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A community of learners in an elementary school recorder collegium

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A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS
IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL RECORDER COLLEGIUM

by

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A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore how students learned in an elementary school Collegium that consisted of SATB recorders. Using Rogoff’s Theory of Community of Learners, an examination of the experiences of the students, the researcher, parents, classroom teachers, and the principal of the school occurred during one academic semester of instruction. The primary question that guided this study was: How did the students, instructor, teachers, and parents work together as a Community of Learners? The research questions for this study included: 1) What were the background conditions that led the students to audition for and take an active role in the Collegium ensemble?; How do the students engage with members of the community?; 3) How do the students engage in shared endeavors?

Data collection included individual interviews, focus group interviews, journals, observations, and artifacts. Data was coded during the analysis process and revealed the following themes: Foundations of the Community uncovered influences from family members, as well as early pre-Collegium experiences; Entry points into the Collegium explored the initial interest by the participants, as they voiced their intentions to be a part of the ensemble and spoke of their attitudes regarding practice and learning processes;
Experiences in the Collegium demonstrated perspectives on rehearsing together, self-preparedness, work attitudes, listening and concentration issues, group awareness, interdependence, learning together, and various issues of managing the ensemble work with other academic commitments.

Findings from this study indicated that close interactive behavior developed among the participants within the constructed environment, influenced by several factors, including foundational and educational backgrounds, exposure to the recorders, and an encouragement of a collaborative Community of Learners approach. The study concludes with a consideration of the author’s role in the community, implications, and need for further study. Implications for the profession include establishing a learning environment that promotes collaborative learning, providing opportunities for students to engage with each other, and using the surrounding community of parents and teachers to assist with teaching students, which can lead to an improvement in the level of performance skills in an ensemble.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI Administrator Interview
ISI Individual Student Interview
PFGI Parent Focus Group Interview
SATB Soprano Alto Tenor Bass
SFGI Student Focus Group Interview
SJ Student Journal
TFGI Teacher Focus Group Interview
TJ Teacher Journal
CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Historically, the most conventional educational method for delivery of instruction in the general classroom environment is adult-driven instruction, or “adult-run instruction” (Rogoff, 1994, p. 209). Adult-run instruction involves a one-way transference of information from teacher to student. Music teachers often deliver information to students via adult-run instruction and will take different approaches for delivery of instruction within their classrooms to accommodate diverse learning aptitudes of the students. Examples of different teaching approaches with adult-run instruction may include an elementary music teacher singing a phrase and having the students repeat it back to them, leading the students with singing a song, modeling the recorder for students, or potentially simply “telling” the students what to do, or lecturing about a composer or genre of music. Regardless of the approaches used by the teacher, adult-run instruction places the teacher as the sole person who delivers and conveys information in the classroom. Teachers often navigate these different adult-run approaches via state and district mandated guidelines.

Rogoff, Turkanis, and Bartlett (2001) claimed that much of traditional school structuring “stemmed from the effort to treat school instruction as an efficient factory” (p. 6). This approach treated students as passive recipients of knowledge passed on by teachers. Rogoff et al. stated that the formulaic drill and repeat mentality did not necessarily promote deep thinking for children engaged in classroom activities that were based upon the adult-run model. Direct music instruction, or teacher-oriented instructional type—where the teacher delivers the information to students—comprise
models in which “the teacher leads and directs students to acquire and generate specific, clearly defined knowledge in the form of concepts, propositions, strategies, and operations” (Sink, 2002, p. 315).

**Child-Run Instruction**

On the opposite end of the spectrum is the child-centered acquisition of knowledge through discovery, or child-run instruction (Rogoff, 1994). With this model of learning, children learn through the acquisition of knowledge and skills either by themselves or with peers. The teacher essentially remains a passive observer.

The adult-run and the child-run models are typically one-dimensional approaches of the learning process in which either the educator or learner is active, while the other is passive. Rogoff (1994) viewed the students in the adult-run model as non-participating recipients of pre-determined information presented by the educator, while in the child-centered model, the student becomes an agent and discoverer of information without interference from the teacher, who remained external to the learning process, except as the initial organizer of the learning environment in the classroom.

Dewey (1997) portrayed the child-centered progressive education in a manner that expressed the polar opposite of a traditional adult-run approach Dewey stated:

To imposition from above is opposed expression and cultivation of individuality; to external discipline is opposed free activity; to learning from texts and teachers, learning through experience; to acquisition of isolated skills and techniques by drill, is opposed acquisition of them as means of attaining ends which make direct vital appeal; to preparation for a more or less remote future is opposed making opportunities of present life; to static aims and materials is opposed acquaintance with a changing world. (pp. 19-20)
Another approach exists, however, which does not entail either the adult-run model or the child-centered model.

**Community of Learners**

The Community of Learners approach to instruction is not merely a blend of adult-run instruction and child-centered instruction, but rather an attitude that involves a "transforming participation in shared sociocultural endeavors" (Rogoff, 1994, p. 210). Rogoff (1994) described prominent characteristics of the Community of Learners approach as having a cooperative structure of activity, an asymmetrical organization of roles of all participants, a student-directed management of learning, coordination of all participants, and the adult role providing support and guidance rather than being dictatorial. Rogoff (2001) stressed:

> Adults are responsible for guiding the overall process and for supporting children’s changing participation in their shared endeavors. Adults provide leadership and encourage children’s leadership as well. This perspective thus eliminates the dichotomy of adult-controlled learning versus children-controlled learning: it substitutes a quite different arrangement in which children and adults are partners rather than adversaries. (p. 7)

In Part I of Chapter Two I will discuss the Community of Learners in more detail for it will comprise the theoretical framework in this study.

**Statement of Issue**

The traditional adult-run approach for music education is a prevalent option for music teachers. It permits a transference of information often required by district or state mandates in order to adhere to suggested standards for the performing arts or possibly funding and performance evaluations for schools. If music is a subject that occurs once or twice a week for a short time period, a teacher’s instinct may be to disseminate
information as directly as possible. A direct approach involving lectures and reading
books or articles on music, however, does not necessarily lead the student to engage in
the music making process. Although modeling can serve as an important factor in
student learning, students who simply copy a teacher’s singing or playing do not
necessarily experience the creative process and may not efficiently develop the tools for
independent problem solving (Damon, 1990; Dewey 1997; Rogoff, 1984, 1994, 1995;
Vygotsky, 1986). The situation becomes more complex when one views curriculum as
“the object of study and subject (student or teacher) is distanced (even alienated) from it”
Jorgenson (2002, p. 51). Further, teachers often feel pressure to “teach to the test,” thus
they focus on covering material instead of parlaying knowledge to their students (Rogoff,
1994). The direct adult-run approach does not always work with a student, for example,
that may have a deficiency in language comprehension or may have difficulty in paying
attention to verbal directives from the teacher.

In student performing ensembles, a conductor poses an agenda of work, indicates
which passages need work, and specifies a work tempo. There is interplay among
members of a student ensemble and, in a collaborative situation, there is a cooperative
sense of activity. However, in the classroom adult-run instruction is traditionally
prominent and entails direct lecturing, where the teacher delivers information to students
via lecturing. In comparing two types of learning, direct lecturing and reciprocal
communication, Damon (1990) described direct lecturing as a simple transference of
information. After drawing attention to the enormous disparity between the two
approaches, Damon stated that direct lecturing “relies on the adult’s skills as message-
maker as well as on the child’s somewhat passive attentiveness” (1990, p. 99).

According to McCarthy (2002), in the second half of the twentieth century, music education research has focused on sociocultural experiences, resulting from a growing awareness of diversity in the Western world and realization that “music education philosophers are increasingly coming to view music as social action and to consider music teaching and learning as a process that is embedded in social cultural values and meanings” (p. 563). McCarthy further stated that theories based on social constructivism, and social transmissions and transformations have formed the basis for operating perspectives for exploring activities in the classroom. Rogoff (1994) emphasized the “perspective that learning is a process of transformation of participation” (p. 209) and argued that education “is a process of transforming participation in shared sociocultural endeavors” (p. 210).

The Community of Learners approach encourages a cooperative activity among students, while maintaining a connection between student and teacher (Rogoff, 1994). The interactive involvement provides opportunities that allow the student to participate, not only as a learner, but to undergo experiences of teaching peers, as students in any given situation are at various levels of development regarding skill usage and concept comprehension.

A study that explores a Community of Learners approach may provide insights for practitioners in music education to offer a more engaging learning experience for their students. In this study I selected a Collegium Musicum model, an ensemble comprised of students playing the recorder, to explore the various aspects of a Community of Learners.
To assist with providing the context for the Collegium Ensemble, in the next section I will discuss the historical development of the Collegium Musicum as a concept that originated in Europe.

**History of the Collegium Musicum**

The first appearances of Collegium Musicum ensembles took place in Germany and Switzerland in the second half of the sixteenth century. The earliest collegia were unstructured get-togethers that “provided opportunities for shared-music making and conviviality” (Phillips and Jackson, 1986). Lang noted that the Leipzig Collegium Musicum began to produce public concerts during the 1760’s (Lang, 1941).

The modern concept of the Collegium Musicum playing music from earlier times began when “Hugo Riemann started the modern collegium movement at the University of Leipzig in 1908” (Haskell, 1988, p. 56). Academic and amateur musicologists were at the core of the performing group, performing primarily Baroque music. Wilibald Gurlitt was a graduate student under Riemann from 1908 and founded his own collegium in the University of Freiburg a decade later. Willi Apel, a German musicologist, immigrated to the United States after receiving his Ph.D. from Berlin, where he specialized in fifteenth and sixteenth century music, and founded a Collegium Musicum at Harvard. Paul Hindemith, also an immigrant from Germany, founded his Collegium Musicum at Yale during the 1940’s. The growth of academic collegia in Europe and the United States was spontaneous and strong. Early music groups that were collegia in all but name, like Musica Reservata under Michael Morrow and John Beckett and The Early Music Consort of London under David Munrow, thrived throughout the second half of the twentieth
The instrumentation of the modern Collegium varied immensely, dependent on factors such as repertoire, style, and availability. Instruments like the curtal, the sordun, and the kortholt had a relatively short lifespan compared to the shawm, the recorder, and the rebec. Phillips and Jackson (1986) suggested that a basic collection of instruments might include a lute, a vielle, a consort of 4 viols, a psaltery, 7 recorders, 4 crumhorns, a flute in $d'$, a tenor sackbut, a tabor, and a tambourine. An expanded collection might add more strings, wind percussion, as well as a harpsichord, and a portative organ. The intention is to play the instruments as needed, according to historical practice, and not all at once.

The recorder as an instrument seemed to have evolved from a folk instrument around the middle of the 1400’s (Hunt, 1977). It is, however, difficult to ascertain if the earliest literary references during the 1300’s from Chaucer, Machaut, and others were conceptually recorders, flageolets, simpler whistles or, perhaps, folk instruments evolving towards a recorder-type construction (Hunt, 1977; Fitzpatrick, 1975; Brown, 1990; Wollitz, 1995).

Fitzpatrick (1975) alluded to literary references that suggested the presence of recorder families before 1450 mentioned that the ranges of the soprano, alto, and tenor recorders fit the “parts of the mid-thirteenth century Anglo-French motets and clausulae and] provides evidence of various recorder sizes” (p.363). The argument against using multi-part literature as a guide for the existence of recorder families is that very little in the way of specified instrumentation is indicated in musical scores until several centuries
later. The pinnacle of recorder ensemble playing, whether in a whole consort or in a broken (mixed) consort occurred during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The popularity of the recorder ensemble began to diminish somewhat during the 1700's. Even though the alto was quite prominent as a solo instrument throughout most of the eighteenth century, Robinson (2003) presented documentary evidence that recorder ensembles existed well into the eighteenth century, by referring to the sale of instruments from Jacob Denner in 1710 and 1720.

The recorder virtually dropped out of use during the nineteenth century. On the occasion of the Chester Archaeological Society's move into the Grosvenor Museum in 1886, Bridge (1901) stated that a disintegrating container unveiled "a rare set of ancient Flutes-a-Bec, or Recorders" (p. 109)

After the turn of the century Arnold Dolmetsch became a primary influence for the revival of the recorder. Dolmetsch was in instrument maker, specializing in viols, lutes, clavichords, and harpsichords for Chickering, a Boston-based piano firm. Upon his return to England, he began to make recorders and formed a consort of five players, which included Carl Dolmetsch, his son, who became leading advocate of constructing and playing recorders (McN., 1940). The revival of the instrument began an examination of literature of early music and eventually spurred a growth of new literature of twentieth century music written expressly for recorders.

The Recorder in Music Education

One does not have to be a band instructor to teach this instrument. The general music teacher in your school can handle this important task easily. Otherwise, a few lessons by a knowledgeable musician will be sufficient to prepare someone
who has a background in keyboard, strings or voice to teach recorder to a class of
beginning musicians. (Derosiers, 2008, p. 27)

In the field of music education many ensemble directors and teachers consider the
recorder as a transition to a wind or stringed instrument. Derosiers (2008) maintained
that the most efficient preparation "for an instrumental program is to use the recorder as a
'pre-band' instrument" and added that schools should try to acquire "a full-time certified
and experienced instrumental music educator" (p. 27). Instrumental instructors for the
band, according to Desrosiers, should possess the following type of experiences in their
training: performances with symphony orchestras; or recent graduates who specialize in
wind and brass instruments. This attitude, espoused by Desrosiers, ignored the recorder
as a self-sufficient instrument and this issue is not new to the field of music education, as
researchers and practitioners have debated the issue for the past fifty years.

Other recent studies have promoted the recorder as a preparational instrument or
even an instrument with a diminished musical value. O'Neill (2002) suggested that the
general public viewed the recorder as a child's instrument, primarily because of its size
and pricing compared to other instruments, stating that the ambiguous attitude towards
the validity of the recorder as a real instrument might act "as a constraining influence on
children's ability to view themselves as musicians since they do not associate it with
instruments they see played in the adult world" (p. 92). McPherson and Davidson (2006)
explained that students often play recorders in school because of tradition or
expectations, stating, "these instruments can provide initial and unthreatening points of
departure, and so their merits should not be underestimated" (p. 332).

Wollitz (1995) stated that a student's accessibility to a first recorder has become
very simplified in recent times, because of the availability of plastic recorders, even though the spectrum of quality can be quite varied. Plastic instruments are generally less expensive than wooden recorders and can also acquaint the student with a training opportunity for the care of the instrument. Wollitz added that, at some point, a student may wish to choose a wooden recorder of acceptable quality, but the choices become more complicated, because of the fact that recorders by the same maker can be quite diverse.

Not all music teachers consider the recorder as a transition instrument to participation in a band or orchestral ensemble. Burakoff (1966) emphasized the importance of teacher qualification for the instrument and stated:

The teacher of recorder in the classroom . . . should: (a) play the recorder well; (b) understand the principles of breathing, and recorder tone production; (c) know the chromatic scale from its lowest to its highest note; (d) understand the use of alternate fingering; (e) understand recorder articulation; (f) be aware of suitable instruction books, solo, and ensemble materials; (g) be able to select the proper recorder for his teaching situation; and (h) be aware of books and records dealing with the recorder. (p. 111)

Further, Burakoff added that student training with the recorder typically begins when a student enters the third grade.

Although polar viewpoints are often presented towards this issue, an ambiguity of prevalent attitudes regarding recorder as a legitimate instrument do exist. O’Neill (2002) stated:

The widely held belief that the recorder is a ‘toy’ or not a ‘real’ instrument acts as a constraining influence on children’s ability to view themselves as musicians since they do not associate it with instruments they see played in the adult world. (p. 92)
Regelski (2004) maintained a comprehensive attitude towards the recorder and encouraged its use in the general music class. According to Regelski, the recorder is an instrument that is financial accessible. And, the recorder is one of the few, if not the only, instruments that students in general music classes can purchase for their own use at home, which can potentially enhance chances that a student will practice at home on their own. Regelski, though, felt that the recorder served primarily as a transition instrument and pointed out “the positive transfer value to instruments such as flute and clarinet” (2004, p. 202). Regelski, however, added that one should also consider them as genuine instruments in themselves.

Although the recorder is in frequent use in the elementary school general music class within various districts, it is typically a supplementary tool within music curricula. Sloboda and Howe (1992) stated that the recorder does not exist as an instrument that a student aspires to play in an ensemble, but rather as a prelude to continued participation in a school band or orchestral ensemble. According to Sloboda and Howe:

Despite the fact that several subjects did not see the recorder as a ‘proper’ instrument, it clearly provided a very important stepping stone for stimulating musical interest and the development of basic skills for a significant minority of the subjects. (1992, p. 287)

The recorder is rarely considered as an end in itself in the educational system, as evidenced by the overwhelming numbers of band and orchestral organizations, especially in American high schools. The Institute of Education Sciences: National Center for Education Statistics reported on the enrollment for the 1998 to 1999 academic year that types of music offered in elementary schools, aside from General Music, included chorus, band, strings or orchestra (IES Center of Education Statistics, May, 2002). The Institute
reported in 2010 that, by eighth grade, 16%, 5%, and 17%, respectively, participated in band, orchestra, and chorus during 2008 (IES Center of Education Statistics, 2010). There is no mention of any other musical groups in the reports.

**The Recorder in the Classroom**

Despite these issues in music education with regards to whether the recorder is an instrument in its own right or a transition instrument to a band or orchestra instrument, the recorder has gained in popularity for use in schools during the elementary years, at which time students are assimilating and developing fundamental music skills and concepts, such as notational awareness and performance, along with an understanding of basic elements of music, including melody, rhythm, and harmony. Music teachers take advantage of various options on the use of recorders in the classroom. Some music methodologies, such as the Orff approach, tend to use recorders without much reliance on notational knowledge by the student. Almost all beginning recorder books presume no previous notational knowledge and, therefore, use the instrument as a tool in teaching staff notation. The students in the present study used recorders initially to reinforce notational knowledge acquired during second grade.

Not all music teachers consider themselves to be expert recorder performers, just like teachers have varying degrees of skill on keyboard or string instruments. Some may feel inadequately trained on the recorder, even more so beyond the soprano size. Others, who are capable, may feel that recorder is not a true instrument or prefer to emphasize useful percussion instruments, both pitched and unpitched. For certain, teachers must weigh up the time allotted for music classes during the year, and decide which of the
multiple aspects of music education will receive most of their time, attention and
preparation. A resourceful teacher can utilize recorder playing, especially in middle
elementary grades, in combination with—or to reinforce—singing, notation, performing
classroom instruments, composition/improvisation and critical response, which are five
major areas of the national standards (Music Educators National Conference, 1994).

**Rationale for the Study**

There are various approaches that a music teacher may consider for the formation,
development, and growth of an elementary school ensemble. It may seem logical, at first
glance, to rely on adult-run instruction. It is the most direct form, which usually involves
the teacher transferring information to the students. The knowledge, training, and
experience of the teacher are sufficient tools for the transference of information, which is
absorbed or assimilated by the students. According to Rogoff (1984), “Formal
instruction is a caricature of school instruction, involving reliance on language used out
of context of practical activities” (p. 28). According to Scheib (2012), lecturing
encourages student passivity, who further stated, “Many teachers believe frontal lecturing
to be the most efficient way to deliver content—the path of least resistance” (p.103).
With this approach the students must be unconditionally receptive and conversant with
the language used in transmission of the lesson. Rogoff asserted that an issue with an
adult-run model of instruction lies within:

The need to engage children conceptually, which is sometimes difficult to achieve
in a transmission model of instruction. If instruction is treated in a factory model,
the little empty vessels on the assembly line may get through their math pages or
their science text, but they often do not understand the concepts. (1994, p. 211)
Thus, students need to engage in an exploration of new ideas and concepts, instead of simply being on the receiving end of instruction.

In a music ensemble, students develop skills, which may include sight-reading, harmonic awareness, practice methods, fingering knowledge, and overall musical literacy, at diverse rates. Rogoff’s Community of Learners approach provides a framework in which students engage in the teaching and learning aspects of the educational process. Hansen (1984) confirmed the community of interaction in a student writing environment and stated, “The students interact regularly . . . they learn to respond to each other with positive feedback, and this response pattern produces an internal atmosphere of respect” (p. 184). Those who are more competent in an area tend to assist the less competent in that area. The study of a music ensemble, in which a Community of Learners approach is present, may serve as a model for practitioners of elementary General Music classes that engage students in the teaching and learning process.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate a Community of Learners, as I explored the learning processes of students in a Collegium ensemble. In this study I investigated the experiences of the participants, the instructor, classroom teachers, and the parents, who comprised a Community of Learners as the students developed musical skills. The main overarching question that drove this study was: How did the students, instructor, teachers, and parents work together as a Community of Learners? The following research questions guided this study:
1) What were the background conditions that led the students to audition for and take an active role in the Collegium ensemble?

2) How do the students engage with members of the community?

3) How do the students engage in shared endeavors?

**Chapter Summary**

The Harrison Elementary School Collegium Musicum was the focus group for this dissertation that explored elements of a Community of Learners approach during six months of the 2009 to 2010 school year. Rogoff’s Community of Learners approach encourages interaction among all students and educator and provides opportunities for the student to experience the procedure of teaching peers.

Many publications during the 20th century demonstrate the varying attitudes for recorder, some of which view the instrument as a mere stepping-stone to participation in band or orchestra. The use of recorder, particularly the soprano, has enjoyed increased popularity in the educational environment.

In Chapter Two, I will review the literature of 20th century philosophies of social interaction and social constructivism and examine the concept of the Community of Learners approach to education in general. In the second section of Chapter Two, I will review books, dissertations, and scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles on the nature of recorder usage and on perception and identity.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review of literature contained within this chapter includes two major sections. In the first section of this chapter I discuss the foundations of social constructivism—which provides the basis for the theory of Community of Learners—and review concepts formulated by Vygotsky, Dewey, and Mead to provide a context and support for why I selected Community of Learners as espoused by Rogoff. Then I review the theory of Community of Learners of Rogoff, which provided the theoretical framework for this study. Rogoff proposed a theory that utilizes a broad cooperative structure, involving children and adults, in which learning takes place. In this model the adults, or teachers, set the intended environment in the classroom and guide the overall learning situation, while providing support and leadership. I will discuss in detail Community of Learners in which the students became an integral part of contributing to the direction of the activity, as they became skilled at managing their involvement in the educational process. Additionally, there was social interaction among the students, as they had different roles and were at varied levels of skills. The complete group developed an interest in participation, as they acquired a sense of the purpose of the activity.

In the second section of this chapter, “The Recorder in a Modern Educational Setting,” I review books, dissertations, and journal articles that investigated the use of the recorder from a solo and ensemble performance perspective and explored pedagogical issues. For the purposes of this study, this section of the review has three subsections: the recorder in a modern educational setting; recorder ensembles in modern education; and the recorder as a tool for practicing musical literacy. The literature I reviewed in this
study is intended to provide the theoretical framework, context, and support for this investigation. I will now discuss the foundation of social constructivism and social interaction.

Foundations of Social Constructivism and Social Interaction

In social constructivism, society creates reality, including the components of that reality, and finds meaning collectively through interaction with other members of that society and the environment. Learning takes place in a societal context. In this section I give an overview of the works of three philosopher/psychologists: Vygotsky, Dewey, and Mead, to provide a context for the foundation of the Community of Learners theory, which I will discuss in the following section.

Vygotsky.

Vygotsky (1986) believed that a child’s mental development was the result of a cooperative action between student and teacher and stated:

The scientific concepts evolve under the conditions of systematic cooperation between the child and the teacher. Development and maturation of the child’s higher mental functions are products of this cooperation. Scientific concepts develop earlier than spontaneous concepts because they benefit from the systematicity of instruction and cooperation. This early maturity of scientific concepts gives them the role of a propaedeutic guide in the development of spontaneous concepts. (p. 148)

Vygotsky declared that a child experiences a verbalization of scientific concepts, “which being applied systematically, comes down to concrete phenomena” (p. 148), while the occurrence of spontaneous concepts “goes from the phenomena upward toward generalizations” (p. 148). Vygotsky argued that the disadvantage of verbalization of concepts lay in their intangible quality for the child. The Russian psychologist recounted...
the unsuccessful efforts of Leo Tolstoy, when teaching Russian literary language to peasant children. The students could not learn literary language through “artificial explanations, compulsive memorizing, and repetition” (p. 150).

In one of Vygotsky’s (1986) studies, the researchers investigated the difference between the level of achievement that a child could attain without assistance and a level, slightly more challenging, that the same child could reach with a modicum of assistance. Vygotsky defined this zone of proximal development as “the discrepancy between a child’s actual mental age and the level he reaches in solving problems with assistance” (p. 187). According to the author, the larger the zone of proximal development is, the more likely it is that the student will perform better at school.

Vygotsky (1978) elaborated on the zone of proximal development and described it as “the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). Vygotsky saw at this point the zone of proximal development as the emergent mental functions of a child that would eventually mature into self-sufficient mental capabilities when collaborating with other children, as well as adults. Vygotsky thought that children could perform much better collectively or under adult supervision by using imitation and stated that, whereas non-human primates cannot mentally develop through imitation, human children use it as a learning process.
Dewey.

Dewey (1997) described the polar extremes of traditional educational methods and the progressive approach to education and considered both philosophies as incomplete and flawed. Dewey witnessed the adult-centered traditional approach being supplanted by the child-centered progressive approach in a reactionary fashion. The new education began with principles formed in negativity, according to Dewey. The hierarchical structure of traditional education restricted individualistic expression. Adult control limited freedom in activity. Learning from instructors and books inhibited learning from experience. Progressive education, though, failed to take into account "the place and meaning of subject-matter within experience" (p. 20). Dewey believed that traditional education did not necessarily lack experience for the learner, but the experience must be of a correct nature. Regarding progressive education, Dewey insisted that the quality of experience must be taken into account and that the educational philosophy "must be framed with reference to what is to be done and how it is to be done" (p. 28). Dewey explained that experience was a moving force and labeled it as an "experiential continuum" (p. 28). It featured developing growth on the part of the learner. It was the duty of the educator "to judge what attitudes are actually conducive to continued growth and what are detrimental. He must . . . have that sympathetic understanding of individuals as individuals" (p. 39), which would inform the educator what was taking place in the learner’s mind.

Dewey (1997) described that interaction took place between an individual and other persons or objects and that the elements of experience (objective and internal
conditions) made possible an interplay, which formed a situation. Because of the principle of continuity, situations, occurring one after another, permitted expansion or contraction of one's environment. "Continuity and interaction in their active union with each other provide the measure of the educative significance and value of an experience" (Dewey, 1997, pp. 44-45). Dewey believed that the educator should produce an environment in which the student not only learned in a traditional sense but also used his or her abilities and intentions for making an experience. The principle of interaction should encourage an educator to adapt materials to the requisites of the student and the principle of continuity should insure a constant deepening of a cumulative growth. Dewey stated that, in addition to the acquisition of specific subject matter, the student is also developing attitudes and general preferences.

In describing social control, Dewey (1997) compared learning structures to simple children's game, like tag, as well as more complex sporting events. The participant is allowed some individual freedom within a socially accepted set of rules and regulations. Dewey thought that the educator should analyze the needs and capacities of the students and provide the ideal environment and content for fulfilling these needs and capacities and added, "The planning must be flexible enough to permit free play for individuality of experience and yet firm enough to give direction towards continuous development of power" (Dewey, 1997, p. 58). Dewey reasoned that the freedom of intelligence represented the most substantial manifestation of the nature of freedom in that it permitted observation and appraisal, but cautioned against equating freedom of intelligence with freedom of physical mobility and warned, "An increased measure of
freedom of outer movement is a *means*, not an end” (p. 61).

In illustrating the meaning of purpose, Dewey (1997) stated that impulse and desire, often rejected by traditional education, were the germinal seed and development, which led to a significant purpose. By contrast, impulse and desire were hallmark characteristics of progressive education and when too much prominence was afforded to activity as an end, it “leads to identification of freedom with immediate execution of impulses and desires” (p. 69). Dewey felt that the student should arrive at a purpose, and, in turn, that purpose would be converted into a plan of action.

There were two points of subject-matter orientation upon which Dewey (1997) insisted. The first, which was a basic principle of the progressive approach, was to base instruction on the experiences that students have already undergone. The second point was the “orderly development toward expansion and organization of subject-matter through growth of experience” (p. 74), which received less attention in the newer schools. It was left up to the educator to discover those things that children have already experienced, and which have the possibility of posing new challenges that will necessitate novel methods of observation and judgment.

Based on the Paul Carus lectures from 1925, Dewey (ca. 1929) spoke extensively of philosophy, experience, and nature as they relate to art and their value in human society and wrote:

The new introductory chapter (Chapter I) accordingly takes up the question of method, especially with respect to the relation that exists between experience and nature. It points to faith in experience when intelligently used as a means of disclosing the realities of nature. It finds that nature and experience are not enemies or alien. Experience is not a
veil that shuts man from nature; it is a means of penetrating continually further into the heart of nature. (p. x)

Dewey explored the concepts of nature, existence, communication and language, the human mind, ideas, and value. In touching on the purpose of the arts, Dewey stated that humans have a “preoccupation with direct enjoyment, feasting and festivities; ornamentation, dance, song, dramatic pantomime, telling yarns and enacting stories” (p. 78). Dewey pointed out that this aspect of human experience has received less attention from philosophers than that of intellectual and moral considerations and proposed that one’s focus is “staging the show and enjoying the spectacle” (p. 79). Dewey compared 20th-century thought of the relationship of art to nature to that of the ancient Greeks, clarifying that in modern (mid-20th century) times “science or knowledge is the only authentic expression of nature, in which case art must be an arbitrary addition to nature” (p. 355). The author continued and stated:

Modern thought also combines exaltation of science with eulogistic appreciation of art, especially of fine or creative art. At the same time it retains the substance of the classic disparagement of the practical in contrast with the theoretical, although formulating it in somewhat different language: to the effect that knowledge deals with objective reality as it is in itself, while in what is “practical,” objective reality is altered and cognitively distorted by subjective factors of want, emotion and striving. And yet in its encomium of art, it fails to note the commonplace of Greek observation—that the fine arts as well as the industrial technologies are affairs of practice. (p. 355)

Dewey defined art as the “solvent union of the generic, recurrent, ordered, established phase of nature with its phase that is incomplete, going on, and hence still uncertain, contingent, novel” (p. 359). In turning to music specifically, the author stated, “Music in its immediate occurrence is the most varied and ethereal of the arts, but is in its conditions and structure the most mechanical” (p. 360). Dewey emphasized that the
nature of art is a coming together of "spontaneity and necessity, the regular and the novel, the finished and the beginning" (p. 360) and continued, "Any activity that is simultaneously both, rather than in alternation and displacement, is art" (361). Dewey connected means and end, directional tendencies and a terminal point, and process and product as integral factors in one's artistic perceptions and stated, "The process is art and its product, no matter at what stage it be taken, is a work of art" (p. 373). Dewey elaborated, "In the esthetic object tendencies are sensed as brought to fruition; in it is embodied a means-consequence relationship" (pp. 374-5). On the subject of value, Dewey declared that any preference or liking presumes exclusion or a rejection and added, "To make a valuation, to judge appraisingly, is . . . to bring to conscious perception relations of productivity and resistance and thus to make value significant, intelligent and intelligible" (p. 430).

In _Art and Experience_, based on the Harvard University lectures of early 1931, Dewey (ca. 1934) explored at depth humankind’s encounter with art and one’s understanding of it and laid the groundwork for the artistic awareness of the human being and the being’s relationship to the artistic experience. The author called attention to the limitation of language when dealing with experience featuring both the artistic and the aesthetic simultaneously, stating, "Art denotes a process of doing or making. The word ‘esthetic’ refers . . . to experience as appreciative, perceiving, and enjoying" (Dewey, 1934, pp. 48-49).

Dewey described art as being the catalyst that “unites the . . . relationship of doing and undergoing, outgoing and incoming energy, that makes an experience to be an
experience” (1934, p. 50) and continued:

Man whittles, carves, sings, dances, gestures, molds, draws, and points. The doing or making is artistic when the perceived result is of such a nature that its qualities as perceived have controlled the question of production. The act of producing that is directed by intent to produce something that is enjoyed in the immediate experience of perceiving has qualities that a spontaneous or uncontrolled activity does not have. The artist embodies in himself the attitude of the perceiver while he works. (p. 50)

Dewey emphasized that perception is not a singular act of recognition or a sensing to which is added emotion but rather determined that “an act of perception proceeds by waves that extend serially throughout the entire organism” (p. 55), and added, “Perception is an act of the going-out of energy in order to receive, not a withholding of energy” (p. 55). The perceiver, Dewey insisted, must order structural elements within his experience that compare with those of the originator of the art, adding, “Without an act of recreation the object is not perceived as a work of art” (p. 56).

Dewey (1934) defined the experience of art as one of growth from its creation and expansion to its fulfillment. The terminal product lacks significance without the collective encounter of the whole process. On the substance of art, Dewey stated, “A work of art . . . is actually . . . a work of art only when it lives in some individualized experience. As a work of art, it is recreated every time it is esthetically experienced” (p. 113). Dewey explained that the product of art “is physical and potential” (p. 168), while the art work “is active and experienced” (p. 168), and elaborating further, that with “an esthetic experience, the work of art in its actuality is perception” (p. 169). Dewey claimed that sensations are crucial to the act of perception, but only after the initial impulse to look or hear is performed and stated, “Perception is born when solicitude for
objects and their qualities brings the organic demand for attachment to consciousness” (p. 266-7).

**Mead.**

Mead (1982) believed that the child related to her physical environment through the social medium in which she lived, “acting with reference to the structure that protects and supports him” (p. 140). The social group determined to a large degree the conduct of the child, according to Mead. Language and gesture completed the social process.

Mead (1934) defined social psychology as “the study of the experience and behavior of the individual organism or self in its dependence upon the social group to which it belongs” (p. 1) and saw the self as a product of human society. Social psychology, as Mead understood it, studied the individual’s behavior, as it related to the group dynamic. It did not construct group behavior by putting together all the individual activities; rather it began with the group behavior at the outset, after which followed analysis of individual behavior. Mead attempted to explain the terms of the group behavior in order to describe the individual’s conduct and stated: “The part is explained in terms of the whole, not the whole in terms of the part or parts” (p. 7).

A fundamental proposal from Mead (1934) suggested that communication was indispensable to human social structure and resulted in the action that the self must identify with the other. The other, for Mead, involved an assimilation of the attitudes of other participants in a human social endeavor. Further, Mead explained:

This requires the appearance of the other in the self, the identification of the other with the self, the reaching of self-consciousness through the other. This participation is made possible through the type of communication, which the human animal is able to carry out. (p. 253)
Mead believed that the self assumed the role of the other, and, at the same time, excited and influenced the attitude of the other with a social group. In this formula, the social process of the whole group presented itself to the individual, who was able to determine his own actions while alluding to the overall relationship, involving self, other, and social structure.

**Community of Learners**

Rogoff (1994) pointed to the adult-controlled transmission of knowledge, the child-centered acquisition of knowledge, and the Community of Learners through a process of shared participation, as three major approaches of education or, more specifically, the learning process. Rogoff stated that all three approaches stimulate learning, but materials learned and the way information is used reflect the particular approach chosen and elaborated:

> In all three instructional approaches, students learn the subject matter; however, in each, they learn a different relation to the subject and to the community in which the information is regarded as important, through their varying participation in the process of learning. (p. 211)

Rogoff explained “the Community-of-Learners model is not a balance or an ‘optimal blend’ of the two one-sided approaches, but is instead a distinct instructional model based on a different philosophy” (p. 212).

In portraying the three planes of sociocultural activity, Rogoff (1995) combined apprenticeship, guided participation, and participatory appropriation into equal and simultaneously occurring events. Rogoff described apprenticeship as “involving active individuals participating with others in culturally organized activity that has as part of its
purpose the development of mature participation in the activity by the less experienced people” (p. 142), which went beyond the conventional one on one relationship. Guided participation referred to the cooperative involvement in an activity, which, ideally, prepared for future involvements in related activities. Participatory appropriation represented the transformation of individuals, as they experienced an activity or event together.

Rogoff (1990) described various processes of guided participation. Much of the discussion turned to intersubjectivity or “shared understanding based on a common focus of attention and some shared presuppositions that form the ground for communication” (p. 71). Rogoff also stressed the structural environment for problem solving between children and adults, as well as the interactional status involving siblings, other children, parents, grandparents, and the larger community. In the last major section of the book, Rogoff described the development of children through interaction with adults and peers.

Rogoff (2003) emphasized development as transformation of participation in cultural activities and pointed out, “People develop as they participate in and contribute to cultural activities that themselves develop with the involving of people” (p. 52). Rogoff described an interactive reciprocity among individuals, groups, and cultural communities with developmental transitions, autonomy and interdependence, as well as learning through participation as important topics. Rogoff suggested that a basic process guided participation and involved “children and their companions supporting their shared endeavors by attempting to bridge their different perspectives using cultural available tools” (p. 285).
Rogoff, Turkanis, and Bartlett (2001) stated in *Learning Together* that the Community of Learners was not a finished product. The Community of Learners must constantly undergo assessment and adaptation. They warned, “Variations in practices still must remain true to the core principles in order for the school to remain a coherent community of learners” (p. 225). Student interest generally determined the shape of the instruction. Background diversity in the student population permitted more diverse contributions toward learning. Rogoff, Turkanis, and Bartlett insisted that written materials explaining the Community of Learners approach should not be a how-to manual, but a resource that fosters creative teaching.

The preceding works have emphasized the importance of social interaction among all participants in the educational process. They underscore the need for learners to participate as teachers, doers, and problem solvers, as students claim ownership of their education. To help provide support and context for this investigation of an ensemble that uses recorders, I reviewed studies that discuss the recorder as a teaching tool and authors who considered aspects of social identity in the music environment.

**Definition of Community**

Based upon the theory of Community of Learners I developed the following definition for how I approach the term community in this study. The term “community” in this study refers to the student participants, siblings, parents, teachers, administrators, and myself. The community within Harrison Elementary School has promoted the development of learning, as Collegium members participated in sociocultural activities associated with the group (Rogoff, 1990, 1994, 2003). This community, therefore,
consisted of adults and children, who played asymmetrical roles within the activities of the group (Rogoff, 1994). Family members provided early exposure and continued support to the student participants. Teachers and administrators encouraged a working learning environment for the students and I developed a music classroom atmosphere conducive to interaction among peers at slightly different stages of experience (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986).

The Recorder in a Modern Educational Setting

Griscom and Lasocki (2003) have assembled a list of resource materials for teaching the recorder by topic, which include general bibliographies, literary references, manufacturers, methods and treatises, performance practices, ensembles, the future of research and other informational topics about the recorder. Although very little space is given over to the use of the instrument in the present day public school music classroom by elementary students, the authors stated:

By the sixteenth century there were enough amateurs in France and Germany to warrant the publication of general instruction books that included material on the recorder. The rise of the middle class in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the concomitant interest in self-instruction brought with it a spate of recorder "tutors" (or methods, to use a more modern term) . . . In all periods, whether the pupils have been professional or amateur, the finer points of performance, such as breath control, intonation, ornamentation, and musical interpretation, have been learned with the aid of a teacher; they can hardly be imparted by a book. (p. 279)
Recorder Ensembles in Modern Education

Wortman (1968) in a survey of 90 respondents from 29 states found that there was no significant evidence of a carry-over value in recorder playing into adult life. The survey detected that most of the teachers used the recorder primarily for reading notation around fourth grade. In the survey respondents noted the recorder’s usefulness for music reading in particular. Wortman concluded that the “preparation of school recorder teachers has been of a very informal nature” (p. vi). The respondents saw the recorder as a stepping-stone to orchestral instruments but did not generally emphasize the technical aspects of playing the instruments. Wortman did, however, find that some teachers used sizes other than the soprano and uses the recorders in combination with singing.

Wortman (1968) made several recommendations for future research that have a direct bearing on this paper and urged a comprehensive study on recorder use in the general music classroom, using interviews, getting beyond the teacher survey. Wortman asked for a study to investigate efficient starting ages for learning the recorder and an investigation “to determine the effect the utilization of recorders has on musical learning and on development of musical skills” (p. 98).

Kersten (2000) provided some guidelines for establishing and running a recorder ensemble in the music class and stated potential problems from purchasing to maintaining the instruments. Kersten (2000) recommended using recorder ensembles in elementary and early secondary years and suggested two manufacturers of plastic recorders as a good starting point for third grade students. Alto and tenor recorders make interesting additions at the fifth and sixth grade levels, according to Kersten, and the bass
recorder at seventh or eighth grade. The article included several publications from 1970 to 1998 that provide ensemble music for various combinations for the recorder family. Kersten suggested some tips for arranging music suitable for SATB recorder and focused on the benefits of ensemble playing, stating that students “can discover multipart harmony through ensemble experiences” (2000, p. 12).

**The Recorder as a Tool for Practicing Musical Literacy**

From American colonial times to the present there has been a number of approaches to the challenges of teaching notation and linking it to sound, which, in turn, is a microcosm of the Western development of notational skills and how to relate them to the production of sound. The *fasola* school of singing (based on a four note solmization, using shaped notes) was a major source of learning during the 18th century in England and the New World. Another popular medium for singing is solfège; both the fixed do, or French method, and moveable do, or tonic sol-fa.

Hutton (1953) designed a study using “flash cards, musical games, and slides used with the opaque projector” (p. 122) and concluded that, although both the control and the experimental groups of the fourth grade subjects showed a significant improvement over the course of a year, the experimental group with access to audio-visual aids showed a “pronounced difference in music sight reading ability” (p. 126). Hutton also found that those students at or below grade average in the experimental group attained higher scores than similar students in the control group.

Hargiss (1962), in a study on sight singing ability in college-age piano class students, asserted that instrumentalists tend to be better music readers than singing
students who do not play instruments. The subjects in the paper were members of a music methods course training to become elementary teachers. Divided into three levels of piano skill ability, each level featured a control group and an experimental group, the latter of which sang everything they played, while the control group did not sing consistently during their keyboard training. In the piano post test both groups both groups made gains, but with no significant difference between the groups. On the sight singing post test, the “experimental group made a greater gain” (p. 71). Hargiss concluded: “the results of the present study have strengthened the contention that instrumental experience is necessary to maximum development of musicality” (p. 75).

Gordon (1997) reflected on beginning instrumental study, “There is no correct chronological age for determining when a child should begin to study an instrument. There is, however, a correct musical age for beginning instrumental study” (p. 161). Gordon believed that children learning music should acquire the ability to audiate, or hearing music in the absence of sound, before they start to learn an instrument. For Gordon, most reading or performance problems emanated from poor audiation skills.

Regelski (2004) believed that reading musical notation is most effectively taught, using instruments such as recorders. He stated, “Recorders . . . are inexpensive, easy to care for and can be taken home for practice. They also have positive transfer value to instruments such as flute and clarinet. Recorders are also ‘real’ instruments” (p. 202).

Guderian’s (2008) study intended to determine if teaching aspects of improvisation and composition to fifth grade general music students would influence the quality of soprano recorder sight reading. The researcher concluded there was no
significant difference between the control group that had a consistent amount of sight reading practice and the experimental group that had less sight reading time, but more improvisational and compositional exposure. Guderian found that all student participants in the study “had a positive experience and experienced an increase in musicianship skills and musical knowledge” (p. 214) and reported that the students’ soprano recorder playing in both groups revealed an improved fluency.

Liperote (2004) provided a study of 50 fourth grade wind and percussion students, in which half had followed an audiation-based recorder curriculum in addition to general music as third graders. During the last two months of the school year the students participated in a third music class, playing in an ensemble. Although not specified in the study, the only recorder used presumably was the soprano. Liperote concluded that there was no significant difference either in stabilized music aptitude or in music achievement between the students who studied recorder in third grade and those who did not, but did, however, find:

Students with lower stabilized music aptitude who received audiation-based instruction playing the recorder in the third grade had a higher level of music achievement than students with lower stabilized music aptitude who did not receive audiation-based instruction playing the recorder in the third grade. (p. 116)

Chapter Summary

Literature pertaining to the social interaction of students and teacher in an educational structure includes works representing the origins of social constructivism (e.g., Vygotsky, 1978; 1986; Dewey, 1929; 1934; 1997; Mead, 1934; 1982), studies on the community of learners approach (e.g., Rogoff, 1984; 1990; 1994; 1995; 2003;
Rogoff, Turkanis, & Bartlett, 2001), studies and information on the use of recorders and other instruments in an educational setting (e.g., Wortman, 1968; Kersten, 2000; Hutton, 1953; Hargiss, 1962; Gordon, 1997; Regelski, 2004; Guderian, 2008; Liperote, 2004).

In the next chapter I will present the design and methodology of the study, which includes descriptions of the site, the participants, the music program, and the audition process for the Collegium. I will then discuss how I collected and analyzed data in this study, in addition to how I established trustworthiness of the final report.
CHAPTER 3: DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate a Community of Learners as I explored the learning processes of students in a Collegium ensemble. In this study I investigated the experiences of the student participants, the classroom teachers, the instructor, and the parents, who comprised a Community of Learners as the students developed musical skills. The main, overarching question that guided this study included: How did the students, teachers, instructor, and parents work together to form a community of learners? The following research questions guided this study:

1) What were the background conditions that led the students to audition for and take an active role in the Collegium ensemble?

2) How do the students engage with members of the community?

3) How do the students engage in shared endeavors?

I chose a qualitative approach for this study, in which I explored and investigated "the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). The majority of the data for this study was gathered from interviews, observations, and a collection of artifacts. According to Lichtman (2006), "In general, the main purpose of qualitative research—whatever kind—is to provide an in-depth description and understanding of the human experience" (p. 8). Because my purpose was to explore and portray the perspectives of the students, parents, teachers, and myself with regards to their participation as a Community of Learners in the Collegium, I thus found that qualitative inquiry was the ideal approach for this study.
Research Design

For this study I selected a case study design. Creswell (2007) defined a case study as:

A qualitative study in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case *description* and *case-based themes*” (p. 73).

In this study I examined a group of students in the school Collegium for a six-month period of the 2009-2010 school year. The principle focus of this study was the students’ sense and perception within a Community of Learners of their own musical development in the context of a recorder ensemble.

Site

The Harrison Elementary School, in which the study was focused, was a recently constructed four-story building completed in 2000 with air conditioning, computers, sinks and storage areas in every classroom. It was a large elementary school located in the central part of a state in the Northeast United States. Student population was approximately 775 students during the year of this study and included Pre-Kindergarten to Grade Six classes and three classrooms for moderately-to-severely disabled students. The music room was an average-sized classroom on the third floor, to which each class arrived at the appointed time for general music. I collected the Collegium members for their rehearsal, as they were located in approximately seven classrooms on the fourth floor. At the beginning of rehearsal they were responsible for breaking down seven long
tables and resetting approximately thirty chairs and positioning about sixteen stands.

Before returning to their classrooms, they reset the music room.

Participants

As participant-observer, I observed members of the Collegium Musicum, who played a full complement of soprano, alto, tenor and bass (SATB) recorders (occasionally with sopraninos, when needed), as part of their music training during the school day. The enrolment for the Collegium was set at 30 fifth and sixth grade players, which was the maximum number of students that could fit comfortably in the room. Most of the students had studied the soprano recorder during third and fourth grade general music classes at the school. Occasionally, there may have been one or more successful applicants in the group that were new to the school and it was possible that those students might have had less time and intensity of instruction on the instrument.

The group members were from diverse ethnic backgrounds: Asian, African, African-American, Hispanic and Caucasian. Historically, the Collegium maintained an international student enrollment with members who were born in Russia, Ireland, West Africa and the Middle East, as well as students who were born in North, Central, and South America. The group was divided almost evenly between boys and girls (14 and 15 respectively), although no conscious effort was made to make it so. The following table lists student participants, their grade level, and instruments, as well as teachers, principal, and parents interviewed.
Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kerri</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Soprano recorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mai</td>
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<td>Soprano recorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane</td>
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<td>Soprano recorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donavan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bass recorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Ms. O’Toole</td>
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The Program

The music program included several class and ensemble offerings. Each morning when students arrived, they assembled in the school for morning activities, which included the American Pledge of Allegiance, a brief moment of silence and a song from one to four classes singing together. Occasionally, the Collegium or a quartet from the Collegium would play.

The General Music program at the school had its foundations at the Kindergarten level and continued through Grade Six. In addition to the regular education classes, which met once a week, there were normally two-to-three classes of students with moderate to severe disabilities, some of whom attended a second music class into which they were integrated. As the students reached Grade Five, they had the opportunity to audition for Chorus or the Collegium Musicum, both of which performed throughout the school year at the Winter Concert, the Spring or Memorial Day Concert, Promotion Day for Grade Six and occasionally at the city’s Art Festival. Aside from the initial audition to enter the Chorus or Collegium, there was no competitive activity.

Students participating at the school gained exposure to staff notation beginning in the first grade and continued to read and sing simple, short melodies using partial pentatonic modes on the treble staff during the second grade. In third grade the vast majority of students purchased a plastic, three-piece soprano recorder ordered through the parent-teacher organization. Those students who bought their own recorder were responsible for bringing the instrument home in order to practice. Those few students who did not buy a recorder used one at school during music class, but did not have an
opportunity to work on the school instrument at home. It was around the second month of third grade that they began to work on simple two-note pieces, using G and E. Using these two notes provided familiarity to students, as they began singing with these notes on the staff in second grade. Further, it gave the student a normal hand position from the outset, unlike many beginning tutors that used the left hand thumb and one or two fingers only for an indefinite number of lessons allowing an unused right hand to develop possible bad habits by not being used. Another advantage in beginning with G and E allowed for one large hand motion to change notes, adding the first two fingers of the right hand simultaneously. As the teacher worked with the students on breathing technique, articulation and self-assessment, they added the notes A and B.

In fourth grade the students continued to use the soprano recorder, adding both the high D and low D. The students reinforced their listening skills by helping each other overcome various deficiencies, involving tone production, rhythmic and melodic inaccuracies, as well as finger placement and posture. At the end of the year, a few fourth graders received an invitation to play in the Collegium (with the fifth graders) on the last day of school, when the sixth graders attended the school ceremony for promotion to middle school.

**Collegium Musicum**

The students at Harrison Elementary School, at which the study took place, understood that the audition to enter the group was a competition, in which approximately one in three were successful. The name Collegium Musicum refers to a collection of musicians (most often attached to a university), which normally play period
instruments. In this study, the elementary school Collegium consisted of modern versions of the recorder family that played multiple part arrangements of folk song literature, as well as some early music. The size of the Collegium had to be manageable and physically had to fit within a music classroom. Throughout the duration of learning a piece, students, who previously had played only four or five different notes on a soprano recorder in unison, were dealing with new notes, possibly a different size recorder and playing one of four parts that were sounding simultaneously.

**Auditions.**

During the first week of school, all incoming fifth and sixth graders (including previous members) had an opportunity to audition for the Collegium, which was a yearlong commitment. Entrance requirements included an assessment using three simple categories: 1. sight-reading abilities; 2. technique and manipulative skill; and 3. classroom participation from the previous year. If a student was new to the school, he or she automatically received a score of 1 for past classroom participation, which was the best score possible. At the end of each assessment, each auditionee indicated which instrument was their preference—soprano, alto, tenor or bass, whereupon each student had an opportunity to match hand size and finger control to larger instruments. Each successful applicant was required to own or purchase either the soprano recorder, for C fingering (which is identical to tenor fingering) or an alto, for F fingering (which is identical to bass fingering). The cost of purchasing a bass or tenor could be prohibitive to some families. As a result, the parent teacher organization supplied the group with three
or four instruments of each over the past ten years. Some tenor players, however, ended up buying their instrument.

**Data Collection**

To help explore the Community of Learners, I sought the perspectives of the student participants and I investigated how they interacted with each other in the Collegium. I conducted individual interviews from the students and the principal, focus group interviews of the students, classroom teachers, and parents; observations of the students as they rehearsed and performed in the group and as they sight-read appropriately challenging pieces; as well as documentation about the group and artifacts, which included repertoire and concert programs. Creswell (2007) stated “the data collection in case study research is typically extensive, drawing on multiple sources of information, such as observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials” (p. 75). These multiple sources of information helped me to explore the Community of Learners in the Collegium Musicum.

**Interviews.**

As the music teacher to the successful applicants of the auditioned group, I interviewed the 22 student participants—18 individually and 19 in focus groups—during a time normally reserved for sectional rehearsals during the six-month period of the school year. There were five groups of three to four students apiece. They discussed topics that helped to discover their sense of perception in regard to music making. Care was taken to ensure that depth, range, specificity, and personal context were present as criteria for effective focus group interviews (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1990). The five
students who spoke English as a second language were able to understand very well and responded with competence. During the focus group interviews for students, some were quite loquacious and bantered back and forth energetically, while others tended to be more reserved and waited, perhaps respectfully, to be drawn in to the discussion.

I interviewed six parents of participants once, also in focus groups, to examine how the student worked at home to prepare for rehearsals and gained a parental perspective of how this musical activity was shaping the student attitude. Focus group interviews involving parents revealed their strong support for the program and called attention to the enormous amounts of time that their children spent with their instrument in the home, practicing the assigned material.

I interviewed the classroom teachers of the students in an effort to gain their perspective with regards to student attitude and responsibility as it was reflected in the classroom. The teachers provided pertinent points of discussion during their focus group interviews; they seemed to have spent some time preparing general thoughts on the concept of the Collegium and the involvement of its students. I interviewed the principal who was familiar with the Collegium program at the school.

Interviews occurred at the school for the student participants. Interviews of adult participants occurred at the school, which was convenient for the parental participant. Interviews of both student and adult participants were 15-to-30 minutes in length. I followed an interview protocol in which I provided topics for the students to discuss and ask a set of predetermined questions for the adults, while still allowing for flexibility during the course of the interview. Creswell (2009) indicated that qualitative interviews
“involve unstructured and generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants” (p. 181).

I recorded interviews using a digital voice recorder. I generally sat approximately three to five feet from the participants and I occasionally wrote notes, when needed, during the interviews.

Observations.

I conducted observations so that I could monitor how the students interacted with each other in the Collegium. In the full rehearsal, once a week, I observed the effort of the students putting together the parts to make sense of an ensemble piece. During the sectional rehearsals, which occurred for approximately twenty minutes once a week I observed the selected participants in the music room, as they read and rehearsed their own part with others in the section. At a bass rehearsal in April, for example, I noticed that a player with limited experience was having difficulty finding the correct fingering for B natural. “The section leader reached over to place fingers five and six [middle two fingers of the right hand] on [the] correct position” (TJ-1). At a tenor rehearsal in March, the two fifth graders were having difficulty going from C to a high E, because of the change to a half thumb. The two sixth graders and I devised a short rhythmic exercise on the two notes to successfully eradicate the problem within a few minutes. I noted that helping each other with fingering, reading notation, and timing became commonplace events.
As they were assigned a chair in the manner of orchestral seating (see Fig. 1), they became aware of a responsibility to help others in the section, who were further away from chair one than themselves.

Figure 1. Collegium Musicum Seating Chart

Journals.

The students wrote in their music journals at the end of eight rehearsals. This occurred during the last five minutes of rehearsal after instruments are packed, the journals and pencils were handed out to students. The students were asked to comment in two or three sentences about a single aspect of rehearsal, after being given general
guidelines and specific issues on which to write. Topics included their concentration ability for that rehearsal, reading problems, listening for instructions, listening to the ensemble, problems with playing together, and personal preparedness.

After five minutes, students returned their journals and pencils and began to reset the room. As the full rehearsal was on Friday afternoons, I was able to take the journals home in order to look at them that evening or the next morning. The writing began to demonstrate threads or categories of thought, which was noted in my field notes.

**Artifacts.**

According to Bresler and Stake (1992), artifacts may present themselves in unexpected places. The authors suggested that documentation may be a marginal inscription in a field notes book or an inscription on a trophy or an award and that browsing may be a normal pattern behavior for the qualitative researcher.

Artifacts for this study consisted of a variety of documents collected throughout the course of the project implementation and included copies of the repertoire for the year, practice sheets—especially for altos, who were learning new notes, and basses, who were learning new notes in a different clef from their previous experience—and programs from previous years and the current year were available. A copy of the weekly music schedule was used on the music class and Collegium, which showed the time factor involved. The city’s Public School benchmarks for music, which follow the National Standards for Music, as well as the state’s Curriculum Frameworks for music, are included, as this document suggests a sequential presentation of various concepts and practices, relating to notation and recorder playing.
Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

According to Rogoff, Baker-Sennett, Lacasa, and Goldsmith (1995), analysis of Community of Learners includes three planes: community, interpersonal, and personal. They posited that one does not focus solely on a particular plane, but rather one is in the foreground while the others remain in the background. Rogoff et al. define these planes as the interpersonal plane of analysis, which “focuses on how people communicate and coordinate efforts in face-to-face and side-by-side interaction;” the personal plane of analysis which “focuses on how individuals change through their involvement in one or another activity, in the process becoming prepared for subsequent involvement in related activities;” and the community aspects of an activity which “requires reference to the personal and interpersonal aspects of the endeavor” (1995, p. 46). Thus, development is a process of transformation.

Data coding.

To assist with the analysis of the three planes espoused by Rogoff it al. (1995), I used a system of coding to interpret my data. Creswell’s (2009) hierarchical and interactive description served as a model for data coding. After organizing and preparing the data for analysis, which included transcribing interviews, scanning or printing documents and materials and sorting data, I read through all the data, in order to find a sense of the overriding significance and looked for emerging themes in the data record. Interviews and field notes were transcribed within a 48-hour time period. At this point the coding process began to bring meaning to the information that had been gathered. Bresler & Stake (1992) stated that notes and stories kept by the researcher often form the
organization of the analysis in qualitative writing. For example, when posed with
questions about playing in the Collegium, many students emphasized the importance of
listening to each other. Responses to other questions also began to highlight the strong
social interaction that occurred in the group and ultimately pointed to the use of the
Community of Learners concept as a theoretical lens for this study. Data was coded by
hand. I left sufficient space in the left-hand margins of the transcripts so that I could list
the codes. Categories of codes, which totaled 31, included the following examples: Early
Memories (EM); Sibling Influences (SI); Perception of Development (PD); Rehearsal
Perceptions (RP); Learning Processes (LP); Listening Issues (LI); Sight Reading (SR);
Sight-Singing (SS); Playing recorder (PR); and Harmonic Awareness (HA). Lichtman
(2006) suggested codes will change, combine, be added, be deleted and change again.
Throughout the coding process themes emerged from the data sources including
interviews, journals, and observations from the categories (codes). I grouped themes into
similar categories and gradually merged these together into the document. I sought both
confirming and disconfirming examples in the data record through the triangulation of
individual interviews, focus group interviews, observations, journals, and artifacts to aid
with the reliability and trustworthiness of the emergent themes. Analysis of coding and
themes was an ongoing process throughout the data collection process.

**Researcher bias.**

With an epistemological assumption qualitative researchers interact with the
participants in the study (Creswell, 2007). Knowledge of the students, as their teacher,
could have posed a strong possibility of researcher bias. For example, I have taught them
how to play the recorder in previous years before they participated in Collegium. It was through my instruction that they acquired the necessary skills for reading notation and playing the recorder. The direction of the study, however, was what the students were thinking and how the process of learning took place. The pending threat of bias actually turned into an advantage in arriving at the focal point of the investigation. Bartel & Radocy (2002) stated, for example, that even though research may understand “bias” as an intrusive expression of the researcher, “obscuring the researcher’s voice may create bias: All research has someone’s interpretation, and all research data gathering is done through a construct structure” (p. 1121).

Another issue for prejudicial consideration is the motivation for students taking part in the study. As students did not receive a grade for the Collegium, they felt no pressure to participate in the study in order to elevate an assessment grade. I emphasized the voluntary nature of the project from the outset.

I kept track of my biases throughout the study in the form of researcher memos. For example, I was the teacher in this study and I have taught the recorder for over thirty years. An entry in a research memo included: Are my perceptions of student/parent/teacher responses unencumbered with preconceived notions? Did I really see what was occurring here in this learning situation when the students were learning new notes or was I too focused on student behavior? Did I allow more advanced students to momentarily to “interrupt” a rehearsal to correct fingerings or note readings of other students? Did I discourage students from expressing sporadic comments about some students playing too fast or slow, too loud, or with poor intonation?
External review.

The dissertation supervisor has been a directional guide to the formation of the entire project. Heller and O’Connor (2002) emphasized the need for close cooperation between dissertation supervisor and the student, during the submission process of each section or chapter up to the final presentation. This supervisory capacity insured against the threat of the author being too close to the work and, possibly, overlooking the important details. Further, the dissertation supervisor assisted with data coding to confirm or disconfirm emerging themes in the data record.

Peer review.

Anfara, Brown, and Mangione (2002) included peer examination as a strategy employed for dependability in qualitative work. Because my supervisor was also embedded into this study, I sought out Doctoral students in the online music education program at Boston University were to review my work, throughout the process of the study. For example, I asked them to review my coding to see if I was missing any important themes or ideas that may have been important to this study of the community of learners. I also asked them to review early drafts of the study to assist with the organization of my data.

Member checks.

During the course of interviews and observations, I periodically asked the participants to review transcripts of interviews and observation. I asked them to check the language of their responses to establish the veracity of my assumptions. As Gall, Borg, and Gall (2006) state, member checking may correct some factual errors,
participants review the writing of the researcher. After reading transcripts of interviews, parents, teachers, and the principal accepted the written language as accurate and as it was intended. After reviewing the transcripts with the students individually, most found everything accurate. There were four students who used the description e-sharp, when I believed they meant high E. They subsequently agreed to a change of language after an explanation about the terminology.

**Delimitations.**

Although the purpose of my inquiry was to investigate a Community of Learners, some aspects of the learning process were beyond the scope of this study such as musical literacy. Further, this study was limited to a seven-month time frame, which included the Spring Concert performance at the end of the year, when the students reached a peak in their culmination of skills and experience. A study of longer or shorter duration may yield slightly different results.

**Chapter Summary**

After summarizing the purpose and restating the questions that guided this study, I describe the general design and offer a portrayal of the site at which the study took place and indicate the general background of the participants. A description of the Collegium Musicum at Harrison Elementary School follows. This section deals with audition procedures and defines their skill levels prior to entrance. The rationale for the study discloses a need to consider the Community of Learners approach as a more effective method of music education than the prominent adult-run approach. The purpose of the study points out the investigation of the learning processes of the Collegium
students as they developed their musical skills. The school has general music classes for Kindergarten to Grade Six. Recorder study begins during Grade Three and Collegium auditions take place in Grades Five and Six.

An explanation of the data collection ensues, which includes information on the individual and focus group interviews. I discuss the journals, observations, and the artifacts that contributed to general data collection. The chapter ends with a discussion of the data analysis and trustworthiness with a description of the coding, concerns about bias, checks from various points of view, and a statement of delimitations.

In Chapter Four I examine the relevant historical nature of the Collegium during the school year of the study, 2009—2010, and its related development as a social learning endeavor over the previous 15 years. I describe the details of the audition procedure and clarify the position of the Collegium within the school structure along with some the pragmatic issues relating to student involvement. There follows a list of participants and their function (student, teacher, parent, principal, researcher) within the study. The chapter closes with a vignette that describes the proceedings of a typical rehearsal.
CHAPTER 4: THE COLLEGIUM MUSICUM

In this chapter I portray various aspects of the Collegium Musicum for the reader. I begin this chapter with a vignette about the students arriving at the school to prepare for their audition into the Collegium and then the audition process itself. I then use another vignette composed of several observations to portray a “typical” rehearsal in this ensemble. By bringing the reader into the “world” of the Collegium Musicum, I intend to provide a context for the reader to help with an understanding in the subsequent chapter of how the students, classroom teachers, instructor, and parents interacted with each other in a Community of Learners.

Arriving At School

On the first day of school, the 2nd of September about half of the sixth and fifth graders brought in their soprano or alto recorders, hoping that they would be selected to audition for the Collegium Musicum. Some seemed to think that the earlier they audition, the better chance they would have of being in the ensemble. This year 60 students competed for approximately 30 chairs—the maximum capacity determined by the amount of space in the classroom. Rehearsals took place in the General Music classroom, which contained seven long tables and 31 chairs, in addition to a teacher’s desk and chair, a large cart holding a computer and audio-visual equipment, SAB sets of mallet instruments, 19 music stands, four digital pianos, three metal bookcases, two carts, and an upright piano with bench. A storage unit built in to the wall held books, scores, videos, hundreds of used recorders, and Collegium jackets. A regular sized third floor classroom was the setting for the music program, instead of the intended second floor
room (twice the size) listed on the blueprints from 2000 as the music room, but the school was fortunate to have a room for music in an era of budget cuts and school closings.

The Collegium Musicum may seem a pretentious title for a group of elementary aged recorder players, whose items of period music make up a tiny sliver of their entire repertoire. I formed a group in another school in southeastern Massachusetts in 1995, using fourth and fifth graders. This somewhat rural school had two 30-minute periods of music each week, plus their Collegium rehearsal. For sectional rehearsals, they arrived about 30 minutes before school, using SATB recorders, SATB crumhorns and cornamuses, a bass racket (rankett), a harpsichord, a cello, a rauschpfeife, and anything else that I asked of the very generous school committee. When I began in my current school, the school committee did not keep financial pace with the smaller town.

Fortunately, the Parent Teacher Organization (P.T.O.) was very supportive in buying some bass and tenor recorders over the years, but did not match the momentum of the previous school district.

The name Collegium Musicum stuck, perhaps because it sounded exotic to the uninitiated. The then principal, a couple of vice principals over the years, and several classroom teachers had trouble getting the Germanic pronunciation of the Latin just right. Consonants were swapping places and extra ells were added, but most everyone appreciated the spirit of the ensemble and accepted its educational value, as well as its artistic value—and to my knowledge, no student member had a problem with the pronunciation!

For most successful applicants, Collegium participation was a culmination of their
musical endeavors from the earliest years in the school. Those that began in the building at the Kindergarten level had General Music once a week, during which time (about 35 lessons per year) they would have learned about 50 songs, some with solfège (movable do), played a number of circle games (if I could move the tables and chairs to the perimeter of the room before they arrived for the lesson) and, after a good bit of rhythm clapping, would listen to short four beat patterns of quarter and eighth notes and choosing the appropriate pattern visually, even getting a chance to write them on the board during one of our games near the end of the year. In first grade the students added more songs, as well as notes to their range, continued with circle games and learned to draw the treble clef on quite large staff paper. With most classes this last unit usually took two lessons, as the students took the symbol apart and drew it in four stages. When they wrote their first song on staff paper near the end of the year, this clef lesson was definitely worth the two lessons of devoted painstaking efforts. By second grade most of the students could read simple eight-bar pieces that they learned during the previous two years, using letter names (E, G, A, and B) a little more frequently than tonic sol-fa.

In third grade all the returning students anticipated the purchase of a soprano recorder. Letters arrived home during the first two weeks of school, stating that the P.T.O. would send in an order to a reputable supply store that sold a well-crafted three-piece ivory colored soprano recorder for those who wanted to send in the appropriate amount of cash. The letter clearly stated that owning a recorder was not a requirement, but most parents saw the value in having each student being able to practice almost daily at home on their own instrument. Recorder lessons were the norm for a sizable portion of
each 40-minute General Music lesson during third and fourth grades. They continued to read, sing, listen, and critically respond to performances by each other, alone and in groups. At the end of fourth grade, invitations to take part in the end of the year performances by the Collegium were available to four or five students. They learned that the invitation did not automatically assure them of a spot in the Collegium during fifth grade, but they seemed to believe that they would have an excellent chance to pass the audition over the next two years.

**Audition Process**

In past years the entire first day of the school year was allotted to the Collegium tryouts, completing 80 to 90% of the auditioning students. This year, however, in the interest of equity and fair play to classroom teachers who expected a General Music class on the first day of school, auditions had to be held during five or ten minute breaks between classes. Auditions lasted for about three weeks, dragging things out interminably for the students, who could not be told if they passed the audition until everyone had an opportunity.

Students tested in three categories during the audition. Each received a number grade from one (an excellent rating) to a five (less desirable characteristic for the group). A three (one in each category) was, therefore, the best possible score. The first category was one of classroom work attitude (behavior and ability to focus on the tasks, for example). If a student was new to the school and had no prior experience, then they were automatically given a one (giving them the benefit of a doubt). The second category represented their manipulative skills or their technical prowess. Did they hold the
instrument correctly? Did the fingers cover the holes properly? Was the breath even and was the articulation (tonguing) acceptable? These were some of the details that they concentrated on during the previous two years at the school. In the event that a person new to the school, who may have not used a recorder to the extent that this school's students did, the rating was sometimes skewed in their favor, if they seemed quick to assimilate instruction. The third category has commanded a highly regarded respect from the students over the years—the ability to read, e.g., playing notes at sight. All students, except for returning bass players who have acclimatized themselves to the bass clef, were expected to read the assigned piece in the treble clef. For soprano players the piece relied on notes in the lower half of the staff; and returning alto players found their notes in the upper half of the staff.

After auditioning, I asked each student if they had a preference for a different sized member of the recorder family rather than the one on which they auditioned and hand positions were checked for accessibility to the larger instruments. If a student preferred to play an alto or a bass, he or she had to purchase an alto on which to practice at home. By the same token, if one wanted to play a tenor, a soprano recorder would suffice for fingering practice, if they could not afford a tenor. The only disadvantage of not owning the larger instruments would be the extra effort in making hand position adjustments to allow for the wider spacing for fingering.

After the completion of auditions, parents received letters, asking permission for the successful applicant to participate in the Collegium Musicum. The order for the instruments followed the return of the signed permission and the agonizing wait for the
instruments took two to three weeks. In the meantime, however, rehearsal began, using school instruments. The problem of not bringing home instruments to practice was, fortunately, temporary. On the day of the instrumental arrival, each student learned of the importance of marking and labeling each instrument and its bag. With 300 or so soprano recorders in the building that all look alike, marking made it easier to link a lost instrument with its frantic owner. Some had even gone so far as to buy some unique material and sew or stitch a one-of-a-kind bag or discreetly putting a sticker on the instrument itself.

**Searching For That Which Is Haydn**

At 12:20 Ms. Lyons shows up promptly to retrieve her fifth grade class from General Music. The lesson comes to a close in a couple of minutes. As her class leaves, Brigitte, Patrice, Carol, and Jorge, who are in the Collegium, stay behind to clear away tables and chairs, as I proceed to the fourth floor to collect the other 22 students. At each of the seven rooms remaining, I approach the door and knock, whereupon the Collegium students alert the classroom teacher for permission to leave, grabbing music folders and instruments in the process. All of us travel single file through the hallway quietly as we pass the other rooms. This time a couple of excited students need a reminder about the expected line behavior and they make the necessary adjustments.

We arrive at the room a couple of minutes after 12:30; the chairs are set out in sections. Upon entering tenor and bass players take a school instrument. Approximately half the players take a stand from the designated stand areas and position one in front of every two chairs. There is a good bit of chatting and doodling on instruments as the
setting up activity is continuing. Kassandra in the alto section shouts out “What’s first; what are we doing first?” I arrive at my stand with music and inform the group to begin with The *Harrison Schoolhouse Song*. Immediately a soprano player pipes up, “I don’t have that one; my mother threw some of my papers away.” I reach into the divider for a copy, as I think to myself that he must not have a dog at home to blame. My arms go to the starting cue position. A bass mumbles, “Do we do the intro this time?” “Yes, upbeat to the last two bars, please,” I speedily reply and cue the first soprano recorder upbeat, followed by the remainder of the group on the downbeat. As we reach the last few bars without problem or incident, I signal to take the first ending and repeat another time. On the second pass they take the final ending, as the altos and tenors have a little extra motion with their IV – I cadence, which they relish as a departure from the usual half and whole notes harmonic material, which is sometimes thought of as filler material by the more competent players.

We then turn to the “Andante” movement from Haydn’s *Surprise Symphony*, which I had transcribed from an Eulenberg study score for the group a couple of weeks earlier. [See Appendix J.] An air of anticipation takes over the ensemble, as this piece is a little different from the usual fare of arranged folk material and the odd Renaissance item, which we normally do. The tenors are particularly excited, as, at long last, they have something with a melody without interference from those upper range sounds from sopranos and altos. They and the basses begin gently at the first downbeat and are glued to the score, as they make sense of the two-part opening. This is not sight-reading, as the Collegium has had sectional rehearsals during the previous two weeks of classes, so they
manage the first 16 bars quite well, except for some uncertainty on the low tenor D due to sloppy finger placement. One of the bass players is floundering throughout after losing her place.

Figure 2. Haydn’s Surprise Symphony, Andante, bb. 1-16

We arrive at the infamous second beat of bar 16, at which point all sections join in and let loose with an energetic but cacophonous burst of painful sound, causing everyone to grind to a halt with a mixture of laughter and groaning. We stop and inspect the problem with each section individually and discover the need for adjustments for breath control and also find that more accurate half-thumb placements are necessary. Most adapt immediately, but a few are assigned practice exercises to work on the elusive perfection of sound at home.
Some problems begin to arise in bars 17 and 19 because of the syncopation in the alto and tenor recorder parts.

Figure 3. Haydn’s Surprise Symphony, Andante, bb. 18-24

After working a couple of exercises on the passage the altos reach an enjoyable understanding of the rhythmic structure, allowing us to search for other problem spots. Second sopranos are exhibiting furrowed eyebrows during the same passage, so they play on their own to discover that their troubles originate in the passage that includes going from notes on the quarter beat to eighth notes to sixteenth notes. After a clapping exercise and a fingering exercise while singing the letter names, the problem is resolved. Meanwhile the tenors, who have the only tacit part in bars 17 to 24, profess boredom and with begging facial expressions ask could they have a part written out for them by next week. Excited by the earnestness of their wishes, I promise to double the alto part, more or less, and print out a copy for them for the following rehearsal.
Rehearsal time is diminishing, but as the Collegium is showing so much concentration, we push on to the next section—bars 25 to 32. The second sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses are steady and accurate for the most part. The first sopranos, who have the countermelody, are able to perform it in isolation but need some work listening to the ensemble in order to make their line fit with the overall tempo. The sopranino player (Kassandra puts down her alto and proudly picks up the instrument she is dying to play) asks to play her part without the rest of the group, just to make sure it’s correct and succeeds enough to make the first four chairs of the soprano section a little jealous of yet another melodic focus point.

Figure 4. Haydn’s *Surprise Symphony*, Andante, bb. 25-35
Time has, indeed, run out, so bass and tenor players are given the signal to store their instruments; the rest of the group puts away stands, move chairs aside in order to reset the seven tables with chairs correctly positioned. As they line up at the door, the sixth grade are given the signal to return to their classrooms unaccompanied; the fifth grade proceed with me to the end of the hallway in the opposite direction to another stairwell nearer to their rooms. As they ascend into another world, I return to the music room to prepare for my final General Music class (a Grade 1) of the day.

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter Four contains two vignettes. The first relates to the students arriving at the school at the beginning of the year full of expectations. I discuss background information about the structure of the Harrison Collegium Musicum and the physical rehearsal environment. A brief passage explains the past musical training of students in the school from Kindergarten to Grade Four. A description of the audition process follows. The second vignette is an account of a rehearsal with the full group, as they work two pieces. The first is *Harrison Schoolhouse Song*, which is an easy arrangement of *Red River Valley* with an altered text to reflect the departure of the sixth grade at the end of the year, as they bid farewell to the elementary school. The second piece is a transcription of the “Andante,” from Haydn’s *Surprise Symphony*.

In Chapter Five, following the first introductory section, there are three major sections that allow the reader to enter the world of the Collegium Musicum in Harrison Elementary School specifically and to examine the larger community of teachers, parents, the principal, as well as the students in a general sense. Responses from all participants
address student backgrounds, entering the Collegium, working in the Collegium, and how participants made the Collegium work in the context of their academic environment and made possible a developmental transformation, individually and as a group, through participation.
CHAPTER 5: LEARNING IN THE COLLEGIIUM

In this chapter I explore the various facets of how the students and adults interacted both alone and with each other to form a Community of Learners in the Collegium Musicum. First, I begin with an exploration of the background of the students. This provides insights into foundational aspects of the Community of Learners which include supportive family roles, sociocultural orientation, family orientation, and learning through participation with adults.

Next, I examine the point of contact with and entry into the Collegium. I discovered that for many of the participants, interest in membership in the Collegium began with having an older sibling precede them, or by singing during early elementary years in collaboration with Collegium accompaniment. In addition, I explore the practice habits as reported by the participants and their analysis of self-development as they strove to improve their playing in the Collegium.

I discuss how the students worked within the parameters of the ensemble as they worked and related to each other through rehearsing—analysis of self-readiness, personal skill preparation; listening—listening within the ensemble, sensitivity to others in relation to self and shared sociocultural endeavors; and concertizing—sensitivity to the notion of working together. Finally, I examine how they dealt with issues of academic conflict—homework, occasionally leaving classes for rehearsals; and I explore their perspectives of how they functioned within the larger school community.
Foundations of the Community

The members of the Collegium formed the inner core of the Community of Learners. The larger community also included family members, playing supportive roles in the earliest stages of students' education and exposure to music and classroom teachers, adding encouragement and offering flexibility in managing academic accountabilities of the students. By the time students were attending school, the community of learners extended to classroom and music teachers, as well as other students, interacting with those students destined to be Collegium members who became participants for this study.

Foundational and Educational Influences

Foundational influences, including supportive family roles and diverse origins, encouraged the elementary student participants in this study to explore part playing in the SATB recorder ensemble. These experiences were varied among the participants, and included influences from parents, siblings, and other relatives, as well as previous instrumental connections (other instrumental studies, as well as beginning the recorder) and exposure to the Harrison Collegium Musicum through singing with classmates as the Collegium accompanied them. For the Winter Concert and the Spring Concert at Harrison Elementary School, each grade level, consisting of 80 to 100 students per grade, sang one or two pieces. The students in the Collegium normally played the accompaniment for most grades for the concerts, providing the young singers to an early introduction to the group, and giving them an opportunity to interact with the instrumentalists.
For these student participants, growing up in a household with family members who listened to music, supported music, or had older siblings who engaged in musical activities, helped inspire them to audition for the Collegium. In some situations, family members sung to or with their children, which made an indelible impression upon their earliest memories. Because all of the student participants attended the same school, they lived in the same city in which the study took place; however, not all of them were born in this city. Several were born outside of the United States and experienced their earliest musical contact from disparate global environments. For example, Denzel was born and raised in Africa, Mai was born in Southeast Asia, Jorge and Vernon came from Brazil, and Becca came from Ghana. Patrice, Lucinda, and Isabel were born in the United States shortly after their parents had emigrated from Ghana, the Dominican Republic, Peru, and Columbia respectively. Jose was born in the United States, but his parents were born in El Salvador.

Eleven of the student participants have been a part of Harrison’s music program since first grade. All but three began to study the recorder as a classroom instrument during third grade and every participant was in the school during the fourth grade year, when all students continued the study of recorder. Participants had some awareness of the Collegium as accompaniment during school concerts when they were in the earlier grades.

**Early musical memories.**

Sociocultural orientation comprises a foundation for the Community of Learners in this study. Many of the student participants first heard music from family members as
they played, sang or listened to recordings in the home. Some students remembered that their parents sang lullabies and other songs before bedtime (*Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*; *Lavender’s Blue*; and *Starlight, Starbright* were three examples specifically mentioned). A few of the participants, however, did not remember anything before elementary school. Tiffany, for example, heard music as a young child, but did not remember any family members singing to her (ISI-7). Donavan remembered first hearing music in Kindergarten (ISI-5).

Kassandra had a clear connection to her pre-elementary years from her mother’s singing. She stated, “When I first developed a memory, my mom used to sing to me every night before I went to bed” (ISI-11, p. 1). The connection continued to her final year in the Collegium. One song she remembered was *Lavender’s Blue*, for which the ensemble provided an accompaniment as the First Grade sung it during the Spring Concert. She reminisced, “And I had a CD with a bunch of little nursery songs on it, so that’s how I remember that song. I knew I recognized it” (ISI-11, p. 1).

Jose, who grew up in the United States, remembered songs in Spanish sung by his older brother and began to sing along with him (ISI-8). In a similar fashion, Isabel’s first memories of songs consisted of those sung in Spanish at home (ISI-15). For Mai, she recalled that her mother would listen to music in the house. Mai added that, “I just listen to it. On some days my mom would clean the house while listening to music really loud” (ISI-3, p. 1). Not all of her memories were pleasant. Mai’s mother “listened to Vietnamese music,” but Mai did not like to listen to it herself, because “sometimes, I don’t like sad, because they sing while having sad thoughts and stuff” (ISI-3, p. 2).
Vernon claimed to have listened to music for his entire life. He began to listen to music “as soon as I got home from the hospital” (ISI-18, p. 1). For Vernon, his family provided his first connection to music. He recalled, “They sang to me for me to go to sleep” with songs like *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* (ISI-18, p. 1). Russ remembered hearing music as a means of settling down for the night and recalled, “Well, before I went to bed, then they’d sing me a lullaby” (ISI-17, p. 1). Patrice reminisced about her earliest years. Her family “had boxes and boxes of CD’s and they would like play music for me and my siblings, in order to keep us quiet” (ISI-16, p. 1).

**Sibling influences.**

For the participants in this study, coordination with other children often began prior to their participation in the Collegium Musicum. Eleven of the student participants had older brothers or sisters, who had gone to the same school one-to-four years earlier. Some student participants had an older sibling, who preceded them as Collegium members, which created an anticipation and exposure to the recorder during third grade. Some of the student participants thought about auditioning for the Collegium when they first began the recorder because of their older siblings’ involvement in the group. Sibling influence also played a role in familiarity of songs sung in the General Music classes. Many of these same students became familiar with songs used in General Music classes from older siblings, as the repertoire remained consistent through the years prior to this study. This early exposure to songs from older siblings exceeded the conscious boundaries of social interaction, which was inadvertent, but constructed a foundation for a Community of Learners approach. Brigitte heard her older sister sing the songs from
the General Music classes at home, and thus began to sing them herself before she entered school. Brigitte’s mother stated that Brigitte “has taken this all on herself . . . with the help of learning how to read [musical notation]. I am actually tone deaf, so she learned one hundred percent on her own” (PFGI-1, p. 1).

Not all the music that the student participants heard while growing up came from the General Music classes. Jordi heard a lot of music in his household from his brother, who listened to recorded music on the computer (ISI-12). Even though Jordi’s older brother listened to recorded music instead of singing songs that he learned at school, Jordi recalled that, “I’ve always wanted to play an instrument (SFGI-1, p. 3). Jordi’s sister helped him with his desire to learn an instrument when she purchased a piano for him. He said that “My sister, for my birthday, got me a piano, but it was kind of hard for me to do that” (SFGI-1, p. 3). As he found the piano a little confusing because of the combined left and right hand coordination, he confessed with some relief, “I found my brother’s recorder in one of our boxes and I started playing it” (SFGI-1, p. 1). For Jordi, the recorder did not require the same type of coordination with the left hand and right hand, along with the reading of two different clefs simultaneously, and he stated, “I liked that a lot—better than the piano” (SFGI-1, p. 3).

In addition to recorded music played at home, the student participants heard their older siblings play the recorder. Reika heard her older brother playing the instrument at home (ISI-9), as Jorge heard his older sister practice recorder (SFGI-5). Kerri and Sinead, adopted sisters, attributed inspiration from their sister Jocelyn, only one year older. Kerri mentioned that her “sister had got me into recorder and once I learned it I
thought it was fun. So I kept on going and now I’m in Collegium” (ISI-1, p. 1). Sinead
echoed the positive assistance and said, “I kept, like, learning and learning. My sister
Jocelyn sometimes helps me” (ISI-2, p. 1).

Leann’s older brother, a former Collegium member, provided an influence and
she remarked, “I started out in music by going to school and there were music classes.
So, then I found out about the Collegium and, since my brother was in it, I wanted to be
in it, because I thought it would be kind of cool” (ISI-10, p. 1). Donavan used to play
recorder with his sister, a Collegium tenor recorder player the year before Donavan’s
successful audition into the group (SFGI-4). Russ’s sister, older by two years,
participated in the Collegium during her year in fifth grade. He stated, “she played the
recorder here and she used to let me play” (ISI-17, p. 1).

In addition to influences by older siblings, occasionally a younger sibling served
as an influence as well. Sometimes a younger sibling had some bearing on a participant’s
attitude toward playing the instrument in general through interaction. For example,
Vernon, in speaking about his practice at home, said, “I play it and my little brother tells
me if it’s good or not” (SFGI-4, p. 5). In describing her practice at home, Mai stated that
her three year old sister “would dance along with the music and things that I play” (ISI-3,
p. 2), but revealed that she did not enjoy her little sister dancing while she was playing,
because “she gets in my way” (ISI-3, p. 3).

**Family influences.**

Aside from siblings, influence from family members, immediate and extended,
seemed quite strong with most of the student participants. Parents, uncles, aunts,
grandparents, and cousins played their part in introducing and nurturing a developing awareness of musical expression. Two of the participants mentioned their involvement in extended family musical gatherings with some sense of regularity, while others viewed a single family member as a catalyst for recorder validation and reinforcement. Kassandra recalled that one of her cousins had studied recorder in school and added that her mother played the guitar (ISI-11). Brigitte distinctly remembered her mother singing lullabies to her at an early age (ISI-13), even though Lucy Buchanon, her mother, professed to lack a musical ear (PFGI-1). Vernon proudly stated that his “Grandpa learned how to play guitar by himself and [now] he teaches other people” (ISI-18, p. 1). In addition to her mother listening to Vietnamese music, Mai reported that her father played guitar, drums, and piano (ISI-3). In a rather exuberant fashion, Diane poured forth:

This is where I’m at in music. Music is my passion, because my whole family loves music, because some of my aunts and uncles, when they were young, played the saxophone. And some of them played the trombone and some played instruments, I’m sure I don’t even know about. (ISI-4, p. 1)

Arlo remembered he and his family singing in the car during early childhood (ISI-14), a fact that has come back to haunt his mother Francine Fritz in later life, who stated, “The boys both practice the recorder all the time, even in the car. I have to ask to please stop, while we’re in the car driving” (PFGI-1, p1). Arlo’s aunt also made an impression upon him, as he recalled suddenly that she would sing in his presence during his earlier years (ISI-14).

Patrice had a significant experience with music, in which the extended family would be active in various musical groups. “On my Mom’s side, her whole family always sung in the choir and then chorus at school. And on my Dad’s side, the boys, they
played, like, instruments, just like a guitar or something and then the girls, they’d be like a singer” (ISI-16, p. 1).

Isabel had a similar experience to Patrice. She received guitar lessons from her grandfather for a few years. She would involve herself in family performing groups, as she and her cousins would provide entertainment to her family and friends. The songs that the group would sing would normally be in Spanish, the primary language of the extended family. Isabel revealed that she passes on the experience already to younger children by using some of the same songs while baby-sitting (ISI-15).

**Non-recorder instrumental experience.**

Learning through participation with prior musical experiences helped to prepare these participants for the Collegium Musicum. As recorder study fulfills the classroom instrument study requirement in the third grade at the school, most of the student participants in this study did not have a chance to study other instruments before learning to play recorder. A few students, nevertheless, had some non-recorder instrumental exposure at a young age and a number of others had non-recorder instrumental experience during third and fourth grades.

Tiffany, Kerri, and Jordi played the piano during the second and third grades (ISI-7, ISI-1, and ISI-12). Reika began piano from about the age of six, continuing for approximately four years, then switched to guitar (ISI-9). Russ played the same combination as Reika but in reverse order (ISI-17). Russ, though, never devoted his time in an attempt to master an instrument. He stated that, “I liked playing the guitar a little bit, but I never really got a chance to play a whole bunch of stuff. My grandmother had a
piano. I liked to play it a lot” (ISI-17, p. 1). Patrice took lessons for the piano and played the tambourine as well (ISI-16). Jose liked to play bongo drums at home, but took to learning the recorder, because he “wanted to learn how to play different songs and learn what they were about and do the melody” (ISI-8, p. 1). Arlo took private lessons in guitar for several years and occasionally continued to play around on a drum set at home (ISI-14).

Three of the participants, Vernon, Isabel, and Kassandra, studied string instruments. Harrison Elementary School had a strings teacher two days a week and up to 70 students from third to sixth grades were involved in string lessons for small groups of students. Vernon played cello in a small group lesson for a couple of years (ISI-18). Isabel tended to experiment more as she studied cello and piano and played the guitar for a bit (ISI-15). Kassandra took violin lessons in the school, as well as piano lessons during third and fourth grades (ISI-11). Denise Manion, her mother, philosophized on Kassandra’s exposure to music in broad, sweeping terms:

> With Kassandra, like, one thing about her is, it’s taken her down many different musical avenues. Not only does she play in the Collegium, but she ventured into trying the violin. And she’s done the piano. She now wants to learn the guitar, because I take guitar lessons myself. It’s made her venture into so many different avenues, so I really like that about it. (PFGI-1, p. 2)

**Pre-Collegium recorder experience.**

The most memorable aspect of early recorder experience depended on the individual participant. As the student participants parleyed their interests in music into learning the recorder, they brought out the difficulties they had with playing the instrument. The earliest memory of this recorder experience usually incorporated a task
that was initially considered difficult, such as a concept on which the student could focus with confident repetition. Kerri, for example, remembered “playing the G’s and E’s” on the newly acquired instrument that was difficult at first because of the concentration required on holding the recorder correctly while reading notes at the same time (ISI-1). Kerri added that she considered sight-reading to be highly important, “Because, if you mess up, you can correct yourself and you know what you are reading and playing” (SFGI-1, p. 3). Mai (ISI-3) and Diane (ISI-4) also recalled focusing on playing G and E. Because Tiffany began her recorder in another school, she recollected learning B, A, and G before learning E (ISI-7). With Patrice the actual fingering of isolated notes did not present an obstacle so much as the motion from one fingering to another. Patrice added, “For me, it was kind of difficult to change from like a B to an A like really fast. But it was easy for me to change from a G to a B” (ISI-16, p. 1).

As the third instrument of her earliest experiences, recorder for Reika “was kind of hard at first. So, I remember about the fingering and left hand on top” (ISI-9, p. 3). In addition, she had vivid memories to “blow with tonguing and articulation” (SFGI-2, p.1). Isabel had issues with hand position:

The recorder, it was kind of hard. I had to learn my fingering. I had to learn which fingerings were for the correct notes! It was tricky. I had to learn which hands to use. I had trouble with that, because I was a righty. I really had to try to get comfortable with that [putting the left on top]. I had to practice a lot. (ISI-15, p. 2)

Kassandra had the same issue. Keeping her left hand on top was a momentary problem, which she “got the hang of it after a little bit” (SFGI-2, p. 1).

The physical contact between fingers and instrument emerged as an important
aspect of early recorder experience for several of these participants. Denzel reminisced, “that you had to keep your fingers flat on the holes” (SFGI-2, p. 1). Russ also thought of the early challenges of finger position. For Russ, “I had a little trouble trying to get the fingers to go on the holes perfectly, but after I learned how to do that, all the notes were pretty easy” (ISI-17, p. 1). Vernon combined finger position with breath pressure as an early obstacle and recalled, “What I remember is that you have to keep your fingers really flat and you really don’t need to overblow to make the sound good” (ISI-18, p. 1).

Although Becca and Tiffany had been playing soprano recorder for a couple of years, they often related back to their initial experience with the tenor recorder, a difficult instrument for them to play because of the wider stretching of the hand positions (SFGI-4). Vernon recalled his early efforts with the soprano recorder. He stated, “Well, I remember I wasn’t really good at the fingering and I ended up squeaking the sound a lot and I remember kids laughing at me and I used to laugh, too” (SFGI-4, p. 2). Arlo compared recorder fingering to the very different approach of guitar playing:

It was kind of hard, but easy, like, to get like your fingers in the right spot and remembering where to put them. Like, you don’t really have to strum the right thing. But it’s hard, because you have to blow. For a long time you have to hold your breath through. (ISI-14, p. 2)

Donavan confessed that his earliest memories of playing recorder presented a tough ordeal, to which he provided a solution espoused by his teacher. He said, “It was hard at first. Then I had to practice a lot” (ISI-5, p. 1). Donavan added, “I wasn’t that good, every time I tried [to] do something. I couldn’t really get the notes fast enough” (SFGI-4, p. 2). Leann thought that recorder during third grade seemed easy, “because we had, like the easiest songs” (ISI-10, p. 1). Brigitte thought of it as neither too hard nor
too easy. “I tell you, it would be right in the middle” (ISI-13, p. 1). Carol thought of it as “between difficult and easy” and she recalled a vivid memory of “putting the mouthpiece first in the bag” (ISI-5, p. 1).

**Entry Points into the Collegium**

Practicing comprised an important aspect in this study as participants engaged with each other musically in the Collegium Musicum. Practicing helped the participants to maintain their membership in this community. Many students anticipated a possible acceptance into the Collegium as they approached Grade Five. Most students in Grades Three and Four had established simple but functional work habits and had kept monthly records of practice times. At the end of the year there were several promising Grade Four students, who attended Collegium rehearsals by invitation. These would assist the Grade Five students, as they played for the moving on ceremony at the end of the school year for all departing students in Grade Six. The Grade Four students, who were invited to play, had received excellent grades during the year for notational reading and playing soprano recorders in the classroom. Before auditioning, students were well aware of the communal nature of the Collegium: that each student played a part within the total ensemble and sometimes played with classes, which sang with the Collegium supporting them.

**Excitement and Interest in the Collegium**

In this study, excitement and interest in the Collegium Musicum helped the participants to establish a connection to the purpose of the activities in the Collegium. Because of the uniqueness and the structural nature of the elementary school Collegium,
exposure to the group normally occurred at the school during the years prior to joining
the ensemble. At the school Winter Concert and Spring Concert, three or four grades
would sing their songs with the four- or five-part accompaniment supplied by the
Collegium members. Classes normally began working the assigned song as much as six
weeks before the concert. Around the last week or two before the performance, a few
Collegium players, with permission from their classroom teachers would arrive in the
music room to play their recorder parts with the singers. As a result, younger students
became aware of a group of student musicians, who played their instruments as those
younger students were singing. All student participants in this study became familiar
with the group’s existence before they auditioned. Each of them professed some
excitement or, at least, satisfaction as a member of the ensemble and produced reasons
for their feelings.

Jordi had a connection with pre-performance experience. For Jordi, “It’s cool,
because, like, you know, everybody playing at the exact same times, kind of like before
anyone else hears it, like, before a concert and stuff. That’s kind of cool” (ISI-12, p. 2).
Mr. Gomez, the fifth and sixth grade bilingual teacher, mentioned that Yamilet, one of his
students, “feels very happy, because the day before, [that student is] already telling me
what time she is going to come to Collegium” (TFGI-I, p. 1). Other teachers concurred
with the improvement in student attitude. Ms. Lyons, the fifth grade Social Studies
teacher, expressed the general student attitude:

I know they leave in good hands. I know while they’re away that the
discipline and the expectations are right in tune with what I expect of
them. And then when it’s time for the performance, it’s just a beautiful
performance; then everyone is doing their thing and they seem very proud
and smiling and, like we said for the Promotional Ceremony, the graduation, at the end of the year, the kids do love when, you know, they have an audience. (TFGI-1, p. 5)

The teachers at Harrison Elementary School noticed the enthusiasm among the students who participated in the Collegium. In speaking of attending rehearsals, Ms. Rizzo, sixth grade English Language Arts teacher, conveyed, “The students in my room are excited to come. They remember their times, more so than I remember their times” (TFGI-2, p. 1). On the same topic Ms. Cargill, the fifth grade English Language Arts teacher, added, “Two kids [Lucinda and Donavan] are always attentive and concerned about, you know, making sure, especially when, even when we have music, that they have their instruments, that they have their folders” (TFGI-2, p. 2). Ms. Rizzo and Ms. Gardiner, the sixth grade Social Studies teacher, also confirmed the positive attitude of their students’ involvement (SFGI-2). In addition to the teachers, parents noticed the enthusiasm their children had for playing in the Collegium. Francine Fritz spoke of her son Arlo’s fascination with the soprano recorder, as he and his brother played what appeared to be non-stop at home:

I have to ask to please stop, while we’re in the car driving. Arlo looks forward to sitting at the assemblies and stuff and being a part of the Collegium club there. And it’s never a problem to get them to practice; they’re always blowing on that thing! (PFGI-1, p. 1)

Many of the students spoke of the excitement they experienced during a performance. Denzel, for example, liked the idea of “getting to play with some of my friends and, like, playing for other people” (SFGI-2, p. 5). Kassandra had similar feelings, when she followed up Denzel’s comment with hers. She added, “I like when we all play together as a group and when we play in concerts and when we have practices”
Lucinda went as far as wanting to “play in front of everyone” (SFGI-3, p. 2). Arlo confessed that he thought playing “in front of people at the school” was one of the most exciting parts about being in Collegium (SFGI-5, p. 5), a sentiment shared by Brigitte (SFGI-3). Her mother, Lucy Buchanon, confirmed Brigitte’s thoughts:

She gets family members together for an audience, so she can learn how to do that. She enjoys taking it at Christmas time in front of the aunts and uncles and performing everything and to have the opportunity here to do it is phenomenal. (PFGI-1, p. 1)

Two students voiced their surprise that people liked to listen to them play. Sinead commented, “It’s kind of interesting that people are paying attention to me and actually listening” (SFGI-1, p. 7). Jordi expressed a similar mild disbelief that people wanted to listen to the group (SFGI-1). Two other students communicated their satisfaction with a rehearsal and a performance. Lucinda wrote about a rehearsal three weeks before the Winter Concert, ”The soprano is cool because [it] is the group I’m on. The Andante is cool, “Because we did it well today” (SJ-21, 21 May). Becca commented after the concert in her journal, “The concert was amazing. I think it was one of the best concerts we had. Since this was 6th grade’s last concert, it was amazing” (SJ-20, 15 June).

According to Kerri, “Today was a problemless rehearsal because of all my practicing at home. I had fun” (SJ-1, 22 January). Later in the year she described a rehearsal as “a blast” (SJ-1, 30 April). Her sister Sinead declared in early May, “I think being in this group is fun. I love Collegium” (SJ-2, 7 May). A month later she wrote, “The Spring Concert was good. My experience makes me want to maybe join next year. Collegium is fun” (SJ-2, 15 June). Mai thought, “Collegium was great with all the people and music” (SJ-3, 22 January). Even though Carol expressed to “love being in
Collegium," she was ambivalent about how much fun she should have, when she wrote, “I think it doesn’t matter if you play good [sic] or not. It’s about being serious and having fun” (SJ-6, 7 May). Kassandra indicated her fondness and said, “I enjoy being in the collegium. I enjoy being in a group and playing a musical instrument” (SJ-11, 7 May). Denise Manion, her mother, verified Kassandra’s fondness for playing in the group in speaking of her independent sense of practicing, “It’s fun for her” (PFGI-1, p. 1). Tiffany and Donavan made reference to the tenor and bass recorders, respectively, as a major factor for the fun that they felt by being in the group (SFGI-4). Reika and Kassandra thought that the Collegium “was cool” (SFGI-2, p. 2) and “looked pretty fun,” (SFGI-2, p. 3) when they heard the concerts during the years before joining the ensemble. Denzel had a similar experience, as he heard his older sister play tenor recorder in the group a couple of years before he auditioned (SFGI-2). In some cases, the seeds of exposure were not only sown by older siblings, but some shared learning took place between students in the same family as older or more experienced children helped their younger siblings at earlier stages. For Brigitte, “When I got in on fourth grade at the end of the year, I just loved it, so I auditioned” (SFGI-3, p. 2).

Tiffany and Brigitte expressed gratitude for the experience that Collegium afforded them (SJ-7 and SJ-13). Vernon described the Collegium as fun, as well as a great experience (SJ-18 and SFGI-4). Isabel conveyed more specifically as to the reason for her excitement, “because of learning different [sic] kinds of music and notes I get to learn” (SJ-15, 7 May). Ms. Rodriguez seemed to concur with her daughter’s anticipation before leaving for school, saying, “Isabel is really, really excited. She would totally
forget everything, but ‘today, make sure, today is the day [for recorder]’” (PFGI-2, p. 1).

Jose realized that a successful audition to enter the Collegium depended on reading music notation adequately. He said, “The notation has to be good to get into the Collegium and start practicing every day, if you want to get in” (ISI-8, p. 3). Jose, whose exposure to musical notation occurred later than most of the student participants, communicated his appreciation of finally learning to read music, as he wrote of a February rehearsal: “It was easy because [sic] I could read Notes. And we played a good song. And That I listen to my teacher and understand The Notes” (SJ-8, 12 February).

When asked about the dullest or least exciting part about being in Collegium, many students answered that they found nothing dull or least exciting concerning the group. Sinead proffered, “Well, I don’t really think that there’s anything not so exciting” (SFGI-1, p. 7). Vernon submitted that he did not “think there really is a dullest part or a worse part in the Collegium” (SFGI-4, p. 6). Becca followed up by saying, “I think I have no clue” (SFGI-4, p. 7). Donavan responded in his openly honest manner, “There is no least exciting; it’s just fun” (SFGI-4, p. 7).

Other students made references to events that affected their ability to play music, particularly those that distracted their train of thought during rehearsals. Mai found it annoying that many students would talk, sometimes quite excitedly, after the group played through a section of a piece (SFGI-1). Jose presented a self-critical approach and stated, “The least part is, like, when I mess up and get in trouble with notes,” an emotion with which Lucinda agreed (SFGI-3, p. 5). Jorge bemoaned the prospect of “sitting
down, not playing or like slow, slow songs that have no speed to it at all” (SFGI-5, p. 5). Arlo referred to the bother of waiting as another section tried to correct some note errors, a sentiment echoed by Patrice, who said, “Just sitting, waiting your turn to play” (SFGI-5, p. 5). Tiffany recalled times, “When one section messes up and we have to do it over and over again” (SFGI-4, p. 7). Kassandra pointed out, “When we’re practicing and one section like the basses don’t get the notes right and everyone else is getting them perfect and we have to keep playing it over and over and over and over again” (SFGI-2, p. 6). Denzel, the first chair bass, defended his section and said, “It’s a big instrument, so it’s pretty hard to get the notes” (SFGI-2, p. 6). Kassandra responded and said, “Sometimes you guys play the wrong part, like we’re supposed to repeat [in Au clair de la lune] and you don’t repeat like you go down to the bottom. It’s annoying” (SFGI-2, p. 6). Reika agreed with Kassandra, who finally softened the chiding, when she said, “I’m not talking about you. I’m talking about the other basses. We’re playing and we’re supposed to repeat and they go down to the bottom and we’re all messed up” (SFGI-2, p. 6).

Teachers noted a sense of pride on the part of Collegium members. In referring to Donavan, Ms. Lyons, the fifth grade Social Studies teacher, spoke at length regarding his efforts:

He has said that he really enjoys it and thinks he might be going to make first chair. He’s very excited about that. He works hard. He’s a student that’s not in my own homeroom. He works very hard for what he gets and he’s very proud of where he’s at with this and it definitely translates, you know, to my curriculum. I teach social studies and writing and I just see the same effort in my classroom, as I believe he’s giving in Collegium. (TFGI-1, p. 4)
Ms. Gardiner, sixth grade Social Studies teacher, perceived the group self-esteem. She said, “I think when the concerts start to come closer and closer, I see more excitement. I think they’re more proud of what they are doing” (TFGI-2, p. 7). Leann focused on her achievements as she spoke of “getting together and putting on a show for everybody, so that they can see what you’ve accomplished” (SFGI-2, p.5). Reika followed her thoughts and added “playing in concerts or people to see what you have done and you can actually say that I have played instruments and be proud of it” (SFGI-2, p. 5).

Patrice described the connection between her instrument and herself:

I love the instrument I play. It is an alto. When I play the alto I get so involved because it is very fun & complicated. I love the alto because it is unique & not like any other instrument I have played. Another reason I like the alto is because it has very complicated notes & is very enchanting. When I play the alto it makes me feel very great because I know notes that none of my alto friends know. (SJ-16, 28 May)

Several students brought up the idea of ensemble playing as being exciting for their own listening experience. Carol liked “listening to the new songs everyone plays and how the tune goes” (SFGI-3, p.5). Patrice mentioned that she became energetic as she heard “different parts play together for the first time” (ISI-16, p. 3). She enjoyed the pieces that have “different tempos, sometimes they go fast and sometimes they go slow and you have to have the right count when you go to switch” (SFGI-5, p. 5).

The background conditions of the Collegium students helped to shape their attitudes and determination to become part of the ensemble. Many of their earliest memories provided a favorable acceptance of music, as well as working together, initially with parents and siblings, to achieve a goal. The music classroom, offering an early acquaintance with the recorder, also provided a predisposition for cooperative learning.
Practicing

Within a few weeks of admission into the Collegium, students began to realize that individual practice would lead to a more comfortable competence when playing with the entire ensemble. Becoming familiar with repertoire parts, learning new notes and fingerings, having a simple vision of self-improvement—all these elements were in the minds of students as they became part of the performing entity. In the first section students described the mechanics and structures of practicing at home. In second section students discussed the importance and the consequences of individual practice, which supplied them with the skills to function in a cooperative sense, when they played together within the group.

Practicing experiences.

All student participants practiced at home on a regular basis, as some of the repertoire that year challenged their previous skill levels. Brigitte, an alto recorder player, mentioned, “I spend time on it, because some of them are a little bit tricky, but I try to learn them at home” (ISI-13, p. 2). She explained her sequence of activity, “I go home, review my notes and then start to play it and then I’d play all the new music we have. So then, I learn them better” (ISI-13, p. 3). Ms. Buchanon, her mother, confirmed her commitment, “Brigitte is not a TV person. She goes in her room. That’s her area where she plays” (PFGL-1, p. 3). Kassandra admitted, “I practice, because I like it” (SFGI-2, p. 2). Since Kassandra enjoyed practicing, she found time to practice every day:

When I get home from school I’m by myself because my mom’s at work. I would, like, sit in my room and go through all the pieces in my folder. If
I had trouble, then I'd stay on one for a while. I'd practice that one, practice the main part that I had trouble with and then I’d just continue on. I practice about ten or fifteen minutes a day most of the time. (ISI-11, p. 3)

After working troublesome spots in a piece, she would play the entire piece to “see how it sounds” (SFGI-2, p. 3). Kassandra thought that learning all the notes for the alto posed some problems, “but just switching the fingering wasn’t that difficult” (ISI-11, p. 2).

Russ, a soprano recorder player, stated, “I’ll sit up in my room, once or twice a day, and start playing the recorder” (ISI-17, p. 2). Tiffany, a tenor recorder player, had to use a soprano recorder at home, as she practiced about ten minutes daily. “I go over my music and I practice the low D, because I have trouble on that” (ISI-7, p. 2). Tiffany outlined her procedure for preparation: “Well, first, when I get the piece, I look at all the notes and then, when we have practice, I play it and then, when I get home, I practice it more” (SFGI-4, p. 5). Jordi saw the results of his preparations. He said, “The day before the Winter Concert, I was practicing a lot and, on the day of the Winter Concert, I actually got better at playing all the songs” (SFGI-1, p. 2).

Isabel, an alto recorder player, sometimes relied on her grandfather to help her out (ISI-15). She expanded, “I get home. I practice. Then I eat. Then I practice. I don’t watch TV at all, actually. I practice most times and then I listen to music” (ISI-15, p. 3).

Ms. Rodriguez, her mother, shed more light on Isabel’s practice habits:

She doesn’t practice every single night. She practices, like, every other day and most of it is weekends. But surely, she plays with the little one Monica to teach her how she’s supposed to be, like, doing it. So, when they’re both in the room and they practice, but she doesn’t practice every single night. (PFGI-2, 1)

She stated that Isabel practiced sometimes alone and sometimes with her younger sister
Monica. “Usually, she just gets in her room and she starts to practice and practice and practice and I just let her be” (PFGI-2, p. 2). Isabel found that she had to practice reading her staff notation to keep pace with the assignments (ISI-15), but thought her sight-reading was “pretty good, but I’m thinking ‘how am I going to play this? This is something I never played before’” (ISI-15, p. 3). She emphasized the importance of reading notation generally and added, “You need to know what notes you’re playing and what kind of notes they are and what kind of fingering you need to do. So, to me, it’s really important” (ISI-15, p. 4).

Practice for Denzel, a bass recorder player, was a matter-of-fact event. He said, “Well, I go into the guest room and I just practice a piece and that’s pretty much it” (SFGI-2, p. 4). He admitted that he would return to the places that gave him difficulty after playing through a piece (SFGI-2). He brought up the problem of not owning a bass recorder to use at home. “Normally, I’d practice the bass more, because I can’t bring it home, I’d practice [the bass line] on the alto and after I’m done with that, I’d go back to the alto line” (SFGI-2, p. 4). Carol had an orderly understanding of her work. She said, “Say, if we get a new song, then we would practice it at Collegium practice and I would start practicing it at home” (SFGI-3, p. 4). She asserted, “I practice a lot” (ISI-6, p. 2), as did Reika, who acknowledged that she practiced 10 to 20 minutes a day (ISI-9, p. 2), six days a week usually (SFGI-2). Reika felt comfortable with her reading ability and said, “I sort of just look at it and I know my notes. So, it’s pretty easy for me, unless it’s super hard” (ISI-9, p. 2). Arlo stated that he practiced at home without elaborating on frequency or intensity (ISI-14). Ms. Fritz, his mother, added:
He practices consistently. He comes home and he does his homework. He practices it more than he did his guitar. And we were taking guitar lessons and I would have to say 'Arlo, go practice your guitar.' But with the recorder, he’s constantly practicing the songs and constantly has it. For this Christmas, they were practicing the minute they got home from school, in the car, everywhere. (PFGI-1, pp. 2-3)

Self-improvement represented an important concern, as Kerri, fourth chair soprano recorder player, pointed out, “I like doing it over and over again, just keep playing it and playing it and playing it and I think that every time I do it, I get better at it and I just learn it” (SFGI-1, p. 4). She added, “I just go to my room and I play, like, from the beginning. I play them all through and the ones I had trouble on, I’d go over and I’d to them again until I get them right” (ISI-1, p. 2). Kerri stated that she thought about each note as she sight-read material (ISI-1). Ms. Donahue, her mother, verified the practice sessions:

My kids do it sporadically. I can’t say that they do it every night or it’s not like a set time, but they all have a recorder, even the ones who aren’t taking it. So, they all go upstairs and they do it and, to be honest, with the five of them, there’s so much going on, but they do it a lot and they practice and make out their written sheets and everything. So I know they practice periodically. I never really paid attention, because I would go up and they’d be doing their recorders. (PFGI-2, p. 1)

Some of the practice sessions with Kerri and Sinead tended to be tense, according to Ms. Donahue:

There’s a lot of competition between my girls, too, which sometimes it’s, like, ‘do it separate,’ because they start ‘I play better.’ You know what I mean. They get into that and then, you know, Kerri’s always saying ‘I’m the fourth chair’ and Sinead’s seventh or whatever and I’m, like, ‘What’s the matter? You got a chair.’ You know what I mean? So there’s some of that that goes on, because they’re in the same grade and they’re siblings. (PFGI-2, p. 2)
Lucinda would “practice at home a lot to get it better and better” (SFGI-3, p. 3), a motivation shared by Denzel (SFGI-2). In describing her focus during practice, Lucinda said she would be “looking at the notes and doing it one after another one and doing it better” (SFGI-3, p. 4).

Students commented on attitudes toward reading and sight-reading in general.

Diane mused:

You need to know your notes. You really do and you need to know the fingering. If you don’t know them, maybe you could practice them at home, but if you need to play a piece, then you need to know note after note after note after note. You don’t need to learn just one note. You need to learn a whole bunch of notes. (ISI-4, p. 5)

She elaborated further:

If I see hard notes, I just practice them. I make them into one big exercise. Through exercise, you’ll get better at it and you’ll learn the notes and you learn to finger them and everything, like, how to play a feast! (ISI-4, p. 3)

Patrice, who practiced about 20 minutes a day (ISI-16), revealed that her reason for practice was “motivation to be a good player” (SFGI-5, p. 2). She confided in a journal entry:

I prepared by practicing the piece Andante until I was sure it was good. I felt like I should have practiced more so that it would have been perfect. My goal over the weekend would be to practice all the pieces more often until they are absolutley [sic] perfect that way I can be moved up a chair & be proud at what I have done/will do. (SJ-16, 30 April)

Becca exclaimed, “What makes me practice is that it makes me get really better and I’m doing better since fourth grade, since I’ve been in Collegium” (SFGI-4, p. 2). She added, “Sometimes my mom might tell me that I need to stop, because I do practice for a long time” (SFGI-4, p. 5). Jordi had an inner compulsion to practice. “I’m always playing.
I can’t stop. It’s kind of like an addiction” (ISI-12, p. 2). He verified his enjoyment, “I just practice for fun, because I like playing recorder. I actually got better at playing all the songs” (SFGI-1, p. 2). Jordi confessed that he had not learned how to read notes at his previous school, when doing the recorder (ISI-12).

Three students mentioned that practice had improved their playing. Leann stated simply that she practiced, “so I can get better at playing recorder” (SFGI-2, p. 1), as Denzel echoed the sentiment (SFGI-2). Carol related to the outcomes of work, as she volunteered her reason for spending time with the instrument, “I love to practice, because it makes me better” (SFGI-3, p. 2).

Looking to the future, Brigitte was determined to become better because of practice, as she wrote, “I think I should practice more. I need to learn the notes better than I know them now. So that will help me with the notes. Then I can be successful on the piece Andante. And I won’t get lost” (SJ-13, 30 April). She added that she thought that it was harder to read, “when there’s a lot more notes” (ISI-13, p. 2). Brigitte enjoyed practicing, because she “liked the songs a lot” SFGI-3, p. 2). Jorge had no problem practicing, because, as he stated, “it’s fun just to play the recorder” (SFGI-5, p. 2).

Kassandra liked to practice (SFGI-2). She reported after a rehearsal, “I reviewed all the pieces in my folder. I feel I could have practiced more but I also feel that I worked successfully” (SJ-11, 30 April). Ms. Manion, her mother, confirmed her attraction to the instrument saying, “She’ll just do it for fun. This is what she enjoys” (PFGI-1, p. 2).

Sometimes a negative influence played a role, encouraging practice at home. Jorge offered his reason for practice:
Sometimes I have fear of messing up, because the piece might be too hard or, it’s too easy, or too slow. Like, if it’s too slow, I’ll mess up and I just have a fear of it. So I keep going over it just to make sure I don’t mess up at all. (SFGI-5, p. 4)

Donavan was concerned about failing to keep up with the group. He said, “I practice, like, five minutes to ten minutes, because I want to get better, so I won’t get left out or lose my place” (ISI-5, p. 2). Donavan mentioned that he had “to think about what the notes are” (ISI-5, p. 3). At the beginning of the year he had switched from the alto recorder, read with the treble clef, to the bass recorder, which required the bass clef.

Students reported their personal work methods with a refreshing candor. Jose worked with simple repetition of his assigned part and said, “First I do easy music and then it keeps going and going until hard. And I keep playing until I get it right” (ISI-8, p. 2). Leann followed a similar path and added, “I usually take out my alto and review the notes and then I see which ones I’m having trouble on and then I just go over notes” (ISI-10, p. 2). Leann claimed that she had much difficulty with note recognition on the staff and had to work on her reading skills. Leann said, “It’s kind of hard, remembering all the notes” (ISI-10, p. 2). Ms. McDowell, her mother, vouched for Leann’s practice at home and said, “I think she practices more when there’s an event coming up but for her to get her homework done, that’s enough for her” (PFGI-1, p. 4). Leann said that she experienced some difficulty reading notes and said, “It’s kind of hard, when you’re reading a new piece, because it could be more than one new note that is [in] a different spot than they usually are in. It’s not as easy as I thought it would be” (ISI-10, p. 3).

Arlo usually worked his recorder assignments after doing his academic homework. He stated, “I practice until I, like, get the parts down, like, where I can play it. I’ll play it
once through and then try to fix what I did wrong” (ISI-14, p. 2). He confirmed, “If I know that I messed up, I just stick on that part” (SFGI-5, p. 3). After he had worked a passage on his soprano recorder, he took out his guitar occasionally and played the passage on his second instrument as a comparative tool (SFGI-5). Carol looked at the notes with which she had difficulty after playing through the pieces (ISI-6). Brigitte stated, “I go home, review my notes and then start to play it and then I’d play all the new music we have. So then, I learn them better” (ISI-13, p. 2).

Vernon had a routine of singing his parts. He recalled, “My practice habits at home are that I look over my music and I read it, like [student intones] sol, la, then I play it with my alto” (ISI-18, p. 2). Mai used singing silently to learn her lines. She said, “I like to play the melody of a song, because, if I already know the song, I would try to hum it in my head or something to memorize notes, too” (SFGI-1, p. 7). She explained her approach on a challenging segment of music, “When there are two notes I don’t know how to get to fast enough, I just do the note I don’t know. I just practice going back and forth” (SFGI-1, p. 5). Russ stated that, when he sight-read music, he experienced some difficulties and mentioned, “Sometimes, it’s a little extra tricky, because you don’t know what to play, but eventually after you play a couple of times, then it’s pretty easy” (ISI-17, p. 2). He made exercises on his trouble spots and said, “I’ll just try to, like, play through the pieces once and if I don’t get it (the parts I mess up on), I’ll just do like [we learned] at school, when you [he sings on la, do re mi re do la] dit-di-di-dit-di-di-dit” (ISI-17, p. 2). Becca found a tactic that worked favorably for her. She mentioned, “When I get home after school, I finger my notes before I start playing and then, when I
think I know all my notes, I just start playing” (SFGI-4, p. 4). Tiffany relied on an analytical attitude. She said, “First, I would play it and then I would look if I’m playing the right speed and I would see if I’m making any mistakes on my notes and I would do the notes over until I get them right” (SFGI-4, p. 5). Diane claimed that constant vigilance was essential. She stated, “You need to watch out for what notes are which. Don’t forget what bar you’re on. Don’t forget what staff you’re on. Don’t forget anything” (ISI-4, p. 3). She clarified that she questioned the identity of each note that she saw:

Like, if I know some certain notes, then I’ll be, like, ‘Oh yeah, I know that note.’ I’ll try to work on them if I don’t know it. If I see a different note, I’ll be, like, ‘Wait, what’s that note? I need to learn that note. How do you play that note? What fingers are they?’ (ISI-4, p. 4)

Kassandra, a sopranino and alto player, practiced the pieces in her music folder and said, “If I had trouble, then I’d stay on one for a while. I’d practice that one, practice the main part that I had trouble with and then I’d just continue on” (ISI-11, p. 3). She revealed:

Well, if it’s switching from like one note to another, I would do the patterns that we do sometimes, like keep switching from that note to another one in a little pattern. I would just keep trying to replay that part over and over until I got it, like, really good. (ISI-11, p. 3)

On recently learned notes, Kassandra added:

I still have to think about some notes. Like on Andante, the high notes are new to me, because we never really used that before. Like, I’ve always known those notes. We just never played them, so I’m not used to them. (ISI-11, p. 4)

Kerri mentioned, “I make patterns [on] the notes. They help me” (SFGI-1, p. 4). Sinead had trouble occasionally with reading, when playing a new piece of music for the first
time. She explained, “I sort of have to think of what the note is, because it’s a different order than in different pieces sometimes” (ISI-2, p. 3). She added that the ability to read notation assumed a high importance, “because you have to, like, know music to like play it right, so I think it’s very, very important” (ISI-2, p. 3). Sinead recounted, “I sometimes play at the pieces and when I get stuck, I take out one of my practice sheets and then I do that. Then I do some of the things [we learned] like the exercises” (ISI-2, p. 2) and commented that her fingers sometimes went to the correct note without her thinking about it (ISI-2). Additionally, Sinead was concerned with her sense of musical form, called to mind her thoughts about straightforward repetitions or a da capo repetition. Sinead said, “I just like do in order how I’m supposed to like on Au clair de la lune, you have to go back to the A [section], if I just do it like that and I kind of remember like other people playing, going back and I kind of say ‘Oh, that’s how we’re supposed to do it’” (SFGI-1, pp. 4-5). Jordi found that he had to concentrate on some notes that were more difficult to read than others (ISI-12) and described his approach to learning:

I repeat parts I really have trouble in and I practice on those pieces more than others. It’s, like, if I really know how to play one and I get it well, but there’s another one that I don’t know how to play, well I play that one more than the one I do know how to play. (SFGI-1, p. 5)

Jorge focused on his problem areas:

I would take it home and if I didn’t know it like completely or if I did a little bit, I would play it and I’d keep playing and playing until I got it, like, half of it right and then I’d focus on the parts I didn’t and I’d go through it perfectly after I get it fully right. Then, I’d have my parts focused when I’m done. (SFGI-5, p. 3)

Patrice gravitated toward her trouble spots and stated, “I usually work on the ones that I have more trouble with until I get to the ones that I’m really, really good at” (ISI-16, p.
She used her mistakes for points from which she improved. Patrice said, “If you can’t hear your mistakes, how are you supposed to learn from them” (ISI-16, p. 2)? Patrice was determined to be successful in making corrections and added, “I play it and, if I mess up, then I would focus on that area and I try playing that part until I get it right” (SFGI-5, p. 3). She called on family members to play her part on another instrument, as she read through hers. She recalled, “They could play it with me to see if it sounds right” (SFGI-5, p. 4).

**Learning processes.**

Students talked in depth about how learning developed, when practicing. Each related what procedures served most efficiently when learning a piece or a segment of a piece. Some would sing their part or clap its rhythm as a tool for learning, while others focused just on playing the trouble spots with a devised exercise.

The student participants’ perception of their development as recorder players provided thoughts from several different perspectives. All believed that they improved in their ability to play over the course of several years. Seven of the participants used the word “better” in describing their improvement. Donavan attributed his progress to his work at home. Donavan remarked that, “I just practice a lot and I got better” (ISI-5, p. 2). Leann owed her improvement to practice as well and stated, “I actually get better, because I practice” (ISI-10, p. 2). Patrice gave a similar reason for her development. ”I think that I’m better than I was before, because I practice a lot” (ISI-16, p. 2). Arlo described his musical evolution quite simply “I got better” (ISI-14, p. 2). Tiffany offered a result of her progress, “I became better and I learned more notes” (ISI-7, p. 2). Because
of his involvement in the Collegium Jordi thought he had grown “better than the beginning of the year” (ISI-12, p. 2). Jordi commented at the end of the year in summative fashion, “I learned that I can play like I never had. I was shocked when I saw everybody play like pros. I think that was awesome” (SJ-12, 15 June). Russ looked back on his year of progress, “I have learned a lot. I learned a whole bunch of notes. I don’t mess up on my fingering; usually it’s pretty easy” (ISI-17, p. 1). Ms. Kennedy, the school principal, understood the musical development as an educator familiar with the individual students and the ensemble:

You can definitely see in the littler ones, the younger ones, kids starting in third grade, and the pieces they’re playing, then seeing the sixth graders and the harder pieces they’re playing, but also seeing them in the performances as a group, being able to play with singers. You can definitely see how it’s progressed and they’re able to accompany vocals and they do it very well. (A1, p. 2)

The players of alto, tenor, bass, and sopranino instruments viewed branching out from the soprano recorder as a sign of growth. Kassandra recalled her transition, “The original instrument I played was the soprano in the third grade, but when I joined Collegium, I went to alto” (ISI-11, p. 2). She added, “In the fifth grade in the middle of the year, I took on sopranino with alto” (ISI-11, p. 2). Brigitte explained her change to alto recorder, “I play a bigger instrument. There’s different notes and it’s a different color” (ISI-13, p. 1). Vernon observed his multiple move, “I’ve developed, because I’ve gone up to an alto recorder and now I’m in a bass recorder and it’s, like, a lot bigger than the soprano” (ISI-18, p. 1).

Many students remarked on the development of skills. Jose and Reika became mindful of all the new notes they learned (ISI-8, ISI-9). Kerri remarked on the
challenges she had faced and the goals she had met (ISI-1, p. 1). Patrice saw the advancement of student skills within a few years as impressive and said, “My experience in achieving the concert was great. I had a lot of fun and can’t wait until the sixth grade graduation. I still find it hard to believe that the fourth graders have improved so much from before” (SJ-16, 15 June). Ms. Kennedy, the principal, summed up the quality of development of the Collegium group from her perspective:

I’m trying to think of the first time I saw them, probably when they perform at morning exercises. I’m thinking how well they do and the quality of the pieces they’re doing. I mean the younger children are doing simpler pieces, but the fifth and sixth graders, they seem high level pieces that they’re playing, so my initial answer would be impressed, very impressed. (AI, p. 1)

At the dress rehearsal for the Spring Concert, the entire ensemble made adjustments, as the learning process continued. I noted:

Most of the pieces that the Collegium accompanied took place without incident. On one of the first grade songs, however, the basses, tenors, and altos began to play more slowly, as the singers sped up. The song (Lavender’s Blue) was stopped to point out the discrepancy and then restarted with a more successful outcome. (TJ, 14 June)

**In the Collegium**

Learning took place as students worked together with each other and with the teacher. Rogoff (1994) stated, “The idea of a community of learners is based on the premise that learning occurs as people participate in shared endeavors with others, with all playing active but often asymmetrical roles in sociocultural activity” (p. 209). Once in the Collegium, students had to cope with rehearsals during the school day. Home practice and school rehearsals were mutually dependent upon each other. Rehearsal work at school indicated what technical aspects of repertoire that needed personal attention for
improvement while practice at home nourished the school rehearsals, which could function at a more efficient and progressive level, as everyone contributed to nature of the entire ensemble. Students appreciated their practice efforts at home, when they began to hear how their parts fit into the entire ensemble. When in rehearsals, students often reminded each other of the fingering, for example, of a recently learned note or helped one another with the rhythmic performance of a difficult musical passage. Peer validation of one’s efforts became commonplace.

Rehearsals

Weekly rehearsals for the Collegium provided an opportunity for Collegium members to hear how their parts fit in with the entire ensemble. The students would have spent practice time at home to work on various passages of their repertoire, connecting their visual recognition of the musical notation to a sound produced by individual understanding. Once the students arrived at this stage, the sectional rehearsals furnished the foundation for the whole product to materialize. During the sectionals, students often asked about the fingering for new notes, tempo or rhythmic considerations, and accidental marks. The whole section could focus on the same problems without taking up time in the general rehearsal with the other recorder voices waiting their turn. Students became aware of their developing skills as they prepared at home for each rehearsal.

Student preparedness.

Analysis of self-readiness by the participants provided an important component of shared endeavors for them in the Collegium. Students experienced different levels of
preparedness. They were capable of assessing their areas of weakness, involving knowledge of the repertoire, technical competence, notational and reading skills, and fluidity of motion when playing. They remarked quite candidly that they did not always achieve preparedness, a trait that took an important place in student participants’ minds.

Arlo and Jordi thought that they should have prepared the end of the *Andante* a little more fully for a rehearsal in April, as it presented them with more difficulties than did the first half of the piece (SJ-14, SJ-12). At the same rehearsal Kassandra expressed, “I feel I could have practiced more but I also feel that I worked successfully” (SJ-11, 30 April). Patrice aimed for perfection, “I prepared by practicing the piece *Andante* until I was sure it was good. In rehearsal [sic] I felt like I should have practiced more so that it would have been perfect” (SJ-16, 30 April). Lucinda understood a need to be more prepared. She stated, “I need to practice more. I do think that I need to practice because when I’m playing I get lost. That’s why I need to practice more” (SJ-21, 30 April).

Russ looked at preparation in a more general sense when he said, “I think the group is a good group. I think that if everybody practiced more, then the group would be really good” (SJ-17, 21 May).

For Leann, the rehearsals became necessary preparations for the concerts. Leann said, “Usually, the concert, you know, like, people are watching you. The singers are singing and regular rehearsals, like when we’re playing in a group, nobody’s watching, like, nobody sings, like, we just review, but at a concert, you don’t review” (ISI-10, p. 3). Like Leann, Kassandra viewed the rehearsals as necessary preparations for the concerts stated:
The practice on Friday, there’s room for mistakes. Like, if you make a mistake, you can fix it, but when you’re at a concert, if you make a mistake, you can’t go back and replay it. You have to just keep continuing on, like it never happened. And on Friday Collegium practices, we can go over parts that each section’s having trouble with, go over and practice, so we can get it down good. When you’re at a concert, you just have to get good right there. (ISI-11, p. 4)

Ms. Rodriguez spoke of the parental advice that she gave to her daughter about preparation:

If I say ‘Isabel, you want to be a singer, a singer has to go to school. You want to play the alto, you want to do something, you have to be good, too, in reading and everything.’ So, it’s, like, a really good discipline for her. She knows (I’ve been teaching her), ‘You want something. You need to work for it.’ So, I feel like it’s a discipline. She wants that. Then she needs to work for it. (PFGI-2, p. 4)

Full and sectional rehearsals performed a vital part in student participants’ perceptions of necessary musical activities. Reika viewed rehearsals as an opportunity to correct mistakes (ISI-9), as did Tiffany, “We can mess up, if we’re in practice, and we can fix it” (ISI-7, p. 2). Carol and Brigitte thought that correction played an important role during rehearsals (ISI-6, ISI-13). Arlo saw the rehearsal as a chance to perfect his musical input. He said, “You play it over and over until you get it right” (ISI-14, p. 3). Patrice valued her private practice over group rehearsal and said, “When I practice alone, I can hear what I’m doing and hear my mistakes, but when I play with others, my mistakes kind of get, like, covered up” (ISI-16, p. 2). Donavan expressed his perception of the rehearsal as a chance to play music without the stress and pressure of an audience (ISI-5). Jordi took a long view of the rehearsal process. “It’s, like, you know, in the beginning it might sound bad, but, like, people might not think that at the concert, because they’ve never really seen us, like, rehearse” (ISI-12, p. 2). Vernon used the bass
rehearsals to deal with troublesome musical issues (SFGI-4, p. 4).

Four students told of specific issues concerning rehearsals. Kerri assessed a January session as a useful event:

Today was a problemless rehearsal because of all my practicing at home. All my notes sounded peaceful and I stayed on track with all the rest of my group. It was a little challenge, but it tested my brain. (SJ-1, 22 January)

Sinead pinpointed a successful occurrence during a May rehearsal. She said, “We did a song and it was perfect. Then, when we were done with the song, we cut off at the same time, every group, every person” (SJ-2, 21 May). Mai thought that an April rehearsal was tough for her “because it was difficult, the notes and the tempo” (SJ-3, 30 April). Jorge saw a positive and cooperative value all rehearsals and stated, “I think it is realy [sic] cool rehearsals [sic] are so well [sic] and that we work together so good [sic]” SJ-22, 21 May).

Students demonstrated a variety of positive attitudes toward their recorder work. Each realized the importance of practice and all had their ideas on how to prepare for rehearsal. Parents described the practice habits of their children. Student participants generally saw rehearsals as a valuable opportunity to perfect their skills, as they worked together.

Work attitude.

Personal skill preparation manifested itself during the rehearsals of the Collegium. As the students rehearsed in the Collegium, they realized their practicing at home helped to prepare them for working with each other. The students’ attitude towards working alone, working with their section members, and working with the entire ensemble
provided a basis for how they interacted with each other in the Collegium.

Four students, Reika, Arlo, Patrice, and Jose, mentioned that preparation work helped them to avoid playing what they called “poorly.” Reika mused, “You’re in a group, so if one person plays a wrong note, it kind of sounds off, so I want to play it right” (SFGI-2, p. 1). Arlo explained his work ethic, “I look at it and I try to play it and I go through the whole song and play it. If I know that I messed up, I just stick on that part” (SFGI-5, p. 3). Ms. Fritz, his mother, affirmed Arlo’s devotion to his work and recalled that when he took guitar lessons, she would have to remind him to do his guitar practice, “but the recorder, he’s constantly practicing the songs and constantly has it” (PFGI-1, p. 2). Patrice stated, “I play it and, if I mess up, then I would focus on that area and I try playing that part until I get it right” (SFGI-5, p. 3). Jose thought that he needed to spend more time on the areas that presented the most difficulties first (SJ-8).

Tiffany balanced her thoughts after a January rehearsal, “Today in Collegium I thought that we could have done a little better. I think that my section didn’t get to play a lot. But when we did play we did great” (SJ-7, 22 January). A month later, she wrote of her successful focus: “We played two pieces and I read the notes really well. I listened to the conductor and I played the speed that he wanted” (SJ-7, 12 February). Arlo isolated his trouble spots in Haydn’s Andante, “I think I need to practice during the end because I have a little trouble, but in the beginning I’m pretty good and successful” (SJ-14, 30 April). Lucinda found areas of difficulty and noted, “I play a new song today. It was a little hard for me because is new. It was hard because [sic] there were new notes on the song” (SJ-21, 12 February). She added that she needed to work more, because she
would lose her place occasionally (SJ-21). Reika reflected after an April rehearsal, “I think I should have practiced a bit more. I was able to play but I feel I could’ve done better. To me, I think my playing was in the middle” (SJ-9, 30 April). Vernon stated after an April rehearsal, “I think I could have done better” (SJ-18, 30 April). Denzel offered a specific piece as grounds for improvement after the Spring Concert, “It was good and we could have done better in *Go Tell Aunt Rhody*” (SJ-19, 15 June).

Isabel offered detailed areas of work with her alto recorder: “Today we played *Belle Qui Tien*. I have been struggling at getting from my G to my F-sharp. I also need to learn my fingering for C-sharp so I can go through the whole song without any problems” (SJ-15, 22 January). Patrice pinpointed a problem area in the *Allemande*:

> When I am listening to the whole ensemble when everyone is playing at the same time I listen by trying to figure out what not[e] someone is on if I am lost such as when I first started playing *Allemaigne*. I would always get lost at bar nine (9). Then as I started listening I was able to recognize where everyone was & where I was & that way I would be able to figure out the speed (tempo), & the notes. (SJ-16, 19 March)

Kerri attributed a rehearsal without problems to “all my practicing at home. I stayed on track with all the rest of my group. It was a little challenge, but it tested my brain” (SJ-1, 22 January). She added after a February rehearsal, “Today my focus was easy on my ability because it was easy. I think today was full of direction because of people’s understanding and also mine” (SJ-1, 12 February). Mai was pleased after a rehearsal for Haydn’s “Andante” three weeks before the Spring Concert, noting, “We did great, played it very well. We never mess up big time” (SJ-3, 21 May). After a May rehearsal, Becca remarked, “Something that went really well was that we played *Andante*. People did mess up but if they messed up they caught up to their notes” (SJ-20.
The second-year Collegium members displayed a sense of cooperative learning with the fifth grade members, as they demonstrated some embellishments on repeated sections of Allemande. I observed after a rehearsal in March, “The Susato piece presented a challenge, especially for the Tenors and Basses, but the returning 6th graders were helping all this year’s new members face the problem area (bb. 11-12)” (TJ-1, 19 March).

Student participants adopted various approaches, when working with their instruments, as they coped with challenges of learning how to play the recorder on their own. They used their developing skills as a point of departure for learning how to interact with each other during the ensemble learning activity.

**Listening**

Listening was an important factor in the learning process and within the organizational structure of the Collegium players. Even from early Kindergarten years, listening for learning purposes was an emphasized technique of learning. Listening to each other within the classroom and silent listening while reading notation were, at least, as important as listening to the teacher in the earlier years. When first becoming acquainted with the recorder in third grade, students employed listening procedures to develop articulation techniques (tonguing), hand/breath coordination, and ensemble playing both in unison and in two or three parts. Upon entering the Collegium, students began to listen to each other in sections for linear sounds and in the whole ensemble for vertical or harmonic structures.
Group awareness.

As participants talked about the consciousness of the group dynamic, four general areas surfaced: structural description, awareness of other instrumental parts, the ability to keep one's place because of the group, and a sense of ensemble. The rehearsals, over a period of time, formed a structural consciousness that eventually led to a strong group identity. Players, not only heard other instruments playing different notes from their own, but also became dependent on those other instruments for cues or checking for their place in the score. Members developed a strong sense of group identity during the learning process.

Kerri stated in a straightforward manner, “Collegium’s a fun group, where kids can learn and play music” (ISI-1, p. 2). Jordi visualized himself as part of the group that plays concerts (SFGI-1). Diane remarked on the uniqueness of the group, as she had not experienced anything similar in her previous school (ISI-4).

Sinead emphasized the difference between playing on her own and playing with the other parts, saying, “The music sounds a little different” (ISI-2, p. 2). Diane alluded to the beauty of having all the different instruments playing simultaneously, as she stated, “I never knew it could make such beautiful music before” (ISI-4, p. 2). Carol described the group, saying, “It’s, like, a whole musical, because there are a bunch of different instruments” (ISI-6, p. 3). Jordi sometimes became lost while playing in the Collegium but became more aware of the other parts and admitted, “Once I play it more, I understand when all the other ones are playing; I just breathe and start playing again” (ISI-12, p. 4). Brigitte remarked, “When all of us come together on Friday, it sounds
different” (ISI-13, p. 3). Arlo mentioned his gratefulness for hearing the other parts, as it helped his part to fit in with the whole group (ISI-14). Jose listened to the other parts, as he said, “It’s, like, helpful, because I can understand the notes better” (SFGI-3, p. 3).

Sometimes awareness of the other instruments proved a challenge. Mai complained, “Once you’re playing, you can’t really hear, when the other [parts] are playing, because maybe the sopraninos are playing too high and you really can’t hear the tenor and the basses” (ISI-3, p. 2). Tiffany thought hearing everyone’s line presented some challenges at times (ISI-7). Lucinda admitted some confusion, as she became aware of other parts (SFGI-3).

Using the group to keep one’s place became useful for students. For example, Kerri stated:

Sometimes, it’ll mess you up, because you’re thinking, “Wait, I play this note and they play something else.” But it helps, because if you mess up, there’re other kids playing the same thing and you can go along with them and then, if they’re different, you just have to think about where you are. (ISI-1, p. 3)

She added, “The rest of the ensemble is a big help, because if I mess up, the ensemble helps me correct my mistakes by playing the right notes and letting me hear the right notes, so I can fix them” (SJ-1, 19 March). Kassandra focused on the other parts, saying, “I imagine hearing the other parts, so I can work it out, the timing or when I’m supposed to come in” (ISI-11, p. 3). Denzel, a bass recorder player, said, “I listen by seeing what part everyone is playing, like, in Harrison School House Song. I listen to the soprano line to see when to come” (SJ-19, 19 March).

Many of the players emphasized the sense of ensemble from a practical angle or
with an appreciative impression. Tiffany noted, “If I practice alone, I might not play, like, the right tempo and stuff, but when we’re all playing together, I can, like, listen to them” (ISI-7, p. 2). Kassandra liked playing with the whole ensemble (ISI-11). She described her opinion of her musical relationship to the group:

When you’re alone, you could hear what you’re playing and it’s only you, but when you’re all together, you can’t really hear yourself that well, so, you don’t know, depending on how loud you’re playing, if the note’s, like, a little off. (ISI-11, p. 3)

Patrice offered a similar positional view:

When I am listening to the whole ensemble, when everyone is playing at the same time, I listen by trying to figure out what note someone is on, if I am lost, such as when I first started playing Allemaigne, I would always get lost at bar nine. Then as I started listening I was able to recognize where everyone was and where I was, I would be able to figure out the speed and the notes. (SJ-16, 19 March).

Leann brought out the idea that if she was lost, then the ensemble would suffer, saying, “If you don’t know your notes, the whole group is going to sound really, really bad, but if you know your notes, it’s not going to sound bad” (ISI-10, p. 3). Reika submitted an inclusive viewpoint that you hear everyone playing when in full rehearsal or concert (ISI-9). She added, “You’re in a group. So if one person plays a wrong note, it kind of sounds off, so I want to play it right” (SFGI-2, p. 1).

Arlo expressed his appreciation that he learned to play with a group, in addition to playing as a single performer (ISI-14). Russ admitted that he actually liked to practice with other people (ISI-17). Vernon liked the Collegium very much, saying, “It is really fun, because we play together. It also is a great experience” (SJ-18, 7 May). Isabel relied on listening to the group for the pulse of each piece, claiming it helped her establish the
tempo in her mind (ISI-15). Carol, Becca, Kerri, Sinead, Donavan, and Arlo commented on the ability of the group to keep together (SFGI-3, SFGI-4, SJ-1, SJ-2, SJ-5, SJ-14). Jordi described his thoughts on the group, “While I’m playing, it’s kind of like I’m playing as one but all” (SFGI-1, p. 4). Kassandra stated, that she works on her recorder playing “for the sake of the group” (SFGI-2, p. 2).

Concentration issues.

Student participants viewed the ability to concentrate as an important means of focus in their learning environment. Several of the students made references to other students, who at times made concentration a challenging achievement. Following a rehearsal in February, Patrice wrote:

My concentration ability was fairly well [sic] today. It could have been better but some people were talking. When I was reading my notes it was very easy because I know the piece. It was little hard listening because some people were talking. As for understanding direction, that was easy also because when I listened well I understand the directions. (SJ-16, 12 February)

Arlo was satisfied with his ability to concentrate “unless someone is being annoying. I can follow direction OK, but I don’t think some people think I can” (SJ-14, 12 February). Jorge found it difficult to concentrate, when talking during rehearsal became a problem (SJ-22). Becca exhibited a feeling of success despite the distractions and said, “Today in Collegium I was able to read my notes, understand directions but I was not able to hear. There was a lot of talking going on” (SJ-20, 12 February). Isabel noted her success in overcoming distractions:

My ability on concentrating is greatly improving. I’ve been ignoring the noises in my surroundings. I am able to understand directions. I have
trouble sometimes because of the fooling around that is surrounding me when I [am] trying to listen. (SJ-15, 12 February)

Vernon expressed his successful focus, “Today I was able to pay attention since my partner wasn’t playing the wrong note” (SJ-18, 12 February). Brigitte claimed that she was easily distracted when her fellow musicians talked (SJ-13), a sentiment shared by Donavan (SJ-5).

Jordi spoke of concentration in more abstract terms rather than assigning blame. Jordi said, “Focusing on reading sometimes is hard. One way it’s hard is, if you start late or just don’t pay attention. Listening is the main thing though. If you don’t, you’ll get lost through the whole piece” (SJ-12, 12 February). Isabel became confused as she heard other instrumental lines (ISI-15). Reika and Kassandra thought that they easily achieved a reliable level of independence when they played (SJ-9, SJ-11).

Students experienced confusion in various ways. Donavan found that hearing the other instrumental lines caused some uncertainty for him (ISI-5). Tiffany claimed that hearing all the other parts brought about some confusion for her (ISI-7). Leann considered playing along with the other instruments overpowering at times, because she could not imagine the sound of other lines when practicing alone (ISI-10). Jose revealed that he made more mistakes when playing in the entire ensemble than he did when practicing alone (ISI-8). Brigitte usually managed quite well when playing with group, except when performing included the sopranois (ISI-13). Jorge tried to ignore the other parts unless he felt secure while playing (SFGI-5).

Kassandra tried to use other instrumental parts to keep her place:
Sometimes the other parts help me to catch up. Like on “Andante,” when the sopranos play, I know where I’m supposed to be on sopranino, but on other pieces, it confuses me, because I don’t know the other parts that well. So, I really don’t know where I am. (ISI-11, p. 5)

She elaborated on the concept of using the other parts as points of reference:

I imagine the other parts, so I can work out the timing or when I’m supposed to come in. Like, on “Andante” with the sopraninos, I, like, hear the other parts in my head and I think when I’m supposed to come in and I practice on that, so I can do it when we’re all together. (ISI-11, p. 3)

Arlo and Patrice found that listening to the other parts helped them to keep them on target with their own playing (ISI-14, ISI-16). Becca used the other instruments to navigate her way back to the correct spot, if she lost her way. She said, “When I play my part, I listen to all the other sections and sometimes I’m not playing the right notes and I just listen to see where they are and just go right back where I’m supposed to be” (SFGI-4, p. 4).

Interdependence through listening.

Students commented on several aspects of listening. They revealed that they paid attention to instruction, were vaguely or acutely aware of other instruments playing, and used other instruments as signaling cues.

Students listening to instructions and directions during rehearsal weighed heavily on the players’ minds. Sinead wrote, “I can read the notes OK, but I lose place sometimes. I listen and understand directions, but I get distracted sometimes. I can get distracted by hearing people chatting and laughing so that’s the reason” (SJ-2, 12 February). Donavan concurred when he mentioned, “The music I play is easy for me and I concentrate a lot. I can’t hear the direction because people are playing or talking” (SJ-5, 12 February), as did Carol, who stated:
I was able to concentrate on my notes. But a lot of people were talking behind me, so, on the new piece, I asked the person next to me what “note is this?” I couldn’t remember, and she didn’t hear me. So, I skipped that note. I felt guilty, but I didn’t want to mess up the song! So, it was hard to listen. (SJ-6, 12 Feb.)

Isabel noted her growing ability to listen, as she explained:

My ability on concentrating is greatly improving. I’ve been ignoring the noises in my surroundings. I am also able to understand directions the constructor [sic] is giving. I have trouble sometimes because of the fooling around that is surrounding me when I trying to listen. (SJ-15, 12 Feb.).

Patrice used her listening ability to detect a lack of togetherness in the ensemble (SJ-16, 22 January). Tiffany had no problem with instructional listening. She indicated, “My focus in Collegium was good. I read the notes really well. I listened to the conductor and I played [at the necessary] speed” (SJ-7, 12 February). Rather than describing his own situation, Jordi generalized, “Focusing on reading sometimes is hard. One way it’s hard is if you start late or just don’t pay attention. Listening is the main thing though. If you don’t, you’ll get lost through the whole piece” (SJ-12, 12 February).

Some students focused on their own part occasionally, almost to the point of ignoring the other parts. Sinead, a soprano recorder player, ignored the other instruments, in order to avoid confusion (SFGI-1, p. 3). Mai, the soprano section leader, followed, “I don’t get confused or anything. I want to hear the first soprano. Arlo sits next to me and all I hear is me, Arlo, and Russ playing [soprano]” (SFGI-1, p. 3).

Vernon mentioned, “The only time I hear the sopranos or altos is when they have an introduction or when the bass has a rest” (SFGI-4, p. 3). Arlo warned, “I try to block them out a little, because I like to focus on what I’m doing and, if I get mixed up, then I
can’t get back on track” (SFGI-5, p. 3).

Tiffany, Donavan, Jorge, and Patrice spoke of a vague awareness of the other instruments, as they were playing their own part. Tiffany, tenor recorder, heard the sopranos especially, “because they have a higher pitch than us” (SFGI-4, p. 4). Donavan said, “The basses are so low, so I can hear everybody else play their instruments” (SFGI-4, p. 4). Jorge, soprano recorder, confessed to a hazy consciousness of the others, saying, “I’m aware of them, by listening to them playing sometimes, but I don’t, because I have to focus more, because I lose my place” SFGI-5, p. 3). Patrice indicated that she had a choice and reasoned, “If I learn to play it, then I can practice it a lot. Then I can relax and listen to them, but, if not, I focus on my own piece” SFGI-5, p. 3).

There was a marked dependence on attending to the lines of other players for guidance while playing their own parts. Over half of the student participants made a point of listening to the other instruments as signal or cue for their own parts. Brigitte, an alto player, said, “I listen to the melody [of other players] first before I play [my part] and then I start playing it” (SFGI-3, p. 3). Kerri, a soprano player, gave credit to the group for helping her keep her place, stating, “I think the rest of the ensemble is a big help, because if I mess up, the ensemble helps me correct my mistakes by playing the right notes and letting me hear the right notes so I can fix them” (SJ-1, 19 March). Jose, a soprano player, relied on other instruments to keep him in place. He remembered, “I hear everybody and [it] helps me stay in place. And I hear tenor and alto play” (SJ-8, 19 March). Jordi depended on the whole ensemble for finding his way and stated, “If I lose my spot and I hear a note that I [recognize], I can find my spot again. It really helps
when I listen ‘cause then I can stay on track” (SJ-12, 19 March). Arlo listened to the group and declared, “It helps, because sometimes when I mess up, I can hear where the other people are, so I can get back on track” (SJ-14, 19 March). Tiffany mentioned that she listened to the entire group, especially if she had a few measures of rest and declared she became quite aware of the sopranos (SJ-7, 12 February). Even though Vernon had professed earlier in the school year that he rarely listened to other parts (SFGI-4), by March he had become more aware of the soprano line, as he indicated, “I can listen to the ensemble by paying attention to the Soprano line. It helps me pay attention, because they are playing the melody” (SJ-18, 19 March). Becca, one of the tenor players who were positioned in front of the basses, described her experience, “I am listening to the whole group while we are playing at the same time. When the bass is playing, I try to get my ears to go back at them and sometimes it’s very good, sometimes it’s not good at all” (SJ-20, 19 March). Carol posited a broader viewpoint than her fellow students and wrote:

I listen to the tune I’m going in, then I listen to other instruments. I concentrate on my part of the song, comparing how my part sounds different from others. For instance, [Soprano] Recorder is the highest sound in CM, so then, I listen to base [sic], tenner [sic], and Alto, noticing how the notes are different and lower. Then, listening to it all together makes it sound better. (SJ-6, 19 March)

Isabel acknowledged that she used other parts as a signal or cue to keep her own place (ISI-15). Becca divulged that she used other instruments “to see where they are and just go right back where I’m supposed to be” (SFGI-4, p. 4). Reika preferred to listen to separate parts in the whole ensemble, saying that it helped her (SJ-9). Arlo counted on listening to the entire group when lost, to “get back on track” (SJ-14, 19 March).
Harmonic awareness.

The exposure to harmonic structures is a natural consequence of playing in an ensemble playing multiple parts. Without necessarily understanding the complexities of harmonies, student participants expressed awareness of different notes and lines of music (compositional voices) occurring simultaneously. Harmonic comprehension was not an emphasis in General Music classes during the early elementary years. Even though students had been involved in performing part activities in previous years; e.g., singing a song, while tapping rhythmic ostinati, students did not study triadic structures or chord progressions. The years during Collegium provided the first exposure to conscious participation in harmonic performance.

Isabel felt the pressure relating her part to the ensemble, as she stated, “I have to work things out myself. I have to find out how to make my playing better, because I try to catch up with all the different notes that are playing, surrounding me” (ISI-15, p. 3). Arlo found that listening to the other parts provided a useful tool and stated, “It helps me to keep my spot” (ISI-14, p. 4). Patrice echoed Arlo’s thoughts in using the rest of the ensemble to keep her place (ISI-16). Reika used the other lines “to catch up or slow down” (SFGI-2, p. 3) to adjust her own tempo if necessary, a practice shared by Kassandra and Denzel (SFGI-2). Reika, an alto player, emphasized listening to other “parts such as soprano or bass. It helps me to listen to other sections, if I get lost” (SJ-9, 19 March). Jose and Carol agreed that hearing the other parts gave them some assistance in keeping their place (SFGI-3). Mai, a soprano player, listened to the alto, tenor, and bass parts just “to see where they are” SFGI-1, p. 3). Russ expressed pleasure when he
played with the other parts and stated, “I feel comfortable, because I get to hear more and you have, like, all the beats, so, if you, like, mess up, they’ll be playing and you’ll know what to do after that” (ISI-17, p. 3). Becca, a tenor player, felt that listening to the entire ensemble helped her to find her place in case she became lost. “Sometimes I’m not playing the right notes and I just listen to see where they are and just go right back where I’m supposed to be” (SFGI-4, p. 4). Kassandra experienced helpfulness and confusion on occasion and stated, “Sometimes, depending on what piece we’re playing, really! Sometimes the other parts help me to catch up. Like on Andante, when the sopranos play, I know, like, where I’m supposed to be on sopranino, but on other pieces, it confuses me, because I don’t know the other parts that well” (ISI-11, p. 5). Earlier in the year, Lucinda found it “confusing, because I’m feeling one note and they are playing the other notes and I get, like, confused too much” (SFGI-3, p. 3). Later she confessed her reliance on hearing the other parts, “It is helpful because when I need to hold a note the others group got another or extra note. It [is] helpful because it keep[s] me in place so I don’t [get] lost” (SJ-21, 19 March).

**Concerts**

Concerts provided an exposure to the larger community and provided a demonstration of how the Collegium worked together. They also furnished the Collegium members with a sense of awareness that there was an audience perspective. The live performance presented an opportunity for an extension of the Collegium community, which incorporated a listening audience.
Community of learning.

Students were clearly aware of playing for a listening audience at the concerts. Most of them felt, at the very least, a little stress to do as well as they could. Some of them expressed surprise that people actually wanted to listen to them. Invariably, they viewed concerts from a perspective of how they differed from rehearsals.

Jordi cautioned that the players should spend time learning their pieces, because “sometimes people will actually listen to them” (SFGI-1, p. 7). Mai responded positively, “At the concerts, everybody actually listens” (SFGI-1, p. 7). Donavan professed a little nervousness, when an audience was listening (ISI-5). Carol felt pressure not to mess up in front of an audience, “Because you can’t go back and fix it, like, you can’t stop the whole concert” (ISI-6, p. 3).

Thus, the act of rehearsing represented a continual process of musical activity. Participants viewed the process of learning, the rehearsals at school, and the concerts in various manners. Some equated the process of learning with the actual rehearsal, while others saw the whole learning experience, including performances, as an interactive process. Some regarded the end product as simply a concert, while others deemed the product as the entire learning process.

All students at the school normally participated in two concerts with their music class every year from Kindergarten level up to the sixth grade. Collegium members presented an instrumental accompaniment to each grade and would play one to three pieces without any singers. Players related specific thoughts and concepts of the school concerts. Isabel stated, “In a concert I have more pressure on myself, because I want to
get this correct, because sometimes I end up making a mistake. It's more pressure, because I have people surrounding me and there're kids singing" (ISI-15, p. 3). Russ noted, "At concerts you're playing live, in front of people obviously. I like playing at concerts" (ISI-17, p. 2).

Several students spoke about the Spring Concert after it was presented. Vernon, Becca, and Tiffany generalized that the concert was awesome, amazing, and great (SJ-18, SJ-20, SJ-7). Lucinda believed the concert "was cool" (SJ-21, 15 June), despite her nervousness of becoming confused. Jordi expressed shock that everything had gone so smoothly (SJ-12). Mai felt relief that the Collegium "made it through the concert without messing up" (SJ-3, p. 15 June). Leann conveyed satisfaction with her result and stated, "I think I did achieve my goal in doing awesome at the concert. I think the songs are getting easier for me to play and I think I did well at the concert" (SJ-10, 15 June). Jorge credited his preparation for his achievement, when he wrote, "I played all the songs right and I played the songs good [sic]. I practiced all night long and got good" (SJ-22, 15 June). Kerri mused afterwards, "Today the show went well, I was happy that the singers stayed with our playing. I am also very satisfied with how well the show went" (SJ-1, 15 June).

Several participants extolled the value of the learning process. After a rehearsal in the Spring, Carol mentioned, "I think the song "Andante" went really well in Collegium today. Of course some sopranos (I will admit it was me) started early on the high D! But it was really well [sic]. I hope it's that good on the Spring Concert and 6th grade graduation" (SJ-6, 21 May). Reika, leaning heavily on her rehearsals, said, "My
experience in achieving in a concert relates to learning throughout the year very well. Practicing every Friday leads to a great concert to put on” (SJ-9, 15 June). Isabel found the learning process to be quite valuable as it related to the performance, when she stated, “I think I should work more harder [sic] so, when we play, it could be all worth the work, when I know exactly what to do, and know all my notes” SJ-15, 30 April). Jordi contributed the thought that “In the beginning it might sound bad, but like people might not think that at the concert, because they’ve never really seen us, like, rehearse” (ISI-12, p. 2).

Many participants alluded to the difference between the rehearsal context and the concert performance. Vernon pointed out the obvious, when he said:

Well, the difference is the crowd. I say that because on Collegium practice every Friday only [the conductor] is there to see us play. So I barely get nervous, but when we are at a concert, it is way different, because you have all the cameras and people looking at you, and if you make a mistake, [you] won’t be able to stop the song and do it over again. (ISI-18, p. 2)

Donavan articulated his awareness of the audience, when he said, “Friday Collegium practice, we don’t have the people around us, but a concert, you get kind of nervous, in case you mess up around the people” (ISI-5, p. 3). Kerri referred to the difference of momentum between the stoppings, to correct items in rehearsal versus the continual motion of performing at concerts (ISI-1, p. 2). Sinead recalled at “a concert we have to play every single sheet and there’s singing [but at] practice, we just play the notes with no singing and sometimes we don’t have time to do all the songs in practice” ISI-2, p. 3). Diane brought out the idea on verbal communication at a concert, saying, “You don’t tell us when to repeat. You don’t tell us when to go. People don’t ask questions during
concerts” (ISI-4, p. 4). Carol emphasized that “you can’t stop the whole concert” (ISI-6, p. 3) to resolve problems. Tiffany pointed out, “In a Friday practice, we go over the music, like, twice and in a concert, it’s just like one time we do it and we can, like, mess up, if we’re in practice and we can fix it, but, if we’re in the concert, we just have to continue” (ISI-7, p. 2). Leann, mindful of the audience and singers, said, “The concert, you know, people are watching you, the singers are singing and regular rehearsals, like, when we’re playing in a group, nobody’s watching, like, nobody sings, like, we just review” (ISI-10, p. 3). Kassandra’s thoughts covered mistakes, as she stated:

The practice on Friday, there’s room for mistakes. Like, if you make a mistake, you can fix it, but when you’re at a concert, if you make a mistake, you can’t go back and replay it. You have to just keep continuing on, like it never happened. And on Friday Collegium practices, we can go over parts that each section’s having trouble with, go over and practice, so we can get it down good. When you’re at a concert, you just have to get good right there. (ISI-11, p. 4)

Brigitte observed, “We had to learn our notes awesomely, so that we wouldn’t mess up in a concert, but in a Friday rehearsal, that’s when we start to learn our songs” (ISI-13, p. 2). Arlo noted the frequent playing of a piece in rehearsal, compared to the once through at a concert (ISI-14).

Some student and teacher participants mentioned situations, in which the lines between process and product dissolved somewhat. Kerri stated that practicing is “almost like a head start to a concert” (SFGI-1, p. 2). Kassandra found the whole situation of playing whether in rehearsal or concert endearing (SFGI-2). Mr. Gomez believed that the product in the form of concerts to be part of the entire process, as he said, “For me, it’s the same as the final product, just coming out from my classroom to come and practice,
then coming from my classroom to go to a performance” (TFGI-1, p. 5). Ms. Wozniak compared the situation to a classroom project, saying, “I think it’s probably kind of like when we do a project with them in the classroom. Then, at the end, they take that project and then, like, ‘Wow, I did this’” (TFGI-1, p. 6).

**Issues in the Community**

Although the participants enjoyed playing in the Collegium, issues existed during the course of this study. Students were ultimately responsible for fitting their Collegium responsibilities into an already packed scheduling commitment. They were accountable for any classroom work and homework that was assigned while they attended rehearsals.

**Perception of schooling.**

The school day for these participants entailed a variety of experiences. Some of the student participants, reported in perfunctory fashion of the mechanics of getting through the day. Many tended to recite the motion of coming in at the start of the day, attending various blocks of learning, mentioning specials (art, music, and gym), and ending the day, but some professed to have favorite subjects or least favorite subjects and a few brought up General Music or the Collegium in relationship to other classes.

Collegium represented a primary focus for Kerri and during the school day she would switch classes and two times per week she had Collegium practice in addition to “music, art, gym, and sometimes health” (ISI-1, p. 1). Her sister Sinead, on the other hand, did not mention music specifically, but specified the movement from block to block, alluding to a special on certain days (ISI-2). Five students, Kassandra, Brigitte, Isabel, Patrice, and Russ, mentioned the progression of classes without specifying music
classes or Collegium (ISI-11, ISI-13, ISI-15, ISI-16, ISI-17).

Carol summed up her day without adding any flourishes:

We go to the gym. We have morning opening exercises, then, we line up to go to our classrooms. We get our books ready to switch classes and at the classes there are three blocks and then we go to lunch. Then, if we have a special, we go to it and then we do our homeroom block work. (ISI-6, p. 1)

Jose saw beyond the mechanics being herded around from class to class. “It’s good at school to learn about, like, math, science, music. You get more knowledge” (ISI-8, p. 1). Leann had things in a certain perspective:

I think a typical day at school is, like, when I have to switch classes, like, go to music or Collegium, usually, like, three times a week and just, like, have fun with our friends at recess. I don’t really like science and social studies. (ISI-10, p. 1)

In contrast to those who did not mention music classes specifically, Donavan asserted, “I’m always in music class” (ISI-5, p. 1) and Tiffany remembered at the end of her litany of academic blocks, “And then on Wednesdays I have Collegium practice and that’s it” (ISI-7, p. 1). Arlo added Collegium to round off his list of commitments of a school day (ISI-14). Reika, who is an academically bright student, was quick to pass over math, science, social studies, and English, when describing a typical day.

So, like, we come in the door and we, like, go to all our classes and all that. So, on Monday we have soprano and Thursday we have alto. Friday is Collegium, so it’s pretty much the same thing every week. Sometimes, it’s different, because we have specials and all that. (ISI-9, p. 1)

Music was prominent in Vernon’s mind, when he stated, “I have two classes in the morning and then, I usually come to [the music] room and practice and then, I have lunch, recess, and then, I have math class in the afternoon” (ISI-18, p. 1). In her usual
effervescent manner, Diane expressed her overview:

A typical day at school, for me (I’m a sixth grader), so, a typical day at school, I just learn—maybe learn some new things, go over things, just get ready for the next grade, get good grades, learn, maybe, new... some new stuff, you know, having academic classes, like music, art and also gym, chorus and Collegium. It’s just, like, a typical day at school. (ISI-4, p. 1)

**Interference with classroom work.**

In the past few years a small number of parents have discouraged their children from taking part in the Collegium or the school Chorus because it would take their child away from the approximately thirty minutes of a math class or an English Language Arts class once a week. The students who were successful in their audition to enter the Collegium received no favors. Teachers expected each student to maintain a high standard of work for every class affected by Collegium participation.

The discussion on the coordination of Collegium rehearsals and class work time came entirely from the two teacher focus group interviews. The intersection of rehearsal time and missed class time weighed heavily on the minds of all eight teachers. Generally, they felt that the students coped very well with the perceived balancing act.

Ms. Wozniak noted that students missed a few minutes of math classes, but stated that she made no special provisions for them. She actually encouraged a more independent attitude for them, saying, “They know [at] the beginning of the year, if you are in that group, it is up to you to get the homework, come and see me after; you do not want to interrupt the group, when you are leaving. That is just how it is and it takes them a couple of weeks and then they ‘get it’” (TFGI-1, p. 1).

The sixth grade teachers, in particular, had worked well in anticipation of any
organizational problems and have prepared all sorts of practical plans for coping with these potential problems. Ms. Lyons, a fifth grade teacher, echoed the general sentiment of the students’ preparedness:

None of them that I’ve seen over the years ever use it as an excuse, you know, ‘we had to this for Collegium’ or ‘we have a rehearsal tomorrow’ or ‘I missed out on something.’ No, they take personal responsibility for getting their assignments, you know, [to Ms. Wozniak] as you just said. Yes! (TFGI-1, p. 2)

In the second group interview, the discussion centered on the concept of rehearsal and missed class time. Ms. Rizzo claimed that the students in her room showed excitement to go to rehearsals and that they remembered their times better than she did. She brought up the fact that “they miss different subjects, because we switch for classes” (TFGI-2, p. 1).

Ms. Cargill responded that she had only two students that left during her second block period (TFGI-2). She continued, “In third block, there are some children, who come in more or less as the block begins – maybe five to ten minutes later and I’m not concerned about them, because they are doing pretty well” (TFGI-2, p. 1). She generalized that it varied, but that there was “a down side, because they are missing components of the academics” (TFGI-2, p. 2).

Each Collegium player faced the requirement of class work and homework assignments. Each student sought out the assigned work in order to have it turned in at the specified time. Ms. Gardiner labeled the students during the current year as “more academically responsible than in the past” (TFGI-2, p. 2). The students knew that they had to make up any work missed during a rehearsal. The monolingual sixth grade
teachers had a workable system that involved a mailbox for each student in the
domeroom. Ms. Gardiner described the student's responsibility in the following manner:

If they missed in one classroom, that teacher would give me the work. It
goes in their mailbox. They know they are responsible for missing it.
Every day they have to check their mailbox before they leave school that
day. (TFGI-2, pp. 2-3)

The sixth grade teachers continued at depth on overcoming the challenge of
balancing Collegium commitment with class work. They emphasized the fact that
everyone worked together, in order to guarantee success. Students reminded each other
of rehearsals, studies and topics covered in the classroom, when they were at rehearsal,
and announcements that were made, when a certain group was at sectional rehearsal. Ms.
Rizzo confirmed that, after consultation with all involved, students are pulled from the
Collegium on occasion. She stated, "You know, we give them a warning and I think that
warning kind of puts them back into gear of what has to be done" (TFGI-2, p. 3). She
quickly acknowledged that problems were quite rare because of high levels of student
responsibility during the year. Ms. Gardiner added, "So the number that are on the
wishy-washy side this year are very small for us and they are that way, you know; that
piece of reality—you are gone if you cannot achieve your academic. It is there for them"
(TFGI-2, p. 3).

The fifth grade teachers expressed more concern about practicality. Class activity
during the Collegium rehearsal tended to take on the shape of reinforcement of concepts
already introduced. Ms. Reiner, for example, spoke of a student who missed 20 minutes
of math every week. "He is pretty good at math; so, it is not affecting him at all" (TFGI-
2, p. 4). Regarding the full Collegium rehearsal on Friday afternoons, she explained,
"They can flip-flop. They go to Collegium and then they have to do the math that they miss—the class work—when they come back. The other kids have done the math and they are playing math games or something" (TFGI-2, p. 4).

A more detailed description began to emerge, as to how the fifth grade teachers adapted in a most efficient and logical manner to accommodate the Friday afternoon Collegium rehearsal. Ms. Cargill explained during the Friday afternoon rehearsal time of 12:30 to 1:10, she does a read-aloud activity and "they read also, so, in that window, there is not any direct instruction that is taking place and, so then, about 1:00, I begin a lesson and, at that point in time, they are usually coming back from Collegium. So, they do not substantially miss the beginning of that lesson" (TFGI-2, p. 4). She elaborated further:

That was a part of the curriculum that, after we discussed, we met with the administration and there was a time period—more or less from 12:30 to 1:00 each day—that was a gap and the discussion was in that gap: what are we going to fill in? And the gap was the need for more English Language Arts and so each teacher is structuring that time period in, however they choose, whether it is silent read for [the students] and journal notes on what they have read. So, what I'm saying is, even though it is an important time, it is not direct instructional time, so the children do not miss out. (TFGI-2, p. 4)

These teachers made a point of demonstrating a collaborative approach with the Collegium learning program, by slightly adapting the structure of their teaching day, to ascertain the efficiency of student work.

**Homework.**

The participants in this study typically completed a fair amount of homework, ranging from 30 minutes to two hours, four days a week. Thus, recorder practice time at
home had to be coordinated with homework in subjects such as Math, English Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science. Students felt the pressure of spending time doing academic homework versus making time for practice.

Sinead liked to practice at home, but admitted that it sometimes became difficult to fit it in, if she had a lot of homework (SFG-1), whereas her sister Kerri needed to remind herself that she should practice at home. (SFGI-1) Their mother Ms. Donahue confirmed Kerri’s spontaneous approach. “I can’t say that they do it every night or it’s not, like, a set time or for how long. I would go up and they’d be doing their recorder” (PFGI-2, p. 1).

In generalizing about her daughter Brigitte’s balancing of non-musical homework and recorder practice, Ms. Buchanon stated:

She’s incorporated it as part of her routine. She does things, whether it’s homework for an hour or this for an hour. Everything is equally distributed and she has accepted it and welcomed it and made it a part of her life. It doesn’t really dominate one part. It complements it. (PFGI-1, p. 3)

Teachers made no special provisions, as Ms. Wozniak explained that it was up the students to come to her, without interrupting the class and to get the homework assignment (TFGI-1). Ms. Rizzo made the point that if a Collegium student were missing homework on a regular basis, then teachers would recommend pulling that student from the group until the problem disappeared (TFGI-2). Ms. Reiner expected self-discipline from her students as well, stating, “They have to be more organized, because when they come back, they have to know what they miss, what their homework is” (TFGI-2, p. 5).
Strengthening the community

Parents, teachers, and the principal of Harrison Elementary School perceived a relationship between participating in Collegium and the efforts and the attitudes of students, as they tended to academic matters. Student participants developed a sense of ownership with the recorder family and acquired a close bond with the instrument of choice and with each other while in the group. All participants referred to examples of positive values and unifying actions as they continued an active connection with the recorder within the ensemble.

**Perceived relationship of music to academic standards.**

Despite popular and sometimes unsupported claims of the positive effects of music studies on intelligence, teachers and parents thought that some academic success might have been influenced by Collegium participation. Though this study does not propose any causal effect between music involvement and academic success, teachers and parents were focused on the students' education as they assessed and nurtured the student participants and, for whatever reason, attributed some scholastic accomplishment to Collegium involvement, whether through motivation for remaining in the ensemble, deciphering musical notation, or having to establish efficient work habits.

Ms. Cargill saw a reciprocal influence between music and her academic area with student work and believed the Collegium provided stimulation of the brain for students, especially those, who entered the United States recently and had limited English. She deliberated:

I don't know if [it] can be a hundred [percent] proved, but two of the students in my group are English Language Learners and a year ago, they
were actually, you know, in a bilingual classroom—not coming into our country with much language skill, whatsoever, in English, and they did get transitioned out this year into my room. And it appears as if through partially the academics, but partially, I think, because they are engaged in this other activity, that it stimulates their brain, you know, right and left. So they’re getting the stimulation and they are improving in their academics in a positive way. (TFGI-2, p. 5)

Ms. Kennedy, the school principal, spoke of the Collegium as an activity on the same level as core subjects for the students. She explained:

I think now, as we’re moving forward in this Core-plus-more, and we’re really realizing that music, art gym, history, science, social studies are all part of the core, I see it also as an academic piece and something that a child that was really interested in, could pursue in their future. So, I don’t just see it as extracurricular. (AI, p. 1)

Ms. McDowell, whose daughter Leann has some mild learning disabilities, offered her perspective:

She’s been so concrete, but this is so abstract and it’s helping her to do better in other subjects, because I know that music can help develop other parts of the brain in learning different techniques like that. (PFGI-1, p. 6)

Ms. McDowell continued:

Well, they took her off part of her IEP this year. Whether it was coincidence or not, I don’t know. But, maybe it’s self-confidence from being in the Collegium and she just feels that much more comfortable with herself. (PFGI-1, p. 7)

Several teachers saw the threat of removal from the ensemble as a strong factor for doing well academically. For example, Ms. Kennedy noticed that the student participants in the Collegium, who demonstrated difficulties in appropriate class behaviors, behaved more appropriately in rehearsals. She remarked that:

There are a few children in the group that have behavioral issues and I’m sure that behavior is better in [the Collegium], because they enjoy what
they're doing and I also bet it helps the behavior in the regular classroom. I figure it just makes for a well-rounded student. (AI, p. 2)

Ms. Reiner stressed, "They really don't have the time to, you know, be daydreaming or whatever; they really have to kind of fit into the schedule and work it out to make sure that they're staying in Collegium" (TFGI-2, p. 5). Mr. Gomez believed that they had to work very well "during the school year, if they want to stay in the group" (TFGI-1, p. 3).

Ms. Rizzo thought that the sixth grade students in Collegium during the year "are higher up and are more responsible" (TFGI-2, p. 5). It is entirely possible that, as most of the players have been in the same school since Kindergarten or Grade 1, they have benefited from a continuous and sequentially constructed music education plan that has emphasized notational independence in the General Music classes. Ms. Gardiner pointed out, "They're still learning, for example, how to read text. Although it might not be words, it's still reading, you know, from left to right. It's still learning how to read a certain language" (TFGI-2, p. 5).

**Importance of the recorder.**

Participants in this study valued the Collegium for the time they spent with their friends. Kerri and Denzel pointed out the social benefits of playing in the group. Kerri referred to the opportunity of "getting to play and having friends, like, with you in the group" (SFGI-1, p. 7). Denzel remarked, "What I remember is, like, getting to play with some of my friends and, like, playing for other people" (SFGI-2, p. 5). Both students realized and appreciated the social collaboration of participating in the Collegium.

In addition to friendship many participants commented on the educational effects of being in the Collegium. Through their participation, they realized the improvements
they made as they transformed from beginners to students who could play four-part arrangements. Carol and Becca thought that playing in the group made them better musicians (SFGI-3, SFGI-4). Ms. Kennedy described the players’ skill in “reading music and playing and sounding good without making many mistakes or any notable mistakes by myself” (AI, p. 1). She continued:

You can definitely see in the younger ones, starting in third grade, and the pieces they’re playing, and then seeing the sixth graders and the harder pieces they’re playing, but also seeing them in the performances as a group being able to play with singers. You can definitely see how it’s progressed and they’re able to accompany vocals and they do it very well. (AI, p. 2)

The symbiotic relationship expanded beyond the ensemble members to include a Collegium-Singers unit working together to produce a performance piece.

Student and teacher participants thought that the Collegium provided a certain element of success. Leann and Reika agreed with each other in realizing that an audience could appreciate what they have achieved (SFGI-2, p. 5). Ms. McDowell iterated her awareness of Leann’s success as huge (PFGI-1). She added, “Leann was thrilled that she’ll be playing at graduation; she’s just out of her mind about that” (PFGI-1, p. 5). Ms. Fritz said that Arlo “feels good being in that group, not embarrassed that he’s in Collegium” (PFGI-1, p. 5). Carol stated, “I like to play on the recorder, so that everybody could see what I could do” (SFGI-3, p. 2).

Beyond the measure of success, a sense of pride and self-esteem made an impact on participants’ minds. Ms. McDowell spoke of Leann, “When she can work out a song nicely, she’s very proud of herself, you know” (PFGI-1, p. 4). In telling of Kassandra, Ms. Manion related:
I love the fact that she loves to be part of that group and, you know, it’s a possible center of brilliance for her, that, you know, to become part of a group and, you know, to do this individually and then be part of the group and hear how everybody sounds together. I mean there’s so much more for her to learn in music that, you know, I look at her, of course, I’m proud of any accomplishment that she makes and that’s one of them. Looking and seeing her own pride and, you know, self-esteem just shoot through the roof when she knows she can do something. It’s fantastic. You know it’s just nice to see. (PFGI-1, p. 5)

Ms. Fritz described her perception of Arlo’s attitude and said, “He’s more like, ‘I’m in Collegium. I made Collegium,’ and he’s proud of himself that he did it” (PFGI-1, p. 5).

Ms. Donahue commented, “My kids are very proud. They think, oh, you know, this is a big deal to them and they love music and it’s been really good for them. I think it’s really good, like for your self-esteem” (PFGI-2, p. 1). Ms. Lyons, a fifth grade teacher, spoke about the Collegium dynamic:

Children feel a lot of self-value, maybe even more so that they belong to another group and they like being part of the group and it’s something that not everyone belongs to and there’s just mutual respect on both ends, those that belong and those that chose not to try out. There’s an underlying respect for everybody with this particular Collegium. (TFGI-1, p. 4)

Mr. Gomez, the fifth and sixth grade bilingual teacher, recalled the pride that one of his students felt, when her mother came to a concert and took photographs of her performing with the group (TFGI-1). Ms. Kennedy, the principal, pointed out the value for students, who may be more introverted, saying, “You see some of the shyer kids up, standing up in front of the group. I think that’s huge” (AI, p. 3).

**Perceived benefits of learning together in the Collegium.**

Participants in this study—students, teachers, parents, and the administrator participants—believed that participation in the Collegium provided benefits for the
students. The transformation of learning for these participants during the course of this study included benefits such as educational growth, personal improvement, fulfillment, creating a social awareness of peer relationships, and learning how to work and learn together as a social entity.

Diane believed that being in Collegium in elementary school would help her in high school and college and said, "It can take me forward" (ISI-4, p. 6). Arlo said that membership in the Collegium afforded him the opportunity to learn "how to play another instrument" ISI-14, p. 2). Ms. Fritz, his mother, demonstrated her amazement at the level of musical literacy by saying, "Reading notes! They can read the notes. I mean, you give them those papers and they know where to put their fingers" (PFGI-1, p. 6). Isabel reflected, "The Collegium helps me learn my things. It helps me play music that I haven't heard of" (ISI-15, p. 2).

The Collegium gave Isabel improvement with her recorder skills. She stated, "It shows me how much better I'm getting, how much more I need to practice or how by playing has been getting better and getting successful at my practice" (ISI-15, p. 4). Ms. Manion mentioned that the Collegium has "taken [Kassandra] down many different musical avenues" (PFGI-1, p. 5). She added another aspect of the benefit that Collegium bestowed upon Kassandra:

Transference, too, you know, being able to take that and trying it with another instrument and trying to figure out, you know, and Kassandra can sit and take the songs that she’s doing on the recorder and actually take that keyboard and before I know it she’s playing a song without anything in front of her and I’m like ‘Wow, who taught you that?’ ‘I just did it.’ So, she’s musically gotten a lot of benefits from it. And personally, I think, self-esteem is a big, big thing. (PFGI-1, p. 6)
She pointed out her belief that participation in the Collegium made them feel good and probably contributed confidence and maturity to their character (PFGI-1). Ms. McDowell thought that her daughter “just feels that much more comfortable with herself” (PFGI-1, p. 7). Mr. Gomez mentioned that he always encouraged his bilingual class students to participate, because they were so new to their cultural surroundings. He recalled, “They don’t want to do it, but when they are in to it, they say, ‘Oh, I go and talk to all the monolingual classmates’” (TFGI-1, p.5). Ms. Gardiner spoke of a couple of her students, who demonstrated limited academic skills:

I see, for a couple of my students, that it might be their strong area, whereas certain academics might not be. I see an improvement in confidence, you know. They come in with a smile on their face that you might not see all the time, so I see a little bit there. (TFGI-2, p. 5)

Ms. Reiner noticed a difference in their organizational skills:

They have to be more organized, because when they come back, they have to know what they miss, what their homework is. [They] have to kind of fit into the schedule and work it out to make sure that they’re staying in Collegium. (TFGI-2, p. 5)

Patrice described a sense of completion or fulfillment and said, “The Collegium [is], like, an opportunity for me to be able to show my musical background and basically, like, have fun playing music” ISI-16, p. 2). She considered the influence of her level of reading competency on her fellow players and said, “I think it’s very important, because if you’re able to read a note, it’ll be easier for you to help someone who doesn’t know and you wouldn’t be bothering some one else who does, if you don’t know how to read” (ISI-16, p. 3).

Leann and Reika articulated a feeling of pride in their achievements (SFGI-2).
Mr. Gomez explained the situation of his students, “A lot of my students, they come from broken homes and this is, like, the outlet for them to express themselves, to being in the group” (TFGI-1, p. 4). He mentioned that it gave them self-confidence (TFGI-1).

Students and teachers recognized the social impact of working in a group. Arlo realized his reliance on the rest of the group when learning his own part. He recalled, “I learned how to play with a group and not just by myself, learning how to listen, but play my part, too” (ISI-14, p. 2). Isabel expressed gratitude for her involvement:

The Collegium members help me a lot, you know, so, it’s a really good thing. The more I listen to them, the more I learn from them. In Collegium practice, it’s a lot better, because there’re actually people that have the same problems, just like I do, and everybody always has trouble with something. And we, you know, help each other; we feed off each other, helping. (ISI-15, pp. 2-3)

Vernon indicated that he felt support from all his friends in Collegium (ISI-18). Denzel, Kassandra, and Jose felt a positive sensation of playing in a group with friends (SFGI-2, SFGI-3). Ms. McDowell thought it provided a strong social benefit for her daughter Leann (PFGI-1, p. 2). Mr. Gomez revealed that, although his students had limited English, a Collegium player from class experienced a common ground on which to converse with players, who spoke primarily English ((TFGI-1). Ms. Rizzo drew attention to the fact that students formed friendships with other students, with whom they would not normally interact (TFGI-2).

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter Five explores the interaction of students and adults, which forms a Community of Learners in the Harrison Elementary School. After a brief introduction, the first major section investigates the background and foundational aspects of the
Collegium Musicum members. Interviews and journals reveal family stimulus and encouragement, sociocultural nature, participatory development with adults, providing influence on the students, and instrumental experience prior to joining the Collegium.

In the following section, I explore the entry points into the Collegium. Much of the student interest about the Collegium found incubation in the early years through having an older sibling play in the group or singing with a class as the Collegium provided an accompaniment for them. I also look at the practice habits and learning processes of the students, as conveyed by them and their parents and teachers.

Finally, I discover student attitudes toward rehearsals and working together within the group. They offer their visions of their group identity, matters of concentration, listening, and harmonic awareness, as well as their take on concertizing, alone and in collaboration with singers. I examine certain issues within the community that touches on student, teacher, and parental perceptions of commitment to a performance group, which had to share commitment with the academic structure of the school day, and how the time, classwork, and homework issues resolve themselves on a day-to-day basis. All participants offer their thoughts on the relationship of music to academic matters and the importance and benefits of the learning the recorder in the Collegium as a Community of Learners.

In Chapter Six I restate the intended point of view of this study, which is to explore the Harrison Collegium Musicum as a Community of Learners, as espoused by Rogoff. The premise of a Community of Learners concept develops out of a general model of social constructivism through twentieth-century writers such as Dewey and
Vygotsky. I discuss each of the three research questions at length. After a brief reflection on my role in the community, sections on implications and the need for further study follow.
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In this study I explored and portrayed an elementary school recorder ensemble, the Harrison Collegium Musicum, which existed and worked together as a learning group and a performing ensemble. The student participants demonstrated the frequent occurrence of social interaction as a small but enthusiastic Community of Learners. Parents and classroom teachers also maintained a collaborative relationship with the Collegium. Individual and focus group interviews, as well as journals, artifacts, and observations provided valuable insight into the inner workings of the ensemble.

It is the Community of Learners approach that was the focus of the learning situation in the Harrison Collegium Musicum, although elements of the other two methods—adult-directed or child-centered—were not prohibited intentionally from usage.

Discussion of the Research Questions

The main overarching question that guided this study included: How did the students, instructors, and parents work together to form a Community of Learners? I was able to answer this overarching question with the dissemination of the three research questions. With Research Question One I wanted to examine the background conditions that led students to audition for and take an active role in the Collegium ensemble. According to Rogoff (1994), collaboration with mature members of the community comprises an important component of the learning process. In this study, collaboration included parents (adults) with the student participants. Except for Tiffany and Donovan all of the student participants in my study remembered background experiences of interactive musical contact with adults before entering the Collegium. For example,
Vernon claimed that he became interested in listening to music within a few days after being born. Although I suspect this claim was an exaggeration, he did consider music as an integral part of his life as far back as he could remember (ISI-18). Other participants shared similar memories. Kassandra had a vivid memory of her mother’s singing (ISI-11), Mai availed of her mother’s listening habits during the housecleaning activities (ISI-3), Russ recalled his parents using familiar lullabies as they sung him to sleep (ISI-17, and Patrice’s parents would play recorded music for her and her siblings to neutralize overly excited moods (ISI-16).

Rogoff, Mistry, Göncü, and Mosier (1993) referred to the importance of family members in the learning process. In the Rogoff et al. study, children learned how “to make tortillas through observing and participating, with mothers providing support in the context of participation” (p. 14). The extended family of the participants in the Collegium played a part in early collaboration for the student participants. Isabel, for example, participated in family events involving musical performances and benefited from her grandfather’s knowledge of guitar. In this study, parents and relatives became models for their children. Isabel’s grandfather, for example, taught her how to play the guitar prior to her time in the Collegium (ISI-15) and Russ’s older sister introduced him to the soprano recorder (ISI-17).

Although the student participants in this study indicated that adults played an important role in their formative years with music, Rogoff (1990) warned that simply being in the presence of a skilled adult does not necessarily contribute to a child’s learning, but rather believed that “interaction in which the adult and the child manage to
achieve intersubjectivity in decision making, with adult guidance, may relate to better subsequent performance by young children” (p. 164). Thus, Rogoff considered interaction an important aspect of Community of Learners. Sinead recalled that she received help in learning about the recorder during the early stages from her sister Jocelyn, who was not in the Collegium (ISI-2). Kassandra mentioned that she benefitted from the knowledge and experience of a slightly older cousin, who had played in the Collegium a few years before she did (ISI-11). Her mother, Ms. Manion, mentioned that Kassandra expressed an interest to learn the guitar because she herself was learning how to play the guitar, and they interacted with each other during this process.

In addition to collaboration with adults, Rogoff (1994) recommended that children who coordinate with each other provided an important part of the Community of Learners. In this study, the participants reported that an interaction with siblings had a strong musical influence on them. Some students, like Brigitte and Jordi, benefited from musical activities of an older sister or brother. Brigitte mentioned that her older sister sang to her when she was very young (ISI-13) and Jordi often heard his brother listening to music (ISI-12). Vernon appreciated the critical reactions of his younger brother, and Mai became aware of her little sister dancing to Mai’s home practice. Reika, Kerri, and Sinead heard older siblings playing the recorder at home, as they prepared assignments for their General Music classes. Some of the student participants, including Leann, Donavan, and Russ had a preview of Collegium life through an older brother or sister, who were Collegium members a year or so before. If Collegium students were the oldest or the first in their families to play in the Collegium, they would nevertheless have had an
opportunity to experience exposure to the Collegium in Kindergarten or Grade One, when classes sang songs in one of the year’s concerts, being accompanied by the Collegium. By the time students reached Grade Three and began recorder study in General Music class, they were conscious of the opportunity of auditioning for the Collegium in two years time.

Students in the Collegium would consistently work together to solve a problem. For example, at a rehearsal in May, Kassandra was having difficulty in playing the sopranino part in Haydn’s “Andante” independently and Reika, the alto section leader, immediately offered to learn the part on her sopranino and play along with her in the future, giving both players a communal confidence (TJ-1, 7 May 2010). This action reflects Rogoff’s idea that “partners engage in a creative process in which the achievement of intersubjectivity leads to new solutions” (1990, p. 183). Later in the month, soprano recorder students from Grade Four joined the group and were assigned seats in between more experienced players, who “were over-anxious in helping their juniors” (TJ-1, 28 May 2013). The one new alto player at the rehearsal had help in solving the question of new fingerings on the instrument from the first and second chair altos (TJ-1). Rogoff added that children “may serve as important cognitive facilitators for one another” (p. 183).

With Research Question Two I explored how the student participants entered and maintained their membership in the Community. For these student participants, the excitement and interest in the Collegium began with learning recorder and practicing at home. Their practice habits allowed them to audition for the Collegium and to remain a
member throughout the course of the study.

The desire to be a part of the Collegium spurred on an energetic commitment on the part of student participants to develop good work habits in their practice at home. Over the course of time, they realized that the nature of working together required individual competence, to a certain degree. This commitment echoed McPherson and Davidson (2006), who stated, “Without doubt, one of the most important parts of learning an instrument is the time and effort put into practising by children to develop their skills between lessons” (p. 339).

Although I was not present at these home practice sessions, during the interviews the student participants spoke about the necessity of individual practice in order to learn and perform together. During the course of this study, a fundamental key to successful interaction involving skillful development for the entire group was preparation and reinforcement at the individual level. For example, Carol, Reika, and Lucinda stressed that they practiced a lot (SFGI-3, ISI-6). Russ usually did two sessions per day at home (ISI-17). Denzel was determined to work on the more difficult sections during his home practice (SFGI-2). Jordi increased his work time on the recorder during the days before a concert and noticed improvement (SFGI-1) and, throughout the remainder of the year, practiced so much that he described it as an addiction (ISI-12). Becca spent so much time with her recorder that her mother would ask her to take a break, and Patrice worked about 20 minutes per day in order to improve and confessed her motive was to move up to a more advanced chair in the alto section ((SFGI-4), ISI-16, SFGI-5).

Several students considered practice in dutiful fashion as part of the structure of
day-to-day living. Isabel listed her normal after school activities as: get home, practice, eat, practice, and listening to music (ISI-15). After arriving at her house, Kassandra would go through all the pieces in her music folder, staying on the ones that presented difficulties (ISI-11, SFGI-2). Brigitte found it necessary to review notes of known pieces before playing any newly assigned pieces (ISI-13). Jorge and Donavan thought of practice as a way to avoid messing up or being dismissed from the group (SFGI-5, ISI-5).

Many of the students offered their perspective on practice methods, which helped them to learn their assignments. Tiffany would look at all her notes when receiving a new piece at school and play it as best she could during the rehearsal. Then she took it home and practiced (SFGI-4). Kerri would repeatedly go over her pieces until everything improved (SFGI-4). Isabel spent a lot of time concentrating on reading her staff notation in order to improve her sight-reading skills (ISI-15). Jose began with easy music and then, gradually tackled the more difficult material (ISI-8). Some student participants offered specific practice techniques, which helped them to deal with difficult tasks. At home, Arlo played through his pieces, then made corrections on the trouble spots and would keep on those spots until he felt successful (ISI-14). In a similar fashion Carol would go back over trouble spots after playing through pieces (ISI-6). Some students offered even more specific and pedagogically sound methods of practice. Becca would finger through difficult passages before playing them (SFGI-4). Vernon would sing passages in sol-fa before playing them (ISI-18). Mai preferred to sing her line silently to learn her music, then play it when she could hear it in her head; when she approached a particularly difficult spot, she would go back and forth with those two or three notes until
she felt comfortable (SFGI-1). Russ liked to make up exercises using rhythmic variations on his trouble spots (ISI-17). In similar fashion, Kerri made patterns on difficult passages (SFGI-1). Kassandra would stick to any trouble spots to work on them (ISI-11). If Sinead had difficulty on some of the repertoire, she would take out a practice sheet to use much like a student would use an etude (ISI-2). Jordi repeated sections in which he had trouble (ISI-12, SFGI-1). Jorge and Patrice would move towards the problem areas until perfection was in sight (SFGI-5, ISI-16).

I discovered during this study that as a result of individual practice, students began to discover how learning processes provided a path for personal and group transformations. All of the students realized the value of practice at home and attributed progress and development in the ensemble to individual preparation at home, as well as sectional and group rehearsals together. Tiffany, Jordi, and Russ noted personal development throughout the year (ISI-7, SJ-12, ISI-17). Jose and Reika appreciated the learning of new notes, because reading independence contributed to the ease of cooperative participation (ISI-8, ISI-9). Patrice voiced her entire span of recorder study as a clear linear development of skills (SJ-16). From her administrative perspective as principal, Ms. Kennedy was aware of the spectrum of learning from beginning the recorder in Grade Three to the advanced students from Grades Five and Six, who became the Collegium (A1).

Not only did the students undergo a process of transformation of participation as individuals, but the Collegium, as a Community of Learners, experienced a participative transformation during the course of this study. The Community of Learners matured into
a learning community. With Research Question Three I investigated how the student participants engaged in shared endeavors in the Collegium. During the early years of recorder training in Grades Three and Four, students were focused on individual needs and skill-building, as they tackled the new instrument. At the same time they constantly received encouragement to listen to each other for purposes of critical analysis. Learning did occur as the students participated in a communal fashion “with all playing active but often asymmetrical roles” (Rogoff, 1994, p. 209).

Through interaction with each other, parents, classroom teachers, myself, and the wider school population, the Collegium members transformed themselves into a more efficient learning group. For example, during the first half of the academic year, they worked on simple repertoire. In some compositions the alto players used only one or two notes to accommodate the new fingering to be learned. Notes for the alto, tenor, and bass players consisted of predominately quarter note and half note values. By the end of the year, the members of the Collegium dealt effectively with eighths and sixteenths, as well as challenging syncopated passages.

Not only did the Grade Six students provide assistance to the Grade Five students at the beginning of the year, but the Grade Five students reached out to help the incoming Grade Four students at the end of the year, when the sixth graders were no longer available, as there were no other performance commitments for them after the Spring Concert. At the sixth grade graduation, they would process in with the rest of their class, as the new Collegium played the ceremonial music. At a March rehearsal, for example, I noted “The Susato piece presented more of a challenge, especially for the Tenors and
Basses, but the returning 6th graders were helping all this year's new members face the problem area [in bars 11 and 12]” (TJ-1, 19 March 2010). Essentially, the more experienced members passed on their understanding of what they had learned from children before them, as well as their teacher.

Classroom teachers were supportive of those Collegium members, who had to leave their rooms twice a week for full and sectional rehearsals. Mr. Gomez, Ms. Lyons, Ms Rizzo, and Ms. Gardiner commented on a sense of pride, as well as joy, from those players, as they gathered up instruments and music folders for the rehearsals (TFGI-1, TFGI-2). Parents were mindful of their children's devotion to practice at home (PFGI-1, PFGI-2). Several students remarked on the excitement of performing for audiences.

Many of the student participants, Denzel, Kassandra, Lucinda, Arlo, and Brigitte among them, specifically mentioned a connection to the larger community of family and friends and said that they looked forward to perform for them (SFGI-2, SFGI-5, SFGI-3). The players like to listen to themselves as an entity, according to Jordi, Denzel, Mai, Carol, Patrice, (ISI-12, SFGI-2, SJ-3, SFGI-3, ISI-16). Thus, many sensed a connection of effort among themselves. Reika, for example, felt the need to play correctly, so that the whole alto section would sound solid (SFGI-2). Tiffany felt pride for her tenor section, when they played extremely well (SJ-7). Patrice depended on listening to the rest of the group, when she lost her place (SJ-16). Kerri noted that she always knew that she was in the right place at any given time by listening to rest of the ensemble (SJ-1). Several students remarked on the advantage of listening to the entire group, as it changed the perception of their own parts when played in collaboration of complete harmonic texture.
(Jordi, ISI-12; Brigitte, ISI-13; Arlo, ISI-14; Jose, SFGI-3; Kassandra, ISI-11; Denzel, SJ-19). Additionally, Sinead, Jordi, Becca, Sinead, Leann, and Reika expressed their attachment to concerts as communicating with the larger community (SFGI-1, SJ-20, SJ-2, SFGI-2). Participation with adult guidance became an expected mode of learning, which represented an important aspect of learning program. Rogoff (1990) believed, “The research evidence on the influence of children’s interaction with adults on their cognitive development provides clues about the means by which specific features of guided participation facilitate individual development” (p. 152).

There was a marked dependence on one another within sections and between sections. The possibility of letting down the rest of the group was on the mind of a few students (Leann, ISI-10; Reika, ISI-9). Awareness of community was a strong concept, as students perceived the identity of the Collegium. Rogoff (1990) thought that one overlooks “the adjustments that people who share goals and focus of attention make to each other without focusing directly on each other as targets of interaction” (p. 209) and argued that interdependence “is natural to being human and transforms with development through guided participation in cultural activities” (p. 210).

The Collegium members grew as individuals through participation and, as Rogoff, Baker-Sennett, Lacasa, and Goldsmith (1995) stated, “the process transforms (develops) the practices of the community” (p. 46). Students identified with this ensemble that stimulated their learning processes and began to see indications of their development through interaction, of reading notation individually and as a group, and of finger dexterity for instrumental skills. The Collegium itself developed over time as an entity
and through this process the entire Community of Learners transformed itself into an ensemble that performed at a higher level.

As mentioned earlier in the discussion, music at the beginning of the year was, of necessity, quite simple, as alto and bass novices were adjusting to new notes and/or clefs. It was also the first experiences in playing part music to this extent. The first few weeks of rehearsals permitted adjustments of finger spacing on the larger instruments, learning of new notes, and a sense of harmonic motion within the group. These early sessions also reinforced a sense of cooperative learning, as players began to rely on each other in various ways from helping each other with notational literacy to developing a sense of moving together as they played. Simply arranged folk literature, addressing these challenges, provided a treasure trove of experience during the early sessions. As the Winter Concert time approached, attention turned toward specific songs that the Collegium accompanied for several grade levels in the school. Not all players saw the concert as a final goal at this stage. Some, especially the fifth graders, experienced the rehearsal activity as a product in itself. The experience of formulating and cultivating this entity called the Collegium was also a focus.

As the students prepared for the concert, we would have a practice, or a “dry run.” The dry run rehearsal, in which the students went through the motions of setting up the room with chairs and stands and then putting instruments together, provided an opportunity to establish a sense of identity as a community. That sense strengthened after they worked within the sectional rehearsals and came together in the full rehearsals, hearing how they related to each other in the ensemble. During the course of the year,
the students began to remind each other of notes, fingering, rhythms, tempi, and various
other items for successful interpretation.

The concert itself added a new layer of the experience. The Collegium jackets, a
watchful audience, and other performing groups allowed for a more multi-dimensional
event. Performance was not entirely a novelty at this stage, however. During the course
of the year, when the whole school gathered in the gym for the 8:10 bell for the pledge, a
moment of silence, and a musical item, the Collegium had opportunities for a short
performed item—either as an entire group or in sections. An audience of students and
teachers was just as exciting a challenge as the more formal gathering of parents and
friends at the Winter Concert and the Spring Concert. In past years they had performed
at district Art Festivals, ceremonies for visiting dignitaries (such as the late Senator Ted
Kennedy), and, of course, the promotion ceremonies for the departure of the sixth grade
class on the final day of the school year. Each performance was also a part of the
process. As the students were playing in public, they relied on the connection of
rehearsal experiences when working together as a Community of Learners, as well as the
commitment of personal, daily practice. Anxiety levels were higher with some
individuals, but there was a real sense that the “product” was also a part of the process.
In turn, the whole process was, in itself, the product. Dewey (1934), in discussing the act
of having an experience, stated, “The end, the terminus, is significant not by itself but as
the integration of the parts. It has no other existence” (p. 57) and continued the idea that
form and structure exists in experience because of dynamic organization. Dewey insisted
on calling the organization dynamic, “because it takes time to complete it, because it is a
growth” (p. 57). In general terms, Dewey explained, “Experience occurs continuously, because the interaction of live creature and environing conditions is involved in the very process of living” (p. 36). In other words, the process can become the product, or the overall product is the process—not just a concert at the end of the year!

Dewey (1997) stated, “The formation of purposes is, then, a rather complex intellectual operation,” (pp. 68-9), involving awareness of environment, familiarity with similar activities, and “judgment which puts together what is observed with what is recalled to see what they signify” (p. 69). Tiffany, revealing the observable purpose for the Collegium, stated, “We play music and we have concerts and sometimes we play in the gym in the morning” (ISI-7, p. 2). Near the end of the school year, Denzel wrote, “I think it is a fun and nice thing to do and it made me be a better musician” (SJ-19, 7 May). Kerri saw the result of her membership in the group as becoming “a true musician” (SFGI-1, p. 7). Diane appreciated the opportunity to “learn about music and its history” (ISI-4, p. 4). Isabel offered a specific sense of gratitude, as to the purpose of the ensemble, saying, “It helps me learn my things; it helps me play music that I haven’t heard of” (ISI-15, p. 2). Rogoff (2003) stated that humans “learn to participate in the practices and traditions of their elders, by shared engagement in valued and routine cultural activities” (p. 71). The student participants reflected upon their understanding and their skills, as they perceived them, as they learned and performed music together. They appreciated the value of their shared endeavors, as they participated in the Collegium.

In examining the background conditions that led students to audition for and take
an active role in the Collegium ensemble, I organized related interviews that connected students, parents, and teachers, who provided informative confirmations of early musical experiences and exposures. In determining how the students engaged with other members of the community, I observed the interaction between the Collegium and non-Collegium members of the school, as the Collegium played for various grade level singers at the concerts. I noted how members of the group became conscious of the singers' melody, as they matched their tempi, pulses, and individual parts to the voices they were accompanying. The students involved themselves in shared endeavors from earlier experiences in the music class as far back as the Kindergarten years. The structures of the classes permitted, even encouraged, a cooperative and interactive nature in most activities. Listening to each other singing, playing, or discussing music became a prime objective throughout the years. Offering each other assistance or suggestions for improvement of performances was a natural response for Collegium members and reinforcement of this concept of shared endeavors was ever present in the activities of the participants.

**My Role in the Community**

A researcher participant is within the province of normality for qualitative research and interaction between researcher and other participants may occur frequently (Creswell, 2007). In the years before the study took place, the student participants knew me as their General Music teacher, who taught them musical concepts, the basics of reading notation, and a foundation in soprano recorder playing. They interacted with me on a regular basis, since they began to attend the school and I encouraged them to interact
with each other as well. During the pre-Collegium years, lessons permitted the establishment of a Community of Learners as a natural learning situation. In the third and fourth grades, for example, a student, or a small group of two or three students would sight-read or play a short assigned piece, after which the remaining students in the room would comment on the successes and struggles of the performance. Students generally offered suggestions that dealt with overblowing, evenness of blowing, finger placement on the instrument, articulation, rhythmic accuracy, and pitch precision. In the months during the study, student participants interacted with one another, as they sought to help those less experienced or knowledgeable or seek help from more advanced students.

Even though my teaching goal for the Collegium originally was to create an advanced performing group for the school, there was an unforeseen reciprocal action feeding back to the fifth and sixth grade music classes. The three or four Collegium students that were in each of the General Music classes were offering suggestions and assistance to the less developed students in the classrooms. The act of sharing their undertakings had expanded into the larger school community.

Students, working within an academic environment with a positive attitude to achieve educational growth, will invariably wish to come up with the right solutions to problems, as they strive for perfection. This attitude could have been a factor in the student and parent interviews and the student journals. However, I suspected an overwhelming honesty in most responses. Students complained about the noise level during rehearsals, when, for example, work was going on in one section and the other sections were tempted to doodle about on their instruments, a situation that a teacher
would normally not wish to hear. Also, some parents were very forthcoming regarding
the amount of practice their children were doing or not doing. Some student participants,
according to their parents, were doing too much, even to the point of distraction, while
others were not very consistent in their practice frequency.

Implications

Before establishing a Community of Learners approach to the music classroom,
teachers should be willing to lessen a direct lecturing or adult-run approach and
encourage students, who have learned certain skills more quickly, to interact with those
students, who have not reached higher levels of achievement. Teachers may be
apprehensive of introducing what appears to be chaotic behavior, but certain ground rules
of procedure can keep the pandemonium in check. Vygotsky (1978) assured us that
cooperation with more developed peers could influence a level of potential development
in a child beyond of the actual development level.

If a music teacher wishes to set up a Collegium-like structure as an interactive
entity, the concept of a Community of Learners should be well established for students in
earlier grades prior to joining the ensemble. Indeed, one should lay the groundwork for
this concept before the advent of recorder exposure. Collaborative learning could take
place as early as the Kindergarten year or Grade One. This could manifest itself by
working in divided groups using singing and body percussion, such as one would find in
activities encouraged by Gordon, Kodály or Orff approaches in music education, or
working in small groups to learn and reinforce simple notational reading and singing. An
important goal is to set up a reciprocal awareness of a group identity—whether that group
consists of two or twenty-two students—and to let that group function with an interdependent flow in order to achieve an interactive result. After the introduction of the soprano recorder in third (or fourth) grade, students are ready to extend their sense of a Community of Learners approach, as they listen to each other perform alone or in small groups, especially if the teacher focuses their attention in order to make suggestions on ways to improve a performance. By encouraging a critical response, the teacher sets the conditions by which students can offer their assessment of what went well or what points could use some improvement. By the end of the first year of recorder learning, the teacher could compose simple four- to eight-bar pieces in two parts to augment a student’s awareness of other parts. At this point one is on the path to increase the number of parts, eventually adding other members of the recorder family.

If teachers plan to use a recorder ensemble as an example of a Community of Learners, they should be competent at playing various members of the recorder family. As there are basically only two sets of fingerings to learn, acquiring proficiency in the f-fingerings for soprano, alto and bass recorders is not an impossible task if the soprano and tenor fingerings are inherent. Aside from the knowledge of fingerings, teachers must feel at ease with articulations associated with basic recorder playing. These components, after all, are the means with which the students will be helping each other.

Teachers must be skilled at transcribing, arranging, and composing music for recorder ensembles. It is important to know the capabilities, as well as the ranges, of each instrument. For example, the lowest note on the soprano recorder, which is a C, is the same pitch as the lowest C on the alto, but cannot sound as strong because of the
gentler breath pressure required. Familiarity with the tessitura is vital in order to achieve an acceptable balance of sound.

It is absolutely necessary to develop and maintain an open communication with administrative personnel and fellow teachers in the school. A principal can validate the music teacher’s vision of the ensemble. One’s colleagues can be cooperative or not, when allowing individuals to leave the room for a rehearsal. Mutual respect and understanding ameliorates the working relationship.

Communication with parents is unquestionably an advantage. Parents may have various opinions on whether a child should be doing music at all or if a child should be learning music in a comprehensive manner, such as reading notation, playing an instrument, of developing the ability of critical analysis. As a parent’s music education experience may be different than that of their child, awareness of the music teacher’s approach could avoid possible clashes.

Although a performance ensemble like a Collegium should continue to be a learning experience for everyone, students should have a basic knowledge of the soprano recorder before entry into the group. A limited knowledge of notation, fingering competence, and the basic mechanics of playing the soprano recorder will insure some sense of excitement, achievement, and motivation for further learning, students can detect some progress in ensemble playing early on. Intelligent four-part arrangements will allow some mobility for experienced soprano players, while limiting alto, tenor, and bass players to one or two notes, in order that they may adjust to new fingering patterns, a different clef, or simply the larger physical spacing of the hands on the new instrument.
In order to maintain membership in the Collegium ensemble, as well as the larger student community, teachers should encourage daily practice. The establishment of a daily routine of taking out the recorder, taking the music to be practiced out of a music folder, and having a time sheet onto which the student records the time practiced, even if it is as little as five minutes, helps to make the instrument a part of that student's normal existence. If a student sees another student performing outside of the classroom, such as an all-school assembly or gathering, that action spurs another incentive to play. As students continue to learn new notes and certain combinations of notes, they will need some help on how to eradicate mistakes. Mistakes at this stage are not the notes themselves, but rather the finger motion used in going from one note to another. After showing the students simple, rhythmic exercise patterns for corrections, students could independently apply these patterns in other situations. Some students, who live in close proximity of each other, could practice together after school hours.

Need for Future Study

This case study focused on the fifth and sixth grade Collegium group at Harrison Elementary School, using the philosophies and concepts of a Community of Learners approach. Other studies of similar ensembles may yield different information and should be considered.

Even though the Community of Learners approach was introduced at earlier stages than at the entry into the Collegium, the study did not inspect at close range the earlier years. More research into the interactive possibilities with the initiation of recorder study in the middle elementary years can produce valuable information. Further,
studies of a Community of Learners approach in General Music classes for Kindergarten and early elementary grades can provide useful groundwork for music teachers in the future.

This study covered a relatively small amount of time of late elementary students. An extended study to follow participants further to middle school and beyond could provide interesting material on the effects of a Community of Learners approach in later musical development.

The use of a Community of Learners approach with other ensembles, such as percussion ensembles, bluegrass groups, string ensembles, and other combinations can broaden the possibilities for interaction in other situations. Many areas of the world rely on less standard instrumentation. Bagpipes, fife and drum, mariachi bands, and less usual groupings from around the world are but a few of the possibilities.

Another important consideration is the knowledge of how widespread the Community of Learners approach is at the moment. A survey of teachers, who use the community around them, as well as how interactive they structure their classes, would be illuminating. Such a survey could investigate how many music teachers use a Community of Learners approach in the classroom or with performing groups. It could also explore how those teachers use the larger community, which would include classroom teachers, parents, and other students.

Epilogue

Every year there are new students joining the Collegium. The younger students of one year become the experienced mentors of the following year. The Collegium Musicum at Harrison Elementary School invigorates itself from year to year. The first
time that the group was invited to play for the educational division of the Boston Early Music Festival in 2011, over a dozen fourth graders had been brought into the group in the middle of the year. The older students worked tirelessly with the newcomers to bring them up to a presentable level of performance. Two years later, when those fourth graders played again at the Festival as sixth graders, they were noticeably assisting their younger peers in preparations for the repertoire.

In between the two Boston Early Music Festival gigs, some Collegium players provided a demonstration for a workshop that I gave for the Boston Area Kodály Educators. During the playing of the pieces the Collegium students were sitting among the music educators, who were reading through the repertoire for the workshop. Throughout the session students and teachers were exchanging information, suggestions, and ideas in a cooperative learning spirit. The students felt entirely at ease learning and teaching with the music teachers.

The cooperative learning spirit represented by the Community of Learners approach has extended beyond my expectations. Two of my recent fourth grade students, who did not live in close proximity to each other, practiced with each other through Face Time on their parents’ i-Phones, an avenue of work, which would never have occurred to me. These two students, incidentally, are now in the current Collegium ensemble, offering their expertise to others around them in the Collegium and in the classroom.
APPENDIX A

Guiding Questions for Individual Student Interviews

1. Tell me about a typical day at school.

2. Tell me about your musical background.

3. When do you recall first hearing music?

4. What do you remember about beginning to learn the recorder?

5. How have you developed your recorder playing since then?

6. Tell me about the Collegium.

7. Tell me about your practice habits at home.

8. How is practice and working alone different from playing with others in the Collegium?

9. What do you feel is the difference between Friday Collegium practice and a concert?

10. How do you feel your mind works when you are reading a new piece of music for the first time?

11. How important do you think reading music notation is in order to take part in Collegium and why?

12. How do you feel, when you hear several different parts playing different notes from your own as you are playing?

13. How do you think you will be involved in music, as you grow older?
APPENDIX B

Guiding Questions for Teachers

1. How do the Collegium members in your room feel about leaving class to come to rehearsal? What subjects or activities do they miss?

2. Does the fact that they are out of the room 40 minutes on Friday afternoon and 20 minutes at their sectional rehearsal time affect the academic achievement? If so, how?

3. What kind of value, if any, do you see for students participating in Collegium? If you see little or no value, please elaborate?

4. Describe the difference in your thoughts and attitudes, if there is a difference, between seeing the students leave your room for rehearsals every week and a final project, such as a concert, program, or other performance commitment.
APPENDIX C

Guiding Questions for Parents

1. Describe your perceptions of your child’s affiliation with the Collegium.

2. Describe his/her practice at home (frequency, time limitations, coordination with other homework, etc.).

3. Describe your thoughts or attitudes, when or if you are able to hear him/her ever perform in the entire group.

4. Describe the benefits that you observe with your child’s affiliation with the Collegium.
APPENDIX D

Guiding Questions for an Administrator

1. Describe your first experience or reaction when you first heard and observed elementary children playing in a four-part recorder group.

2. How have you come to view the Collegium as an activity and as a learning process for the students?

3. If you have been aware of any student's attitude in being a part of the Collegium, how has this attitude manifested itself in the actions or demeanor of that student?
APPENDIX E

Sample Sight-Reading Piece for Collegium Audition

COLLEGIUM AUDITION:
Soprano/Tenor

D. Ferguson
APPENDIX F

Sample Letter to Parents of Students with Successful Audition for Collegium

[Harrison] COLLEGIUM MUSICUM 2009-2010
8 September 2009

Your child has passed an audition for the instrumental group (named above). It will involve rehearsals and some performances during school hours (winter concert, spring concert, promotion ceremony and perhaps one concert at the [City] Arts Festival).

Students are expected to become proficient in either the soprano recorder or the alto recorder and are encouraged to purchase one or the other of these. If your child plays tenor recorder in school, she or he should have and practice a soprano at home (if the tenor is too expensive); if he or she plays bass, an alto should be used at home (to avoid buying the more expensive bass).

This year the P.T.O. has graciously offered to order the instruments, if the student brings in the appropriate amount in cash to school. The saving on shipping has a major impact on the price. We are strongly recommending Aulos three-piece recorders of excellent quality but quite reasonably priced. One- and two-piece recorders are harder to clean and care for. Inferior brands are less reliable for beautiful tone work, especially in the lower registers and some have tuning problems in the higher octave.

The cost including shipping:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recorder</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A303AI</td>
<td>ivory soprano recorder 3-pc Baroque fingering</td>
<td>$6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A309A</td>
<td>alto recorder 3-pc Baroque fingering</td>
<td>$28.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr. Ferguson

(please cut here)________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_________ has my permission to play in the Collegium Musicum.

(please check one)

_____ I am willing to purchase the instrument circled above (enclose cash or check made out to [Harrison] P.T.O.

_____ We already have the indicated instrument.

_____ We are unable to purchase the instrument at this time.

Signature of Parent_______________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX G

Sample Pages of Soprano Recorder Studies
Begin the Soprano Recorder

Dennis E. Ferguson

1.

Soprano Recorder

2.

Soprano Recorder

3.

Soprano Recorder

4.

Soprano Recorder

5.

Soprano Recorder

6.

Soprano Recorder

\[ \text{\textit{Traditional}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{Traditional}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{Traditional}} \]
Begin the Soprano Recorder

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.
APPENDIX H

Sample Page of Alto Recorder Studies
Begin the Soprano Recorder

7.

Soprano Recorder

8.

Soprano Recorder

9.

Soprano Recorder

10.

Soprano Recorder

11.

Soprano Recorder

12.

Soprano Recorder

th

1

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x

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x

x
APPENDIX H

Sample Repertoire List

Una Flor
Fais Dodo
Au clair de la lune
Go Tell Aunt Rhody
Oh, Freedom
The Famine Song
Lavender’s Blue
The Little Nut Tree
The Wren Song
The Erie Canal
Kalinka
Harrison Schoolhouse Song

Allemande Tielman Susato
Belle qui tiens ma vie Thoinot Arbeau
Andante, from Surprise Symphony Josef Haydn
APPENDIX I

Sample Music Score (Easy)

Lavender's Blue

Traditional English
D. E. Ferguson
APPENDIX J

Sample Music Score (Moderately Difficult)

Andante
from Mvt. 2 of Surprise Symphony

© 2010

Josef Haydn
D. E. Ferguson
APPENDIX K

(Harrison Schoolhouse Song sung and played at the Grade Six graduation ceremony)
Harrison Schoolhouse Song

Traditional American Folksong

Dennis E. Ferguson

1. From this school house they say we are going. You will

Soprano Recorder 1

Soprano Recorder 2

Alto Recorder

Tenor Recorder

Bass Recorder

From this school house they say we are going,

You will

miss our bright eyes and sweet smile. For they say we are taking the

sunshine, which has
2. We sat by your side, when you taught us. We must now start to bid you farewell. We'll remember the Harrison Schoolhouse and the staff that has taught us so well.

3. We will think of the schoolhouse we're leaving. O how lonely, how sad it will be! We will think of the fond hearts we're breaking and the parting between you and me.

4. We will promise you, teachers, that never - to our new ones we'll ne'er be a pest, And our lives they will show how you taught us and to you we will say "You're the best!"
References


Kersten, F. (2000). Introducing recorder ensembles in general music classes. *General Music Today*. Retrieved from http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/itx/retrieve.do?contentSet=IAC-Documents&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%3D%28ke%2CNone%2C7%29Kersten%3AAnd%3AFQE%3D%28in%2CNone%2C21%29General%2CGeneral%2CGeneral+Music+Today%22%24%3D%3D%3D%3D%3D%3D%3D%3D%3DsgHitCountType=none&inPS=true&sort=DateDescend&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&tabId=T002&prodId=AONE&searchId=R1&currentPosition=2&userGroupName=mlin_b_bumml&docId=A64492538&docType=IAC


CURRICULUM VITAE

Dennis Edward Ferguson (born 1949) received his undergraduate degree in piano pedagogy from Rhodes College in 1971. From 1972 to 1975 he studied at the Conservatoire de Musique in Lausanne, Switzerland, and in 1975 moved to Dublin, Ireland, where he taught music at the St. Mary’s School for the Visually Impaired for several years and taught piano, solfège, choir, and orchestra at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin, Ireland, from 1978 to 1987. In 1988 he moved back to the United States with his wife and their three children. Ferguson received his Master of Music degree in Sacred Music from the University of Memphis in 1990 and continued at the university with studies in historical musicology while working as the Director of Music at the Cathedral in Memphis. In 1992 Ferguson settled with his family in New England, and worked in two school systems as a music teacher and in three churches as a Director of Music. He founded a community choral group, Prolatio Singers & Players, which he still conducts. Ferguson received his DMA degree from Boston University, College of Fine Arts in 2014.