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Parental perspectives of homeschooling music education curricula

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

Dissertation

**PARENTAL PERSPECTIVES OF
HOMESCHOOLING MUSIC EDUCATION CURRICULA**

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my brother, Steven.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The pursuit of a doctoral degree involves an immense amount of time and dedication for many people, not just the student.

Regarding the support and impact left on me through the years, there are far too many people to acknowledge. I must first express my thanks to my doctoral cohort of 2015. The relationships, support, and memories developed over the years have been a source of motivation and inspiration. To Joel, our time together was far too short. I know our cohort was less bright after your passing.

To Dr. André de Quadros, your support and inspiration to our cohort has been invaluable. I can't express the extent of my personal gratitude. Like a family member, you were there with me through heartache, success, loss, and life-changing events. I consider myself fortunate to know you and as a teacher, mentor, and friend.

To my wife, Robyn, you can claim at least half of this doctorate. I would have quit long before completion without your encouragement and support. I don't have the words, or the space necessary to express my feelings.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to document parental views of the homeschool music curriculum in the state of Arkansas and assess how it affects the teaching and learning of music. I focused on homeschooling families before the beginning of the pandemic, which for the purpose of this dissertation is considered January 1st, 2020. The research questions which guided this dissertation were: 1.) What is the parent's philosophy on the teaching and learning of music in homeschooling and in what ways do they report it has changed because of COVID-19? 2.) How do the parents describe their homeschool curricula, and how does music factor into the homeschool curriculum? 3.) How do homeschool parents report the difference between the teaching and learning of music and the teaching and learning of other subjects?

Three homeschooling parents who use music in their curriculum were chosen from three distinct regions within the state of Arkansas. The regions were urban, the Coastal Plains, and the Highlands. Lengthy interviews with each family revealed that, dependent upon parental objectives, location, and availability of resources.

Though parents shared many aspects of educational approach, the largest challenge shared by each parent was the lack of music education resources designed for

the home. The parents hope to see the development of a comprehensive music education curriculum designed for homeschooling parents. The lack of such a comprehensive curriculum was discouraging to each parent. A review of existing resources confirmed their assessment. Each parent offered creative solutions which provide strategies for other homeschooling parents.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“There is no school equal to a decent home and no teacher equal to a virtuous parent.”

- Gandhi

As a product of a public school system, public schools were adequate for my children. My own experience with public school was typical. I had good teachers who prepared me for life outside of school to the best of their ability. I entered college well-prepared in most subjects and was thankful for my experience with my high school teachers. However, as my children progressed through the public school system, I began to lose faith in what once seemed to serve me well. At that point, my wife and I began considered possibly homeschooling our children. As parents, we believe education is essential. This education goes beyond just math or social studies. They needed critical thinking and leadership.

What, then, was going on in the classroom? As we discovered, our children came home lacking in knowledge in the core subjects. For example, at the age of 7, my son had utterly illegible handwriting. "They would work themselves out" was the answer to our concerns. Surely the teacher had addressed these issues in class, and there was a plan. One conversation with my children solidified our decision to homeschool.

Me: “How was school today? Did you learn anything?”

William: “I had fun and learned a lot.”

Me: “That is great! Can you tell me what you learned?”

William: “Sure! I learned how to use red stone in Minecraft.”

Me: “You learned about a video game?”

William: “Yes! I was ahead in my work, so I played on the iPad for most of the day.”

Me: “Did you work on your writing? Did you work any mathematics?”

William: “Not really. I played on my iPad.”

Me: “How often do you play on the iPad.”

William: “Just about every day.”

Me: “Do you play on the iPad just about every day?”

Alana: “No, not really. I play other stuff.”

I realized that William was so far ahead in his work that it had resulted in a significant amount of free time. He had filled this free time with Minecraft. My wife and I felt we should provide our children with the necessary education. These needed values included personal religious ideas and concepts such as critical thinking and leadership. Homeschooling, or elective home education, had now become a viable option. Murphy (2012) described homeschooling as teaching children at home or elsewhere. A parent or guardian, or tutor could educate. Within today's society, homeschooling could also include an online teacher. However, my wife and I decided to function as the primary educators and our home as the classroom.

Swanson (1996) confirmed that a desire by parents to teach their own beliefs plays a role in selecting a homeschool curriculum. In support of this finding, my wife and I consider values such as teamwork, leadership, sharing, and engaging with people. The value of engaging with people makes one more empathetic, sympathetic, generous, and kind.

Our reasons for homeschooling include small class sizes and individualized attention, including our values in instruction, learning life skills and academic skills in the home, and shared familial experiences that occur daily. Nichols (2005) stated that in the 1970s and '80s, the homeschool movement included those parents who homeschooled for moral reasons. Through interviews, Arai (2000) confirmed that one reason parents homeschool is dissatisfaction with the school's curriculum. These were a few aspects of our dissatisfaction with the public school system.

Nichols (2007) found that parents' decisions to homeschool their children were due to the quality of instruction. These parental decisions were due to overcrowded classrooms, student safety, and high academic standards (Nichols, 2007). Arai (2000) stated that it would seem evident that homeschooled children would negatively perceive public education. However, research shows that many parents prefer to avoid public education rather than specific parts of the system (Arai, 2000).

The ability of families to join learning cooperatives, send their children to community college classes or local universities, and hire tutors has further encouraged parents that prefer an option other than public school (Nichols, 2007). The development of learning cooperatives is significant due to their design. These cooperatives provide instruction for complex subjects, which may include physical education, science labs, foreign languages, and music (Nichols, 2007). As evidenced by our children, one of the most popular locations for a cooperative is the local library. Retired teachers volunteered their time for presentations. For example, a retired biology teacher presented a lesson with dissections and other experiments. In our area, the Southeast Arkansas Concert

Foundation (SEARK), which sponsors arts programs in Southeast Arkansas, often invites local homeschool groups and cooperatives to events hosted within the public schools or at a local community college or university.

Families may also form groups to share resources or plan field trips. In the late 1970s and the 1980s, homeschoolers organized themselves into support groups (Gaither, 2017). Gaither (2017) described that during these times, homeschoolers were "misunderstood and held in suspicion by neighbors and family members, distrusted and occasionally persecuted by authorities, confused about what was legal and how to do what they were trying to do" (p. 161). Cooperatives provided emotional and legal support. These support groups also provided an environment where parents could share educational strategies and experiences. Gaither (2017) quoted a mother's thoughts on homeschooling support groups:

[Support group] is like an extended family that keeps you on the right track and helps you when you get discouraged. I have gotten a lot of neat ideas from other mothers and I have made several friends and found friends for my children. The most important thing of course is that the group helps me keep my eyes on Jesus. (pp. 161–162)

My Personal Experience with Homeschooling Students

In 2011, when I first began my teaching career in public school, homeschooled students were allowed to participate in school activities. These activities included: athletics, band, choir, and various clubs. Previous state policies prevented this involvement. However, state legislation established a new precedent. Homeschooled students could receive their academic instruction at home while simultaneously having the ability to participate in public school activities. Over the years, I taught many

homeschooled students who came to campus to play with the band. Other students might attend the school for football, basketball, jazz band, or other extracurricular activities. I found these students to be respectful, eager to learn, and willing to work and please the teacher. Although music education differs from the regular classroom, band rehearsal constituted their first experience outside of a classroom setting in the home for many of these students. They always seemed to adapt well to the challenges of the public school setting. Being in a much larger class and coping with less individual attention was the most challenging aspect for these students.

Other students, however, faced challenges. Many of these challenges dealt with social skills involving their peers. Their inexperience in the social dynamics of teenage high school life sometimes seemed to cause problems, often resulting in hurt feelings and being targeted by their peers. Other homeschooled students suffered problems with time management and meeting deadlines. Although I noticed this struggle with other students, homeschooled students seemed to struggle more. Perhaps it was because they had been allowed to move at their own pace and did not necessarily face the deadlines in public school. Reflecting on the early part of my career, it became easy to attribute these difficulties for homeschooled students as unique issues.

I found students struggling much more with submitting high-quality assignments by the deadline. These observations were apparent across campus as we professors struggled to regain rigor while tempering it with compassion and understanding. As we continued through the pandemic, I observed many homeschool-related things. The first observation is how little the pandemic affected the educational progress of my children.

We continued in the same manner as before. Simultaneously, I noticed that first-year students at our university had very few problems with educational progress or the ability to meet deadlines and produce high-quality work.

At the beginning of my career in public school, I often supervised aspiring music education student teachers from the local universities. I had many things to share with a newer educator willing to listen. Most of my student teachers were eager, albeit lacking in the experience you only received by walking the path yourself. However, one year I supervised a previously homeschooled student teacher. The student teacher entered a university wanting to be in music education but had yet to gain experience with concert bands or marching bands. Their time at their respective university was able to close the gaps in this area. The student teacher had a decent foundation in music. Their main problems dealt with the realization that their educational experience differed vastly from the students they found themselves teaching. Working in a district with a high percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch helped them realize that most students just struggled to feed themselves daily. This realization was a unique moment for the student teacher and helped better prepare them for their first teaching position.

The student teacher's lack of exposure to music within the context of an ensemble did not affect their willingness to instruct at that level. Nichols (2006) stated that the music curricula offered by homeschool publishers generally were not designed for the homeschool setting. Additionally, Nichols (2006) commented that homeschooled music groups seemed to need a solid foundation in the basics of music. For example, the student teacher could not initially read music. Their time playing in their church resulted in

learning traditional hymns by ear. Before graduation, their experience in their university's top wind ensemble helped them overcome this deficiency. The student teacher lacked experience preparing pieces for the all-region band, participating in all-region and all-state bands, performing for the region and state solo ensemble, and participating in various honor bands. However, the student teacher remained eager to learn and quickly picked up the information needed for success.

History of Homeschooling

Homeschooling has a long history. Murphy (2012) described the characteristics of homeschooling as follows: "funding for the student's education comes from the family, not the government; the parents, not state-funded employees, provide the service; and regulation of the enterprise is internal to the family, not the responsibility of the government" (pp. 6–7).

For a large part of American history, family members did children's education at home, and professional tutors were available. However, only the wealthiest could afford such an expense, which was only sometimes valid in the past quarter-century. Most homeschooled families are middle-class and financially stable despite many who forgo one income so one parent or guardian can stay home with children (Murphy, 2012; Bauman, 2002).

In colonial America, fathers were responsible for instruction in catechism and literacy, while mothers educated children on running the home (Gaither, 2017). These skills may include washing, soap making, preparing food, preserving food, and other daily elements essential to family survival in colonial America. The Protestant

commitment to biblical doctrine promoted literacy, so children read the bible for themselves. In the 1670s, the Plymouth Colonies had a school. The school operated briefly, but learning began within the homes (Gaither, 2017). Gaither (2017) quoted a Connecticut record from 1643 that described the educational philosophy of the time:

The prosperity and well being of Comonweles doth much depend upon the well government and ordering of particular Families, which in an ordinary way cannot be expected when the rules of God are neglected in laying the foundations of a family state. (p. 3)

Bringing European traditions, families took responsibility for the children's education. In fact, in 1642, Massachusetts mandated that local officials called selectmen

take account from time to time of all parents and masters, and of their children, especially of their ability to read and understand the principles of religion and the capital laws of this country. All parents and guardians shall cause such to be instructed in reading and writing, so that they may be able to read the Scriptures and to write by the time they attain to twelve years of age; and that then they are taught some useful trade or skill. (Gaither, 2017, p. 6)

Colonial communities established schools but did not enforce students' attendance. What the child learned in a formal educational setting was considered as secondary to what the child learned, first in the church and second at home (Rury, 2002).

Thus, even if relatively few of North America's European settlers attended school, all of them received an education. They learned from their parents and from the churches they attended, along with the apprentice and "boarding out" arrangements that were so ubiquitous in this period of American history. Given this, it is hardly a wonder that so few institutions of formal learning existed during much of the colonial period. Education was largely an informal affair, embedded in a host of other social relationships and guided by the necessities of life and work in a New World. (Rury, 2002, p.43)

The educational economy of the American South involved lessons from the mother, an older sibling, and possibly lessons from a family tutor (Gaither, 2017). Many early Americans received their education from tutors, including George Washington,

Thomas Jefferson, and Robert E. Lee.

Eventually, education gradually moved from home to other institutions. By the 1850s, Americans had created public schools with a significant influx of an immigrant population (Gaither, 2017). However, Southerners remained wary of public schools because of the increased taxation necessary to fund them, and they only became standard sometime after the Civil War.

The religious motivation for the homeschool movement is undeniable. Children in Protestant government schools used the King James Bible as part of literacy competency, which included the recitation and interpretation of the Ten Commandments in their protestant form (Gaither, 2017). Naturally, this created problems with non-Protestant immigrants, especially Catholics, who opposed Protestant doctrine. Eventually, Catholic church bishops created an alternative school system rather than participating in Protestant government schools (Gaither, 2017). Many such people in the 1800s chose to teach their children at home out of dissatisfaction with the available schools (Gaither, 2017).

Sigourney (1845) best articulated this attitude:

Why expose [the child] to the influence of evil example? ... Why yield it to the excitement of promiscuous association, when it has a parent's house, where its innocent may be shielded, and its intellect aided to expand? "I have no time," replies the mother. How much time will it require? Two or three hours in a day, is a greater proportion than any teacher of a school would devote exclusively to them. (p. 107)

By the early 20th century, families ceded many aspects of education to public schools. However, many families still brought other kinds of learning into the home. These subjects included the arts, such as drawing and music (Gaither, 2017). In schools and the home, literacy remained one of the most important subjects for study.

Homeschooling proved attractive as social, cultural, and religious ideas could be cultivated at home more than in public schools. A portion of the conservative right did not consider private schools, and this lack of consideration was due to their high prices and theological disagreements (Gaither, 2017). Knutson (2007) described mothers who considered homeschooling after negative responses from school officials concerning their child's education. Lines (2000) described the social trend of homeschooling as follows:

The rise of homeschooling is one of the most significant social trends of the past half-century. This reemergence of what is in fact an old practice has occurred for a distinctly modern reason: a desire to wrest control from the education bureaucrats and reestablish the family as central to a child's learning ... For a number of different reasons, parents are losing faith in the American classroom, and homeschooling is becoming a serious (and growing) alternative... It is too early to tell whether homeschooling will establish itself as a major alternative to the modern school. But some things are clear: Homeschooling is becoming more common and more widely accepted. (pp. 74–75, 85)

In the 1970s and 1980s, during the height of the homeschool movement, Christian Liberty Academy's correspondent program was the dominant Christian homeschool curriculum (Gaither, 2017). Dr. and Mrs. Donald R Howard created the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) curriculum during this time. Based on Protestant Christian theology, this curriculum promised "to teach children from God's perspective, celebrating the virtues of Christian America and free enterprise as it decried communism, socialism, the United Nations, and secularism" (p. 176). In the 1970s, Arlin and Beka Horton created a curriculum from the Pensacola Christian Academy that stressed phonics, memorization of facts, and celebration of American patriotism (Gaither, 2017). This curriculum was branded A Beka. A Beka, developed initially for private Christian schools, later targeted individual families seeking a Christian curriculum for their

homeschool. Naturally, many competitors emerged with their products. These consist of in-a-box style curricula and specific subjects like Christian Light Education, Konos, Alpha Omega, Rod and Staff, Weaver Curriculum Series, Tapestry of Grace, and Sonlight, Apologia, Considering God's Creation, Answers in Genesis, How Great Thou Art, Diana Waring, Nothing New Press, Beautiful Feet Books, Cornerstone Family Ministries (now Lamplighter), and Cadron Creek (Gaither, 2017). The next few decades contained the development of various curricula, and by 2000, large state conventions drew well over 100 exhibitors. By 2001, over 500 conventions were being held, with over 75 attracting 3000 people or more (Gaither, 2017). The distribution of periodicals such as Homeschooling Today, Practical Homeschooling, and Home Education Magazine soared. These creations resulted in the distribution of over 350,000 periodicals per month. The Old Schoolhouse Magazine has also become a popular source of modern, non-Christian curriculum and sees distribution to over 30,000 families per month in the United States.

Gaither (2017) discussed the stigma of homeschooling, especially in the 1980s and 1990s. Churches often frowned on the practice, extended family members disagreed, and public schools and media expressed dissatisfaction because of the perceived lack of educational quality and social skills. However, well into the twenty-first century, attitudes towards homeschooling began to recognize the importance of education by the family and in the family environment.

The selection of an appropriate and effective curriculum is crucial for all educators. While it has become more flexible in recent years regarding the curriculum selection by homeschooling parents, state laws differ extensively. Some states require

parents to submit applications and have their curriculum evaluated by appropriate officials, while others require nothing (Gaither, 2017). Homeschooling families face a tough challenge in developing or selecting a learning curriculum for their children. Bradford (2018) studied the challenges faced by homeschooling families in rural Texas. Like some states, Texas has limited guidelines for developing effective curricula (Bradford, 2018). Bradford (2018) stated that the absence of guidance could create problems for both the parent and their child, thereby limiting student achievement.

Homeschooling continued to gain prominence and support due to legal victories. Before 1982, only two states legally recognized homeschooling (Nichols, 2007). Essentially, homeschooling operated as an underground, illegal activity throughout the United States (Nichols, 2007). Currently, the national legal picture regarding homeschooling varies greatly. As of the writing of this dissertation, The National Home School Legal Defense Association reported on the levels of regulation and how they vary significantly across the United States. (National Home School Legal Defense Association, 2022).:

- States that permit homeschooling with no regulatory requirements: Alaska, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Texas.
- States that require parents to notify their intention to homeschool only: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Delaware, District of Columbia, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Wisconsin, Wyoming.
- States that require test scores and/or other professional evaluations of student progress: Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii,

Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia.

- States that require the highest degree of review (compared to the other states) either through requiring curriculum review, teacher certification of parents, or in home visits by state officials: Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia.

In *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972), the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Old Amish Order not complying with the state compulsory attendance statute. In *State v. Popanz* (1983), the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that homeschooled students could not be held responsible for truancy. In 1994, U.S. House of Representatives members defeated an amendment that would have required homeschooling parents to be certified teachers (Knutson, 2007).

Notably, in April of 1978, a district judge decided against the school district of Amherst, Massachusetts, and stated, "Under our system, the parents must be allowed to decide whether public school education, including its socialization aspects, is desirable or undesirable for their children." The defeated superintendent of the Amherst district released a statement saying, "I am not opposed to home education; I was merely trying to safeguard the child's interest." As an extension of this case, Massachusetts law set criteria for homeschooling. These included: competent parents, instruction for the number of hours and days the law mandated, and an accountability measure to ensure adequate progress (Gaither, 2017). By the late 1970s, conflicts like this became more prominent and less of an anomaly. More and more families decided to remove their children from public schools, increasing conflicts with local school districts. Hal Bennet and his 1972

text, *No More Public School*, summed the feelings of the cultural movement. Writers such as Jonathan Kozol outlined the terrible state of public school in his book *Savage Inequalities*. Of course, this gave ammunition to those already wary of public schools and saw institutionalized education as stifling creativity and promoting secular humanism (Gaither, 2017). The spotlight on the homeschooling movement in December of 1978 by *Time Magazine* decreased the stigma and further popularized the movement.

Of note is the influence of *The Phil Donahue Show*. Many noted when Donahue interviewed a prominent homeschool proponent, John Holt, and a homeschooling family with national attention, the Sessions family. Many people who later decided to homeschool their children referred to the influence of Holt and the Sessions family on the Donahue show (Gaither, 2017). Holt (1982) summed the sentiments towards homeschooling.

If we look at children only to see whether they are doing what we want or don't want them to do, we are likely to miss all the things about them that are the most interesting and important. This is one reason why so many classroom teachers, even after years of experience, understand so little about the real nature of children. People teaching their children at home consistently do a good job because they have the time—and the desire—to know their children, their interests, the signs by which they show and express their feelings. Only as teachers in schools free themselves from their traditional teacher tasks—boss, cop, judge—will they be able to learn enough about their students to see how best to be of use to them. (p. 22)

Homeschooling in the Era of COVID-19

In February and March of 2020, the United States began to see many public schools and universities transition to online or virtual instruction. Some districts postponed instruction based on the severity of the pandemic. As economic conditions

worsened and the virus continued to rage across the country, educators immediately recognized that the 2020–2021 school year would look drastically different than in years past. Districts quickly began to develop creative and innovative approaches to education at all levels to maintain high-quality education and safety.

As the beginning of the 2020–2021 school year approached, many parents realized that homeschooling might be a viable option for their families. While some parents considered this an opportunity, others felt forced into homeschooling. However, many parents felt as if they needed more choices regarding homeschooling. This group represented a more significant problem in the education of our nation's children. As the beginning of the 2020–2021 school year approached, many parents realized that homeschooling might be a viable option for their families. While some parents took this as an opportunity, others felt forced into homeschooling. However, there were many parents who felt as if they had no choice regarding homeschooling. This group represented a more significant problem in the education of our nation's children.

For years, organizations that had developed a curriculum for homeschoolers were suddenly overwhelmed with endless requests for information and help concerning educational strategies and curriculum purchases. These sudden needs necessitated a change for companies scrambling to meet the demands for thousands of more curriculum orders and materials.

As many parents discovered, one of the significant downsides of homeschooling is the time it takes to plan and implement educational strategies. Planning and preparation are crucial for a parent with previous education or homeschooling experience. To better

suit a child's specific learning style, an enormous amount of time is devoted to collecting and organizing supplementary materials and reworking educational concepts.

The emergence of COVID-19 in 2020 has changed the education landscape (Li & Lalani, 2020; Harris, 2020; Gillan, 2020; DeSantis, 2020). As COVID-19 is an emerging pandemic and still unfolding, the information regarding its effects on education is speculative. As such, no peer-reviewed research exists discussing the possible ripples across education. As information emerges, society can look to those experiencing these things first-hand. In our digital world, one can find testimonies through blog posts and editorials of educators, administrators, students, parents and guardians.

Public schools quickly shifted to digital learning to accommodate issues surrounding COVID-19. Many parents felt it necessary to prepare themselves to set up a homeschooling environment (Harris, 2020). However, Harris (2020) observed that a move towards homeschooling or virtual instruction has "the significant disadvantage that families have to play the role of hall monitor and teacher. Few families want or can afford that, given their work schedules and other responsibilities" (p. 4). For example, Erin Silver, a parent in New Jersey, stated in an article written for CNBC, "there was no bone in my body that felt comfortable sending my son to school" (Dickler, 2020). Because of COVID-19, parents like Erin Silver felt that homeschooling was the only logical option to keep their children safe. This parent ultimately decided to homeschool, hiring a nanny to continue working outside the home. Additionally, Sokol (2020) reported that many parents choose to switch intentionally and permanently to homeschooling due to the ongoing pandemic, confusion about the opening of schools,

and safety measures used by school districts. Having been on the fence about homeschooling, other parents now had the catalyst to prompt the move (Sokol, 2020).

The sudden surge in interest, fueled by the force of circumstance, homeschooling, created a great demand for an accessible curriculum. During the 2019 academic year, just 3 percent of families, or 2.5 million, nationwide homeschooled their children (Ray, 2020). Ray (2020) noted that the homeschooling population grows between 2 percent and 8 percent per annum. The National Home Education Research Institute is projecting an increase of at least 10 percent over the next academic year (Ray, 2020).

The increase in requests for information and curriculum sales has risen. In some cases, requests increased by almost 100 percent. As the school year began, USA Today released a poll that up to 30 percent of parents had considered homeschooling an alternative to online or hybrid instruction (Page, 2020). Additionally, the need for support groups and homeschool cooperatives has grown exponentially.

The onset of COVID-19 and the beginning of a new academic year caused a significant increase in homeschooling support groups, with parents seeking support from other, more experienced homeschooling parents (Sokol, 2020). Adding to the demand on publishers, experts, and other, more experienced parents is the need to make these accommodations expediently. Harris (2020) noted that some parents are completely overwhelmed with instruction, curriculum choices, monitoring virtual instruction, and the need to function as a teacher's aide, hall monitor, counselor, and cafeteria worker. Harris (2020) summed up the feelings of many unprepared parents when Yarlin Matos, a parent of 7, was quoted as: "I had a breaking moment where I had to lock myself in the

bathroom and cry. It was just too much" (p. 2).

Homeschooling as a Contested Space

Despite the previously discussed controversy surrounding homeschooling, However, it should not become an individualized or privatized matter. Privatization, in other words, would allow a limited group of children, homeschoolers in this instance, to enjoy all the benefits of education while asking others to bear the social burdens of education as a public good (Lubienski, 2003). Lubienski (2003) stated:

In education, homeschooling, by its very nature, denies this public interest by acknowledging no mechanism, no legitimate public interest in the education of 'other people's children.' Home schooling is both a more benign and more destructive form of privatization: benign because it does not put a claim on public resources (as do for-profit charter schools, for instance), and destructive in that it is a more fundamental form of privatization. It privatizes the means, control, and purpose of education and fragments the production of the common good not simply to the level of a locality or ethnic group, but the atomized level of the nuclear family. (pp. 214–215)

Andrew (2000) stated that families who choose private schools still believe and are confident in an educational institution. However, those who choose to homeschool have rejected the school as the institution of education. Poetter (2001) discussed the significant problems created by school choice, including the danger of re-segregation by race and class inherent in school-choice plans. U.S. schools have not solved their problem with the inequality of funding and quality of education (Poetter, 2001). It is unlikely that school-choice plans will solve these problems since individuals who take their resources out of the realm of public educational institutions amplify the problem.

The homeschooling community potentially should have realized the impact on

children who remain in the public school system. Or perhaps they were unconcerned? Regardless, this withdrawal impacted public schools through financial needs, such as in-state subsidies based on attendance. In musical performance groups, this is equivalent to the "best players" choosing not to participate in the large groups because they are "too good" for the school group (Ledgerwood, 2017).

One of the biggest arguments against homeschooling is the lack of structure and possible parents' education. Twenty-eight states do not require homeschooled students to take the standardized assessment (Huseman, 2015). Without formally assessing each student, the quality of education becomes challenging to determine, and data becomes distorted and skewed when collected.

Martin-Chang et al. (2011) found that families who purchased a curriculum and led a structured environment outperformed other parents who designed their curriculum and used unstructured environments. Ray (2009) found that homeschooled students whose parents are high school graduates performed well above the national average on achievement tests, while homeschooled students with parents that were not high school graduates performed below the national average. With no way to regulate parents' educational backgrounds, many contest the effectiveness of homeschooling. Unqualified parents continue to concern those who contest homeschooling—the state is usually the primary complainant.

One of the most contested aspects of homeschooling is the issue of whether homeschooling should be subject to state and federal regulation (Kerns, 2016). As cited in Kerns (2016), Merry and Karsten (2010) reported that critics of homeschooling stated

that oversight is needed to "curtail privatization tendencies that threaten social cohesion and equality of opportunity, but also an erosion of good citizenship and public reasonableness" (p. 508). Reich (2005) advocated curriculum regulations, assessments, credentials, and academic standards. According to each state, current regulations may include notification of intent to homeschool, curriculum requirements, record keeping, attendance, and standardized testing. Possible curriculum regulation is particularly interesting, and some homeschooling proponents reject any regulation. Arkansas, for instance, has begun to relax regulations. For parents wanting to homeschool, in 2021, HB1429 changed the 14-day waiting period to five days. Despite the change, The Home School Legal Defense Association of Arkansas still believes the five-day waiting period is unconstitutional.

Another contested aspect of homeschooling deals with socialization with same-age peers. The lack of socialization negatively affects homeschooled children's social development. Lebeda (2007) stated:

homeschooling compresses the three spheres in which children need to be successful—home, school, and peers—into a single setting, making socialization ‘very difficult for kids. ’They claim that failures of socialization may lead to interpersonal conflicts, social isolation, and development of aggressive behavior. (p. 102)

Many homeschool parents do so to shape their children's character to reflect their own. Researchers have shown that many homeschoolers are religious (Apple, 2001, 2007, 2011). However, Kunzman (2009) asked, "If conservative Christian home school parents are determined to shape their children's character to reflect their own cherished beliefs and values, what room does this leave for children to learn to think for

themselves?" (p. 9). This thought poses a unique question and an inherent irony. In essence, parents who are nurturing the independent thought of their children are, by definition, telling them what to think. Kunzman (2009), therefore, asked if parents could remove their children from public schools to educate them in family beliefs and yet still nurture independent thought. This query is significant.

While some researchers agree with public education critiques, others support public schools. Apple (2001) stated that public schools are a social glue within our growing multicultural society. Removing children from this environment could eliminate the glue that holds together social connections in today's world. Reich (2008) noted that withdrawal from these environments could prevent students from being exposed to diverse ideas and people, thereby shielding them from other perspectives and cultures. As some researchers have emphasized, it is crucial if parents choose to homeschool that they retain the control to implement their values, beliefs, and lifestyle choices. Ultimately, Reich (2008) stated that "there are tripartite interests at stake in the education of children: interests of the child, the parents, and the state...neither parents, nor the state, nor the child ought to be permitted to exercise sole authority over the education of children" (p. 17).

As discussed, the movement towards homeschooling happened for several reasons. Some of these reasons are why homeschooling was such a contested space. For example, Gaither (2012) described how some parents wanted to limit their children's exposure to other races, religions, and family structures. This exposure included divorce, out-of-wedlock births, abortion, single-parent homes, and calls for gay rights. Some

argue that the willingness to shield children from different cultural and political aspects harms the whole child's development (Gaither, 2012).

Unsurprisingly, the conservative movements in the 1960s shaped homeschooling and, unfortunately, put children in a contested space between parents and the government. Conservatives, who had long shaped governmental direction, sought to keep public school values consistent with their own during this time. Particularly upset over discussions on race, sex education, death and dying, and non-religious and occult themes, conservatives pushed a blatantly racist agenda (Gaither, 2012). For example, representative George Andrews stated that "the Supreme Court had put the Negroes in the schools-now they put God out of the schools" (Gaither, 2012, p. 116). However, conservatives began to lose ground concerning the education of these issues and were utterly devastated by the 1962 and 1963 Supreme Court decisions eliminating school prayer and school-sponsored bible readings. The Court's rulings on desegregation followed. Politically, a child's education entered a contested space between the government and the cultural ideas of a part of the population.

Gaither (2012) also described a cause of homeschooling as suburbanization. In essence, suburbanization "facilitated the segregation of the population by race, income level, age, number of children, and cultural style" (p. 121). Information concerning the demographics of homeschooled students is difficult to collect due to inconsistencies across states for reporting homeschoolers (Gerst, 2007). Generally, reports revealed that homeschooled students in America tended to be whiter and wealthier. Additionally, these students generally had more educated parents than the general population of public-

school students (Kerns, 2016). In a study, Rudner (1999) reported that only 1.2 percent of homeschooled fathers had yet to finish high school opposed to 18.1 percent of males nationwide. Apple (2007) confirmed that the homeschooling population in America tended to be "somewhat better educated, slightly more affluent and considerably more likely to be white than the population in the state in which they reside" (pp. 114–115). When public schools attempted to be more inclusive and desegregated, homeschooling nurtured the ground for anti-government and racist activism. The 1980s saw a mass movement of those with a racist belief system into the homeschooling environment. A segregationist curriculum tailored their belief systems (Gaither, 2012). Dobson (2000) argued that even though publishers followed the consumer market, it resulted in a segregationist curriculum.

In the 1980s, changes in the tax regulations for Christian schools forced the smaller among them to close down by the hundreds. Suddenly, the parents of the students attending these schools were faced with a choice between government school attendance and homeschooling. For many, this really wasn't a choice at all, and these Christian families became part of a large second wave of homeschooling, joining earlier homeschoolers and boosting the numbers to record highs. Christian curriculum providers, already well-established businesses that had just lost a large chunk of their original market, followed the money, and easily courted the new market of homeschooling parents. (p. 6)

Need for the Study

There are an estimated 1.7 million homeschooled students in the United States, which is steadily increasing (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). Compared to the approximately 53 million American children K–12, 1.7 million may sound like a small number. However, this number is significant. Nemer (2002) stated that researchers

should note and begin studying various aspects of the homeschooling movement because of the large number of students and the increasing population. Reasons for research in homeschooling could yield information in "driving parental choice, techniques aimed at individualized instruction, multi-age learning, emulation of role-models and peers, child development and developmentally appropriate learning, and issues of cultural reproduction and social stratification" (Nemer, 2002, p. 17).

Arkansas law requires compulsory attendance of children between 5 and 17 years of age. This attendance can legally include homeschools. Arkansas law states that a "home school" is provided by a parent or legal guardian for his or her child. The process to begin homeschooling in Arkansas is relatively easy. The only requirement is written notification to the superintendent before August 15th for the fall semester or December 15th for the Spring semester. Additionally, there is no standardized testing requirement for homeschooled students in Arkansas.

As homeschooling enrollment grows, so does the research literature (Ledgerwood, 2017). The International Center for Home Education Research (2016) lists over 1900 references related to homeschooling. However, as Ledgerwood (2017) stated, "homeschooling as a movement is growing; however, higher education knows comparatively little about its practitioners" (p. 31). According to Nichols (2006), the growth in the number of homeschool practitioners should spur music education researchers to examine the role of music in homeschooling in greater detail. As I looked at the literature which discussed music and homeschooling, there needed to be more information. Nichols (2005) confirmed that arts education had received little attention.

Young (1999) noted, "some qualitative studies have provided descriptions of the homeschooling situation that invariably include music, but the primary focus of these investigations was not music education" (p. 17).

Ledgerwood (2017) described researched aspects of homeschooling. These aspects include homeschooling life (Knowles, 1998; Knutson, 2007), motivations (Knutson, 2007), learning environment (Mayberry, 1993), philosophy (Hood, 1990), objectives (Mayberry & Knowles, 1989), curriculum (Swanson, 1996), and interaction with the public school (Lines, 2000; Wagner, 2008). Other areas, however, need more research and information, such as the philosophy of teaching and learning music, an unestablished homeschool music curriculum, and a lack of curriculum. Young (1999), Matchael (2003), Nichols (2006), and Ledgerwood (2017) all explored the musical world of homeschoolers. The various factors that may predict homeschool music curricular choices provide an important area of research (Myers, 2000).

Additionally, curricular choices are essential because of their effect on other educational aspects. Different curricular designs can affect teaching and learning. Pannone (2014) emphasized the importance of curriculum choice as it is crucial to student achievement, learning, intellectual development, and college and career readiness. This selection applies to all curriculum choices, including music.

Of particular interest to this study is what four Arkansas homeschooling families are currently using as their music curriculum and how it affects the teaching and learning of music. Ledgerwood (2017) conducted a qualitative study of three homeschooling families to determine various aspects of the homeschooling family. In this study, the

researcher stated that these families should "serve as a window to confirm and disconfirm stereotypes and bring to light both the strengths and challenges of homeschooling" (p. 14). A large portion of homeschooling research has been qualitative. Studies by Arai (2000), Chen (1999), Chopp (2001), Knowles (1991), Knutson (2007), Ledgerwood (2017), and Nichols (2005) all used a qualitative approach to study homeschooling. Other studies have used similar sampling procedures (Knowles, 1991; Marshall & Valle, 1996; Mayberry et al., 1995).

As parents are not usually certified teachers, they may lack the training to delineate the scope and sequence of how skills are taught (Bradford, 2018). In Arkansas, laws require competency in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, career development, oral communication, physical education, health and safety, and fine arts. Parents can determine when their children have fulfilled these requirements. Congruent with a few other states, homeschool parents are not required to receive home visits from school officials, submit test scores, or approve their curriculum. As there are no guidelines for an appropriate curriculum, this allows parents significant flexibility. However, this flexibility could also cause a parent to be overwhelmed by the many options available. Much like the study of Bradford (2018), Arkansas, like Texas, "provides no guidelines or templates for homeschooling parents/guardians to use when developing their children's learning curricula" (p. 4).

Unfortunately, the absence of direction could potentially cause problems. Sollar (2014) revealed documented cases where parents may not have recognized serious issues when homeschooling their children. These problems move far beyond difficulty with

academic subjects, and mental illness often went undiagnosed while child abuse or other sexual encounters within the home were not recognized or reported.

Gaither (2017) stated that parents must do three things to meet their child's educational needs. They include research to find learning materials that will meet state requirements, collecting advice from veteran homeschoolers about practical ways to homeschool children, and meeting the interests and needs of their children. One of the most practical methods is collecting advice from veteran homeschoolers. Gaither (2017) stated that collecting advice from veteran homeschoolers about practical homeschooling methods is paramount. As such, current and future homeschooling parents could benefit from a study describing the music curriculum from the parent's perspective. This study would contain veteran testimonies about practical ways to educate homeschooled children in music.

Bradford (2018) stated that one of the strengths of homeschooling is the ability to outsource specific subjects. One of these subjects may include music. However, homeschooling families may need to pool resources to hire individuals with extensive training, knowledge, and skills. This practice is also true of music. While hiring a private lessons instructor is an option, it often includes financial resources that may only be available to some homeschooling parents.

There has been research conducted in other states. For example, Ledgerwood (2017) studied families in Wisconsin, Nichols (2006) studied families in Arizona, and Young (1999) studied families in the state of New York. However, there has yet to be any research of this kind conducted in Arkansas.

Research in Arkansas explored the difference in standardized test scores between homeschooling students and public schools (Hines, 1993). Hines (1993) also explored the difference in attitudes toward public schools and homeschooling in Arkansas and the characteristics of Arkansas homeschool families. Hamby (1990) identified why home school families in central Arkansas chose to homeschool their children. According to Hamby (1990), the reasons included: "to provide a Christian education, to counter disappointment with public schools, to develop family closeness, to exercise personal conviction, to instill family values, to accomplish academic goals, to avoid negative peer pressure, and to preserve parental influence" (p. 9). Currently, no research explores the music curriculum in Arkansas homeschooling families.

Studying these families is essential due to the unique circumstances within the state. Economic, educational, and cultural differences further explain specific circumstances that make this research unique. According to the United States Census Bureau, as of 2015, Arkansas ranks 45th regarding per capita personal income and 49th regarding median household income. Arkansas is also one of the most under-educated states regarding adult and student populations in the United States. The state also ranks 43rd and 49th regarding the percentage of the population with a high school or college degree. In 2010, the Arkansas Department of Education reported that students in Arkansas earned an average score of 20.3 on the ACT, below the national average of 21.

Swanson (1996) suggested exploring things homeschooled students do well and considering their application in a public-school setting. Ledgerwood (2017) discussed the instructional methods and curriculum choices of those who homeschool their children.

Burns (1993) ascertained that public school instruction could benefit from a further study on teaching and learning in homeschooling music because of the emphasis on individualized instruction, family-centered learning, and one-on-one instruction.

Additionally, Butzlaff (2000) showed a reliable association between music instruction and performance on standardized reading and verbal tests through a meta-analysis of numerous experiments. In our age of accountability through high-stakes testing, improved reasoning and comprehension are necessary. If music instruction is associated with improvement in these areas, homeschooled students deserve the same opportunity. Boss (2008) summed the importance of music education: “these findings suggest that music assists with language development, skills, and concentration. Music itself does not create intelligence but it can make it easier for some to learn as well as create an environment that is conducive to learning (p. 14).”

This intergenerational environment is nourished and continued by incorporating the music curriculum in homeschooling. Mehr (2014) confirmed that parents agree with the statements concerning music's effect on intelligence, academic achievement, and social development. Music is, therefore, recognized by parents as a social enterprise.

The purpose of research, and in-depth study, is to identify various issues within an area and increase public awareness. Research is also a tool for building knowledge and facilitating learning. This dissertation addressed the need for more insight into the music curriculum within homeschooling families in Arkansas. While a lack of research is not necessarily a reason to study a specific area or phenomenon, homeschooled students are at a significant disadvantage compared to their public-school counterparts because of a

lack of research and understanding. There is a tremendous amount of research regarding music in public schools, music curricula in public schools, educational benefits of music in public schools, and various other topics. However, homeschooled students are not as fortunate because the same attention has not been provided to music within the homeschooling environment, especially in Arkansas.

This study is significant within the literature regarding the homeschool music curriculum because it elaborates on a little-discussed topic. There may be many reasons for more research into music curriculum and homeschooling. For example, Fehrenbach (1995) explained that the problem of establishing a music curriculum for homeschooling related to the absence of a universal agreement on the philosophy of music. Additionally, Nichols (2006) stated that the music curricula offered by homeschool publishers warrant scrutiny because they are of erratic quality and generally not designed for the homeschool setting.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to document parental views of the homeschool music curriculum in the state of Arkansas and assess how it affects the teaching and learning of music. I desire for my research to address the following questions:

- 1.) What is the parent or guardian's philosophy of the teaching, and learning of music?
- 2.) How do the parents describe the homeschool curriculum, and what is the context of music in the homeschool curriculum?
- 3.) How is the teaching and learning of music different from the teaching and learning of other subjects?

However, while writing this dissertation, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged. During that time, it changed many aspects of society. As such, I desired for my research questions to include implications of the pandemic. I recognized that COVID-19 may have changed the education of a child in the home. Therefore, I slightly adjusted my research questions to reflect the emergence of COVID-19. I wish to focus on homeschooling families before the beginning of the pandemic, which for the purpose of this dissertation is considered January 1st, 2020. My adjusted research questions are as follows:

- 1.) What is the parent's philosophy on the teaching and learning of music in homeschooling and in what ways do they report it has changed because of COVID-19?
- 2.) How do the parents describe their homeschool curricula and how does music factor into the homeschool curriculum?
- 3.) How do homeschool parents report the difference between the teaching and learning of music and the teaching and learning of other subjects?

Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter Two will discuss, in detail, a review of the literature regarding homeschooling, music curriculum in homeschool, and additional topics related to my research questions. I will also list and briefly describe music curriculum and supplementary materials currently available to parents.

Chapter Three will explain the research design, participant selection, data collection, data analysis, and possible bias and Chapter 4 will present collected data as related to the research questions of this dissertation. Emergent themes related to the research questions and previously unanticipated themes will also be presented in this

chapter.

Chapter Five will present an analysis of collected data while Chapter Six will discuss my findings regarding the context of music in the homeschool curriculum, parental philosophy of the teaching and learning of music within a homeschooling environment, and how the teaching and learning of music differ from the teaching and learning of other, core, subjects.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter two contains four sections. Each section uses current literature to elaborate on components that complement the research questions of this dissertation. The chapter begins with a discussion regarding the philosophy of homeschooling. The reader will find out how philosophy influences curriculum choices. The reader will also discover the general homeschool curriculum's importance in implementing homeschooling philosophy. The chapter continues with a discussion regarding the teaching and learning of music. As a unique subject, the teaching and learning of music can take many forms. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the music curriculum in homeschooling and curricula that are currently available.

Philosophies of Homeschooling

Hood (1990) stated that "some people have consciously chosen, refined, and clarified the beliefs and values which guide their daily activities and constitute their philosophies of life" (p. 20). Others have only adopted beliefs as they were taught and not questioned them throughout their life. Significantly, philosophy shapes a person's life and everyday decisions. Brameld (1950) described the importance and presence of a person's philosophy:

Philosophy, then, is inseparable from living experience. However implicit, unexpressed in definite terms our philosophy may be, it is always in the background helping to shape, and being shaped by, the tangible means through which we carry on our day-to-day responsibilities. And these beliefs, usually to a

far greater extent than we realize, not only reflect our day-to-day activities but in turn mold and direct these activities. (p. 31)

There is a fundamental human need to make sense of the environment and resolve differences between theory and practice (Bowman & Frega, 2012). In universities, while studying education, preservice teachers often draft teaching philosophies. Understanding one's philosophy also means understanding one's answers should be flexible (Bowman & Frega, 2012). Bowman & Frega (2012) proposed that philosophy develops and refines belief and action within music education. Hood (1990) stated:

These underlying educational beliefs, whether clearly defined or not, guide every aspect of an educator's work, from the selection of broad goals and objectives to minute-by-minute decision concerning issues such as curriculum selection and classroom control. Many of the problems that occur between administrators and teaching, teachers and parents, or teachers and students have their ultimate basis in such philosophical differences. (p. 20)

Hood (1990) described teaching philosophy which generally falls into four camps: essentialism, progressivism, perennialism, and existentialism. Essentialism is an educational theory that time-tested methods should teach all ideas and skills fundamental to a culture (Hood, 1990). Taylor and Eisner (1993) defined essentialism as a "belief in a body of knowledge that must be transmitted to the younger generation" (p. 136). Burns (1993) surveyed 425 families, interviewed 15 families in Arizona, and discovered that essentialism emerged as a core philosophy of homeschoolers. Taylor and Eisner (1997), in a qualitative study with three families from California, also noted the core beliefs of essentialism within their teaching philosophy. Burns (1993) stated that homeschoolers who held essentialism as a core value "preserving traditional values and a democratic way of life; providing the knowledge and skills most essential for students to acquire in

order to become adequately prepared for life; and the value of hard work and obedience" (pp. 78–79). Hood (1990) stated that a general philosophy or religious belief does not guide them. However, their approach to teaching and learning and the kinds of curriculum and materials used unite essentialists.

As such, there are multiple reasons a parent might choose to homeschool their children. Burns (1993) surveyed 425 families and interviewed 15 about why they homeschooled. The most important reason was to instill proper morals and values through a curriculum that stresses the parents' beliefs. Burns (1993) stated that in the 70s, there were few published homeschool curricula compared to the current, which boasts many publishers. However, music curriculum is rarely a part of these published packages.

Swanson (1996) interviewed 39 homeschooling families in a descriptive study to determine curriculum practices and instructional methods. Swanson (1996) found that the "availability of curricula was discovered to be quite widespread and diverse programs were offered through both of the publishing houses studied" (p. 24). This widespread choice for homeschool programs did not include a music curriculum. Many of the parents used one or a combination of packaged curricula. Swanson (1996) stated that they "relied on the packaged curricula because it was easy to follow and thoroughly covered all of the necessary subject areas" (p. 95). They decided because of its: ease of use, content, and affordability. Swanson (1996) found only one parent using a homemade curriculum and two families using books provided by the school district. This use of curriculum speaks to core subjects and not necessarily music. However, there are other reasons parents choose a specific curriculum.

Teaching and Learning in Homeschooling

Qualitative research on homeschooling has yielded a wealth of information. For example, Benson (1981) wrote one of the first dissertations regarding homeschooling. In this study, the researcher detailed his family's experience as they began their home instruction programs. Benson (1981) noted advantages to homeschooling, such as flexibility and one-on-one attention. Missed opportunities regarding contact with other knowledgeable teachers were consistent with other research. The research of Griffiths (1989), Reynolds (1986), and Schemmer (1985) closely followed the research of Benson. Like Benson, these researchers also used a qualitative method but removed the chance of bias by interviewing three to five other families.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 mandated and defined parental involvement in education as "the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities." Although there are numerous definitions of parental involvement, I will use the following peer-reviewed definition for this dissertation: "Parents' interactions with schools and with their children to promote academic success" (Hill & Tyson, 2009, p. 741). Cited and referenced research involving benefits of parental involvement includes improved parent-teacher relationships, teacher morale, school climate, and improved school attendance, attitudes, and behavior. Additional benefits include children's mental health and increased parental confidence, satisfaction, and interest in their education (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Sukys et al., 2015). Of specific importance to this dissertation is the effectiveness of home-based and school-based parental involvement in facilitating

academic achievement in children of all ages, races, ethnicities, classes, cultures, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic statuses (Desimone, 1999; Epstein, 2001; Jeynes 2005, 2007; Jezierski & Wall, 2017; Kremer-Sadlik & Fatigante, 2015; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018; Hill et al., 2018; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Higgins & Katsipataki, 2015; Kellaghan, 1993; See & Gorard, 2015; Wilder, 2014).

In one of the earliest discussions of parental involvement in education, William Kilpatrick published "Parents and Education" in a 1947 edition of *The Journal of Education Sociology*. The author ascertained that no matter how good the school or teacher, there was an essential part of the home's education during every stage of a child's development. The author concluded:

In all these various ways must parents accept the full task of education, namely: (1) by educating their children in and through the home, (2) by co-operating with teachers in the education of their children, (3) consciously promote, through parent organizations, better school education, and (4) as citizens accept the responsibility for using all available means for promoting education as it may be needed both for our children and for our civilization. (p. 400)

Since the earliest parts of public education, the benefits of parental involvement in education have continued to be grounded in empirical work. Sokol (2011) ascertained that research suggested that more parental involvement in academic settings correlates with improved academic achievement. See and Gorard (2015) stated, "So the overall situation currently is that there is an established link between parental involvement and child performance at school" (p. 253). The evidence, therefore, suggested that students benefit from a partnership between schools and parents. Chen (2001) confirmed this statement and stated that children whose parents are involved are more likely to have

positive educational outcomes.

Nord, Brimhall, and West (1997) released a report for the National Center for Educational Statistics and explored parental involvement in children's schooling, specifically fathers. Of 16,910 parents of kindergartners through 12th graders, the researchers found that children are 46 percent more likely to get A's if fathers are highly involved in their school, 21 percent of their fathers are moderately involved in their school, and mothers increased likelihood of mostly A's as well. Additionally, regarding the high involvement of fathers, the researchers found that children were 55 percent more likely to enjoy school, 88 percent more likely to participate in extracurricular activities, and 45 percent less likely to repeat a grade. The researchers also found that children were 43 percent less likely to have been suspended or expelled if mothers were highly involved in their schools. Lv et al. (2019) ascertained that a mother's monitoring and involvement in their child's education is positively associated with children's academic and emotional functioning, especially their academic functioning. Nord, Brimhall, and West (1997) also showed that research controlled for measures of social capital; parental involvement in schooling profoundly impacts academic outcomes and other areas of a child's school experience. The research of Kim and Hill (2015) confirmed these conclusions with a meta-analysis of 52 empirical studies representing 390 correlations. The relationship between fathers' involvement in education and a child's achievement is upbeat and just as strong as mothers' involvement (Kim & Hill, 2015).

Pena (2000) confirmed that research indicated parental involvement in a child's education is related to increases in the school's overall quality. Sokol (2011) also

ascertained the link between parental involvement, improved academic achievement and attendance, educational aspirations, and overall well-being. Catsambis (2001) confirmed that research shows parental involvement is positively related to children's achievement level and motivation to learn. Chen (2001) also confirmed that parental involvement improved school attendance, improved levels of aspirations, reduced dropout rates, and increased graduation rates. The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education (2000) and the United States Department of Education (1994) called for schools nationwide to develop policies that encourage parental involvement in their child's education at home.

However, Sokol (2011) noted some inconsistencies in other research. Sokol (2011) stated, "these discrepancies can largely be attributed to either (a) the type of parental involvement activity being assessed, (b) the grade level of the student, (c) the ethnicity of the student and their family, and/or (d) the quality of the parent-child interaction" (p. 15). Ultimately, research showed that parents could positively affect the educational and emotional direction of the student.

Upitis et al. (2017) researched parental involvement with students taking private instrumental lessons in music education. The researchers surveyed 2583 parents regarding teacher qualities and characteristics, quality of lessons, parenting behaviors, practice monitoring, practice assistance, valuing music as a career, music itself, practice environment, and other areas. Research showed that more dedication to a child's music education came from parents of students involved in studio music instruction. This dedication to assisting their children in their musical instruction improved musical outcomes. The nature of the support involved parental monitoring of practice sessions,

reminding their child to practice, setting goals for practice sessions, and setting specific practice times. Parental involvement in later years of music education decreased.

Students whose parents helped establish habits of independent musicianship and who monitored less reported positive behavior towards enjoyment, practice, and progress. It also was noted that musical outcomes were still improved regardless of whether the parent had played a musical instrument.

Fletke (1997) stressed the importance of parental involvement in pursuing academic excellence. The researcher stated that a wholesome, traditional family life is one of the essential factors in determining a child's success in an academic environment. Healthy family life includes parents who read to their children, establish a routine, communicate with them about the school, and limit their television time (Fletke, 1997). Keith et al. (1986) found early in the push for more parental involvement that students who performed lower than their peers had more TV time and less parental involvement. In 1994, the U.S. Department of Education released a document titled "Strong Families, Strong Schools: Building Community Partnerships for Learning." This document reviewed over 30 years of research confirming that family and parental involvement is critical to a child's academic success. The document also cited research that confirmed that family involvement is more critical to student success than family income or education. The report stated, "it is true whether the family is rich or poor, whether the parents finished high school or not, or whether the child is in preschool or the upper grades" (p. 5).

In a meta-analysis of research by Higgins and Katsipataki (2015), the authors

confirmed compelling data that parental interventions in children's learning increase educational attainment. Specifically, gains are possible from effective parental involvement of up to eight months in literacy. The biggest problem, the researchers noted, is the need for more research with better design and analytical procedures.

Some of the research design issues that can be identified and improved in the future include: the use of standardized tests, larger samples, use of pre- and post-testing, the importance of reporting attrition, cluster analysis, clarity regarding the inclusion of either experimental or correlational studies, more details on analysis procedures and, in terms of meta-analyses, clearer inclusion and exclusion criteria in relation to these issues. (Higgins & Katsipataki, 2015, p. 287)

In a meta-analysis of 50 studies on parental involvement in middle school, Hill and Tyson (2009) found that parental involvement was positively associated with achievement. The researchers noted:

despite consensus about the importance of families and schools working together across developmental stages, extant theories of parental involvement in education have been based on elementary school students and elementary school contexts and do not account for the changes associated with middle school and early adolescent development. (p. 740)

The meta-analysis of Hill and Tyson (2009) was one of the first systematic examinations of data that explored whether and which parental involvement is related to achievement in middle school and early adolescent students. As other research showed, parental involvement during middle school is positively related to achievement; however, types of engagement also matter. For example, the researchers found that academic socialization, in which parents communicate their expectations for achievement and value for education, discuss learning strategies with children, and link material with students' interests and goals, is all strongly associated with academic achievement. Hill et al.

(2018) included ethnically diverse parents, youth, and teachers in their study of 20 focus groups. They confirmed that work by parents to scaffold independence around schoolwork and link education to their futures has the most profound effect on student achievement. Catsambis (2001) found that parents who closely monitored their high school-aged child's homework tended to complete more credits in science and English than their comparable classmates.

However, the involvement that entailed assisting with homework was not consistently associated with achievement. Robinson and Harris (2014) confirmed that helping their child with homework may compromise education outcomes, and excessive parental pressure or interference with students' autonomy could explain the negative relation. Catsambis (2001) also noted a negative association between parental communications regarding academic matters and frequent parent-teen communications with the school. Kremer-Sadlik and Fatigante (2015) ascertained that homework activities were a cause of tension in the home. In one of two ethnographic studies, the researchers specifically described several frustrating interactions between a parent and their children when helping with homework. This anecdotal evidence is consistent with other research. The conclusion of a negative relation associated with excessive parental pressure supports the research of Uptis et al. (2017). The research concluded that parental pressure and decreased autonomy in private instrumental lesson practice harmed achievement. It is important to note that Hill and Tyson (2009) suggested that parental engagement in homework did not necessarily undermine achievement. However, poor school performance may elicit the perception, resulting in a negative relation between

homework help and achievement.

Since the 1994 report from the U.S. Department of Education, research on the involvement of parents in their child's education has continued to support the 30 years of data that confirms the importance of parental involvement. While this research is not necessarily applicable to a homeschool environment, a parent's importance and the potential effect on their child's education are undeniable.

The Teaching and Learning of Music

Merriam-Webster (n.d.) defines teaching as one that imparts knowledge. Hildegard and Anundsen (2006) emphasized that a way to teach music is present in every musical culture. Most music teachers know they face many decisions in determining their actions in teaching and learning (Fowler, 1987). For some parents, using workbooks and textbooks resulted in pursuing individualistic, independent, and self-directed learning (Van Galen, 1996). Myers (2010) studied the music instruction of homeschooled students in a large, Midwestern metropolitan area through an online survey and found that published materials such as workbooks, audio recordings, games, and kits facilitated music instruction.

Teaching and learning through participation might be difficult within a homeschool environment as musical groups are scarce. This situation could be solved by starting a homeschool musical group or joining a musical ensemble at the local school district. As Conkling (2016) mentioned, "When we frame learning as participation, however, we are interested in embodied understanding in social context" (p. 9).

For homeschooling parents, they should understand that there are "no conclusive achievement differences between beginning instrumentalists taught privately or in classes" (Fowler, 1987, p. 29). Additionally, Fowler (1987) stated there were no differences in language, mathematics, and reading achievement between "those students who are excused from classes for music and those who are not" (p. 29). Trend (1992) emphasized that learning is an active process between a sender and receiver. As such, Trend (1992) stated that students take the presented materials and construct knowledge accordingly. This knowledge construction is also true for teachers. Within a homeschool curriculum, parental help is only sometimes needed. For example, Taylor and Eisner (1993) noted a curriculum requiring less teacher involvement. This research showed that participation in a larger group need not prevent a parent from including music in their curriculum.

Fowler (1987) stated that effective music teachers often rely upon modeling in the teaching process. Often, this is a more efficient use of class time than just verbalization (Fowler, 1987). Homeschool teachers would be better suited to modeling musical concepts rather than just verbalizing. However, homeschooling parents who are well-versed in music enough to model musical concepts might be scarce. Singing, being the universal music performance skill, Stanley, Lois, and Schleuter, as cited in Fowler (1987), found that vocal training should begin early, active listening enhances music performance, and body movement teaches rhythm.

Myers (2010) found that many homeschooled students studied music through lessons and activities with their families, and most parents who chose to teach their

children music were also musicians. Myers (2010) recommended further research into the various factors that predict homeschool music curricular choices.

Nichols (2005), in a phenomenological study, interviewed three families in the greater Phoenix metropolitan area. Nichols (2005) noted that parents have many reasons for including music in their homeschool curriculum. What parents believe about the value of music in education influences their choices regarding the curriculum (Nichols, 2005). However, these choices are often "linked to their fundamental philosophy of education" (p. 37). Two reasons are connecting with the world and tackling a complex challenge that requires effort (Nichols, 2005). Additionally, some felt a responsibility as Christian parents to offer various experiences to reveal the child's "gifts" (Nichols, 2005, p. 33).

Homeschooling can be expensive; unfortunately, music education is often considered expendable (Nichols, 2006). In a study by Nichols (2006), the researcher found that a member of one family lost their job in one case. Music lessons were among the cuts to the budget. Reasons for homeschooling included parents' philosophies and rationales, personal experiences with music learning, interests and musical skills, availability and affordability of music learning resources, and requirements of the homeschool program as regulated by an outside entity (Nichols, 2006).

The Music Educators National Conference, now known as the National Association for Music Education, supports including music study in the homeschool curriculum (Nichols, 2005). Part of their mission is to encourage the study and making of music. It is quoted in Nichol's (2005) publication "Where We Stand."

Because of the role of the arts in civilization, and because of their unique ability to communicate the ideas and emotions of the human spirit, every American

student, PreK through grade 12, should receive a balanced, comprehensive, sequential, and rigorous program of instruction in music and the other arts. This includes students in public schools, private schools, and charter schools, as well as home-schooled students. (p. 38)

Conducted in 2005 was one of the few studies regarding curricular choices in music for homeschoolers. Nichols (2005) examined three families' music education curricular choices who homeschooled in the greater Phoenix area. Two families utilized the presence of a private music instructor and, in one of the family's cases, a private trumpet instructor. However, one of the families pieced together a curriculum of its own. Stated components of the curriculum were providing a variety of experiences, listening, movement, creative play, singing songs, tonal pattern instruction, rhythm pattern instruction, and education in different tonalities and meters. Specifically, the family piecing its curriculum credited Edwin Gordon's music learning theory. Nichols (2005) stated that two families used available resources and operated within their limited understanding of music. The researcher suggested that "a practical curriculum that recognizes the unique setting of the home and involves the parent as a co-learner should be developed and offered to the homeschool community" (p. 38). Nichols (2006) studied eight families over three years in an additional study. Like previous research, Nichols (2006) found that families included music in their homeschool curriculum for various reasons. Actual music learning and associated music curriculum came from four primary sources. These sources included resources provided by the homeschool community for homeschooled students only, resources provided by a church, public school resources, and civic or community resources. Nichols (2006) stated that these categories do not necessarily represent that homeschooled schools have more or fewer choices than public

school students. Instead, they can choose from a more comprehensive range of options. All families viewed the incorporation of music into the homeschool curriculum as necessary. However, there needed to be a set curriculum or uniformity of music educational opportunities across the section of families.

Understanding Music Curricula in Homeschooling

This current research aims to provide recommendations for selecting a music education curriculum for homeschoolers. Of particular interest to this study is the reliance of parents upon recommendations. Pannone (2014) did not specifically study the curriculum selection for music education; however, their study of factors contributing to homeschool curriculum choices may be beneficial to understanding the selection of a music curriculum. Pannone (2014) described the need for more research concerning homeschool curriculum selection. Pannone (2014) found in a transcendental phenomenological inquiry of 10 home schools that factors that influenced curriculum choice included recommendations from others, religious and moral beliefs, and their children's interests and abilities. Overwhelmingly, parents spoke of their reliance upon recommendations from others as their primary source of selecting literature (Pannone, 2014). "Without a curriculum, none of my children would have learned to read," stated one study participant (Taylor & Eisner, 1993, p. 68). Taylor and Eisner (1993) also noted the purchase of a homeschooling curriculum and strict adherence.

As research showed, there are many choices for a homeschool curriculum. Introducing music is also a personal choice and is difficult because of the need for a

homeschooling music curriculum. However, the research needs more information regarding factors influencing the curriculum choice by home school educators (Pannone, 2014).

Fehrenbach (1995) described music curriculum in home schools as "an area that is somewhat vague and presumably less requisite than other disciplines of study" (p. 1). Fehrenbach (1995) addressed how the music curriculum is an issue. There needs to be a standardized or rooted curriculum in music education. The need for standardization involves educators agreeing upon a philosophy of music that can be nurtured and implemented nationally (Fehrenbach, 1995). Since curriculum requirements vary from state to state, curriculum philosophies also vary. As it is left to the parents to decide the appropriate music instruction method, a standard curriculum must be present. In a widely diffused homeschooling environment, curriculum decisions are usually acceptable for the parent proficient in music. However, other parents who could be more proficient may encounter many challenges on just where to begin.

Many parents begin curriculum selection with knowledge of two approaches to music education. According to Fehrenbach (1995), music education consists of general music instruction and performance instruction. General music instruction involves an overview of subjects such as music history and music theory, while performance instruction involves the study and practice of instruments. Of importance to the parent wishing for the most significant benefits from musical instruction, Fehrenbach (1995) stated that students who do not study an instrument or voice rarely benefit from general music instruction due to the lack of skills learned. Therefore, studying performance is

essential as it lets the student apply music abstractions into practice (Fehrenbach, 1995).

The homeschooled child can receive music instruction tailored to their interests and abilities. Fehrenbach (1995) suggested a three-part music curriculum.

Listening, composing, and performing becomes a formula of music instruction that 1) stimulates the mind by emphasizing creativity; 2) addresses problem solving techniques and social interaction needs of children; and 3) recognizes music to be an important part of the total education of the child. (p. 4)

Specific investigation and review of home instruction could improve teaching techniques concerning composition, musical procedure, learner outcomes, assessment, and teaching techniques. However, Fehrenbach (1995) suggested that additional research in the homeschool music curriculum is needed to ascertain such improvements.

Ledgerwood (2017) studied three homeschooling families of six parents and ten children in southern Wisconsin. In this study, the researcher explored motivations for homeschooling and music instruction, the kinds of educational and music activities each family evidenced, and then solicited opinions regarding music style preferences, musical experience, and the use of music in everyday life. While some critical information emerged from this study regarding music in a homeschooling environment, the curriculum was not the focus. Ledgerwood (2017) addressed a few issues dealing with curriculum. However, as stated previously, curriculum choice was not the purpose of the study.

Myers (2010) investigated what kinds of music activities and instructional methods that homeschool parents use to teach their children music. Meyers (2010) found parents used lessons and activities at home, private instruction outside the home,

cooperatives with other homeschooled students and families, and ensembles such as community groups and churches. Other activities included computer software, early-childhood music programs, online or video instruction, and public-school music classes. Most parents used lessons and activities at home followed closely by private instruction outside the home.

Myers (2010) recommended materials gathered from libraries and online resources. These range from recordings and books to different kinds of software and apps. Currently published works or complete music curricula offered by various homeschool publishing companies provide music theory or history materials.

Of course, as discussed in Chapter 1, state law in Arkansas, allows homeschooled students to participate in bands at the local public school. However, Myers (2010) noted that out of 43 respondents in a survey, only one indicated that their children participated in a public-school band program. The answers varied when Myers (2010) asked the respondents about teaching music. The most popular answer, 77%, indicated that lessons and activities at home with parents/family constituted most of the musical instruction. Other methods of instruction include private instruction outside the home, cooperatives with other homeschooled students and families, community ensembles, computer software, early-childhood music programs, and online or video instruction. Ultimately, Myers (2010) concluded that music instruction was conducted in various ways according to the region. The researcher suggested the need for further research into the various factors that may predict homeschool music curricular choices.

Currently Available Homeschool Music Materials

There are many different music homeschool curricula available to parents. The music curriculum is often available as an elective and therefore comes separate from any comprehensive homeschool curriculum a parent may wish to purchase. For example, in addition to the core subjects, a parent may wish to teach a foreign language, art, computer science, coding, and many others. At the time of writing there were 8 curricula geared toward homeschooling families. I will begin by providing a brief review of each of these curricula. Then I will discuss supplementary music materials that homeschool families have reported using. Some of these materials were discussed by participants in the study, and others were informally shared with me by homeschool families on various social media. This list is not exhaustive; rather, it is meant to offer the reader a sense of what music materials are available at the time writing. These curricula consist of a comprehensive curriculum, supplementary materials, online resources, and other resources for home music instruction.

Comprehensive Music Curricula. A comprehensive curriculum comprises available material that may provide explicit instructions, skills practices, lesson and unit assessments, games, and other materials. They are often available for lower elementary, upper elementary, middle school students and as an elective for high school students. They are meant as a complete course in music and help the parent who may want to keep information separate from across the market. The two curricula discussed by the participants of this study were *Sonlight* and ABEKA. *Music Appreciation for the Elementary Grades*, *Harmony Fine Arts*, *Rod and Staff*, *Oak Meadow*, *Spotlight on*

Music, and *Alfred* were curricula discussed across several homeschool groups on Facebook.

Sonlight from Sonlight Curriculum Ltd. is a company that provides comprehensive curricula for homeschooling. A comprehensive music curriculum program based on grade or age is available, and this curriculum package contains week-by-week lessons, instructions, activities, and supplemental materials. In addition to music appreciation courses, including music history and how to read music, Sonlight offers curricula for learning to play the piano and the recorder. Parents can purchase full-grade packages or customize them by ordering curricula for specific subjects according to grade or age level.

ABEKA is one of the largest and most popular homeschool curriculum providers and offers a comprehensive music curriculum for homeschooled students. ABEKA provides a musical curriculum and course materials for music theory, piano, voice, strings, and instrumental instruction. These progress from essential to advanced methods. As a Christian-based curriculum, they also provide materials for teaching hymns and other sacred songs. You can purchase the music curriculum by itself or as a complete package with other core subjects.

Music Appreciation for the Elementary Grades by Elisabeth Tanner and Judy Wilcox, published by Zeezok, is designed for kindergarteners through 6th-grade students. The curriculum addresses music appreciation and music theory standards from the National Association for Music Education but does not address instrumental or vocal

performance standards. The authors intend the student to complete the course in one academic year. The flexible curriculum is combined with other fine arts supplemental material, allowing the parent to teach the course over two academic years if desired.

Harmony Fine Arts, compiled by Barbara McCoy, organize music appreciation resources into a 32-week plan that includes listening, tutorials, and other supplementary information and activities. The curriculum contains plans for grades 1–12 for one week or 1 hour of instructional time per week. This curriculum mainly focuses on art appreciation. However, some material is available at the middle school level that discusses music history.

Rod and Staff programs, written from a Christian, mainly Amish, worldview and designed programs in music to promote a cappella singing. Due to the intentional absence of instruments, there is an emphasis on learning shaped notes and singing four-part music.

Oak Meadow, founded in 1975, is one of the most popular and experienced providers of homeschool curricula. They offer homeschooling and distance education from kindergarten to 12th grade, including core subjects and electives, such as music. Music and art remain essential to the curriculum, especially in the lower elementary grades. However, music is an elective course in high school.

The McGraw-Hill company provides a K–12 homeschool curriculum. *Spotlight on Music* is an available curriculum that provides foundational musical skills. According

to their website, this curriculum provides a variety of learning activities that include singing, dancing, virtual instruments, listening maps, and authentic sound recordings. Four sections consist of six units: Spotlight on Concepts, Spotlight on Music Reading, Spotlight on Performance, and Spotlight on Celebrations. Students learn about these musical elements: duration, pitch, design, tone color, expressive qualities, and cultural context. Students explore the beat, meter, rhythm, melody, texture, form, tone color, dynamics, tempo, style, and music background.

Alfred has long been a dominant figure in publishing materials for music education. They currently have practice method books for various instruments and levels, a curriculum in theory, digital interactive resources, supplemental sacred songbooks, games, and puzzles. Additionally, they offer services to help a parent piece together a package of materials to suit their individual needs as they homeschool their children.

Supplementary Materials. Supplementary materials are also available to parents. These materials offer the study of one musical aspect instead of incorporating an entire music section into their curriculum. Often, these supplementary materials focus on music theory, music history, reading music, or instruction on a musical instrument. Not necessarily meant as complete instruction in music, these materials function as supplementary material to private music instruction or a more comprehensive music curriculum. There were 15 supplementary materials frequently mentioned on social media groups. Participants of this study identified the use of some supplementary materials but did not mention names.

Basic Music Theory by Jonathan Harnum is a supplementary source that may complement other musical curricula or instruction elements. Even though teens and adults are in mind, middle school students can follow the instructions. Short chapters followed by "Study Guides" and questions that review key points in the lessons complement experimenting with an instrument or other creative ways of learning. Students should pursue an instrument while using the guide; however, there are no instructions on playing single instruments in the book. Generally, it covers elements of basic music instruction that include: the staff, notes, rests, time and beats, meter, dotted notes, triplets, clefs, accidentals, major and minor scales, key signatures, intervals, modes, triads, chord extensions, chord inversions, and chord progressions. Additionally, it approaches blues scales, double sharps and flats, and odd meters. There are also links to additional content online, such as videos that a student can use to see, hear, or read more on a specific topic.

Beethoven Who? Family Fun with Music by Marcia K. Washburn is another supplementary homeschool music tool for an introductory audience. The book relies heavily on online resources and includes four main sections. These sections are Listening to Music, Reading Music, Making Music, and Appendices. The first section, Listening to Music, emphasizes the essential elements of music. It then works chronologically through musical periods from the Baroque Era to the Twentieth Century. This approach forms a base on which the rest of the book builds. The following section, Reading Music, explains reading music and recognizing pitch, rhythm, and dynamics. The following section, Making Music, explores American folk, patriotic, work, and sacred songs.

Experience History Through Music CDs by Diana Waring offers companion books and associated CDs. These songs contained in the books include sheet music and chord charts. A resource such as this is available to supplement a current study in music history. It does not focus on music theory, reading music, or performing on a specific instrument.

There are also many supplementary resources available that homeschooling parents can utilize. For example, texts like *Great Christian Hymn Writers* by Jane Stuart Smith and Betty Carlson provide brief biographies of famous hymn writers. Resources such as these are not necessarily written for homeschooling parents; however, homeschool parents use them when other materials do not suit their needs.

Maestro Classics Music Series by Stephen Simon and Connie Ward Simon is a collection of brief music appreciation supplements with CDs and associated companion booklets. This resource explores different types of music, composers, activities, sounds of instruments, and orchestra instruments. Music reading and instrumental proficiency are different from the goal of this curriculum. Like this curriculum is *World's Greatest Composers* by Mike Venezia, this curriculum explores the orchestra and various composers. The curriculum is intended to take one full year but can be modified based on the students' needs.

The Meridee Winters Chord Crash Course by Meridee Winters is a set of instructional books that focus on chords, progressions, transpositions, and other skills related to music composition. This course also focuses on basic piano skills but does not

teach how to read music by identifying note names, time signatures, or types of notes.

This resource is supplemental material supporting a more comprehensive music curriculum.

A Young Scholar's Guide to Composers by Melissa E. Craig and Maggie S.

Hogan is a supplementary musical instruction source emphasizing a Christian worldview.

Geared towards the middle school level, the study of 26 famous composers explores significant eras of music history. These materials are available for download or on CD.

This resource involves two days of weekly instruction with a semester or two of targeted completion. This source is not designed for music theory, reading music, or instrumental or vocal performance.

Composers and Artists Studies by Erica Johns and Micah Johns uses PDF files

and the internet instead of a traditional textbook. The lessons feature information on famous composers such as Vivaldi, Bach, Beethoven, and other composers from the Classical and Romantic eras, sets on jazz composers, and conversations on Classical composers, including brief discussions in music theory. Additional studies explore the Renaissance and female artists of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. These studies contain links to videos, recordings, activities, and PDF documents. While not a complete curriculum, this resource set provides parents with several semesters of music study.

These resources emphasize music history and music appreciation more than reading music or instrumental performance.

The History of Classical Music by Rebecca Manor is a homeschool music curriculum for middle school-aged children. The curriculum contains 75 lessons with a targeted completion of a few semesters. This text comes with associated CDs and website access to learning activities. While not a complete curriculum, this resource addresses composition and listening activities but needs to approach reading music or instrumental proficiency.

Kids Guitar Zone by Andrew Keppie is an example of available online lessons. Ten free guitar lessons are geared towards more minor children but do not necessarily focus on reading music. Resources like these are available with several instruments but can generally be completed in less than a semester of study and not explore music history or music theory.

Music Appreciation: Book One by Patrick Fata, published by Memoria Press, is an example of a music curriculum presenting various aspects of music over 26 lessons, including instructional CDs and a targeted completion of a few semesters. While not a comprehensive music theory course, the author does introduce basic music theory through the text. This resource devotes more time to the structure of music, musical instruments, and musical performance rather than instrumental competency or music theory.

Read and Play Music is an online course David Dempster developed and directed toward independent study. Lessons are delivered entirely online but include printer additions and supplements. Music theory is introduced gradually through the instruction

of basic keyboard skills. These courses begin with short, more manageable pieces of music and progress to parts of larger pieces. The author desired to form a good foundation for students to learn to play other instruments later.

The Alpha Omega Academy offers online course options for music. This course mainly includes music appreciation tailored to 9–12 fine arts course credits. The course focuses on music fundamentals, instrument types, and musical group categories. This course teaches students how to read music. However, lessons on instruments, including voice, piano, woodwinds, brass, and percussion, are also available.

Music Ace Deluxe is a computer-based music resource. The resource is designed for elementary-aged children and divides the lessons into 36 areas which cover theory, pitch, rhythm, note reading, listening, and basic keyboard skills. Computer games present lessons and are designed for study over one academic year.

Classical Kids, created by Susan Hammonds, features seven individual stories about several composers from music history. Presented as historical fiction through the eyes of a fictional child, the student learns each composer's music in its historical context.

There are also many fine arts websites and other online tools, such as Classics for Kids, which has a lot of free resources for learning about classical music and composers. Additionally, Hoffman Academy, Kahn Academy, and Red Comet are online resources through which you can receive video piano lessons and lessons on other elements of music appreciation. Parents have many options regarding online lessons in wind,

percussive, string, and voice.

eAchieve Academy is another online source of curriculum geared towards the 9th–12th grade. They offer Music in Film, Beginning Guitar, AP Music Theory, Music Appreciation, and Music Technology courses. These are self-guided online programs available to students in Wisconsin, but many states are experimenting with similar programs. Sycamore Academy and The American Academy are other online sources of similar nature. The former offers middle school music as an independent study course, and the latter offers music aesthetics as a high school elective. The state of Arkansas, through the Arkansas Department of Education, offers a Virtual Academy, including a music curriculum for K–8 grades. However, the Virtual Academy in Arkansas is part of the public school system and is not necessarily meant for homeschooled students.

In addition to the covered materials, many other materials are made available to parents wishing to incorporate music into their homeschooling curriculum. Many of these resources are available online for free, as an app or game, and other materials require online purchasing. These areas of instruction may include piano lessons, ukulele lessons, recorder lessons, vocal lessons, string lessons, wind instrument lessons, percussion lessons, guitar lessons, preschool materials, music appreciation, music history, music theory, and others.

Conclusion

Chapter two covered current literature regarding the philosophies of homeschooling, the exploration and importance of homeschool curricula, the teaching

and learning of music, understanding music curricula in homeschooling, and the curricula and resources currently available for homeschoolers.

Literature based on homeschool curricula and music homeschool curricula was essential to this dissertation. The literature explained the importance of choosing a homeschool curriculum and, despite the importance of curriculum choice and implementation, the need for a comprehensive homeschool music curriculum. While an extensive list of materials was provided, the presented resources showed the extensive research necessary to find suitable materials. The information also showed that the available materials were only written for specific grade levels or addressed certain areas of music education. In chapters 4 and 5, the reader will discover the frustration and negative experiences parents associated with the research and choice of music curriculum. There still needs to be a K–12 comprehensive music curricula that lays the foundations for music education from the beginning of a student's education.

Ultimately, the literature to realize the profound absence of a comprehensive homeschooling music curriculum. The lack of a homeschooling music curriculum offered a springboard into the desired research of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

As discussed in Chapter 1, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged. During that time, it changed many aspects of society. As such, I desired my research questions to include pandemic implications. I recognized that COVID-19 may have changed a child's education at home. Therefore, I slightly adjusted my research questions to reflect the emergence of COVID-19. My adjusted research questions are as follows:

1. What is the parent's philosophy on the teaching, and learning of music in homeschooling and in what ways to they report is has changed because of COVID-19?
2. How do the parents describe their homeschool curricula, and how does music factor into the homeschool curriculum?
3. How do homeschool parents report the difference between the teaching and learning of music and the teaching and learning of other subjects?

Research Design

Matsunobu and Bresler (2020) defined qualitative research as a social construct. They elaborated on their definition by identifying it as an umbrella term which includes “case study, ethnography, phenomenology, narrative inquiry, action, and formative research.” (p. 2). Qualitative research is common in the research of homeschooling. (Arai, 2000; Chen, 1999; Chopp, 2001; Knowles, 1991, 1998; Ledgerwood, 2017; Knutson, 2007; Kunzman, 2009; Nichols, 2005; Nichols, 2006; Taylor and Eisner, 1993; Wagner, 2008). (Arai, 2000; Chen, 1999; Chopp, 2001; Knowles, 1991, 1998;

Ledgerwood, 2017; Knutson, 2007; Kunzman, 2009; Nichols, 2005; Nichols, 2006; Taylor and Eisner, 1993; Wagner, 2008).

Barrett (2020) described the frequent use of case study in music education. While there are divergent definitions, I chose the case study approach for this dissertation.

Barrett (2020) described how the flexibility of focus allowed the scope of the case to become clearer. Barrett (2020) elaborated on the benefits of case study inquiry.

Compared to some other forms of inquiry, case studies generally pose fewer barriers to reading and interpretation. Rich description, for example, allows the reader to come close to lived situation, feel their pulse and tension, and weigh how they might extend to other settings and situations. (p. 76)

Stake (1995) also saw case study researchers as interpreters and gatherers of interpretations. In this study, I fulfilled the role of both interpreter and gatherer in that I interviewed each participant and interpreted their responses based on the presented research questions. Case study researchers must report the constructed reality of the participants through knowledge gathered during the research process (Stake, 1995). The interview of three families and the gathering of their constructed reality is then interpreted and reconstructed in this dissertation.

Participant Selection

I situated this study in Arkansas because (a) Arkansas is underrepresented in the published literature regarding homeschooling, (b) each state is slightly different regarding homeschooling laws and procedures, and (c) Arkansas represents one of the least regulated states. I believed it would be of most benefit to study the approaches of different families when faced with similar legal mandates, restrictions, and regulations. Hanna (2012) studied homeschooling participants in Pennsylvania due to its ranking in

the seven most highly regulated homeschooling states in the United States.

Disqualification from the study were only participants living outside of Arkansas.

According to a 2019 assessment titled *A Rural Profile of Arkansas* distributed by the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture (U of A Division of Agriculture), census data determined Arkansas as a rural state (Miller & Knapp, 2019). Due to the population density, the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture has separated Arkansas into urban and rural areas. Further divisions of the rural area are Coastal Plains, Highlands, and Delta.

Due to this official academic classification and separation of the rural population, selecting a participant from each area as defined by the published report was essential. For this dissertation, there are four participants. These four participants represented the population areas across Arkansas. Like Nichols (2006), identifying participating families that represent the homeschool population of the area is necessary. While Nichols (2006) used eight families, Van Galen (1988) used five. In a study of Canadian families, Arai (2000) used twenty-three. As stated previously, Ledgerwood (2017) used information from three families. Like Ledgerwood (2017), I believed three participants would fall within the context of a representative sampling of families in the area. However, I intended to use four participants to represent each of the four population areas. As stated by Arai (2000), "Obviously, these sampling procedures are not rigorous enough to permit statistical generalizations about the practice of home schooling in Canada. However, that is not my purpose;..." (p. 4). My purpose in this dissertation is to provide an initial consideration regarding the teaching and learning of music in four

homeschooling environments.

After approval from the Boston University Institutional Review Board, I contacted homeschool groups within each population area. The map in Appendix C, developed by Miller and Knapp (2019), identified each area. Each homeschooling group typically represents a collection of many families and guarantee the identification and selection of participants. To help focus on specific homeschooling groups, I contacted homeschooling groups in the following cities:

- Urban - Little Rock, Hot Springs
- Rural Delta - Star City, Paragould, Helena-West Helena
- Rural Coastal Plains - El Dorado, Camden
- Rural Highlands - Harrison, Mountain Home

Pre-COVID-19, these homeschooling groups met monthly. However, since the emergence of COVID-19, these homeschooling cooperatives created groups via social media and held virtual sessions at times.

Process for Participant Recruitment

I began participant recruitment on May 6th, 2021. I asked permission from social media group administrators to post a cover letter and recruiting poster. Interested participants emailed the listed email address to express interest in participation. Potential participants offered brief information confirming eligibility. This information consisted of the participant's location and confirmation of homeschooling before the COVID-19 pandemic or January 2020. Similarly, Ledgerwood (2017) used a screening survey to determine the demographics of each family. Participants were chosen after two weeks of

the advertisement. I received permission to post in the Arkansas Homeschool Support Group, the Central Arkansas Homeschoolers group, the Home Educators of Greater Little Rock group, the Haven Homeschool Group, and the Arkansas Homeschoolers Rock group. Initially, I received a modest reply, consisting of 2 from the Urban area and one from the Rural Highland area. After 19 days, I still had not received more replies, so I reposted my advertisement on the same groups on May 25th, 2021. I also posted my recruitment poster on my personal Facebook page, and others subsequently shared it on social media. Additionally, I sent emails to the following homeschool support groups and cooperatives:

- Central Arkansas Homeschoolers
- Christian Home Educators Fellowship
- Christian Homeschool Educators of Siloam Springs
- Crossgate Homeschool Ministry
- Forest City Christian Homeschool Association
- Christian Home Educators of White County
- Garland County Home Education
- Haven Homeschool Group
- Homestyle Christian Educators
- Hot Springs Homeschoolers
- Jonesboro Area Home Educators
- Legacy Christian Homeschool
- Montgomery County Homeschool Group

- Northeast Arkansas Christian Home Educators
- Northwest Arkansas Secular Homeschoolers
- Saline County Christian Home Education Association, Inc.
- Saline County Christian Home Educators Association
- The Education Alliance

After ten days, I received three replies from the Coastal Plains area but none from the Delta region. On June 7th, 2021, I began an additional campaign to recruit a potential participant from the Delta region. I contacted homeschool group leaders in Drew County, Bradley County, and Lincoln County and asked for contacts in the following counties: Desha, Chicot, Lincoln, and Arkansas. Because these counties were closest to my area of residence, I hoped to find some common associates. I also contacted music teachers in these counties and asked for the contact information of those parents who they know who homeschool in the area. I placed nine calls over seven days and sent multiple emails. After 20 days of advertising in this region and consultation with my dissertation supervisor, I focused on participants from the other three regions. The lack of a potential participant from this area was due to two main factors. First, this region is sparsely populated. Secondly, the few participants with whom I spoke stated that their homeschool curriculum did not use music because of the lack of resources. The main reason was the need for more resources in their area and driving to a larger area was not a feasible option because the main occupation was farming.

Accordingly, I ended my recruitment period with three participants from the Coastal Plains, two participants from the Rural Highlands, and two participants from the

Urban area. I created a computer formula that would randomly sort each respondent to select participants. I then intended to choose the first name in each randomly sorted list to determine participants.

Data Collection

Stake (1995) stated that qualitative research requires sensitivity and skepticism on the part of the researcher. This type of expertise comes from paying attention to things that are considered worthy and making conclusions drawn from those choices (Stake, 1995). To answer my research questions, I employed the use of an in-depth interview, as defined by Johnson (2002) and used by Wells (2011). An in-depth interview involves the creation of an interview guide that elicits an extended account. This interview requires the interviewer to stay focused, allow silence, and ask additional questions only when necessary (Johnson, 2002).

Additionally, Stake (1995) suggested that the interviewer develop a firm plan. I used this interview guide as an example for my interviews with each participant.

Each participant provided one in-depth interview, resulting in three full interviews. Initially, I planned to conduct interviews in person; however, due to mitigation efforts surrounding COVID-19, interviews were conducted via Zoom. The Zoom platform also provided transcriptions through the transcription setting. I planned for one 60-minute interview with one parent or guardian; however, each participant wished to continue the discussion after 60 minutes, with the most extended interview lasting 80 minutes. These discussions resulted in rich data on the research questions that guide this dissertation.

While yielding a large amount of data, these interviews do not necessarily represent the region's consensus. With the increasing flexibility regarding curriculum selection and implementation, state laws that govern homeschooling vary greatly. For example, Gaither (2017) discussed the requirement in some states of obtaining curriculum approval prior to implementation, while other states, such as Arkansas, do not require approval. These findings cannot generalize to homeschooling families in other states. Additionally, because of the small sample size, these findings should not be used to generalize parents' ideas within the geographical regions or across the state.

Coding

Qualitative research necessitates adequately preparing data to address research questions (Adu, 2016). I researched several qualitative data software analysis programs to aid in coding. I decided on NVivo 12. NVivo can import data, transcribe, organize data, identify themes, and link cases across interviews.

Like Basic (2003), I initially coded data for each interview question. Through participant elaboration, additional themes from each interview question emerged. In the context of this dissertation, these emergent themes were also essential to consider in the presentation of data. Therefore, data were coded and sorted to the research questions and consistent themes throughout each interview. Afterward, I conducted a second review and identified data missed during the first review.

Finally, I separated data into emergent themes instead of the relation to each research question. Developed codebooks aided the export and organization of data. This process resulted in two codebooks that identified usage frequency on each research

question and emergent code. Information sorted by code, interviewee, and percentage of coverage of each transcribed interview created an additional document. These results aided me in determining the most referenced concepts and frequency and coverage of additional, emergent themes. Data from each interview was into a chart to better aid me in visualizing ideas obtained from each interview.

Reliability

The Zoom platform recorded all the interviews. Other researchers used member checking as a data protection protocol Stake (1995), Creswell (2008), and Ledgerwood (2017). Therefore, a recording and transcript of each interview were sent to each interviewee to verify accuracy. Each interviewee reviewed the documents and stated that no changes, corrections, or clarifications were needed. Additionally, as Ledgerwood (2017) noted, I shared my coding files with my dissertation supervisor, an experienced qualitative researcher, to ensure correctly coded data. My dissertation supervisor often reviewed my findings, and conversations were held weekly regarding the analysis of findings. Participants of the study also expressed interest in the findings. After early findings, each participant expressed interest in receiving a copy of the dissertation upon its completion.

Confidentiality

I desired to provide a safe environment where participants could speak freely and without fear of reprisal from others. As these conversations flowed naturally, the participants discussed many things which affected their decisions. Two families spoke about perceived issues with the rigor of Arkansas' curriculum guides for music.

Participants discussed specific universities, particular faculty, and staff in various departments, and the benefits and problems of the area homeschooling cooperatives. Participants also discussed political ideology, religious beliefs, and personal thoughts regarding COVID-19. Additionally, all three participants discussed problems and disagreements with various public schools throughout the state.

To maintain confidentiality, I used the four most common last names in the United States: Williams, Brown, Johnson, and Smith. I obtained these names through a cursory Google search. The used names were not essential, as the desired outcome was only to further improve confidentiality. As with the previous selections, I created a Numbers document and had the program assign random numbers between 0 and 1 to each name. I then sorted the table by the number's column in ascending numerical order. The program then assigned each participant a random pseudonym. The last name of "Smith" was randomly assigned to the Rural Delta region in which there was no participant. In a separate, encrypted document, names were entered and assigned pseudonyms. While all three families initially stated that a pseudonym was not required, they agreed with the process. Each participant felt the pseudonym assignment would allow them to speak more freely.

I explained the protection of personal information storage to each interviewee. After transcription of the interviews, I removed details that might reveal the location or identity or jeopardize confidentiality. Additionally, I removed pronouns to avoid the identification of chosen gender of each interviewee. In Chapter 4, discussion of data, I referred to each interviewee as a participant. This reference was dependent on the

individual discussing personal views or views held by the familial group.

A password-protected Zoom account stored all recordings of each interview. A password and biometric-protected MacBook and external hard drive stored all collected digital information and transcriptions. Data collection and transcriptions yielded no printed information, journal entries, or field notes. All interviews were conducted in my locked university office while alone. This procedure ensured that no other individuals heard discussions with each participant.

Due to the rural location, smaller homeschooling cooperatives, and spousal occupations of these participants, one could reasonably assume that too much information about one family could result in identification. Due to abundant caution and respect for the confidentiality of each participant, I provided a limited amount of information.

The participant assigned to the Johnson family represented the urban region. The participant has homeschooled five children since 2008, and four have graduated high school. The participant describes their approach as Charlotte Mason/Classical. The participant did not use a particular curriculum but taught composers music literature, musical composer, engaged in piano lessons, and continuously had music playing. The participant also shared that they had just started their doctorate in an undisclosed study area.

The participant assigned to the Williams family represented the highlands region. The participant lived in a rural area, and the spouse worked in a field in which they traveled frequently. The participant described three children, of which one was female,

and two were male. All three children were teenagers and ranged from middle school to high school. The participant noted that music education began in the second half of kindergarten for females and the second grade for males. The participant described the importance of a flexible and unstructured schedule. The participant also described their educational approach as a classical Christian approach.

The participant assigned to the Brown family represented the coastal plains region. The participant described their homeschooling approach as literature-based and faith-based, but not exclusively faith-based. The spouse of the participant has a degree in music. The participant noted their extensive musical background but possessed no degree. There was an undisclosed number of children in the household. However, the children in the household consisted of a male no older than ten and a younger female with a sensory processing disorder.

Bias

My story revealed my connection with the decision to homeschool my children. The homeschooling of my children connected me deeply with this situation. Additionally, as a music educator, I remain passionate about music. My bias towards homeschooling and music education is evident. However, my experiences have led me to develop this study. Stake (1995) described this type of case as "intrinsic" or a case study that "is undertaken because the case in all its particularity and ordinariness is of interest" (p. 136). Stake (1995) also stated that a "particular case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization. The case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role" (p. 137). While a bias is present, it led me to this

study.

Ethical Considerations

While no study is without risks for the participants, this study posed minimal risk. Interviews were conducted during a time determined by each interviewee and involved them in a comfortable and safe environment. This method ensured that the participants and the researcher remained safe during the pandemic. Ledgerwood (2017), Kunzman (2009), and Nichols (2006) in their qualitative studies demonstrated respect for the participants through punctuality of appointments, obtaining prior permission, sensing when the time or situation was not appropriate, communicating a desire to hear and learn from each participant, and the exhibition of a gracious and thankful spirit. I strictly adhered to all these aspects throughout participant selection, data collection, and member checks. Since I remained alone in my locked university office, this ensured the participants could speak freely without fear of being heard by another individual. Furthermore, since my purpose was not to help or instruct a parent, no comments regarding curricular decisions or educational methods were offered.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the methods used for recruiting and screening participants for this study. I discussed modifications made to participant selection due to the need for more responses, which resulted in the selection of three participants instead of the original desire for four.

Additionally, I described procedures that involved collecting, organizing, analyzing, and ensuring the protection of collected data. Finally, I discussed my

perceived bias and ethical considerations for this research. In the following chapters, I present a detailed explanation of each participant, their philosophy of teaching and learning, their views on teaching and learning of chosen music curriculum, and their ideas concerning how the teaching and learning of music differ from that of other academic subjects.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF DATA

This chapter contains collected data from three homeschooling families in Arkansas. Each family represents the region of the Coastal Plains, the Highlands, and the Delta.

As discussed in Chapter 3, each family was randomly assigned a pseudonym to achieve privacy and anonymity. As families discussed the names of specific schools and universities, the names were redacted and placed in brackets. Redacting information revealing a particular town or area identification also prevented participant identification. Because details regarding the participant's identified gender could reveal details, I removed pronouns and referred to each as a participant.

The participant assigned to the Williams family represented the highlands region. The participant lived in a rural area, and the spouse worked in a field in which they traveled frequently. The participant described three children, of which one was female, and two were male. All three children were teenagers and ranged from middle school to high school. The participant noted that music education began in the second half of kindergarten for the female and the second grade for each male. The participant described the importance of a flexible and unstructured schedule. The participant also described their educational approach as a classical Christian approach.

The participant assigned to the Brown family represented the coastal plains region. The participant described their homeschooling approach as literature-based and faith-based, but not exclusively faith-based. The spouse of the participant has a degree in

music and noted their extensive musical background but no degree. There were an undisclosed number of children. However, the mentioned children consisted of at least one male no older than ten and at least one younger female with a sensory processing disorder.

While coding data, specific themes emerged. These themes were teaching and learning, curriculum, and COVID-19. Within five of these main themes, there was a discovery of sub-themes. Love was a sub-theme for teaching and learning. Overcoming issues and resources were sub-themes of choosing the curriculum. Problems and techniques for overcoming issues were sub-themes of COVID-19, and supplementing the music curriculum was the sub-theme in the music curriculum. The sub-theme in problems and areas for improvement was suggestions.

Teaching and Learning

As stated in Chapter 2, a definition of teaching is “to impart knowledge of or skill in” and is an essential part of the homeschool curriculum. Hildegard and Anundsen (2006), as cited in Joseph (2011), stated that “every musical practice and musical culture contains a way to teach music” (p. 62). The traditional teaching methods involve discussion, demonstration, buzz groups, brainstorming, and role-plays. Music teaching and learning may apply all these methods. During interviews with the Brown, Williams, and Johnson families, there were 16 references to teaching and learning. These references revealed several aspects of teaching and learning that were unexpected themes through the line of questioning. These sub-themes included parents allowing children to determine the direction and subject of instruction and the love of the subject as an

essential component.

The question asked to the interviewee was straightforward, “How do you approach the teaching of music?” The discussion resulted in data collection related to research questions one and two, which involved philosophy, changes due to COVID-19, and the differences in teaching and learning of other subjects.

Participants from two families discussed the technique of letting their children determine the direction of instruction. Depending on the path, the teaching of music and related learning changed. This path was primarily dependent on each child's learning style and interests. The participant from the Williams family directly stated that they allowed the child to determine the direction of the instruction. As such, there were opportunities to adjust instruction based on each child's particular interest.

The early years was very much prompting but they love it [music]. So, when they love it, you don't have to prompt it the same way, you just get to celebrate it. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The prompts determining the direction of instruction from the children had various origins. All three participants discussed using music found in movies, television shows, radio, and the church as a springboard for more rich discussions about certain musical aspects. The participant from the Williams family best described these origins.

I mean, how many of us that our introduction to classical music was on Looney Tunes. Ok, Right, Tom and Jerry, you know it and I think, and our kids can point that out and go, oh, I know what that is, you know. Now they can do that because we've talked about, well, what is that piece that they're playing in the background? But it gives us a frame of reference. And I think that part of our culture is lost without a baseline of art and music. (interview, July 29, 2021)

Both participants from the Williams and Johnson family used the understanding of elements of music history and music theory as a baseline of instruction. The

participant from the Williams family stated:

Having the ability to analyze music and think through music. I mean, I think it just expands your intellectual ability. Quite a bit, I think musical kids are super smart kids, and I want that and want that for my kids. (interview, July 29, 2021)

Conversely, the participant from the Johnson family noted that the children did not necessarily determine the direction of instruction. There was a discussion on popular music, movie music, and music found in television shows; however, the music curriculum was not solely dependent on the guidance of each child's interests.

Not necessarily because, with other subjects I like them to understand the context and the background for any even studying biology. (interview, July 28, 2021)

This statement by the participant from the Johnson family revealed that while the children may have input on the material, they were limited in how far their comments would aid in the progression of instructional methods or outcomes. The family controlled the introduction to the information.

I had them read different historical background, so they could understand what was going on in the time. They learned about the background as well, what was going on, during that time and but to me, the best way was just for them to listen to it. (interview, July 28, 2021)

These interviews revealed slight differences in the teaching and learning of music. However, these discussions also revealed that listening was a significant, shared component in music teaching. All participants from all three families discussed listening as a substantial factor, especially in contrast to the teaching and learning of different subjects. The participant from the Johnson family discussed the differences between the teaching and learning of music and the teaching and learning of other subjects.

With music it's a lot of audio. Depending on their learning style some of my kids do learn better with audio, you know, [They] would want to play it on an

instrument or hold the instrument and actually hear it. (interview, July 28, 2021)

Love

While discussing the teaching and learning of music, love emerged as a sub-theme. Love was mentioned twenty-five times throughout the interviews with all participants. While the frequency of words or phrases does not solely identify essential themes, this frequency led to a more in-depth examination of the concept. For example, the participant from the Williams family discussed the idea of love towards a subject as a significant component of effective instruction and stated, “when they love it, you don't have to prompt it the same way, you just get to celebrate it. (interview, July 29, 2021).” The participant from the Williams family continued in another part of the conversation, "I would say that finding an instrument that your kids are interested in and capitalizing on that interest is a great way to get them to love music. (interview, July 29, 2021)." The Brown family echoed the concept of love towards music, an instrument, or listening when they described the love of the subject matter as necessary for music teaching.

When you're looking at other subjects as a homeschooler in general, you want to instill a love of work, you know. So overall. You want it, you want him to love it, you want him to love. At least finding answers, at least searching for answers if they don't know it and give them those tools. (interview, July 29, 2021)

As the emergent theme of love was mentioned throughout the interview process, it is apparent that the participants recognize its importance in the introduction and further study of music. All three participants also discussed love and interest as necessary in music and other subjects.

Curriculum

General Curriculum Selection

As stated in the literature review, questions regarding curriculum revolved around the question, “How should things be taught?” Egan (1978) surmised that to discuss curriculum is to discuss what should be learned, in what sequence, and by what methods.

Discussion regarding the selection of general homeschool selection was a necessary part of the discussion. These concepts directly influenced the research and selection methods of each participant. During interviews, much of the discussion revolved around curriculum selection, application, and modifications. None of the participants in this study used a comprehensive music curriculum. A complete, comprehensive curriculum addresses learning items, the sequence of learning, and the learning method.

All participants from all three families discussed different methods, reasons, and processes for choosing a curriculum. The participant from the Williams family discussed a strategy that involved the parent reflecting on their preferences and goals with their homeschooling experience. In reference to Egan (1978), this approach first prioritizes the method. This reflection to determine the method may come through a quiz that reveals your preferred homeschooling environment. Often this approach was merely a baseline but helped the participant from the Williams family move forward. The Williams participant from the family elaborated on the initial curriculum selection process.

I took the quizzes to find out what kind of home school I am, and they tell you eclectic, classical, and what is it? Not schooling, un-schooling, they have all these different labels. Right. And I really, I ended up kind of in between. But most of the time, classical. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The participant from the Johnson family employed a similar process for choosing a curriculum. However, the participant from the Johnson family began by trying to determine where they wanted their children to be at the end of the academic year. The two approaches to the selection of curriculum are common among educators. In both instances, a parent must choose what should be learned, as Egan (1978) suggested. In these circumstances, the “what” encompassed the individual aspects of music. With the participant from the Williams family, the initial research first involved the method. The participant from the Johnson family, in contrast, first considered sequence. This sequence was accomplished by starting at the end and working backward.

I just really wanted to just look at, where I wanted my kids to be. I would look towards where they were as where my kids were where I wanted them to be and that’s what helped me decide. (interview, July 28, 2021)

Additionally, the Johnson family participant already appeared to have a firm grasp of their educational philosophy and could better direct their attention to a specific curriculum aligned with their educational philosophy.

I found a couple of philosophies that aligned with my way of thinking, and that was Charlotte Mason philosophy and classical education, which really is both of them intertwined is liberal arts. Then those philosophies helped me decide on what to use and what to buy. (interview, July 28, 2021)

The participant from the Brown family also had a firm grasp of their specific educational philosophy. Like the Johnson family participant, the Brown family participant used educational philosophy to narrow their attention to the available curriculum that supported their educational philosophy.

We do Sonlight, for history and science, there’s a lot of good literature and stuff that you can bring into that with Sonlight for language arts. We also do a literature-based curriculum. I’m familiar with lots of others. But as they get

beyond the basics, when you're looking into developing good writers as opposed to diagramming sentences early on in elementary. I still tend to lean towards the literature-based curriculum. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The participant from the Williams family used this approach to help guide in a general direction. Their initial search, however, did not end at this point. Preference and other more personal beliefs guided choice. They discussed the wish to involve different, more personal ideas in their curriculum. As research showed, religious beliefs were one of the most prominent reasons given by parents regarding the choice to homeschool their children. During these interviews, religious beliefs remained an initial guide for all families. The Williams family participant supported the importance of religious beliefs as they described their search for a curriculum with a biblical worldview. Again, as Egan (1978) described, this would align with the method of curriculum implementation as opposed to what should be learned and in what sequence. These parameters helped parents as they searched through many different available curricula.

So, then I started researching, well, what curriculum qualifies as classical. And within them, Christian. So, like with a biblical worldview. But also, not very structured, like some of the boxed curriculum is very structured. (interview, July 29, 2021)

Ultimately, participants in all three families focused heavily on the delivery of information to their children. It was apparent that all three families agreed on learning specific aspects of music. Each family participant had a different approach to the learning sequence of information, but the most significant difference was the relay of information to each child.

While the Brown family participant discussed an understanding of their educational philosophy, they also used each child's learning style to guide the curriculum selection.

It just basically starts with my knowledge of my kids and how they learn. Fortunately, most of my kiddos are turning out to be really good readers and they love to read. So, a literature-based curriculum is working out really well for us. (interview, July 29, 2021)

Tailoring instruction and curriculum to the unique learning style of each child is an essential guide for curriculum selection. One of the benefits of homeschooling is creating a curriculum best suited to learning style, personality, and preference. With the participant from the Brown family, the children responded well to a literature-based curriculum. The Johnson family participant stated, "That is a nice benefit of homeschooling is that you can tailor it because every child is different in how they learn" (interview, July 28, 2021). For both participants from the Brown and Johnson families, there was a recognition of the benefits of tailoring instruction to the learning style of each child. The Brown family participant elaborated on the benefit of instruction tailored to how their child learns.

So, it's [curriculum] really just based on my kids. I know them. I know how they learn. I have a 10-year-old who will do a couple of sentences and then go run around the house and come back and sit down. So sometimes there have been years where I've had, you know, more than two in different curriculums, and it's been kind of crazy, but my kids are so different from each other. So other than going crazy sometimes I think that's a benefit of homeschooling is just being able to, not necessarily cater to, but facilitate a way, a way that my child learns the best. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The Brown family participant determined the teaching and learning style and looked for a curriculum that fell within preference, perspective, and philosophy. As noted, finding a curriculum that appeals to each child's learning style may often result in the implementation of separate deliveries of educational material. While this approach may result in a situation that the Brown family described as "kind of crazy," it became

apparent that the benefits outweighed any difficulties.

Literature-based curriculum isn't a new idea, but I guess maybe sometimes the thought process is. So, I basically have a few things that I look at. SonLight is really big for us, having done research on the writers and their perspective of education and philosophy of education, everything, I really like it in the sense that it is literature-based, but also is faith-based, which is important to us, but not exclusively. (interview, July 29, 2021)

How the curriculum aligned with their personal beliefs was particularly important to all family participants. Each participant discussed the importance of faith and religious belief in their curriculum selection. This topic aligns with the presented research within the literature review. Religious reasons were among the most significant reasons for homeschooling their children. While not all homeschoolers use religious belief as a determining factor, the Williams, Brown, and Johnson family participants represent a prevalent reason for homeschooling within the community. The participant from the Brown family clearly articulated the importance of a faith-based curriculum. Of particular interest in the Brown family participant's response is that a faith-based curriculum is essential but not necessarily an exclusive aspect of choosing and implementing the curriculum.

I really like it [Sonlight] in the sense that it is literature based, but also is faith based, which is important to us, but not exclusively. One of the reasons we home school is so that we can prepare our children for the world that they are going to enter outside of our home, not sheltering them from it, but introducing it and dealing with things and processing things on our terms rather than a boys locker room terms. Sonlight for us aids in doing so. Yes, it's faith based but it doesn't, it doesn't pretend to be exclusive. (interview, July 29, 2021)

Homeschooling parents used various methods to choose a curriculum, and parents also received information and direction from multiple sources. Looking at the Arkansas Standards for Music Education would be an excellent resource to guide parents in a

general aspect. However, only the Johnson family participant briefly referred to the Arkansas Standards for Music Education, but not positively. While the standards may guide public schools, the Arkansas Standards did not guide the Johnson family participant.

I have glanced at Arkansas standards, overall, so I know, I've looked at music, and, well, I have nothing against Arkansas standards, I just prefer to set my sights a little bit higher and I just kind of looked at it and said, okay. (interview, July 28, 2021)

It is important to note that the Arkansas Standards for Music Education were not viewed positively by any participants. As stated, the Johnson family participant only referred briefly to the standards, and mentioning Arkansas standards to other families did not pause the conversation. Each participant went directly to discussing other areas they viewed as helpful or inspirational when choosing a curriculum.

Selection and Implementation of Music Curriculum

Choosing and implementing a music curriculum was a point of difficulty. Generally, homeschooled music consisted of applied lessons and performance opportunities or history and theory. Sometimes these musical aspects were taught together. However, this was different with younger students. Comprehensive curricula for music are almost nonexistent and generally require a parent to research on their own and piece together aspects of music they wish their children to learn. The Brown family participant articulated the frustration of finding a music curriculum when they stated, "Well, I mean, there's [music curriculum] few and far between, and especially of quality" (interview, July 29, 2021). As was discussed earlier in this dissertation, through a review of current, available music resources, finding materials involved a significant time

commitment on the part of the parent. The Brown family participant stated that curricula were present, but quality curricula were lacking.

The participant from the Williams family also shared their frustration when they stated, “But as far as music curriculum, I cannot find anything that would do what I wanted to do. So, we started music lessons at second grade and for our boys” (interview, July 29, 2021). This statement is a specific example of parents realizing the need for supplemental music instruction outside the home. Another point of interest involved the availability of a curriculum that fulfilled each parent's various, specific goals.

The participant from the Williams family expressed a desire for a complete curriculum when they stated, “I just wanted some kind of a guideline to help me know how to break it down for younger kids.” (interview, July 29, 2021) References to the Arkansas standards emerged from the thought that they could provide a guideline.

Despite the frustration, parents could find different ways to deliver music instruction. The preferred focus of music education in homeschooling emphasized history and theory. The participant from the Brown family explained well the sentiments of other homeschooling families.

But up until this point, it's been kind of whatever I came up with. Lots of reading. I mean, if anything, biographies, you know, we read biographies of all the composers. We've read everybody to just expose them to Classical and different genres and talking about dynamics and emotions in music. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The participant from the Johnson family similarly discussed implementing a music curriculum emphasizing theory and history. As this participant stated, supplementary music theory, history materials, and recordings of prominent compositions

were readily available.

There would be maybe three or four composers, that we would focus on throughout the year. Normally a composer at a time, and we would find biographies about the composer, learn a little bit about the time period that the composer lived in and listen to the music. Some of the books that I had but actually give a little backstory to what was happening in the composer's life when they created the piece or compose the piece. (interview, July 28, 2021)

The Williams and Brown family participants had a musical background and considered this an advantage over other homeschooling families. Throughout the interviews, it became a common theme that most families did not have parents with a musical background. The participant from the Williams family discussed their choral experience. However, this participant also expressed that despite their knowledge, they still wished for some guidelines to break music education into manageable sections geared towards a specific age. In the case of the Williams family participant, it was evident that while the musical background did help, especially in relaying an appreciation of music, it did not necessarily prepare them for teaching others.

The participant from the Brown family also had a musical background, and one parent possessed a Bachelor of Music. Because of this, they could instruct on instruments, theory, and history. In contrast, the Johnson family participant did not have a musical background but discussed Ambleside online as a resource for musical instruction. Besides Ambleside online, this participant only referred to one online resource that supplemented music instruction. The participant from the Johnson family continued the discussion on musical education through applied teachers outside of the home.

The piano teacher gave them their own, her own curriculum, which was normally you know music theory or whatever those different books and different styles of music, but it wasn't necessarily a particular curriculum. (interview, July 28, 2021)

Supplementing music instruction outside of the home through private instructors is frequently used by all homeschooling parents. As the Brown family participant discussed, despite their musical background and formal training, private teachers were still used.

Supplementing Music Curriculum

As conversations continued about the lack of available curriculum, participants shared ways to supplement the limited available materials. These supplements went beyond applied instrumental or vocal lessons. The participant from the Williams family included instrumental and vocal lessons into their music curriculum and used opportunities in their area. These opportunities included summer camps and community music groups.

They did a couple of music camps during the summer to get them engaged and learning about music and folk dancing was tied in with that. But the group that they really loved was through [local university]. And so, it was like a department at the university. They did music lessons on instruments for kids, but then they also had a choral group and they loved that. They were kind of piecing together their music theory through that and learning diction, learning timing, and how to breathe. The one at [university] was for anybody. Public school, private school, home school, whoever they just had to want to and join. So, it was it was neat for our kids to be part of something where they had a different group of kids to hang out with. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The opportunity to utilize such groups in the immediate area was a pleasant surprise. Much like the other two families, the participant from the Brown family incorporated music education through their child's music preferences. This participant discussed, in length, the attempt to capitalize on any moment their children spoke about music. The other two families mentioned circumstances when choosing and implementing the curriculum were guided by such preferences of their children. More

specifically, the participant from the Browns described many instances where conversations during family dinners would transition into lessons about music.

But [child] likes to listen to different genres and just sit and analyze them, you know, so that brings up conversations even at the dinner table. Well, how did this make you feel? What was the music doing? Was it loud, soft? Was it in all these different things? So, kind of a home school is like you're always educating in some way or another. (interview, July 29, 2021)

Like the Williams family participant, the Johnson family participant took advantage of events in their area. While the participant from the Johnson family may have had other access or opportunities for involvement with university programs, they had other opportunities and events in their area to supplement musical instruction. These events usually consisted of local concerts.

Anytime there was something, you know, with the symphony, we would go and listen to the symphony. Every now and then there would be concerts different churches may have put on. The kids would also go to nursing homes. There were other homeschoolers that had musical talents and they would play that on a show. The local high school and middle school has a band. You know homeschoolers can now participate in after school activities. (interview, July 28, 2021)

The ability of homeschooled children to join extracurricular activities at the local school district provided the opportunity for homeschooled students to participate in instrumental and vocal groups. Many parents utilize the capability of homeschooled students to be involved in public school music programs. This ability has been made possible recently through bills passed in the state legislature. None of the families interviewed participated in these school programs. While not explicitly discussed, each family utilized, if available, other resources available in their respective areas.

Perception of Use by Other Parents

Of course, music is optional for many homeschooling parents. Music education,

in some cases, is an afterthought and only incorporated to fulfill the need for a fine arts credit for graduation. The participant from the Johnson family confirmed this mentality.

What has surprised me with just homeschooling, and talking with other homeschoolers, who, maybe even get to high school and they are like, Oh, we have to do this fine arts credit. Now they're real stressed. (interview, July 28, 2021)

Other homes have disagreements between parents regarding incorporating music into their curriculum. The participant from the Williams family articulated the dispute between the two parents.

Some people don't care about music. I'm thinking of one homeschool mom I know that really wanted her daughter to take piano lessons and wanted to do music with her kids, and her husband was like, "But why?" He is not musical at all. He does computers, math, and science and just had no personal value on music, which I cannot even comprehend. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The participant from the Johnson family similarly discussed that incorporating music into the curriculum is on an extensive continuum through their observations. The family further elaborated on the mentality and practice of other parents regarding the addition of music to their overall concept of homeschooling philosophy:

They will do a semester of understanding music probably buy a box curriculum or find something that just says this is going to be on music and that's all that their child will do, and I have other friends who every child. (interview, July 28, 2021)

Like public schools, parents who homeschool their children may choose a variety of electives. The elective courses are available through most publishers of the homeschooling curriculum. For example, ABEKA offers elective courses that may include a foreign language, art, keyboarding, and family and consumer science. Other homeschooling curriculum publishers may include other astronomy or computer coding electives.

Overcoming Issues

While discussing the curriculum selection process with participants, all three expressed difficulties. Some of these difficulties are an issue for all homeschoolers, and others seem unique to a particular area. The biggest problem faced by all families was the inability to view the curriculum before purchase, and the participant from the Johnson family articulated the situation well.

I want to read it [curriculum]. I want to see it, and I want to hold it and there are not really many places in our area that you can just pick up the curriculum and look through. Mardell's has very limited resources. For a short period of time, they had some decent things but not, that's not the case anymore. So that is a frustration. Just finding curriculum that you can compare and look at without having to purchase it. (interview, July 28, 2021)

The price of the curriculum is a contributing factor. The Williams family participant articulated, "I did look for, I did look at price, I considered price" (interview, July 29, 2021). However, the issue of the final cost was not necessarily a significant barrier for parents to overcome. The biggest cost issue explicitly dealt with participants purchasing materials and determining later if it is not a good fit for their children or their educational philosophy. In the best case, sometimes it was possible to sell the curriculum to other parents. Unfortunately, used curricula are sold at a discounted price. In the worst case, parents could not recover the curriculum cost, and this caused a financial loss. However, all participants offered ways to solve the problem of not viewing the curriculum and overcoming the risk of purchasing a curriculum that did not work. The Johnson family participant provided a practical method.

I would just go to the community, the homeschool community and talk with fellow homeschoolers and request to borrow other people's curriculum to see if I could look at it. There were some cases that that wasn't an option, and I just

bought it, hopefully used and then, if it didn't work out, then I sold it but sometimes is not the case. There was a few times I did purchase it because I really wanted to use it. (interview, July 28, 2021)

More experienced homeschooling parents tended to deal with the frustration of curriculum selection less than newer parents. The participant from the Brown family expressed this sentiment.

I kind of feel like sometimes I'm the opposite of some of the newer homeschool [parents] that I talk to where they're like, oh, my gosh, there's so much stuff. It's so overwhelming. Yeah, I tend to be like, I know what's out there, and it might not be exactly what I want. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The Brown family participant demonstrated that experience navigating the immense landscape of homeschool curricula was invaluable. Often, this becomes one of the benefits of area homeschool cooperatives. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become easier to connect with families where this information can be shared easily with less inexperienced families. The Johnson family participant discussed resources available to parents who needed help selecting curriculum and parents who encountered problems.

So, two main sources that I went through, is one is called Ambleside online and they use Charlotte Mason philosophy. When I started making decisions and figuring out what they were doing, then I would just go, I would even go to Amazon and look at review. I'm trying to think there was one list of 100 best curriculums. There's a lot of reviews, you can just look at different people's blogs. (interview, July 28, 2021)

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, social media groups have grown and are now connecting more homeschooling parents. As these groups grow and experiment with different curricula, there is the creation of many positive things. Product reviews, blogs, social media posts, and other electronic communication forms are now more accessible

for disseminating information. As the participant from the Johnson family described, even reviews of curricula on Amazon have proved useful.

COVID-19

During interviews, families discussed their philosophy of teaching and learning and how that might have changed due to COVID-19. Specifically, participants were asked, “With the onset of COVID-19, has it created difficulties for you in your approach to teaching music? How have you adapted to these difficulties?” Specifically, regarding difficulties, COVID-19 prevented the participant from the Williams family from participating in some activities but had little impact in other areas.

Truly we were the weird ones in this, because we already live out. We have not gotten together in large groups and their choirs stopped meeting, but we continued with our private lessons for piano, guitar, ukulele, banjo, and we continued doing the family type of music instruction, just like we always have. (interview, July 29, 2021)

Due to the far-reaching impact of COVID-19 in almost every aspect of our lives, the admission that the pandemic had a negligible effect on homeschooling is worth noting. The participant from the Brown family echoed the sentiments of the Williams family participant.

So, we were kind of homebodies anyway. We hadn’t gotten out, done stuff and you know, the co-op wasn’t meeting any way. So, I imagine if we were to have been a part of a co-op or whatever, that probably would have changed things. But we’ve been pretty self-contained. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The Williams family participant discussed the inability of homeschooling cooperative groups to meet as a possible issue. However, the participant from the Johnson family described the benefit of online resources for selecting curricula. Without homeschooling conventions that allowed viewing of curricula, online resources became

valuable.

Problems and Solutions for Homeschooling Families

The participant from the Brown family articulated COVID-19-related problems they viewed within other families. For their family, their problem extended from challenges faced by one of the participant's parents, who taught piano. The Johnson family participant also described problems encountered by their family and other families within their homeschooling cooperative. Initially, these problems stemmed from the unfamiliarity with online resources and methods.

This co-op, so when COVID occurred, everything went online, and a lot of those teachers were not familiar with doing any online writing. [They couldn't] support the kids on what they're supposed to be doing. They were frustrated because they weren't getting the information. (interview, July 28, 2021).

The frustration the Johnson family participant encountered was evident in the interviews with all participants. Despite the problems and frustrations of utilizing online resources, the Johnson family participant described their methods.

I mean we do still use it [library] all the time, it's [library] doors were closed. They did end up having books ready to go and pick them up at the door. You know, ordered online, order your [materials] online and pick it up at the door. (interview, July 28, 2021)

When asked if any suggestions could have helped during the pandemic, the participant from the Johnson family continued:

I think, maybe if there were some more resources online. And would have made it easier, where especially, even for music education, so if there was a source online that you could go to that would provide even videos or lectures. Something of that nature. That may not be the absolute what you really wanted to use, but it would have been nice to have as a supplement, or to help during this time. (interview, July 28, 2021)

All three participants confirmed that while there were many online resources, the COVID-19 pandemic showed how many more online resources were desired by many families.

Areas for Improvement

At the end of each interview, the participants described challenges or frustrations encountered with curriculum research, curriculum choice, or any other area they deemed necessary. For example, the participant from the Williams family described challenges related to research on curriculum.

I wish that you could look a little bit more at what you're getting. Ordering online is challenging for that reason, of course, they can't plaster pictures of their pages because dishonest people will try to not buy it and just use screenshots or whatever. I don't know, but they can only put so much. (interview, July 29, 2021)

Curriculum for music provides further problems due to the lack of curriculum and the few families who incorporate music as part of the subjects they teach. The participant from the Johnson family identified similar challenges through a lack of online resources or abilities to research.

I think, maybe if there were some more resources online. [It] would have made it easier, where especially even for music education. So, if there were you knew that there was a source online that you could go to that would provide even videos or lectures or something of that nature. That may not be the absolute what you really wanted to use, but it would have been nice to have as a supplement or to help during this time. (interview, July 28, 2021)

These participants and others have commented on the benefit of homeschooling conventions where curricula from multiple companies can be viewed on-site. This viewing aids in the curriculum selection. However, this ability is limited due to geographical location, associated travel costs, and travel time. Mitigation procedures

regarding the COVID-19 pandemic ended these conventions for some time.

As stated by the participant from the Williams family, if a parent had no formal musical background, this would be difficult. Of the curricula available, the Johnson family participant work carefully to avoid curricula that lacked rigor or included busy work.

Yes, and the biggest one, it would be busy work. Early even I would say workbooks. There are some curriculum out there and it is you're just filling in lines and taking quizzes and tests and I really, I think that takes away from the student actually learning. (interview, July 28, 2021)

The participant from the Brown family supported the mentality to avoid a curriculum that lacked rigor and contained too much-unnecessary work. The participant also elaborated on the need for more comprehensive, coherent materials for homeschooling families.

And so, I guess there's frustration with me sometimes in finding exactly what I want or choosing to put the work in and to come up with it on my own. I mean, generally, there is there is a lot out there. It would be nice if you could just buy one box, you know, a box curriculum and it works for everybody, but [it] just doesn't work that way. I just thought that would have been nice if there was something that was already established and then you could just follow it all the way through, and you could see where it was going. (interview, July 29, 2021)

In previous chapters, I collected and reviewed the music curriculum currently available to parents at the time of the writing of this dissertation. The lack of a comprehensive music curriculum was immediately evident. Unsurprisingly, the participants identified the absence of a comprehensive music curriculum as a challenge to overcome. The Williams family participant continued the discussion regarding limitations due to geographical location.

And then it's inconvenient living where we do because we don't have a good spot close to just go pick up the books and look at them. (interview, July 29, 2021)

As previously discussed by participants, the lack of access to product reviews or the limited ability to review curriculum digitally caused, in this case, the participant from the Williams family yet another obstacle to overcome.

Parental Suggestions

With identifying problems and areas for improvement, all three participants offered suggestions to parents newer to homeschooling to incorporate music into their curriculum. For example, the participant from the Williams family discussed how other methods substituted the lack of curriculum.

We fill our days with a variety of music genres. We could listen. We can play a game where we switch the station on the radio and see if we can say what's going on. What do these words mean? What type of music is this and what time period is it from? So, there's that piece of it. And that's kind of how we approach everything. It's kind of like it never stops. We're always building on our musical knowledge. And I would say that's exactly how we do everything else. Pick up a book, put it down and watch a YouTube video of or something. I mean, it's just all kind of just this big fluid thing. (interview, July 29, 2021)

Much like the participant from the Williams family, the Brown family participant also discussed how to circumvent challenges and offer advice to newer parents.

So, if I'm talking to somebody who's just starting out, or whatever, especially if they have little knowledge, you know, music just needs to be fun. It needs to be all about having fun. It can be used, introduced as coping skill. If you want something, do your research, look around the room. Go to your music department at your local school. My [spouse] works for the high school here. There are many times that [they have] gone to the high school band director and been like, hey, my [spouse] is wondering what you're doing. So, you know, you can always ask around. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The Williams family participant also discussed methods for incorporating music

into a parent's curriculum.

I would say that finding an instrument that your kids are interested in and capitalizing on that interest is a great way to get them to love music. Find a resource or group that your child could be part of to where they can learn to use. (interview, July 29, 2021)

As interviews concluded, there was discussion about making curriculum choice or music incorporation less frustrating. The participant from the Williams family began with a suggestion echoed by all participants.

I wish I could just point somebody to a great little book that they could pick up and follow along. And I know I can't write that little book because I don't have the knowledge to put it together, but man, I wish it was out there. Wish somebody would do it, right? (interview, July 29, 2021)

The Brown family participant identified the same need and suggested online resources to identify the existing curriculum.

Man, I would love to have like some database, you know, where I can go in, for instance, for types of home schooling, for different philosophies. Have things organized. If you had your Charlotte Mason approach, these are the curriculums that you would like. You should look into [these] if you want to do the literature-based approach. If you want to do a unit based, if you want to unschool, you know, all these different things, then this is the curriculum that you should pursue that goes along with this philosophy of education. I would love it if somebody would do that for music. (interview, July 29, 2021)

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented data from approximately 200 minutes of interviews with participants in three homeschooling families in Arkansas. The Brown, Williams, and Johnson family participants represented the regions of the coastal plains, highlands, and urban areas, respectively. The chapter identified four main themes and eight sub-themes.

The four main themes were *teaching and learning*, *curriculum*, *COVID-19*, and *areas for improvement*. Love was a sub-theme of teaching and learning. The central theme of curriculum yielded the most sub-themes with general curriculum selection, curriculum selection and implementation, supplementing music curriculum, perception of use by other parents, and overcoming issues. The theme of COVID-19 contained the sub-theme of problems and solutions for homeschooling families. The theme of areas for improvement contained the sub-theme of parental suggestions. Participants also discussed the Arkansas standards of music education, the benefits of homeschooling, choosing a music curriculum, and other parent's use of the curriculum.

In the following chapters, I will further explain the data related to this dissertation's research questions. I will make connections between the data and how they fit in the context of information presented in the literature review. Finally, I will address how this these data apply to current research and present recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

“Homeschooling allows you the freedom to step off the highway of learning and take a more scenic route along a dirt road.” – Tamara L. Chilver

Some time ago, while discussing homeschooling curricula with my wife, we decided to involve our children. My two older children, Alana and William, were old enough and mature enough to be led by video lessons and the lessons supplemented by parental instruction. This approach would allow the older two children to progress while my wife could spend time with our younger child, Ian. As we discussed the curriculum with Alana and William, we narrowed the search to the Bob Jones University (BJU), and Abeka curricula. Our children, as always, were inquisitive as we all discussed the teaching and learning of the material. We read about the curriculum, looked at examples, and ultimately played example lessons from each curriculum.

We were excited to give a sense of ownership to our children. As Tamar Chilver stated, "Homeschooling allows you the freedom to step off the highway of learning and take a more scenic route along a dirt road." However, as we have quickly learned, you can get dirty when you step off the highway.

After some time, our children watched the two video examples from BJU and Abeka. The following conversation sets the stage for what we are about to discuss.

Me: “Those were some pretty good examples of what you will be using, what do you think about those?”

Robyn: “Yes, which one appealed to you? What did you like best? What didn’t you like?”

As we waited for a response, I saw disinterest from my daughter. Simultaneously, I saw a gleam of mischief in my oldest son's eyes. Over time, he has relied on his humor to distract from the current situation. He has honed his humor with age, which fulfills the object of distraction and simultaneously creates frustration.

William: "I don't care. Which one is shorter?"

Alana: "Yeah, which one has the fewest tests and quizzes?"

Me: "That is not what your mother and I asked you."

Robyn: "Would you two take this seriously? What did you think?"

William: "Well, in one video the teacher asked the students questions and they responded. In the other video, the teacher just taught."

Robyn: "Yes, well, what did you think?"

William: "I don't really care what the kids have to say, I just want to hear what the teacher says."

Me: "William, you still didn't answer my question."

My wife shook her head in exasperation as I lowered mine to stifle a laugh. Of course, my youngest son, Ian, now involved in the conversation, began to laugh. At this point, I could hold back no more. After the laughter had subsided, the discussion continued. With guidance from us and arguments between them, we finally decided to use Master Books. This curriculum was initially not an option we had discussed. Master Books also had no video lessons and was completely parent-led. My wife decided to make her video lessons to accommodate this desire. Within a few hours, we abandoned everything described.

After completing four years of homeschooling, we continue to discover that homeschooling is a journey. This journey allows you the freedom to adjust constantly. Even experienced parents experience challenges with teaching and learning, curriculum selection, and the challenges associated with homeschooling are present even with the most experienced homeschooling parents. While it can be, at times, overwhelming and frustrating, we see the benefits. The families in this study expressed similar feelings and shared humorous, albeit frustrating, stories. Within these stories lie the heart of the findings.

All three participants were uniquely engaged in teaching and learning in the data presented. Some approaches complemented each other, while others may have been unique to their educational philosophy or environment. The most significant part of the data was discussions regarding the music and homeschooling curriculum in other subjects. All participants also encountered problems related to curriculum selection, availability of materials, limitations due to location, and other areas for improvement. This chapter is structured, and findings are presented according to emergent themes. Anecdotal references from my own experiences supplement these sections.

Teaching and Learning

In this section, I will summarize my findings related to teaching and learning. Additionally, I will discuss what participants identified as the love of a subject. The concept of love was mentioned many times throughout the conversations. Related were the concepts of instilling love and developing or recognizing the child's interest. However, there was only sometimes a clear distinction. In conjunction with one another,

love and interest appeared less.

Love is a complex theme as the spectrum is quite large and sometimes dependent on the individual or a particular situation. In tandem with developing and capitalizing on a child's interest, the concept of love presented itself. As such, I will not attempt to discuss love as a feeling or emotion, as it is beyond the scope of this dissertation. I will address how participants used love or interest to enhance the teaching and learning of music. I discuss these findings through the lens of collected research and my own experience with teaching and learning as a homeschooling parent.

Teaching

The subject of teaching and learning composed a large part of the collected data. Data also showed that parents focused on what and how their children learned. As discussed in the literature review, educators use several teaching methods, and participants in this study used many teacher-centered methods.

Teacher-centered methods rely on the teacher providing the required information and the students receiving that information (Murphy, Eduljee, & Croteau, 2021). Within the teacher-centered approach to instruction lie teaching methods such as lecture (Murphy, Eduljee, & Croteau, 2021). There are many methods for instructional delivery. However, several were particularly evident among the participants of the Brown, Johnson, and Williams families. These families' teacher-centered methods were lectures, directed discussion, and modeling. The American Psychological Association (APA) Dictionary of Psychology defines each of these methods. Lecture is defined as the formal, verbal presentation of information or other material by an instructor to a group of

students or other learners. Directed discussion is defined as a dialogue between two or more people about a specific topic, and modeling, or behavioral modeling, is a conscious or nonconscious imitation of another person's behavior.

Of note were the numerous instances of modeling. All three participants agreed that modeling is a practical part of music teaching. The Brown family participant was more fortunate since both parents had a solid musical background, with one parent having a degree in music. One parent in the family taught music and modeled instrumental performance regularly. However, each participant used various forms of modeling.

All participants used multiple ways to introduce music. The participant from the Williams family reminisced that "many of us remember our introduction to classical music through Looney Tunes and Tom and Jerry." (interview, July 29, 2021). The participant continued to describe how they used music found in everyday activities as opportunities for learning. Often an effective prompt was, "What is that piece that they're playing in the background?" (interview, July 29, 2021). The participant from the Johnson family also discussed using music from the radio, favorite movies, and cartoons to create a learning environment. The Brown family participant seemed to use such opportunities but relied more heavily on a structured environment. With all three participants, it became apparent that music instruction delivery relied heavily on the traditional lecture method and an open discussion.

In addition to these methods, all three families utilized some outside supplementary instruction. Supplementary material includes relevant material that is not a part of the primary curriculum. Supplementary materials may include various articles,

recordings, videos, and other items in education and the general homeschool curriculum. Supplementary material in the homeschooling music curriculum may consist of multiple approaches. For the families of this study, supplements included private lessons, public concerts, community choirs and bands, involvement with local homeschooling cooperatives, and others.

Outside experiences involved community groups with the participant from the Johnson family, while the Williams and Johnson participants involved private music instruction. Research from the literature review discussed how learning involves the whole person and is often successfully achieved through participation. The actions of these homeschooling families support this claim as they all realize the importance of participation. These individualized teaching methods continued outside of the home in all three families.

These discussions revealed that individualizing instruction allowed ease in incorporating different teaching methods. The Brown family participant surmised that despite challenges tailoring instruction was necessary. The participant stated "I think that's a benefit of homeschooling is just being able to, not necessarily care to but facilitate a way that my child learns the best." (interview, July 29, 2021). The participant from the Johnson family agreed when they stated that "a nice benefit of homeschooling is that you can tailor it, because every child is different and how they learn." (interview, July 28, 2021). This ease and use of multiple teaching methods often moved fluidly between each other.

A significant realization was that the homeschooling environment allowed the

parent to prompt interest in music efficiently, refer to the basic musical tenets given in a traditional lecture, and the ability to keep the child's interest in instruction using moving, more fluid, guided discussion. The participant from the Williams family discussed, in length, the concept of fluidity and the ability to incorporate music teaching into everyday activities.

We fill our days with a variety of music genres. We can play a game where we switch the station on the radio and see if we can say what's going on. What do these words mean? What type of music is this and what time period is it from? So there's that piece of it and that's kind of how we approach everything. So it's kind of like it never stops. We're always building on our musical knowledge. I mean, it's just all kind of this big fluid things. (interview, July 29, 2021)

Within my own experience, my wife discusses music during the day in a more traditional method of direct lecture. I also give my children piano lessons. During these lessons, I often use modeling as a method of teaching. Collectively, we use music in movies, cartoons, and on the radio to prompt musical discussion. These movies usually involve some of their favorites, such as the Harry Potter series. Cartoons such as *Spongebob Squarepants* and *Looney Toons* also provide many opportunities to discuss music in a light, informal setting. During these discussions, we can further elaborate on information included in my wife's lecture, my modeling, and my children's performance and practice of these musical elements. Upon more excellent reflection, I see the benefit of all teaching methods working together to provide almost seamless instruction at any point throughout the day. Our children's interests guide the method and allow for the possibility of constant instruction.

Allowing a child's interests to guide the method and frequency of instruction emerged during discussions. All three participants referred to cultivating the love of a

subject, listening to their child's interests, or using their child's love of a particular aspect of music or education as a catalyst for educational opportunities. For example, when asked about allowing their child to prompt the lesson's direction, the Williams family participant discussed how love aided them in the transition between subjects. "So, when they [children] love it, you don't have to prompt it the same way, then you just get to celebrate it." (interview, July 29, 2021). The sentiments of the Brown family participant were similar when they stated, "When you're looking at other subjects as a homeschooler in general, you want to instill a love of work, you know. So overall, you want [them] to love it." (interview, July 29, 2021).

Lukie et al. (2013) discussed how a child's interest and collaborative parent-child interactions could affect home literacy and numeracy activities exposure. While the aim of this study was not homeschooling, the researchers found that a child's interest and collaboration between the parent and child positively impacted literacy, numeracy, and exposure. Hidi and Renniger (2006) also found that a student's interest provided positive learning opportunities. The researchers also discussed that the "potential for interest is in the person but, the content and the environment define the direction of interest and contribute to its development" (p. 112).

The participant from the Williams family elaborated on using their child's interest and love of music when they stated, "I would say finding an instrument that your kids are interested in and capitalizing on that interest is a great way to get them to love music." (interview, July 29, 2021). One of the research questions guiding this dissertation involves how music teaching and learning differ from other subjects. The statements

from the Brown family participant regarding instilling a sense of love were not only towards music. They stated, "When you're looking at other subjects as a homeschooler in general, you want to instill a love of work, you know." (interview, July 29, 2021). The Brown family participant's desire to instill a sense of love was essential as a "homeschooler in general."

While these parents used the child's interests to develop instruction, the parental interest could have influenced the child's interests in a subject. For example, in the Brown family, one parent had a degree in music and discussed the relationship between the parent's interest to the child's interest.

I have a musical background. I don't have a music degree. So, I bring a love for it to the table and [spouse] brings love and theory and pedagogy to the table that I don't have. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The Brown, Williams, and Johnson family participants appreciated music and worked hard to find and develop music education in their homeschooling environment. It became apparent through these interviews that the children genuinely enjoyed music education, and this enjoyment was not due to force by the parents. For example, the participant from the Williams family described a time before COVID-19 when choral community groups were still meeting. They referred several times to the entire family's love for these groups and the disappointment the family expressed when COVID-19 mitigation procedures ended these community groups.

Similarly, the participant from the Johnson family discussed the entire family's love of public concerts and live music. In Arkansas, public concerts and live music are relatively limited. When discussing live concerts, the families in this study usually

referred to band and choir concerts in the local schools, concerts of community groups, and, more specifically, the Arkansas Symphony. For participants needed to be more specific regarding additional live music descriptions. For participants from the Williams and Johnson family, both the parent's love, or interest, and the children's love, or interest, in a subject appeared symbiotic. More specifically, the parent and the child influenced each other. However, it was impossible to determine which influence came first. Regardless, the teaching or delivery of the material remained the same, and student or parent interest may have influenced the direction of the lesson.

Learning

Understanding and elaborating on the psychology of learning styles is beyond this dissertation's scope. The subject of learning styles and their implementation encompasses many written materials and sets of commercial activities. From a cursory search, a conservative estimate of available materials encompassed several thousand articles and dozens of books. Over the years, there have been many models of learning styles proposed. This dissertation will not explore or elaborate on these materials, schemes, or models, but I will discuss these styles within the context of collected data. The participants from the Williams, Johnson, and Brown families often referred to learning styles. The core of each participant's teaching may have changed based on their ideas.

The Johnson family participant noted that "every child is different in how they learn." (interview, July 28, 2021). As discussed in the literature review, research by Munir, Emzire, and Rahmat (2019) concluded that student activeness in learning enables better learning outcomes. Murphy, Eduljee, and Croteau (2021) stated that on a college

campus, across all academic majors, student-centered methods were the preferred method for instruction.

One of the factors to which a teacher should be attentive, other than motivation, interests, attitudes, intelligence, talents, and several other innate attributes, is the learning style. Students in the classroom are groups that have a diversity of learning styles. (p. 234)

One of the factors that teachers need to pay attention to, other than motivation, interests, attitudes, intelligence, talents, and a number of other innate attributes, is the learning style. Students in the classroom are groups that have a diversity of learning styles. (p. 234)

Determining a child's learning style in a traditional classroom can be more difficult. The participant from the Brown family summarized it best when they stated, "I know them [my kids]. I know how they learn." (interview, July 29, 2021). Understanding the child's learning style involves knowing how to approach instructional delivery. These tenets often direct many aspects of teaching, including curriculum instruction. The Brown family participant stated with a chuckle, albeit a fatigued one when the family expressed:

So sometimes there have been years where I've had, you know, more than two different curriculums, and it's been kind of crazy, but my kids are so different from each other. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The Johnson family participant confirmed the importance of understanding their child's learning style and discussed how it was necessary to change methods with the same child and their other children. The participant further elaborated on the importance of adjusting instruction as necessary.

I would say yes, because some time, you know, with music it's a lot of audio and auditory learning. So, depending on their learning style, some of my kids do learn better with audio. The ones that did really well with music, they are the ones that

would just want to play it, and hear it, so they were able to like to hold the instrument or play the instrument. (interview, July 28, 2021)

The Johnson family participant did not have an extensive musical background but found it necessary to incorporate it into their homeschooling curriculum. Their selection of music curriculum relied heavily on online sources they had discovered through their research. The participant elaborated further on research and selection.

Okay, so for our music curriculum, we often just would follow Ambleside online since they use Charlotte Mason's philosophy for music study. (interview, July 28, 2021)

The participant from the Johnson family found Charlotte Mason's philosophy most aligned with their educational philosophy and goals. Despite the referral to Charlotte Mason as a curriculum, it is an educational method based on the concept that a child is a person. Emphasized is the education of the entire person, not just the mind. The three-pronged approach, education, atmosphere, and life, emphasizes living methods based on narratives, hoping to bring the subject to life. It has extensively influenced those who have developed and implemented different curricula. The Charlotte Mason method has a rich and extensive history and continues influencing writers and practitioners. Further discussion regarding the specifics of the philosophy and its effect on the curriculum's development and implementation is beyond this dissertation's scope.

The Johnson, Brown, and Williams family participants supported these findings regarding teaching and learning. As they discussed, understanding their child's different learning styles changed their approach to teaching, and this sometimes involved using multiple curricula, which may have applied other teaching methods.

In summary, interviews with participants from three homeschooling families

revealed that teaching and learning in a homeschooled environment differ significantly from public school instruction. A thriving homeschooling environment needs to understand a child's learning style, knowledge of different types of instruction, and the pedagogy required to match the learning style and method of instructional delivery. Learning functions in the same way regardless of a homeschooling setting. The consensus among these parents is the importance, and great benefit, of understanding their child's learning style, adapting teaching methods, and benefitting constant flexibility. To these parents, these thoughts represent the benefit and allure of teaching and learning in a homeschooling environment.

Curriculum

According to Marshall and Breault (2010), curriculum consist of developing and configuring experiences that potentially lead to learning. The driving question for curriculum developers, or content in a particular subject matter, is what the curriculum should contain, the best way to organize the contents, and the teaching approach (Egan, 1978). In summary, curriculum discussion involves what should be learned, in what sequence, and what methods. (Egan, 1978). As discussed in the literature review, there are many different homeschool curricula. These curricula include language arts, reading, mathematics, and others. Homeschooling curricula in music is limited and difficult for parents because of a lack of resources to help them navigate that field.

The research needs to include information regarding factors influencing the curriculum choice by home school educators (Pannone, 2014). One research question that guides this dissertation is, "How do the parents describe their homeschool curricula, and

how does music factor into the homeschool curriculum?" Conversations with participants from the Williams, Johnson, and Brown families yielded substantial curriculum information such as implementation, selection, or problems.

As discussed in the literature review, the discussion regarding educational curricula is quite extensive. Discussion of the curriculum has grown complicated and sometimes contentious. Even discussions regarding the homeschooling curriculum can quickly encompass vast research and opinions. Egan (1978) described needing clarification regarding whether the curriculum involves all learning experiences, if it simply refers to a plan to achieve objectives, or if it also involves evaluations. The interview guide that directed this dissertation's interviews provided a method to keep the discussion focused on curriculum as parental practice and choice. The literature review discussed, in more detail, the importance of curriculum selection by public school educators and homeschooling parents.

This section will separate the conversations regarding the curriculum into three sections. These sections include the selection of a general education homeschool curriculum, selecting a homeschool music curriculum, and supplementary materials.

Selection of General Homeschool Curricula

Each participant had a different approach to selecting a general homeschool curriculum. These approaches varied according to preference and did not necessarily relate to the geographical region, availability, or other uniquely distinguishable factors. The participant from the Williams family chose a curriculum based on preference. To help narrow the available options, the participant used online tools, which allowed a

person to discover how their educational choices fell within an existing methodology.

[I] took the quizzes to find out what kind of home school I am. And they tell you eclectic, classical, not schooling, and un-schooling. They have all these labels. Right. And I ended up kind of in between. But most of the time, classical. (interview, July 29, 2021)

With this guidance, the participant from the Williams family could eliminate a curriculum that did not fit their preference regarding religious beliefs or their worldview. They stated, "So then I started research, well, what curriculum qualifies as classical, and as Christian." (interview, July 29, 2021). Therefore, in the case of the Williams family participant, they could narrow their curriculum to lecture-based instruction. Within the lecture method, the family then found a curriculum that identified as Christian. Many different theologies and beliefs are associated with the term Christian, and a Religious-based homeschool curriculum also covers this large spectrum. For example, the participant's curriculum choice aligned with independent Baptists in both practice and beliefs.

However, homeschooling families may use different aspects from several curricula. Each curriculum may have a slightly different theological worldview. As such, these worldviews could cover a myriad of Christian denominations. Participants of this study identified all the curricula they used as Christian. Since these participants did not discuss personal theological perspectives, this brief explanation makes no assumptions about each participant's theological or personal beliefs. This explanation forms a context of the word Christian when used in the curriculum. Contained on their respective websites are the theological foundations of each curriculum.

Additionally, the participant from the Williams family narrowed the process even

further when they stated, "So, I chose things that are not very structured, like some of the box curriculum is very structured." (interview, July 29, 2021).

During the conversation, I surmised that general education curriculum selection involved a significant amount of time, narrowing the large field of available curricula. While the Williams family participant expressed some exasperation at the length of the process, with experience, the process sped up significantly.

The Brown family participant differed from the Williams family participant regarding the curriculum selection. The participant from the Brown family mentioned the importance of understanding their children, but they also discussed a preference for a particular learning style or approach to presenting the information.

It just basically starts with my knowledge of my kids and how they learn. Fortunately, most of my kiddos are turning out to be really good readers and they love to read. So a literature based curriculum is working out really well for us. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The Brown family participant further elaborated on how the research process did not focus only on educational philosophy and pedagogical preference. However, it involved research on the specific authors and greater detail about their approaches. The participant from the Brown family described how after a few years of homeschooling experience, they leaned toward specific authors and curricula associated with their philosophy.

Basically, I have a few things that I look at SonLight is really big for us, having done research on the writers and their perspective of education and philosophy of education, everything. (interview, July 29, 2021)

While an external source did not determine the preference for a literature-based curriculum, it was apparent that participants from the Brown and the Williams family

choosing a curriculum included considering what curriculum aligns with their philosophy of education and their children's learning style. The Brown family participant also mentioned that their chosen curriculum was "faith-based, which was important to us, but not exclusively." (interview, July 29, 2021).

The participant from the Johnson family chose a curriculum based on educational outcomes. They stated that they "just really wanted to just look at, where I wanted my kids to be I wanted them to be able to think on their own." (interview, July 28, 2021). The participant continued when I asked them to elaborate.

I found a couple of philosophies that aligned with my way of thinking, and that was Charlotte Mason philosophy and classical education, which really is both of them intertwined in liberal arts. (interview, July 28, 2021)

The common theme of selecting a general education curriculum among participants from all three families involved choosing a curriculum aligned with their philosophy on teaching. Multiple factors influenced this preference, and the selection influenced their child's learning preferences, educational outcomes, and personal beliefs. As discussed in the literature review, many homeschool parents do so because they wish to incorporate religious beliefs into the curriculum. However, the desire to impart beliefs was not necessarily associated with religion. The participant from the Brown family described how a faith-based worldview was essential but not exclusive.

One of the reasons we homeschool is so that we can prepare our children for the world that they are going to enter outside of our home, not sheltering them from it, but introducing it and dealing with things and processing things on our terms rather than a boys locker room terms. (interview, July 28,2021)

The central theme that links these participants' process of curriculum choice is that despite consideration of additional teaching or pedagogical preferences and the

consideration of personal religious or worldview beliefs, the child's specific learning style or interests played a crucial part.

Selection of Homeschool Music Curricula

The selection of music curriculum in the homeschooling environment followed a very similar pattern to the selection of the general education curriculum. The theme that dominated the selection of music curriculum discussed that there were no resources. The participant from the Williams family had a little musical background but still had a general idea of the musical elements needed for music education.

Ok, so I got a little music theory. My husband and I both were in choir from junior high. I was still in a choir group in college, and we are at our church. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The participant from the Brown family had the most significant advantage in selecting and incorporating a music curriculum into their homeschool environment. One of the parents had a music degree and taught music within a local school district. While the other parent did not have a music degree, they developed a great love and appreciation for music from involvement at a young age. This parent's mother was an accomplished pianist and taught piano privately for many years.

Additionally, the participant from the Johnson family relied somewhat on private music instruction. These applied teachers did not necessarily use a set, boxed curriculum but put together materials unique to each student. Anecdotally, as a college professor who taught applied lessons, I also assembled my curriculum. This curriculum consisted of exercises, etudes, and other supplementary materials from years of study. In my collegiate studio, I tailored materials to the specific student. The Johnson family

participant described that their child's applied teachers approached instruction similarly.

And then you know the piano teacher gave them their own, her own curriculum, which was normally, you know, music theory or whatever those different books or different styles of music, but it wasn't necessarily a particular curriculum. (interview, July 28, 2021)

Within the families of these three participants, you can see three separate approaches to selecting a music curriculum. The participant from the Brown family appeared to have an advantage since one parent had post-secondary musical training. However, as I will discuss later, they still had difficulties. The participant from the Williams family brought appreciation and love because of the musical background of both parents. However, they, too, experienced problems. They articulated that despite their passion and fundamental knowledge, they "wanted some kind of a guideline to help me know how to break it down for younger kids." (interview, July 29, 2021). The participant from the Johnson family relied on both music curricula within a more extensive curriculum package. They also relied on their child's applied teacher and trusted these individuals to give them materials that fit their child's level and learning style. These materials included excerpts from various methods and theory books, exercises and homework assignments written primarily for the child, and other items from multiple sources.

Much like the approach to selecting the general education curriculum, different factors influenced the selection of the music curriculum. Even parents with a musical background or formal musical training encountered unique situations. Some may perceive these aspects as giving the parents with musical training an advantage. However, the Williams and Johnson family participants disagreed and discussed their difficulties.

Supplements to Curricula

While discussing selecting a music curriculum with the participants, I noticed much exasperation regarding the lack of available music curriculum and music materials that aided the parent with music instruction. The participants expressed additional frustration as the available materials needed to break down the information more to assist parents in presenting concepts to their children. The chosen curriculum in general education comes with teacher guides, suggestions for delivering content, lesson plans, exams, quizzes, suggested projects, and other items that a parent can use to supplement the material. Even though both parents in the Williams family had a background in choral music, the participant sighed heavily, "I just wanted some kind of a guideline to help me know how to break it down for younger kids." (interview, July 29, 2021). It was apparent that even though the parents had a musical background, they needed more preparation for teaching the subject.

Parents looked to incorporate supplementary materials to aid instructional delivery and teaching methods with these difficulties. Supplementing the small amount of available curriculum or what material was pieced together by the parents looks different for each family. However, participants from all three families did utilize, in some form, private instruction outside of the home. The participant from the Williams family discussed private lessons as a part of music education.

As far as curriculum, I cannot find anything that would do what I wanted to do. So, we started music lessons at second grade for [name/gender] and then second half of kindergarten for our [name, gender]. They each play two instruments. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The participant from the Brown family also utilized private music instruction

outside of the home and stated, “All of my kids took piano lessons, and one took violin.” (interview, July 29, 2021). The participant was the exception since one of the parents had a music degree and taught music in the local school district. Despite the formal music education of the participant’s spouse, one of the children’s grandparents taught piano and would, on occasion, give piano lessons.

Except for the participant from the Brown family, the other two participants relied heavily on private music teachers to supplement the material presented in the home. However, all three participants took advantage of other available resources. For example, the participant from the Williams family, which represented the geographical region of the highlands, was able to utilize a community chorus.

And through that [private lessons] they joined a choral group for a while and they were kind of piecing together their music theory through that and also learning diction, learning timing, how to breath. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The Williams family participant was also close to a university. Their proximity to a university gave them opportunities that other homeschooling students may have yet to have had. The university resources provided them multiple options for supplementing their music education at home.

they [children] did a couple of music camps during the summer to get them engaged and learning about music. The group they really loved was through [university name] and it was call [group name]. And so, it was like a department at the university. They did lessons on instruments for kids, but then they also had a choral group and they loved that. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The participant continued the discussion by explaining how the younger and older groups were. All ages and ability levels were welcome. The group contained students from public schools, private schools, home schools, and other students who wanted to

participate. The difficulty of the music was equivalent to the literature of the local school. As an added benefit, these groups had the involvement of college professors and music majors for instruction.

The Johnson family participant, who represented the urban region, also took advantage of opportunities available to families that lived in less rural areas.

And then we would go anytime there was something, you know, with the symphony. We would go and listening to the symphony and every now and then there would be concerts different churches may have put on. (interview, July 28, 2021)

The participant from the Johnson family was also provided opportunities by a university close to their home. The participant described how the university was a valuable source for connecting homeschool families and providing other performance opportunities, such as a community band. Additionally, the Johnson family participant utilized the Arkansas statute, allowing homeschooled students to participate in music programs in the local school district. HB 1474, Act 592 of 2017, provides homeschoolers to participate in interscholastic activities at any Arkansas Activities Association member public school anywhere in the state as long as the student's resident school district and the other school district agree.

The participant from the Brown family appeared to have fewer resources in the coastal plains. The area is rural, with the largest city in 12 counties being El Dorado. The latest census data confirms a population of 44,170. Even some of the larger population areas in that geographical region, which generally consist of around 10,000 people, needed the presence of local symphonies or other community groups usually found in cities like Little Rock. The participant from the Brown family did utilize performances at

universities and with symphonies and traveling musical companies. However, these often included a drive of at least 60 minutes. Activities at some of the larger venues may require two hours. While the Brown family participant lamented the lack of these items within a reasonable distance, they had also found acceptable substitutes through involvement with local church choirs and public-school bands and choirs.

These discussions in this section revealed that research, creativity, and careful planning were necessary for these three participants to supplement the music curriculum within the home. At least to some extent, all three participants relied on private lessons outside the home. All participants took advantage of opportunities in their area. However, the geographical area limited these opportunities. The participant from the Johnson family appeared to have the most choices. Their location in an urban area provided access to more prominent universities, public schools, community groups, and others. The participant from the Williams family had similar opportunities as the Johnson family participant, but their location in the highland area took more effort with travel and associated costs. While the participant from the Williams may have had similar opportunities regarding community groups, they were more limited. Their proximity to a university was positive. However, since it was a small university, options were limited. The Brown family participant appeared to have the fewest available options in their geographical area. The coastal plains, which consist of more rural areas, had fewer opportunities within their immediate area. Options were available but involved planning and the dedication of a more considerable amount of time and cost for travel. However, because the Brown family participant benefited from a formally trained music educator,

these deficiencies seemed to be of little concern.

Issues and Solutions

All the participants in this study faced challenges, and other challenges may have been unique to that participant or their region. As shown in the literature review and throughout this dissertation, the most significant challenge faced by homeschooling parents who wished to teach music was the need for a comprehensive curriculum. The participants in this study have shown creativity in their approach to overcoming challenges posed by the need for a comprehensive curriculum. Other curricula for homeschooling, such as math or science, are comprehensive as they come with lesson plans, tests, homework assignments, teachers' manuals, student books, and other materials.

The lack of a comprehensive curriculum caused problems for the participants. This absence involved combining existing elements and creating a new curriculum. Time, therefore, became a more significant issue.

The participant from the Williams family discussed how much time was required to piece together the curriculum. Despite the frustration, the participant looked at the opportunity positively. The pieced curriculum allowed them to develop something adapted to their lifestyle.

I pieced together a curriculum that I thought would fit our lifestyle. My [spouse], a corporate pilot, which means we never know when [spouse] is going to have a trip or for how long. So, when [spouse] is home, we play and when [spouse] is on a trip, we work hard. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The participant from the Brown family also expressed significant frustration at the lack of materials that addressed the parents' pedagogical needs. The participants in this

study all discussed the lack of curriculum providing quality pacing guides and the necessary information to present to their children.

I think, if it was possible, to have something that's lined out, even within a year period. I would have been nice if there was something that was already established and then you could just follow it all the way through, and you could see where it was going. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The participant from the Williams echoed the problems which face the participant from the Brown family. As the conversation regarding difficulties continued, the discussion shifted to vetting the available curriculum.

I wish that you could look a little bit more at what you're getting. Ordering online is challenging for that reason, of course, they can't just plaster pictures of their pages because dishonest people will try to not buy it and just use screenshots. (interview, July 29, 2021)

Ordering online did not seem to be an issue for the participant from the Brown or Johnson families. The most significant difficulty in vetting the curriculum was related to geographical location. The Williams family participant, representing a more rural area of the highlands, stated a problem with their location.

It's inconvenient living where we do because we don't have a good spot close to just go pick up the books at look at them. (interview, July 29, 2021)

COVID-19

The Brown and Johnson family participants discussed the ability to go to homeschooling conventions before COVID-19 as a solution. However, with the onset of mitigation protocols such as limiting the number of people in a room, families were forced to discover alternate selection methods. A solution to these limitations required the use of an online curriculum. However, the participant from the Williams family already discussed the problems with choosing a curriculum online when you could only look at a

small portion. The participant from the Brown family agreed with the sentiments and expressed similar wishes when they described a lack of "free online, I guess it's called open education resources. Free education resources for everybody." (interview, July 29, 2021). These gatherings of the homeschool community provided an opportunity for the parents to view the curriculum in its entirety, and the COVID-19 pandemic effectively removed that ability. The participant from the Johnson family elaborated on the benefit of these gatherings.

I would just go to the community, the homeschool community, and talk with fellow homeschoolers and request to borrow other people's curriculum to see if I could look at it and there were some cases that that wasn't an option, and I just bought it. (interview, July 28, 2021)

Before COVID-19, my family attended meetings or activities with other families from local homeschool cooperatives. These meetings often provided an opportunity where it was feasible to recover at least some of our investment. After the COVID-19 mitigation protocols, which limited large gatherings, and caused the postponement of these opportunities, homeschooling groups on social media became more active than before the pandemic. However, the opportunities provided by social media were not as lucrative to recover costs or trade materials. We were left with a curriculum we did not want to use during this time. Many families have limited financial resources. As such, they cannot afford to buy multiple curricula, hoping to recover the costs of curricula that do not meet their needs.

Unfortunately, as the Johnson family participant stated, if the ability to view a potential curriculum was unavailable, they just bought it. However, this only sometimes worked to their benefit. The participant often wished for the best.

Hopefully [the curriculum] was used, and then, if it didn't work, then I sold it, but that sometimes isn't the case. There was a few times I did purchase it because I really wanted to use it. But then, after receiving it and looking at it, I decided that it was not going to work. (interview, July 28, 2021)

In the few years my wife and I have homeschooled our children, I can confirm that we have decided to purchase the curriculum without viewing. A curriculum we determined would only work for our children sometimes remained. We felt inadequate about what we wanted to impart to our children but were stuck on which curriculum would best present these priorities. Unfortunately, as with the other families, we were limited by the available information on the current curriculum. Blog posts and product reviews became our source of vetting the material. However, most of the time, these contained bad reviews, or the source seemed unreliable. For example, if one shops for an item on Amazon, one might look for a product with many positive reviews. These reviews are much more helpful when you see a product with 1,000 reviews instead of four.

Various blog posts had the potential to be helpful; however, they fell within the context of a general product review. Often, self-proclaimed curriculum experts wrote blog posts. Upon further investigation, these experts often needed more experience in education, insufficient educational credentials, and experience writing or implementing different curricula in any educational setting.

Personally, my wife and I have struggled. For example, there were product reviews when researching Bob Jones University's history and science curriculum on its website. However, they still needed to answer our specific questions about the curriculum. Sometimes the product reviews were for older curriculum editions, and this

situation confused us when trying to compare them with the newer editions.

Compounding the issue were the unique curricula written for video lessons and parent-led classes. These curricula were different, and it became impossible to determine to which the reviews were referring.

Furthermore, some issues arose that we should have anticipated. Our oldest children are only ten months and 12 days apart. They are not twins but are in the same grade. Educationally, they have always been in the same grade, so we must think about the curriculum as if we have twins. This situation for homeschoolers was not as common as one might think. We were often left to navigate the problem without any aid. We were made aware of this situation because of the need for more information regarding purchasing multiple curricula for the same grade. All companies require you to call as no information is available on their website. After further research, we discovered that each company is different regarding copyright. One company may allow you to have both children watch the same video but require a surcharge. Another company may require you to purchase two complete sets of videos, one for each child. This research adds to the time and cost needed to choose and implement a curriculum, as one can imagine.

At all levels of education, COVID-19 has created challenges and forced educators to discover creative solutions. As these families discussed, COVID-19 eliminated the ability of homeschool cooperatives to meet. They also stopped community groups, public activities, concerts, and other gatherings or opportunities to supplement the music curriculum.

The rural location of the Williams and Brown families participants had some disadvantages. However, regarding challenges created by the pandemic for homeschooling families, their location created the circumstances that led to the instruction being influenced very little by COVID-19 mitigation.

We live in a rural area and have been supplementing instruction in various ways since we began homeschooling. COVID-19 did not affect our teaching as we were already limited in opportunities associated with the larger, more urban area. The pandemic also allowed me to work from home for almost seven months. For our family, education continued uninterrupted while allowing me to be more involved because of my ability to teach from home.

As stated, the effort required to develop a curriculum covering all music education aspects was substantial. The participant from the Brown family continued the discussion on what was lacking.

It would be nice if you could just buy one box, you know box curriculum and it works for everybody, but it just doesn't work that way. (interview, July 29, 2021)

Additionally, the small amount of music curriculum available may not fulfill the needs of the parents regarding rigor. For example, the Williams family participant stated

I needed something that I could do at their level as children, but that wasn't babyish. And there just isn't anything that's in that middle ground that I could find. (interview, July 29, 2021)

In the literature review, I described the homeschooling music resources available. Resources regarding music theory, music history, or music appreciation were generally associated with high school students. Written for lower elementary students were

resources with more basic musical concepts. The participant from the Williams family lamented this situation.

It's [music curriculum] is either below their level or above their level. I could not find anything in the middle ground. And if I did, it was for a classroom, not for a family, and it assumed that the person teaching it had this wealth of musical knowledge or could sit down and play whatever. Every homeschooling parent can't do that. So, it [music curriculum] needs to be something that can be taught without having had all that. You need to be able to learn it along with your kids if that's where you are. (interview, July 29, 2021)

The idea that the curriculum was available for middle or intermediate skills is fascinating. However, this curriculum targeted trained public school music teachers, and these methods did not transfer to the homeschooling environment. Additionally, the Williams family participant discussed another point of interest. Much of the available curriculum is for teachers with prior training in music education, and the curriculum needs to discuss how to teach the concepts. This approach was especially problematic for the parent without formal musical knowledge or training in music education pedagogy. The participant chuckled as we discussed these frustrations about the absence of a curriculum that helped the parent with music education pedagogy. The conversation briefly shifted to a small amount of humor when a cultural book came to mind.

Almost if they had a classical music for dummies. But they broke it down for the younger kids and included more theory. So, I really feel like having that music available to play along with it. And I cannot find anything like that. (interview, July 29, 2021)

While the discussion was humorous, the frustration regarding the lack of direction for teaching music at home did not dissipate. Additionally, the debate regarding the required effort of parents to piece together a curriculum only added to the shared frustrations. The participant from the Brown family articulated this sentiment.

I guess there's frustration with me sometimes in finding exactly what I want or choosing to put the work in and to come up with it on my own. (interview, July 29, 2021)

In this section, participants from the Williams, Johnson, and Brown families each described issues related to various aspects of homeschooling. Some of these issues were due to geographic location. Families in rural areas had fewer options for supplementary activities but found creative ways to replace counterparts in more populated areas. The pandemic disrupted opportunities for family activities in urban areas. Additionally, there was a lack of a rigorous curriculum for specific ages. The available curriculum could have helped the parents plan and deliver instruction. They felt it was written more for the formally trained music teacher or someone who entered the curriculum as an experienced musician. The most significant issue shared by all families, including my own, is dealing with the curriculum. A comprehensive music curriculum is necessary for families as some families must spend significant time constructing their curriculum. This time commitment could be a burden when balancing it with curriculum selection in other areas. In summary, solutions to the issues became an important topic of discussion and showed parental creativity and resiliency.

Suggestions and Areas for Improvement

As the interviews reached their end, I asked the participants what would have helped them on their journey to select a curriculum and what might help them as they go forward. The most significant need expressed throughout the interview was a comprehensive music curriculum. The lack of a comprehensive music curriculum required an enormous amount of time on the part of the parents. This extensive process

extended to the selection of the general curriculum. Both required many hours of research on what is available, what meets the family's needs, what fulfills their philosophy of education, and other areas. This process also meant that a monetary investment was required, which was, at times, a gamble. The gamble often paid off, but at other times, recovery of the monetary investment was not possible. There was discussion regarding their suggestions for decreasing the time spent searching and lessening the financial gamble sometimes needed. The participant from the Brown family had the most poignant recommendation regarding these areas.

I would love to have some database, you know, where I can go in, for instance, for types of homeschooling, for different philosophies, that will have things organized and well, if you had your Charlotte Mason approach. These are the curriculums that you would like, you should look into if you want to do the literature-based approach. These are the curriculums if you want to do a unit based, if you want to unschool, you know, all these different things. Then this is the curriculum that you should pursue that goes along with this philosophy of education. I would love it if somebody would do that for music. (interview, July 29, 2021)

I discussed in the literature review current music resources and attempted to give a general description of each. Each description needed to be more extensive and could have been more specific about what each resource met, learning style, or educational philosophies. There are many blog posts and individual opinions across the internet, but it requires individual research as most reviews are not all-inclusive. The Brown family participant continued with how they found success.

Do your research. Go to your music department at your local school. My [spouse] works for the high school here. There is many times that he has gone to the local band director and been like, "Hey, my [spouse] is wondering what you're doing." So, you know, you can always ask around. (interview, July 29, 2021)

At the end of the interview with the participant from the Brown family, it became apparent that we could discuss this topic at length. While our discussion was rich with information, the conversation ended with a simple wish. "So probably, I mean, if I could ask for anything, it would be some sort of organized reference to what's out there." (interview, July 29, 2021).

The participant from the Brown family discussed feeling overwhelmed as they just began their journey into homeschooling. They stated that when talking to newer homeschooling moms, "they're like, oh my gosh, there's so much stuff out there. It's so overwhelming." (interview, July 29, 2021). The participant continued to discuss how they are much more comfortable with what is available now. Therefore, with experience, they know what they want. The most practical advice was, "I would say don't stress." (interview, July 29, 2021).

Having the educational philosophy of teaching your children and to love learning. And so if I'm talking to somebody who's just starting out, especially if they have, you know, little experience, music needs to be fun. It needs to be all about having fun. (interview, July 29, 2021)

I can attest to being overwhelmed at the beginning of the homeschooling journey. Even taking the journey with my wife and my experience as an educator makes it easy to become overwhelmed with the amount of material available. The participant from the Johnson family discussed things they learned to look for which did not work for them. Parents are beginning to understand what will work but do not think about looking for things in the curriculum that they do not want or know will not work with their children. The Johnson family participants explained what they look for in the curriculum, which is relatively prevalent and intentionally avoided.

Yes, and the biggest one, it would be busy work and I would say workbooks. When you're taking music lessons you know, especially for piano there's all these different workbooks that they would do, and that are very simple, and small easy chunks. But there are some curriculum out there and it is you're just filling in lines and taking quizzes and tests and I really think that takes away from the student actually learning. (interview, July 28, 2021)

While some parents may see workbooks as beneficial and may look for specific curriculum that contains these elements, the participant from the Johnson family discussed taking the time to research the curriculum and discover if it contains things that do not work. Sometimes, these elements can be eliminated or changed.

A [music] book came with the CD and it came with a workbook and you had to read and then answer all these question. And then listen and answer all these questions. Well, we didn't use any of that we just read openly and discussed and then they listened. We would kind of talk about it but anything that added extra to me what I thought of this busy work, I would just throw away. (interview, July 28, 2021)

The participants think this advice helped them and helped other parents newer to homeschooling. A poignant comment made in passing caught my attention. The participant from the Johnson family stated that "it helps not to throw in your bias." (interview, July 28, 2021). It takes a conscious effort to limit your bias. The participant briefly elaborated in a manner that resonated with me.

There's some genres or some composers that I personally don't care for. I don't say anything and then let them listen and come up with their own judgements. (interview, July 28, 2021)

As discussed in the literature review, personal familial, religious, or cultural beliefs influence reasons for homeschooling. This flexibility is a strength of homeschooling. However, homeschooling also provides a controlled opportunity for the latter. Although the participant from the Johnson family approached many topics from a

religious worldview, it was also important to them to allow their children to come up with their judgments. In either situation, homeschooling provided opportunities that may not be available in other settings.

The most concise summary of this section involves a recurring theme throughout this dissertation. Interviews with these participants, in tandem with an extensive literature review, show the need for a comprehensive music curriculum for homeschooling.

According to these participants, this comprehensive music curriculum would include age-appropriate goals and high quality. A curriculum written for families with no musical knowledge is needed. The need for detailed instructions regarding presenting the information and supplementary materials, such as recordings and other activities, is quite prominent. While these families have shown resilience and creativity in developing a curriculum that suits their goals, the difficulty many parents encounter when selecting a music curriculum may be a deterrent. Music is a priority within my own family, and the effort to put together a music curriculum is worth our time and energy. These discussions and associated concepts have many implications for homeschooling families and music education, and I will address both in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Data Presentation and Analysis

Three research questions guided this dissertation.

1. What is the parent's philosophy on the teaching, and learning of music in homeschooling and in what ways to they report is has changed because of COVID-19?
2. How do the parents describe their homeschool curricula, and how does music factor into the homeschool curriculum?
3. How do homeschool parents report the difference between the teaching and learning of music and the teaching and learning of other subjects?

The literature review explored the homeschool curriculum and compiled information about the homeschooling movement. The literature review discussed parental involvement, music teaching and learning, music philosophy, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

This study interviewed three participants that represented three families in Arkansas. The participants yielded a wealth of information about teaching and learning, general homeschool curriculum, music homeschool curriculum, issues each family encountered, solutions used, and suggestions for future needs and parents newer to homeschooling.

The participants discussed different methods regarding the delivery of instruction. The traditional lecture method was the most popular form of instructional delivery for all

subjects. Specific to this dissertation, all participants discussed the importance of incorporating music into their curriculum. Music education typically follows the same type of instructional delivery. All participants utilized additional methods such as guided lectures, discussions, projects, videos, and recordings. Participants in the rural areas of these states relied more heavily on the latter for instruction.

Learning looked different in each family. Participants discussed the importance of understanding their child's unique learning style. The participants identified the ability to tailor instruction to each child's learning style as a strength of homeschooling. This strength allowed the families to employ various instructional delivery types specific to curricula.

All participants identified different methods for curriculum selection. Parents used online resources, conversations with other parents, and the ability to view in-person curriculum at homeschooling conventions. Regarding the music curriculum, the families of this study needed help in the selection and implementation. Often, a suitable curriculum eluded the families. Families often relied on supplementary materials and support from private instructors, community groups, videos, and other online resources. Careful planning far in advance was necessary. Even so, the family's curriculum selections were often only used in part because the intention that some curricula required the instructor to have previous musical training. While the creativity of these families was inspirational, this did not negate their frustration. Reliance on supplementary material remained necessary. The selection of a music curriculum in homeschooling created many difficulties, but all families articulated viable solutions.

Because the sample size for this study only consisted of three families, generalization to the larger population of homeschooling families in Arkansas is not possible. However, focusing on three families from three distinct regions of the state allowed for more in-depth interviews. Each interview was more than 60 minutes. This chapter represents my desire to look forward at possible implications and what the data means for the parent, educators, and other stakeholders in music education.

Implications for the Homeschool Educator

In this study, the families discussed the benefit of tailoring instruction for the individual child. While research from the literature review discusses this in more detail, all the families discuss the importance and preference of both the child and the parent in understanding and implementing curriculum based on the child's specific learning style. Personal anecdotes also support these claims, and this specificity allowed a more positive experience for the child's education.

Lessons Applicable to Teaching in Homeschooling

For these homeschooling participants, understanding how your child learns best takes targeted effort, and the knowledge that each child potentially learns differently is paramount. The intersection between identifying the child's learning style and applying a curriculum that supports these styles takes research and, often, trial and error. For example, it was quickly apparent to my wife and me that our two oldest children best learned spelling in vastly different ways. Even with my experience and education in teaching, finding a curriculum that best worked for William's learning style took researching many different curricula. It also took the failure of two curricula before we

saw success. The initial implication is that experienced and formally trained educators can choose a curriculum easily. The assumption that even the most experienced educator is familiar with all curricula and methods must be corrected.

The Brown family's issues intersect with my own. Both families included experienced, formally trained educators, and both families noted the difficulty that mirrored those of families without formal instruction in education. Personal anecdotes and data from the families in this study show that finding your child's learning style, research, curriculum implementation, and trial and error should be the expectations of all parents planning to homeschool their children.

The pandemic sparked a quick changeover to homeschooling for many families. This shift was birthed from necessity and, in some cases, desperation. According to these participants, the most significant implication is the appropriation of adequate time for the research and selection of homeschool curricula. Additionally, all families should prepare themselves for the frustration and disappointment of failure. The experienced homeschooling parent understands that this process repeats yearly for every child. Initially, my wife and I thought the previous curriculum used for our two oldest children would work with our youngest child. We were both excited about the time savings regarding preparation and implementation. However, we quickly realized our child's learning style better fit a different curriculum. Early in our homeschooling journey, this was a great disappointment. With experience, we understand that the curriculum for every subject and each child's learning style requires individualized research and preparation.

The child's involvement in choosing a specific curriculum or instructional delivery was also a benefit of homeschooling. Each family discussed the benefits of allowing the child's curriculum choice and lesson direction.

The families in this study articulated how they often let their children participate in selecting music to which to listen. Each child's music preferences may differ, but using music chosen by the child has important implications. Much like my personal experience, educators could provide a set of choices for students in their respective classes. In some cases, the complete autonomy of the student could be more prudent. However, the educator's presented options could support the teacher has prepared lessons. Even guided selections would boost student morale and give the student a feeling of ownership.

Lessons Applicable to Learning in Homeschooling

Regarding curriculum selection and instructional delivery, parents in this study discussed opportunities given to their children. My narrative that opened Chapter 5 also showed the process of providing ownership. While we allowed our children to be involved, the response "which curriculum has fewer tests and quizzes" was not a suitable answer. Ultimately, we chose a different curriculum that supported our knowledge of each child's learning style. My wife decided to make her videos since our two older children have reached the age where autonomy is viable. Creating her videos is a significant investment of time, but the benefits are substantial.

Sometimes, due to time constraints, creating individualized videos is not feasible in education. As discussed previously, COVID-19 showed that budgeted time is necessary for success, and it is also essential to reduce frustration and disappointment for

both the parent and child. The ability to create individualized instruction is another lesson gleaned from the practices of homeschooling families. Unfortunately, the required time commitment inhibits many families.

Additionally, the economic structure of purchasing a homeschooling curriculum eliminates the desire of many families. Trial and error may limit even experienced homeschooling families. Several families in this study looked at cost, but not exclusively. Cost is a necessary implication for education as it shows individualized instruction, quality curriculum, and the significant devotion of time by the teacher is limited to middle and upper-class families. The perceived socioeconomic disparity is a concern. Addressing quality education related to specific demographics is a complicated and nuanced subject. As quality education should not be limited to a particular class or demographic, this topic is far beyond the implications of this dissertation. However, future research should explore this further.

Another strength of homeschooling is the ability to incorporate a more flexible schedule. The flexible schedule is often associated with the ease of scheduling vacations or other days off. All families discussed education and instructional delivery flexibility. We employ a daily schedule to keep our children focused. At times, abandonment of this schedule serves as a positive ability. The children discussed in this study and our own often become frustrated at an educational task. Other times they are completely disinterested. The flexibility of instructional delivery allows parents to shift focus to another job or subject. This flexibility enables each child to remain engaged throughout the instructional day.

Employing unimpeded flexibility with instruction and schedule is impossible in public schools. Class size requires instructional time, supervision, meal logistics, and many other factors that require rigorous and meticulous schedules. When homeschooling, a parent is free to develop and implement an agenda. Some parents retain a structured schedule, while others implement strategies more suited to their lifestyle or child. However, the families in this dissertation discussed flexibility, even if they usually functioned with a stricter schedule. For example, my wife and I give our children the option to work later in the evenings with the incentive not to have school on Friday. This approach gives our children ownership of the pace and teaches them the importance of time management. The families in this study discussed ongoing educational opportunities. A car ride could provide an educational opportunity regarding music education. Families used the radio to discuss rhythm, harmony, melody, and other musical concepts.

An important implication is the needed awareness of autonomy and the ability to shift tasks, outcomes, or subjects. For example, my younger children often become restless during instruction. At that point, my wife can decide to take a break. Outside activity, like recess, helps alleviate restlessness, and instruction can resume.

Regarding general education, the immediate implications of this study answer two of the three research questions which guide this dissertation. The first question explored the parent or guardian's philosophy of teaching and learning and how it has changed because of COVID-19. Parents discussed, in length, the importance of the discovery and implementation of learning style into curriculum selection. Additionally, parents

discussed the benefits of involving the child in the selection and implementation process. For them, their involvement created ownership and maintained engagement.

Implications for the Music Educator

This dissertation explores only a snapshot of homeschooling music education in Arkansas and the practices of three families from three different regions. Therefore, one should be bold when applying to the larger homeschooling population in Arkansas. Focusing on three families allowed me to dive deep into conversations and personal experiences and portray my own implications for music education.

The families in this study prioritized music education. This prioritization led to many hours of research into the curriculum, substantial financial resources, travel, and many creative solutions to the sundry problems encountered along their journey. Each family mentioned how music education was not a priority for some families as they merely focused on obtaining the mandatory fine arts credit as part of graduation requirements. Some of these individuals discussed did not pursue music education in the curriculum because it was of no interest or value. Other parents greatly wanted to incorporate music but quickly became discouraged because of the lack of curriculum, significant time commitment, financial burden, and lack of direction in teaching music. As discovered in the literature and within these interviews, a comprehensive curriculum must be revised.

As this dissertation concludes, the most considerable implication involves the lack of a comprehensive music curriculum for homeschooling. As discussed in the literature review, many resources approach different aspects of music education. These resources

include mainly history, but some resources incorporate basic music theory. These resources, in most cases, are only written with a particular age group in mind. As all participant families discussed, music resources were either too elementary or too advanced for a parent who needed formal music instruction to teach. A more serious approach to music education became reliant on private teachers or community groups. The families in the rural areas of the highlands and coastal plains described distance from private teachers, community groups, or colleges as a hardship. The families overcame this hardship in this study but discouraged others from incorporating music into their homeschooling curriculum. These factors create a poor outcome for music education in homeschooling.

This lack of a comprehensive curriculum can separate immediate and long-term needs. The primary conditions involve a more significant presence of music educators in the homeschooling community. While the involvement of music educators in the homeschooling community may be complicated, the immediate involvement could quickly provide direction for essential resources. The families in this study and their conversations with other families described the lack of direction and implementation as the most significant source of frustration. Local music educators could help alleviate these feelings by guiding the current music resources and curriculum.

For the collegiate educator of future music teachers, this also provides a topic for discussion and direction. Music educators exiting college should be aware of problems associated with music education in homeschooling. This knowledge implies that young music educators could help provide guidance and strengthen music education in the

homeschooling community in their respective areas. Based on my professional experience, collegiate music education classes should include discussions regarding homeschooling. However, as the homeschooling population grows, conversations will become more critical.

The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed more families into homeschooling. Many families have chosen to remain in a homeschooling environment for various reasons. However, with the easing of mitigation procedures, more children are venturing back into normal extracurricular activities. These activities may include different athletic teams and other electives such as instrumental and vocal music. Depending on the time away from public school education, homeschooled students may be more advanced than their peers. However, homeschooled students could be behind their peers regarding music history, theory, and performance. This deficiency is essential for music education students and veteran music teachers completing their degrees. This situation implies the need for discussions between educators and parents of homeschooled students.

The involvement of local music teachers and music educators could meet the immediate needs of homeschooling families wishing to incorporate music into their curriculum and see marginal success. Ultimately, the most effective approach to improving and attracting parents to music education in the homeschool environment is the development of a comprehensive music curriculum for each grade level. The curriculum's design needs to provide parents with skills without formal musical training, and the curriculum also needs specific instructions for implementation. Inspiration for writing a comprehensive music curriculum needs to inspire direction and organization. A

comprehensive music curriculum must imitate the curricula of other subjects with which parents are already familiar. Much like the comprehensive curriculum with other issues such as math or science, the music curriculum needs to follow a similar structure with which homeschooling parents are familiar.

As I recall my undergraduate music education courses, I can reflect on the many things I learned. We built budgets, discussed transportation issues, fundraising, work with community members, resources within our field, and many other items. Absent from the conversation was any mention of homeschooling.

Within the first few years of teaching, situations arose for which I needed to prepare. However, I always had mentors to contact. In my fourth year of teaching, I encountered homeschooled children in my instrumental ensembles. Incorporating these students into instruction was something for which I needed to prepare. Unfortunately, since allowing homeschooled students to participate in public school activities was relatively new, my mentors and former teachers' guidance was lacking in this area. I began to work diligently to understand the skills and knowledge homeschooled students brought to the public-school classroom. The knowledge obtained by these students usually consisted of a more solid understanding of music theory and music history.

In most cases, homeschooled students also brought instrumental proficiency superior to their peers. Simultaneously, I began to understand deficiencies. Typically, these deficiencies revolved around the amount of participation in an entire ensemble. While the homeschooled student may have more advanced knowledge of their respective instruments, they needed help understanding how the instrument fits within a larger

ensemble.

When I began teaching at the university level, a secondary methods course was one of the first courses I taught. The experience with homeschooled students for many years changed my approach to teaching future music educators, and I began to incorporate information about homeschooled students into my class curriculum. This understanding has continued to evolve, especially since the beginning of this dissertation. Within my secondary methods class, we discuss the strengths and weaknesses of incorporating homeschooled students into one's respective ensemble or music classroom.

Of note is the need for music educators to take advantage of opportunities in the community. For example, I have long required music education students to observe school board meetings, and now, I require my students to observe meetings of homeschool cooperatives. Within our cooperatives, parents are constantly looking for volunteers, retired teachers, or current teachers to present a lesson or organize an activity. This practice provides an excellent opportunity for music education students to educate homeschooled students and their parents. Recruitment to public school music programs becomes a possibility.

Comprehensive curricula geared towards homeschooling families usually include several items. These items follow a form with which homeschooling parents are familiar. For example, curricula in other subjects include multiple options that allow for a custom approach or a complete curriculum kit. The parent searching for curriculum in core subjects can purchase subject kits, complete grade kits, or parent kits.

These kits include materials for both the student and the parent. The student

materials include readers, textbooks, workbooks, and novels. Within the student materials, and depending on the subject, a student will find the content, chapter summaries, glossaries, and indexes and review them throughout the sections and chapters.

Of particular importance are the materials provided for the parent. These teaching aids include many approaches and materials, allowing flexibility if desired. The included lesson plans are of paramount importance as they usually focus on how to teach a particular concept instead of what or when. This format allows the parent to save time, help improve teaching and limit frustration. The teacher guides include suggestions for what to teach, suggested timing for quizzes and tests, teaching tips, grading information, activities, games, and other items which the parent may find beneficial. These kits also contain teaching aids and manipulatives such as flashcards. Curricula from ABEKA also provide access to various standardized tests.

The parents of this study used curricula that contained these materials and approaches. An immediate implication for developing a comprehensive music curriculum is to include similar items and arrange content similarly. For example, a comprehensive music education curriculum might contain these items for both the child and the parent. A comprehensive curriculum might have a textbook, workbook, and CD that includes listening examples for the child. For the parent, the kit may consist of detailed lesson plans, descriptions of what to teach, teaching tips for those familiar and unfamiliar with the music, engagement activities, and learning and listening game. Additionally, it would be prudent to include other supplementary materials, such as flashcards and links to

online music resources, reinforcing items covered within the text and presenting the lesson.

Additionally, a small portion of the music curriculum should have considered parents with musical backgrounds. While other subjects, such as math and science, provided materials and teaching guides, parents wanting to teach music involved creating a patchwork of materials that may or may not suffice. There is a great need for a high-quality, comprehensive music curriculum that approaches materials like math or science within music education. Discussions revealed the assumption that parents abandoned music education because of these challenges.

The lack of the amount of comprehensive homeschool music curriculum and high-quality homeschool curriculum also may limit a child's opportunities. Students have many different activities and educational programs available, and the number of options a child provides is steadily growing. For example, in public schools, students can now take computer-aided drafting and design, robotics, coding, and other technological subjects that appeal to many children. However, the hardship placed on parents may cause the option of music to be absent from the educational setting in homeschooling. This absence limits the child's possibilities, depriving society of a valuable part of the fine arts.

Regarding music education, parents discussed items related to the second research question. The second research question explores how parents describe the homeschool curriculum and the context of music in the homeschooling curriculum. The most immediate implication of the music curriculum in homeschooling involves its absence. The glaring lack of curriculum creates issues with the time required to piece together

materials which may still not address the desired music learning outcomes. The attempted creation of a usable curriculum requires different forms of supplementary materials. As discussed earlier, these supplemental materials could resemble the available resources in homeschooling kits or comprehensive curricula. These supplemental materials could include flash cards, listening examples, worksheets, and other manipulatives. As an educational kit, it could contain stand-alone theory books, ear training exercises, history books, and other materials that only explore single music elements. Even with these few supplementary materials available, it often causes additional research and study time. The lack of direction creates the need for extra time. Additionally, the absence of such a curriculum creates a financial burden because of the trial-and-error method.

Through my journey in studying and gathering experience with homeschooling, I realized my thoughts have adapted. For example, at the beginning of my career, I did not believe I understood the profound importance of understanding your students beyond a surface understanding. My experience as an educator showed me the importance. However, my experience as a homeschooling parent significantly broadened and solidified the importance of understanding your students' motivations, learning styles, and other areas.

Suggestions for Future Research

My research on this subject has led to several items worthy of further study. One of the most glaring gaps in research deals with the lack of a homeschooling musical curriculum's influence on the teaching and learning of music. As determined, homeschooling allows for individualized instruction and flexibility with instructional

delivery. Further research is needed to ascertain the effects the lack of a homeschooling curriculum has on the teaching and learning of music.

One of the most significant suggestions is a comprehensive music curriculum. Throughout this dissertation, the lack of a comprehensive music curriculum has become the catalyst for frustration and simultaneously creative, practical solutions. There is a great need and interest in developing a comprehensive music curriculum in homeschooling. While additional supplementary methods, such as private lessons, will continue, the expressed need for a curriculum designed like other subjects remains at the forefront of families wishing to incorporate music into their educational plans.

Research on developing a comprehensive music curriculum for homeschooling would be an area worth more exploration. The development would require collaboration between multiple experts in the music curriculum, experienced educators, and homeschooling families who incorporate music into their overall curriculum. The development of a comprehensive music curriculum is worthy of research. It is an area that provides an opportunity for an individual to create a comprehensive curriculum designed for homeschooling families wishing to incorporate music into their educational plan. This effort would require additional research about the needs and preferences of families interested in integrating music into their homeschool curriculum. The research and development of this curriculum would need to be a collective effort between music curriculum development and implementation experts, experienced music educators, and many other sets of families that can continue providing information about curriculum needs.

According to the families in this study, there is a need. However, this may not be the case if it is researched further in Arkansas because of the small sample size. This study discussed many families in their homeschooling cooperative that share similar views. Further research in this area, combined with the effort and interest of willing researchers, could develop a comprehensive music curriculum for homeschooling parents.

Conclusion

This dissertation began with a quote from Gandhi. We should come full circle. Gandhi stated, "There is no school equal to a decent home and no teacher equal to a virtuous parent." Homeschooling is vital for me as I have a personal, vested interest in high-quality education. The culmination of discussions with my children and wife resulted in the decision to homeschool our children. I have also spent my entire professional career and educational journey in music education. Music education and homeschooling are where both of my passions intersect. While writing this dissertation, my knowledge of homeschooling has grown extensively. I have learned many things about homeschooling as a parent and educator.

Additionally, the families in this study shared many thoughts that rang true. These thoughts involved the desire for a comprehensive curriculum for music education, the lack of available resources for creating a curriculum, the different homeschooling teaching philosophy, and the stated differences between the teaching and learning of music and the teaching and learning of other subjects. Parents have sundry reasons to homeschool. All these reasons are slightly different; however, I saw my family's struggle

with choosing to homeschool in the stories of the Williams, Johnson, and Brown families. We also needed help with similar aspects of teaching and learning and curriculum selection and implementation. As a music educator, I believed I would not share the same struggles with the music curriculum as the other families in this study. This mentality could be vanity. I found that we all struggled with similar aspects of homeschooling, and I determined that I shared many ideas, struggles, and solutions with the Williams, Johnson, and Brown families. The decision to begin homeschooling, teaching and learning all subjects, and choosing and implementing the general and music curriculum and difficulties link many homeschooling families. After conversations with these families, I know I am not alone in these areas. Sometimes, it is a relief that you are not alone in navigating these areas.

I have seen that teaching and learning in a homeschooling environment have many great benefits. Educationally, we can tailor instruction to each child. This personalized instruction and one-on-one time have allowed our children to understand different subjects more in-depth. This personalization has also allowed them to progress much faster through the material. For this reason, they are far ahead of their peers in public school. I often reflect on how my children might have been affected had we left them in public school.

On the other hand, I often reflect on how public schools would be affected if classroom teachers had the same benefits as homeschooling families. This dissertation has seen the many benefits of small class sizes and an intimate understanding of each student's needs. As discussed earlier, I rarely had these public-school opportunities and

often felt stretched too thin.

Additionally, homeschooling has allowed the families and me in this study more time together. Because of the flexibility of homeschooling, time together becomes easily obtainable through flexible scheduling. This time together has strengthened our family dynamic, and this is another luxury not afforded to millions of other families. For various reasons, homeschooling is not an option. Again, this makes me reflect on the flexibility of homeschooling versus the more rigid schedules in public schools. My wife and I are fortunate in this regard.

I believe it is difficult for children to view things long-term. As a parent, I hope my children can look back and see that my wife and I did our best. I hope they see we made what we thought were the best decisions. I remember an adage from my youth. Children grow up seeing their parents as heroes. As children age, it is easy to see parental decisions as those of villains. Eventually, you hope they grow mature enough to forgive us for both.

Since the catalyst for this dissertation began with a simple conversation between my son and me, I believe it is fitting to end the dissertation with a similar discussion that encompasses many themes found throughout.

William: "Hey, dad, why did you decide to homeschool us?"

Me: "Well, it was for many reasons, but we valued your education and development and made the decision we thought best."

William: "So, since mom doesn't work, did you have to give up stuff?"

Me: "Yes, we have made sacrifices, but we don't think of it that way and you shouldn't either."

William: “Dad, thanks for making those sacrifices.”

Alana: “Yeah, we don’t want you and mom to give up stuff, but I am glad we are homeschooled.”

Ian: “Yeah, what they said. Love you.”

APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT FLYER

Do You Homeschool And Use Music In Your Curriculum?

- Are you a parent or guardian who homeschools?
- Have you homeschooled prior to January 1st 2020?
- Do you incorporate music as part of your curriculum?
- Would you be interested in sharing your perspectives?

About the Study

Who: Justin Anders, currently pursuing a Doctor of Music Arts degree at Boston University, serves as the Chair of Music at the University of Arkansas at Monticello and has a master's degree in teaching and administration with experience in middle school, high school, undergraduate, and graduate levels.

What: Studying parental perceptions of music curriculum when homeschooling in the state of Arkansas as part of the doctoral dissertation.

Why: I am interested in this topic because of my own experience in researching and choosing music curriculum for my own children.



How it Works

I will be interviewing four parents from four distinct regions in the state of Arkansas. Interviews will consist of answering questions about your views of homeschool music curriculum, thoughts and incorporation of music curriculum, and the process associated with researching and selecting music curriculum.

Justin T. Anders

Doctor of Music Arts Candidate
Boston University
College of Fine Arts

Contact Information

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After the interviews, I will incorporate the findings into my dissertation. All information included in the dissertation will be kept confidential, names will be changed and identities protected. Transcripts of all interviews will be presented to you for verification of intent, tone, and accuracy.

If you are interested in becoming a participant, please contact me for more information.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1.) Choosing Curriculum for Homeschooling

- Can you walk me through your process of choosing homeschool curriculum?

Follow-Up: What challenges or frustrations do you face when choosing curriculum?

2.) Choosing Music Curriculum

- What about your process for choosing a music curriculum?

Follow-Up: Can you describe ways in which choosing music curriculum might be easier or less frustrating?

3.) Teaching and Learning

- How do you like to approach the teaching of music?

Follow-Up: Are there any differences between your approach to teaching music and your approach to teaching other subjects? Can you give a specific example(s)?

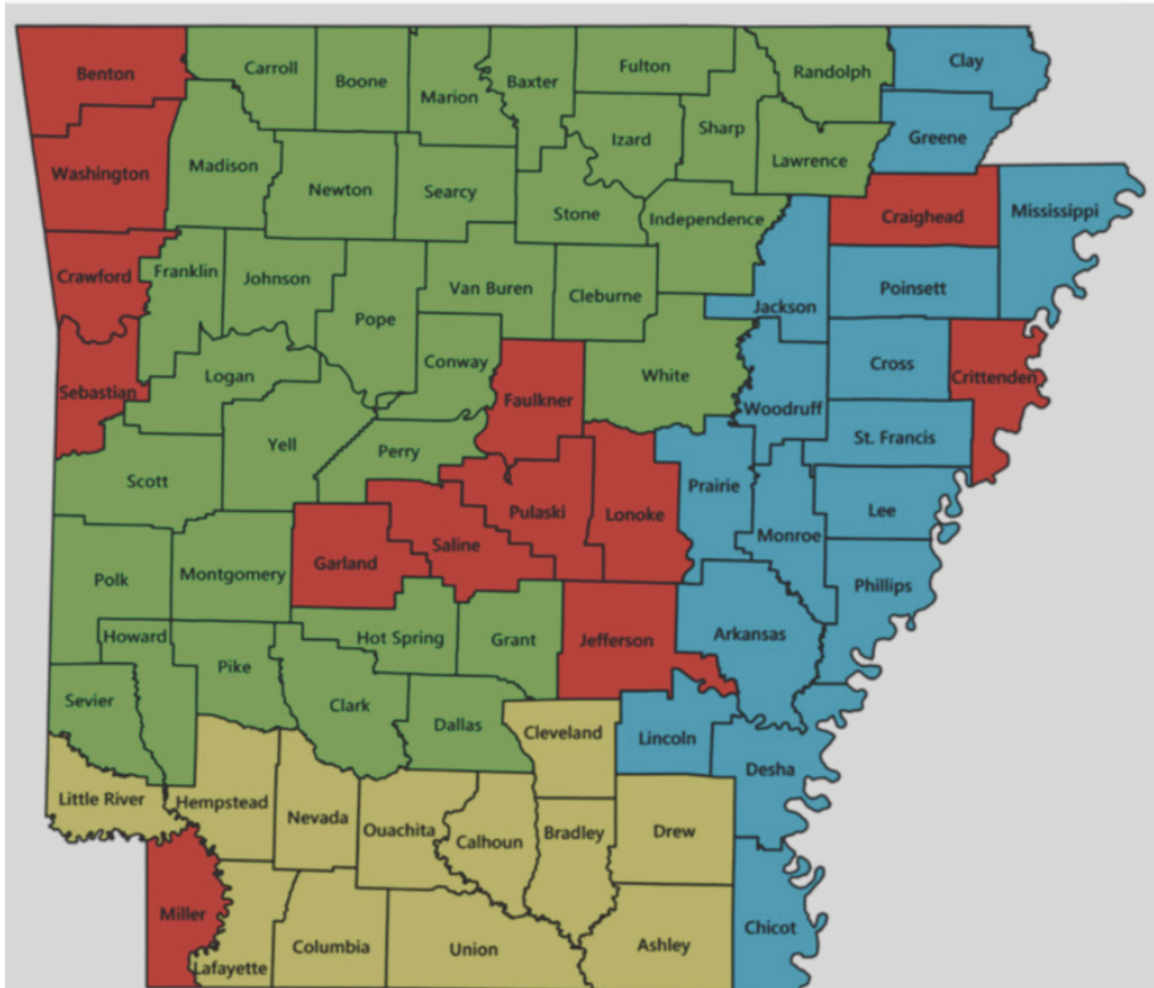
4.) COVID-19

- With the onset of COVID-19, has it created difficulties for you in your approach to teaching music?

Follow-Up: How have you adapted to these difficulties?

Do you have any questions for me?

APPENDIX C: ARKANSAS REGIONS AND COUNTIES



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