy as he learned to navigate his teacher-role.

Marisa was the most introverted participant in the study and while she was not required to fulfill the teacher-role for her aunt, she certainly needed the opportunity to practice her communication skills with a trusted adult. Savannah recognized this and provided ample opportunities for Marisa to impart her ideas and musical knowledge to her during pair practice. Having a musical background enabled Savannah to encourage her niece in ways that her fellow adult participants could not offer their children in this context.

All four adolescents, regardless of tendencies to be extroverted or introverted, demonstrated communicative growth via regular contact with their adult relative during the on-on-one pair practice time at weekly rehearsals. As the study progressed, students felt increasingly comfortable explaining and demonstrating musical concepts and they gradually relied less on instructor intervention. As their classroom orchestra teacher, it was gratifying for me to witness their pedagogical transformations. Bonding between adolescent and adult participants was a noted benefit of improved communication skills and mutual engagement in the process of learning music.

The adolescent participants of FOP described the experience of teaching their adult family members in a variety of ways, including “weird”, “awkward” and “good”.

During the student focus group interview with Ms. Walsh at the fourth week of the study, each person was asked to address what it felt like to be the teacher for their parent or relative. The students offered a variety of perspectives. Bo said it felt weird to be the teacher, particularly due to the reversal of roles with his father and the novelty of the learning situation. He also noted that teaching required a great deal of patience.

Arianna reported feeling at ease with the reversal of roles and said that it felt good to be the teacher. She affirmed Bo's opinion that effective teaching required patience, a trait she claimed she did not naturally exhibit. Marisa's role during FOP was more of a practice partner than a teacher for her aunt, but she still noted that it felt strange not to have an orchestra teacher in charge throughout FOP rehearsals. She also believed that having some autonomy and learning to speak confidently would be good practice for future parenting. Billy reported that the teacher-role experience felt awkward due to the reversal of roles with his mother. He also expressed the challenge of finding the right words to communicate basic concepts during pair practice.

The adolescents spoke candidly during both of their pair interviews about their teacher-role experiences. Bo explained that adjusting to the new role was somewhat challenging due to his inexperience with explaining and demonstrating things effectively to a beginning-level adult musician. In his final interview he admitted to being frustrated whenever his dad Bruce asked him to hold on a minute during tutoring, but he discovered that his dad responded well to polite directives. Arianna noted that the reversal of roles "felt a little weird", but she still relished the chance to be the expert and to teach her mother Melitza how to play the violin. She also felt her mother would gain valuable insight from accepting the student role in their musical relationship. Arianna identified impatience as her greatest challenge while teaching. Billy explained that teaching could be stressful, especially because working with his mom, who was a beginner, required patience and hard work. He voiced concern about his need for the FOP instructors to demonstrate more teaching strategies.

Marisa, from the outlier aunt-niece pair, did not have an equal chance to embody the teacher-role due to her aunt's previous instrumental training. However, her communicative skills were regularly engaged as Savannah encouraged her to share her thoughts and posed musical questions to her during their pair practice. Marisa revealed at the end of her final pair interview that given the chance to participate in FOP in the future she might prefer to work with an adult partner whom she could actually teach. While she loved spending time playing music with her aunt, it was possible that as she witnessed her adolescent peers working with their beginner-level parents she may have felt as though she was missing out on a key learning experience from FOP.

Over the course of the study, the adolescent participants with parent partners, Arianna, Bo and Billy, grew more comfortable in their teaching role even though the task of teaching a beginner remained a challenge. I observed improvement in their approaches to problem solving and the communication of ideas during FOP rehearsals. The need for instructor intervention to model and explain musical concepts diminished greatly during the final month of the study as the students took more responsibility for their parent's progress. The process of teaching did not necessarily grow easier for the adolescents; rather they improved as teachers because they were mindful of the specific challenges facing their parents, they sought solutions and strategies for success, and they recognized the importance of maintaining patience and celebrating small victories in the learning process when teaching beginners.

The main challenges of FOP were Patience and Practice and the main benefits were Bonding and Group Music Making.

Participants of FOP encountered a variety of challenges and benefits during the study. Several of the obstacles were specific to the age level and experience of the individual. For the adolescents, navigating the teacher-role and effectively communicating with an adult were evident challenges. For the adults, mastering a new instrument and learning how to read music—or relearning musical knowledge from grade school—and working with an adolescent partner were notable challenges.

Familial dynamics and learning journeys were distinct for each pair, yet collectively the FOP participants grappled with similar issues. Common challenges reported by the participants and observed by the instructors were the cross-case themes of Patience and Practice. The challenge of maintaining patience mainly affected the adolescent participants, Bo, Arianna, and Billy, with parental partners who were beginning string players. Bo was afflicted to a lesser degree than Arianna and Billy, both of whom struggled with impatience on a regular basis. One reason for this may have been that Bo's father Bruce had an easier time with the playing mechanics of his instrument and understanding note reading than did Arianna's mother Melitza and Billy's mother Nancy. Arianna and Melitza identified their shared trait of impatience as an impediment in their FOP journey. The root of Billy's impatience was two-fold: he struggled with applying effective teaching strategies and he had expected his mother to acquire violin fundamentals more rapidly than she did. Ultimately, the reversal of traditional roles for the three parent-child pairs caused some interpersonal conflicts, but also resulted in important insights and reciprocal understanding.

Finding time to practice in addition to weekly rehearsals was a huge obstacle for every pair of participants. Everyone fell short of the recommended goal of one to two hours of weekly home practice, with most pairs feeling accomplished if they were able to squeeze in fifteen to twenty minutes in any given week. Participants cited overly full daily routines, parental responsibilities, and the need to rest as the main reasons for not practicing at home. Savannah and her niece Marisa had the disadvantage of living apart, and Arianna split time living with her mother and father. Arianna's mother Melitza noted that Tuesday evening rehearsals were the best time for the pair to practice because it was time devoted to one another, free from the distractions of home and other family members.

The idea that FOP rehearsals afforded the pairs sacred one-on-one time to explore music and enjoy each other's company contributed to the emergent theme of Bonding. Bonding was one of two common benefits highlighted by participants, with the other being Group Music Making. Bonding within the adult-child dyads was evident as the participants invested themselves in the process of strengthening their existing relationships through dedicated time together playing music week after week. It is interesting to note that while the adults felt that time together with their young relative was of paramount importance, the adolescents valued the musical aspect of FOP just as much. They joined FOP because they wanted to spend time with their relative *making music*. Similar to Bushong (2005), adult participants in this study experienced firsthand the foundational skills and dedication required to learn an instrument. In both studies, adult-child pairs were encouraged to engage with each other musically at home, but only

during FOP did the instrumental learning take place with adult-child stand partners in the same ensemble. A multitude of activities can provide adolescents and adults the opportunity to bond, but FOP required both an extended commitment to learn about music and a willingness to adopt less familiar roles in the relationship. Fortunately for me, four pairs committed to this study, so the musical experience of the participants extended beyond one-on-one music lessons and evolved into interactive group music making.

Group Music Making became a significant aspect of the FOP experience during the second half of the study once the pairs started playing ensemble pieces with multiple parts collectively. While the adults and adolescents enjoyed spending exclusive time together, they especially enjoyed playing music as an ensemble. Participants learned fiddle tunes that had parts appropriate for beginning and intermediate level musicians so everyone felt successful and contributed something important to the group's overall sound. The ensemble experience positively changed the energy of the FOP rehearsals and the pairs looked forward to playing music as a whole group each week. Also, the parents new to learning string instruments finally realized what motivated their children to remain committed to music participation in their middle school orchestra program: it was fun!

Implications for Practice

Music educators and their adolescent students could benefit from a learning opportunity similar to that of The Family Orchestra Project. I highly encourage interested educators to consider what type of program may best suit their teaching style as well as

serve the families in their community. One of my main interests in this study was investigating how my middle school students would execute the teacher-role for their adult partner. Thus I chose to keep my program aligned to a typical beginning-intermediate orchestral classroom environment in hopes that the adult participants would gain insight about the experience of their children but also to help my students feel that they were in familiar territory. I wanted to empower them to use skills they had learned in their school orchestra ensembles to guide their parent or relative.

A semester-long or year-long intergenerational ensemble may be too lengthy of a time commitment for many secondary school teachers to make, but there are other means to facilitate adult-child interactions in smaller yet effective doses. I offer a few ideas for consideration, some of which have been shared with me by fellow music educators. Of utmost importance is granting adolescent children the opportunity to share what they love with a caring adult relative. This could be accomplished through an interview assignment for which a student invites an adult relative to engage in a conversation about a variety of musical topics (such as music preferences, personal musical background, family traditions involving music, etc.). Another idea is to invite parents or adult relatives to attend a special “Music Exploration Night” during which they would engage in a guided dialogue about music with their young relative, learn some basic rhythm reading and then potentially transfer that knowledge to playing open strings on an instrument under the guidance of their child. A final suggestion is for each member of your ensemble to invite one parent to sit (or stand) beside them during a designated selection on an orchestra

program. The experience of being on stage (or on a gym floor) alongside their child and witnessing the music performance from a different perspective could be quite powerful.

Another implication for practice is that of providing adolescent students some opportunities for semi-autonomous discovery learning in pairs or small groups within the music classroom. This can feel challenging in larger ensembles, but may be attainable through a two-week-long chamber music experience during which student quartets are given the task to learn an attainable musical selection with minimal teacher intervention. The goal of the project would be for students to not only demonstrate developing musicianship but to also develop communicative and problem-solving skills. Ideally the chamber unit would culminate with an in-class dress rehearsal for orchestra peers and then a special evening performance for family members to attend.

Recommendations for Future Research

Given the opportunity to conduct a future research study with The Family Orchestra Project, I would be interested to recruit student participants who struggle in my regular classroom and could benefit from more family support through mutual involvement. All of the volunteer students in this study were top musicians in their respective orchestra classes. That may have greatly influenced their decision to participate in FOP because they seemed confident they had musical knowledge to share.

I would also be interested to conduct longitudinal research with the participants of this current FOP study to see if there were any long-term effects to the partners' relationships as a result of participating in the program. Another variation would be to

invite pairs to participate in FOP again to see how the pair and group dynamics develop as the musicianship of each participant changes over time.

Inspired by the Parent Instrument Program (PIP) of Bushong (2005), another study could recruit beginning string players and their parents to participate in a FOP-style program during their first year of playing. Bushong recruited adult participants to attend weekly classes to learn how to play the same instrument that their child was learning in beginning band. She designed PIP to promote parent-child musical interaction, to bolster student home practice support, and to improve retention rates. The research design I propose would vary from Bushong's in that the adult and child participants would be learning a common instrument alongside one another rather than meeting separately. The focus of the program would be potential parent-child bonding through shared instrument study.

Investigations into the group dynamics and opportunities for adult-child bonding in intergenerational ensembles that play other styles of music such as mariachi, bluegrass, or jazz could be especially fascinating. It would also be interesting to see how novice musicians fared if taught to play music by rote rather than face the challenge of instrument mechanics plus reading printed notes for the first time.

A Final Note

I am often quite tired on my drive back to school for FOP rehearsals. But I always enjoy the experience and I find myself feeling more optimistic about life in general and teaching as my profession by the time I say good night to the participants. (Personal Reflection from Field Notes, Eighth Rehearsal, 11-19-13)

Walking the line between creator and researcher of The Family Orchestra Project proved to be quite the acrobatic journey, but it was well worth the sense of balance I gained from all of my insights. The main challenges that I faced as the instructor of FOP were tailoring instruction to meet the needs of learners with a wide range of musical abilities and being both an "insider" of the group as well as an observer. What I enjoyed most was the opportunity to facilitate group music making for my adolescent students and their adult relatives. They were able to connect with one another through experiential learning and I was able to interact with them in a fun, relaxed setting. It gave me great satisfaction to witness each of my students growing more comfortable in their teacher-role, communicating their knowledge and love of music with a trusted adult, and thereby strengthening their familial bonds. My initial observation about myself that first night of FOP rehearsal was an accurate one: I *did* learn just as much from this experience as my participants. And for that I am truly grateful.

APPENDIX A

INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS

1. Name: _____
2. Name You Would Like to Use as Your Pseudonym (*False Name*) Throughout the Research Study: _____
3. Have you ever played an orchestra string instrument before? If yes, which one (violin, viola, cello, bass)? _____
4. Please list any other instruments that you know how to play (i.e.: guitar, piano, trumpet, etc.):

5. Do you know how to read music notes? Please circle an answer below:
 - a.) Yes, I am very confident with reading music.
 - b.) Yes, I learned how to read music when I was younger, so I remember some things but could use some review.
 - c.) Yes, I learned once upon a time, but I can't remember a thing!
 - d.) No, I have never learned how to read music notes.
6. Who is your stand partner for The Family Orchestra Project?

How are the two of you related?

7. What motivated you to join The Family Orchestra Project together?

8. What do you anticipate will be the greatest **benefit** of being a member of The Family Orchestra Project?

9. What do you anticipate will be the greatest **challenge** of being a member of The Family Orchestra Project?

10. Approximately how much time do you and your relative spend together on a regular basis each week?
a.) Less than 5 hours b.) 5-10 hours c.) 10-15 hours d.) 15-20 hours e.) Over 20 hours
11. What are your favorite activities to do with your relative?
-
12. How would you rate your current level of communication with your relative?
Choose the best option below:
- a.) Excellent – we have conversations every day and can talk about almost anything!
 - b.) Good – we have conversations frequently and can talk about most topics.
 - c.) Fair – we have conversations occasionally, but we have trouble connecting with each other.
 - d.) Unsatisfactory – we don't have conversations on a regular basis and I feel like we don't have much in common.
 - e.) I'm not sure how to describe our level of communication, but I know that I want it to improve!

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions for Student Group Interview

1. Tell me about your experience with The Family Orchestra Project (FOP) so far.
2. Tell me who your stand partner is and why you invited that person to join the orchestra with you.
3. What are the greatest challenges that you have faced so far in FOP?
4. Have you discovered strategies that are helping you work through some of the challenges that you and your parent/relative are facing?
5. What does it feel like to be a teacher for your parent/relative?
6. How does it feel to have adults and kids in the same orchestra?
7. What are you enjoying most about FOP so far?
8. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about FOP?

Interview Questions for Adult/Child Pair Interviews

Interview #1 (Midpoint of the Study)

1. Tell me about your experience with The Family Orchestra Project (FOP) so far.
2. What does it feel like to be stand partners in the same orchestra?
3. Have you been able to find time to practice together at home? Please describe your home routine for me.
4. What are the some of the challenges that you have faced so far in FOP?
5. What are you enjoying most about FOP so far?
6. Is there anything that I can do as the FOP director to improve your learning experience?

Interview #2 (End of the Study)

1. What has participating in The Family Orchestra Project (FOP) taught you about music?
2. What has participating in The Family Orchestra Project taught you about each other?
3. What were some of the greatest challenges that you faced as a pair?
4. What did you enjoy most about participating in FOP?
5. Given the chance, would you participate in The Family Orchestra Project again, or would you recommend it to others?
6. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about your experience in FOP?

APPENDIX C
WRITTEN PROMPTS

1. This week I learned...
2. The most *challenging* thing about this week was...
3. The *best* thing that happened this week was...
4. Next week, I hope...

APPENDIX D

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD PROJECT APPROVAL

Date: July 10, 2014

Principal Investigator: Gabrielle Marie Halko

Protocol Number: 1300000343R001

Protocol Title: The Family Orchestra Project: Parent-Child Bonding during Adolescence through Playing Music Together

Level of Review: Expedited

Determination: Approved

Expiration Date: July 22, 2015

Documents Reviewed

Concurrently:

HSPP Forms/Correspondence: *Draves_F212.pdf*

HSPP Forms/Correspondence: *G. Halko F212.doc*

This submission meets the criteria for approval under 45 CFR 46.110, 45 CFR 46.111 and/or

21 CFR 50 and 21 CFR 56.

- The University of Arizona maintains a Federalwide Assurance with the Office for Human Research Protections (FWA #00004218).
 - All research procedures should be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the Investigator Manual.
 - The current consent with the IRB approval stamp must be used to consent subjects.
 - The Principal Investigator should notify the IRB immediately of any proposed changes that affect the protocol and report any unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others.
 - For projects that wish to continue after the expiration date listed above please submit an F212, Continuing Review Progress Report, forty-five (45) days before the expiration date to ensure timely review of the project.
 - All documents referenced in this submission have been reviewed and approved. Documents are filed with the HSPP Office. If subjects will be consented the approved consent(s) are attached to the approval notification from the HSPP Office.
- This project has been reviewed and approved by an IRB Chair or designee.
No changes to a project may be made prior to IRB approval except to eliminate apparent immediate hazard to subjects.

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