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# The pedagogical reasoning and action of popular music theory professors in higher popular music education programs

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

Dissertation

**THE PEDAGOGICAL REASONING AND ACTION OF  
POPULAR MUSIC THEORY PROFESSORS IN HIGHER  
POPULAR MUSIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
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**ABSTRACT**

A growing number of higher education leaders and pedagogues in the United States have sought to include popular music into their curricula. One of the core tenets for any music program is the study of music theory. Although there have been investigations into the inclusion of popular music in undergraduate music courses, little attention has been given to how popular music theory has been taught in higher popular music education (HPME) institutions. According to Shulman (1987), scholars and educators agree that there is a knowledge base for teaching specific to each academic subject, which by extrapolation includes popular music theory. Shulman (1987) additionally argued that all educators utilized a process of pedagogical reasoning and action, in which educators progressed through a cyclic process of comprehension, transformation, instruction, evaluation, reflection, and arrive at new comprehensions.

The purpose of this study was to explore the pedagogy of popular music theory in higher education institutions by examining the pedagogical reasoning and action of professors who taught popular music theory courses in HPME institutions. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What resources do popular music theory pedagogues explore, and what are their criteria for inclusion, when selecting curricular materials?
2. How do popular music theory pedagogues prepare (analyze, interpret, transform, and organize) curricular materials?
3. How do popular music theory pedagogues adapt and tailor instruction, as well as evaluate student understanding?
4. How do popular music theory pedagogues reflect on the instructional process, and what new comprehensions of subject matter, students, and self arise from their reflection?

To address these research questions, I conducted a multiple-case study researching the methods, reasonings, and knowledge of three university professors who taught popular music theory at select higher education institutions. The participants in this study were selected using purposeful, criterion-based sampling. Data collection was primarily completed utilizing interviews, observations, and document collection. The interviews were transcribed from their recordings, and the observation data were transcribed from field notes. A coding system was adapted from Shulman's (1987) framework, which included the knowledge base for learning and the areas of pedagogical reasoning and action, and a report for each case was generated preceding the cross-case analysis. Triangulation of the data occurred through repetitious review of all recordings, transcriptions, observational data, journal notes, provided course materials, and member checks that occurred at multiple points throughout the development of the case and cross-case reports. Contextualization data were included to provide thick, rich descriptions of

each case to bolster credibility in this study and help the reader understand the context for each professors' pedagogical decisions.

It was discovered that each professor in this study had a sizable amount of subject matter knowledge in popular music theory, but that most of their useful knowledge for teaching popular music was learned primarily autodidactically. The aural tradition of music transmission, which is influenced by personal interests, sociocultural influences, and experiences in popular music groups, was found to be a prominent part of these professors' knowledge base. The context in which each professor taught was found to influence their pedagogical decisions and affected their choices of materials, listening examples, and internet-based resources. Students' sociocultural background and personal goals, along with the vision and mission of the institutions in which the professors taught, were found to be the strongest influencers in the pedagogues of this study. All three professors also valued limiting class size to around 16 students, and preferred formative assessments over summative assessments when evaluating student comprehension. To aid the readers understanding of the implications of the findings of this research, existent resources for popular music pedagogy, such as peer-reviewed databases, journals, compilations, popular music organizations, and current research in the field of popular music pedagogy, are also discussed.

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## Chapter 1

### Popular Music Theory Pedagogy

The inclusion of popular music training in higher education internationally has been of interest to administrators, pedagogues, and researchers since the early 1990s (Cloonan & Hulstedt, 2013). In the United States, popular music programs within higher education institutions are relatively new (Reinhert, 2016) and increasing in number (Benjamins, 2019), but have existed for some time in “primary, secondary, and tertiary education institutions; for profit music education ventures; and non-profit or non-governmental organizations” (Powell et al., 2015). The increased interest in popular music training in higher education has prompted the development of music theory courses based on popular music structures (Cartwright, 2004; Gillis, 2013; Kinchen, 2012; Pembroke, 1991; Reinhert, 2018; Rosenberg, 2014), but little is known about the pedagogical process of the professors who teach those courses.

At the time this study was conducted, in the United States, some universities had developed music degrees based entirely on popular music forms (Green, 2002, 2008; Karlsen, 2010, Reinhert, 2018). At Berklee College of Music and the University of Southern California, as examples, multiple degree plans have been developed with various emphases in popular music. Popular music degree programs have also been created in response to the vocational needs related to specific genres of popular music, such as the worship leader vocational training programs at Cedarville University, Grand Canyon University, and Liberty University. There have also been certificates in popular music developed at some post-secondary institutions, such as Hillsong College, Visible

Music College, Berklee College of Music, California College of Music, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and Brooklyn Music School (to name only a few). Although there have been investigations into the use of popular music in undergraduate music courses (Björnberg, 1993; Brady, 2002; Folse, 2004; Giddings, 2008; Harrington, 1991; Krikun, 2017a), few investigations have been conducted on the pedagogical process of these professors. Given the growing interest in the inclusion of popular music in higher education, the lack of research in popular music theory pedagogy is surprising.

The increased interest in popular music theory has also led a growing number of researchers to publish articles in journals such as the *International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) Journal*, the *Journal of Popular Music Education (JPME)*, *Music Theory Online (MTO)*, and *Music Theory Spectrum (MTS)* by scholars who seek to understand the harmonic progressions used in popular music (Rosenberg, 2014; Heetderks, 2015), emerging forms (Cohen, 2015), the use of modulations (Hananberg, 2016), metric structures (Rosenberg, 2010; Cohn, 2016), the contrapuntal relationship between melody and harmony (Nobile, 2015), and composition (Davis, 2005; Tobias; 2013), to name only a few. Popular music pedagogy has likewise become a topic of growing importance to researchers and pedagogues. Books have been published such as the *Routledge Research Companion to Popular Music Education* (Smith et al., 2017), the *Bloomsbury Handbook to Popular Music Education* (Moir et al., 2019), Karlsen and Väkevä's *Future Prospects for Music Education: Corroborating Informal Learning Pedagogy* (2012), and Holley's *Coaching a Popular Music Ensemble: Blending Formal, Non-Formal, and Informal Approaches in the Rehearsal* (2019).

### **Higher Popular Music Education (HPME)**

Higher Popular Music Education (HPME) in the United States includes research and pedagogy in the areas of “popular music business, musicology, pedagogy, performance, production, technology, theory research, and songwriting” (Reinhert, 2018, p. 4). Each specific category of HPME does not exist independent of the others, but rather is often integrated into programmatic instructional designs or utilized in the act performance symbiotically with other categories. For instance, technology has a strong relationship with the categories of popular music business, performance, production, and songwriting. Each aforementioned category of HPME is also quite broad in scope. Songwriting, for example, includes several notable sub-categories such as lyrical and musical development, the use of digital technologies, and notation and charting (to name only a few). However, essential to all HPME categories is pedagogy in its many forms. The current study is focused on a particular subset of HPME, the pedagogy of popular music theory.

The pedagogy of popular music theory in higher education is challenging for a number of reasons. Ephemeral musical tendencies (such as instrumentation and harmonic structures), evolving music technologies, student societal expectations and vocational goals, and culturally diverse musical styles are but a few considerations for HPME pedagogues. Additionally, Till (2017) asserted that HPME programs often had “large group sizes, high staff-student ratios and heavy teaching loads, providing little time for research into teaching methodologies” (p. 18). Till’s (2017) research and assertions were focused on HPME in the United Kingdom, but there is also an increased number of

HPME programs in the United States (Krikun, 2017b; Till, 2017). Due to the lack of existent research into the pedagogical process of those pioneering HPME (Krikun, 2017b), there is a need for investigations into HPME, and popular music theory pedagogy in specific.

Given the lack of investigations into the pedagogy of popular music theory, professors who endeavor to teach this subject are faced with a number of questions, such as:

1. How does one teach popular music theory?
  - a. Are there teaching methods effective in multiple educational settings?
  - b. What sociocultural considerations affect student learning?
  - c. How are popular music classes designed and structured?
2. What curricular resources are available for teaching popular music theory?
  - a. What educational frameworks might be conducive to popular music pedagogy?
  - b. What books, journals, and articles exist that could be adapted for instruction?
  - c. What popular musical examples could illustrate curricular topics in varying ways?
  - d. What electronic resources are available for use in a popular music theory course?
3. What evaluation methods exist for assessing popular music comprehension?

To explore these questions in the context of higher education pedagogues, I adopted Shulman's (1987) Pedagogical Reasoning and Action framework.

### **Pedagogical Reasoning and Action**

Shulman (1987) outlined a process of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action (PRA) and stated within that all those who teach work from “some form of text” (p. 14) and have a good comprehension of the subject matter contained in that text as a basis of instruction. According to Shulman, the key to pedagogy is “the capacity of the teacher to transform the content knowledge he or she possesses into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations and background presented by the students” (p. 15). PRA is a transformational process in which subject matter knowledge is changed into content knowledge that is useful for teaching (Shulman, 1987). Within the model of PRA, educators decide how to represent the main concepts of their subject matter, then they select a particular instructional style, such as teacher-led or project-based learning (p. 16). Often embedded in the instructional style are decisions about how to evaluate student learning, both in formative and summative ways (p. 18). Once educators make these preparatory decisions, they implement the instruction (p. 17) and reflect on the overall process “in comparison to the ends that were sought” (p. 19), they arrive at a new comprehension of the subject matter, the students and their characteristics, and a pedagogical approach for future teaching (p. 19).

The comprehension of music theory and aural skills could be considered a singular skill set, similar to subjects such as English or math, but the comprehension of theoretical concepts and aural competency are complementary skills that require differing pedagogical processes. Rifkin and Stoecker (2011) contended that the “learning process for aural skills” (p. 155) was divergent from the learning processes of other disciplines,

and suggested core music theory knowledge was an amalgam of aural and analytical understanding. Marvin (2012) similarly argued that pedagogues have increasingly incorporated aural skills with analysis skills in music theory classes and that even where aural skills and analysis skills were taught separately, the courses complemented one another. Rifkin and Stoecker (2011) and Marvin (2012) suggested that there was a unique amalgam of subject matter understanding that music theory specialists possess—unlike subject matter knowledge in mathematics, sciences, or literature. Understanding the ways in which aural and analytical comprehension are combined and subsequently transformed through the process of PRA is important to discovering ‘best practices’ within the field of popular music theory pedagogy.

Some research in music theory pedagogy has produced data regarding the first few stages of Shulman’s (1987) model of PRA, but no in-depth investigations have been conducted regarding the PRA of popular music theory professors. While discussing the implementation of instruction, for example, Dirkse (2014) demonstrated that the selection of questioning was an important aspect to undergraduate theory, and pointed out that an instructor’s good questioning helped students stay engaged, and allowed instructors to assess student understanding. Dirkse (2014) also offered examples of good questioning techniques based on music theory subject matter, thus merging disciplinary content and formal educational scholarship. Regarding the transformation of materials, Folse (2004) modeled the preparation of subject matter for the undergraduate theory core by critically analyzing and interpreting two popular music examples, which were then utilized to represent music theory concepts. More importantly, Folse (2004) demonstrated

how music theory pedagogues adapted and tailored music theory subject matter to be relevant to specific students. In music theory pedagogy literature, however, very little has been revealed about how music theory educators have evaluated student learning, reflected on their own pedagogical processes, or what actions occurred after their new comprehensions.

### **Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to explore the pedagogy of popular music theory in higher education institutions by examining the pedagogical reasoning and action of professors who taught popular music theory courses in higher education institutions. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What resources do popular music theory pedagogues explore, and what are their criteria for inclusion, when selecting curricular materials?
2. How do popular music theory pedagogues prepare (analyze, interpret, transform, and organize) curricular materials?
3. How do popular music theory pedagogues adapt and tailor instruction, as well as evaluate student understanding?
4. How do popular music theory pedagogues reflect on the instructional process, and what new comprehensions of subject matter, students, and self arise from their reflection?

### **Rationale**

I have been engaged with popular music theory informally for over 30 years, and my participation in popular music bands predated my formal education in classical music

theory. I also have 15 years of vocational experience in churches that favored more contemporary styles of music over Western European classical styles. During that time, I transformed and applied my conservatory-based music theory training to the context of contemporary church worship based in popular music forms, and at least to some extent, required aurally-based transmission methods instead of notation-based methods. My lived experience is consistent with Cartwright's (2004) statement that for contemporary worship teams, "music is usually improvised from chord charts as in 'pop' secular music" (p. 12) in contemporary worship services, and not performed exactly as notated.

I have personal experience with a broad spectrum of both classical and popular music-related courses through the act of teaching and curriculum design, and I was part of a team that developed several complete popular music-based programs that began in the fall semester of 2020. See Appendix A for an overview of my experience in popular music pedagogy, curricular, and program development. At the time this study was conducted, I was concurrently working on two new music theory courses that reflected the most recent approaches to the pedagogy of popular music theory. These courses were part of a new popular music-based program and were taught for the first time in the fall and spring semesters of the 2020–2021 academic year. Although I understood before this study began that transformations of music theory subject matter knowledge were made by instructors who taught popular music courses, I had not analyzed the process of transformation. Given my position, I felt responsible for knowing more about how popular music instructors thought about the transformations and repackaging of music theory materials, and what their pedagogical process entailed.

There are several practical benefits for studying how higher education popular music theory pedagogues transformed subject matter knowledge into pedagogical content knowledge. For example, the study of the transformation of subject matter knowledge could be important to those in higher education institutions who seek to reevaluate “conservatory-based music theory instruction in favor of an alternative theory curricula” (Kinchen, 2012, p. 3) or to “effectively teach traditional and contemporary theory concepts” (Cartwright, 2004, p. 4). Other post-secondary institutions that offer certificates in popular music may also find the results of this study beneficial. This study may also provide a new perspective for the field of music theory pedagogy. As most of the existing research in music theory pedagogy focuses on the subject matter rather than the educator’s pedagogical reasoning, this study will begin to elucidate areas of this discipline not previously researched, namely; the pedagogical processes used by professors of popular music theory.

Music researchers and educators have suggested there has been a need for reform in higher education music programs (Allsup & Olson, 2012; Clements, 2012; Väkevä, 2009), and understanding how popular music professors think could be an essential step for any person seeking to do so. It was my intention to help fill the gap in research on popular music pedagogy regarding the way in which popular music pedagogues progressed through the stages of pedagogical reasoning and action. Future researchers may benefit from learning how the professors in this study *represented* the concepts found in popular music theory, *selected* an instructional style (and what style was selected), *evaluated* student learning, *implemented* their instruction, *reflected* on their

process, and arrived at *new comprehensions* (Shulman, 1987). Considering the lack of research in this area, the findings of this research may offer a somewhat unique contribution to the body of existing scholarly research in popular music. The institutions that would find this research most fruitful may be those that train music industry professionals, popular music artists of any genre, or those seeking a vocation in churches that have adopted a popular music format.

## Chapter 2

### Review of Literature

This chapter is intended to provide an overview of the theoretical lens in which this study was conducted, which has been derived from Shulman's (1987) findings when researching teacher preparedness. There are four main parts of this review of literature: an orientation to existent research in popular music education (PME) and higher popular music education (HPME), an overview of Shulman's (1987) model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action (PRA), the knowledge base (KB) of educators, and the intricate way the cognitive domain (Bloom, 1956) has been used as a basis for pedagogical reasoning and action. It should be made clear here that Shulman's (1987) PRA theoretical concept is the crux of this study and that information regarding HPME, the KB for teaching, and the cognitive domain has been included to the extent the information is related to the PRA of the professors studied.

#### Popular Music Education (PME)

Although popular music education (PME) in the United States has occurred since the 1930s (Fish et al., 2017; Krikun, 2014), it is important to note that the first academic journal on PME, the *Journal of Popular Music Education (JPME)*, and the first academic handbook, the *Routledge Research Companion to Popular Music Education* (Smith et al., 2017), were not published until 2017 (Fish et al., 2017, p. 2). Additionally, the "world's leading organization in popular music education" (Fish et al., 2017, p. 1), the Association of Popular Music Education (APME), was not founded until 2010. The stated goals of the APME are to advocate for popular music education (PME), "create educational

opportunities” (About APME, 2021) for PME students and pedagogues, “identify, develop, and promote best practices” (About APME, 2021) in PME, encourage connections between “music industries and PME” (About APME, 2021), and “foster collaboration” (About APME, 2021) in the growing PME and Higher Popular Music Education (HPME) communities. The APME identified the study of music theory as one common area of “Teaching, Learning and Assessment in popular music” (Fish et al., 2017, p. 6).

### **Higher Popular Music Education (HPME)**

There is a growing amount of research in Higher Popular Music Education (HPME), and researchers are currently working to codify this emergent field. The aforementioned books, the Routledge Research Companion to Popular Music Education (Smith et al., 2017) and the Bloomsbury Handbook to Popular Music Education (Moir et al., 2019), are two examples of such efforts to fill the “vacuum in literature” (Parkinson & Smith, 2015, p. 113). The Routledge Research Companion to Popular Music Education (Smith et al., 2017) is a collection of 33 research articles in HPME that fall into four main categories: past, present, and future; curricular in popular music; careers, entrepreneurship and marketing; and social and critical issues. Abramo, Hebert, and Smith (2017) concluded the Routledge Research Companion to Popular Music Education (Smith et al., 2017) with a broad discussion of topics not discussed directly in this publication. The topics included in Abramo’s (et al., 2017) work included discussions of perceived success in popular music education (PME) programs, neoliberalism and the commercial dimensions of popular music, Bourdieu and PME,

identity and masculine domination in PME, gender performativity in theory, performativity in popular music, and the institutionalization of PME.

The Bloomsbury Handbook to Popular Music Education (Moir et al., 2019) is a collection of 30 research articles in HPME that fall into six main categories: conceptualizing popular music education; musical, creative, and professional development; originating popular music; popular music education in schools; identity, meaning, and value in popular music education; and formal education, creativities, and assessment. One point of clarification regarding both the Routledge Research Companion to Popular Music Education (Smith et al., 2017) and the Bloomsbury Handbook to Popular Music Education (Moir et al., 2019), both books include university and K–12 education, meaning they are not focused solely on HPME. In contrast, all of the participants in this study teach within HPME programs.

Even though the overall output of research in popular music pedagogy exists outside of this dissertation's scope (popular music theory pedagogy), it is connected peripherally in varying ways. For example, while researching authenticity in HPME, Parkinson and Smith (2015) noted an increase in the number of undergraduate popular music-based programs (p. 97), particularly in the area of vocational training. The end goal of vocational training, consequentially, has led to conversations within the HPME community regarding several thematic issues outlined by Parkinson and Smith (2015): "vocational and academic, employability, music, gender, and pedagogy" (p. 96). The first four thematic areas identified by Parkinson and Smith (2015) all contribute to the fifth area, pedagogy, which is also the crux of this study. The inference made here is that

professors' pedagogical choices in HPME programs, including those who teach popular music theory, are influenced by much more than merely the subject matter.

Student motivation, which is tied to students' perceptions of value, is also a topic of importance when discussing HPME programs. Hall (2019) sought to discover what motivations students had for studying within higher popular music performance education [HPMPE] programs, what their perceptions of those programs were, and what vocational value students felt the program had (p. 330). The vast majority of cases studied by Hall (2019) cited their motivations for enrolling in an HPMPE program were career based (p. 331), and Hall (2019) listed intrinsic motivations and societal influences as being the "cognitive framework" (p. 332) for the students' choices to enter the HPMPE program. The four key student concerns identified through Hall's (2019) research were: "issues of negative public perception, problematic conceptions of the popular music industries, the value of practical experience over and above qualifications, and negative narratives concerning the developments in digital technologies and their effect on career opportunities" (p. 327). But perhaps more striking was that students in this study expressed concern of the value of HPMPE programs due to the "narrative of negativity" (p. 337) regarding popular music training in higher education programs, particularly in the popular music industry. Given students' expressed goal of employment in the popular music industry, perception of HPME programs seems a valid concern.

One possible explanation for the 'negative narrative' of HPME programs could stem from the institutions in which they have been developed, specifically regarding institutions historically known for western European classical training. Hunter (2019)

observed that the “values, practices, and aesthetics from the Western classical tradition” (p. 45) had been grafted into HPME curricula. This is not to say either tradition of music-making is of lesser value, but it does give evidence that “systemic exclusion[s]” (p. 48) exist in the two seemingly divergent music industries. Hunter (2019) also stated there was a “sibling” (p. 55) relationship between classical and popular music and suggested they be “valued in *co-relation to*, rather than *competition with*,” (p. 55) one another.

### ***Popular Music Theory***

At the time this study was conducted, a limited number of HPME studies concerning popular music theory had been conducted. In one such study, Fleet (2017a) explored the inclusion of written notation in popular music studies degrees at higher education institutions in the United Kingdom (UK). Fleet (2017a) found that out of 57 undergraduate programs in the UK, only 46% included written notation in their curriculum. While this percentage evidences divergent viewpoints on what curriculum should be included in HPME music theory courses, Fleet (2017a) argued that musical notation held an “inherent value” (p. 166) for students who chose to study popular music at a university. The value that Fleet (2017a) referenced was tied to the assertion that students who gain the ability to read and write the language of music would be on even ground with “other musicians who do work with music notation” (p. 175).

Musical notation was also the focus of Dean (2019), who interviewed students to discover their perspectives on “the value of notation skills” (p. 74) in HPME degree programs. Dean (2019) reported that some students felt notation was “unnecessary for their current practice and future ambitions” (p. 78) but acknowledged that fluency with

musical notation would be desirable for specific vocations. For example, students perceived that notation would be important to session musicians, teachers, and in musical theater settings, but not as much for vocalists or music publishers (p. 77–78). Dean (2019) advocated that higher education providers should inform students of the “range of opportunities” (p. 78) for popular music professionals with notation skills so that students could decide whether developing notational skills fit with their long-term goals. Interestingly, Dean (2019) suggested that a “particular type” (p. 79) of musical notation may fit popular music students. Dean’s (2019) suggestion implies that Western European notational practices are not an ideal fit for popular music students and that an adaptation of those notational conventions may be a better “fit for these students” (p. 79). I agree and discuss some such potential adaptations in chapter 6.

In another study, Fleet (2017b) argued that the human hand could be instrumental in helping popular music students acquire greater aural interval recognition skills by using a revitalized version of an “eleventh-century mnemonic device” (p. 200), namely Guido d’Arezzo’s Guidonian Hand method. The original Guidonian Hand method required physical action to trace the “hexacordal scale across the joints of the fingers” (p. 202), whereas Fleet’s (2017b) adaptation is expanded to include “recognition of the thirteen enharmonic intervals within the octave” (p. 205). According to Fleet (2017b), in the Guidonian Hand method the “body and action are linked...[and] can therefore be harnessed to enhance the experience of learning” (p. 200). Fleet (2017b) asserted that the revamped Guidonian Hand method could improve the “working sense of relative pitch for the popular musician” (p. 205), and reported that while all students who reported

acknowledged an increase in confidence and ability in recognizing intervals, this method seemed to be most beneficial to those without prior musical training (p. 210). Fleet's (2017b) guiding concepts were tied to both "corporeal intentionality" (p. 199) and "body knowledge" (p. 203), linking Fleet's (2017b) study to cognitive research. The cognitive domain, which began with Bloom's (1956) work, was also of interest during this research and will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2. Because the current study was focused on the pedagogy of popular music theory in HPME programs, the findings will contribute to the growing body of knowledge related to HPME and aid in the fulfillment of APME's stated goals to educate pedagogues, disseminate best practices, connect vocational training to HPME, and "foster collaboration" (About APME, 2021) in HPME communities.

### **The Knowledge Base for Teaching**

The knowledge base for teaching is a "codifiable aggregation of knowledge, skill, understanding, and technology, of ethics and disposition, of collective responsibility – as well as a means for representing and communicating it" (Shulman, 1987, p. 4). Scholars have recognized the existence of a knowledge base for teaching (Ball, 2000; Berliner, 1986; Cochran, DeRuiter, & King, 1993; Grieser, 2014; Grossman, 1990; Gudmundsdottir, 1990; Hatson & Leon-Guerrero, 2008; Leinhardt & Greeno, 1986; Millican, 2008, 2013; Pella, 2015; Shulman, 1986, 1987, 1988; Valli & Tom, 1998); however, there is no consensus on a singular source for the KB. Valli and Tom (1998) suggested the sources of the KB to be an amalgamation of "the entire repertoire of skills, information, [and] attitudes" (p. 5) required by educators to be effective in the act of

teaching. Other scholars, such as Millican (2008), proposed the KB for teaching was all knowledge “needed to carry out classroom responsibilities” (p. 68). Shulman (1987) stated that the KB for teaching was It is notable that, although the sources for this KB are numerous, they are often obscure and “difficult to delineate” (Hatson & Leon-Guerrero, 2008, p. 49). Indeed, even the teachers themselves often have difficulty “articulating what they know and how they know it” (Shulman, 1987, p. 6).

### ***Knowledge Base Sources***

There are numerous sources of knowledge within the knowledge base (KB), but Shulman (1987) suggested that these sources fall into four general categories. First, Shulman stated that scholarship in content disciplines was foundational to an educator’s KB for teaching. These content disciplines, according to Shulman, included at minimum the “knowledge, understanding, skill, and disposition that are to be learned by students” (p. 8–9). Second, educational materials and structures are necessary because “teachers function within a matrix created by these elements” (p. 9). According to Shulman, these materials and structures include, but are not limited to: curricula, institutional hierarchies, teaching organizations, societal considerations, government agencies, and financial considerations (p. 9). The third source identified by Shulman was formal educational scholarship, or the “scholarly literature devoted to understanding the process of schooling, teaching, and learning” (p. 10). The fourth source identified by Shulman was wisdom of practice, which are the “least codified of all” (p. 11), but nonetheless are the “maxims that guide” (p. 11) pedagogues. Shulman also cautioned that the KB for educators was not “fixed and final” (p. 12), and that much of the KB “remains to be

discovered, invented, and refined” (p. 12). For the purposes of this study, the KB for teaching was defined as any type of knowledge or experience possessed by the educator that was useful for disseminating the understanding of the musical structure of popular forms of music in undergraduate music programs.

### ***Categories of the Knowledge Base for Teaching***

Within the knowledge base (KB) there are a number of categories, Shulman (1987) identified seven in specific: general pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, curriculum knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts, knowledge of educational ends, and pedagogical content knowledge, but acknowledged that more categories were possible (p. 8). Millican (2008) gave an example of an additional category when researching music educators in public schools, administrative knowledge, or the knowledge needed to manage “financial, travel, inventory, and student information” (p. 69). Given the adaptive nature of the elements within the KB for teaching, additional KB categories are possible, but I have limited the overview in this research to that of Shulman’s (1987) seven basic categories for this review of the literature. The following is a brief overview of Shulman’s (1987) seven categories of the KB for teaching.

**General Pedagogical Knowledge.** General pedagogical knowledge is knowledge related to the act of teaching. According to Shulman (1987), this knowledge has particular reference to classroom management and organizational skills. Millican (2008) defined general pedagogical knowledge as “related to general teaching and presentation skills” that required no “subject specific” skills (p. 68). Some examples of these skills are

“classroom management, presentation, and communication skills, as well as the establishment of class routines” (Millican, 2008, p. 68). For Fernández-Balboa and Stiehl (1995), general pedagogical knowledge was also manifested in a discussion of “knowledge about instructional strategies” (p. 300). This study's general pedagogical knowledge area was music theory, an area of increasing interest to researchers (Davis, 2005; Dirkse, 2014; Folse, 2004; Jones & Bergee, 2008; Kos, 1980; Lively, 2005; Marvin, 2012; Rosenberg, 2014).

**Content Knowledge.** There have been conflicting definitions of content knowledge. Shulman (1986) stated that content knowledge referred to “the amount and organization of knowledge... in the mind of the teacher” (p. 9), while Millican (2008) only included “items related to factual knowledge of a particular discipline” (p. 68). The differentiation here is that Shulman’s (1986) definition included the organization of knowledge rather than just the content. Shulman (1986) also included references to Bloom’s (1956) cognitive taxonomy (Shulman, 1996, p. 9), which was important to this study for understanding how professors who taught popular music theory thought about, presented, and refined content knowledge. Shulman’s (1986) definition was adopted for this research.

**Curriculum Knowledge.** Curriculum knowledge is the “knowledge of specific techniques and commonly adopted schools of thought related to delivery of instruction” (Millican, 2008, p. 68). Shulman (1986) labeled this the “*materia medica* of pedagogy” (p. 10), or the body of collected knowledge, and suggested that curriculum knowledge was the “*pharmacopeia* from which the teacher draws” (p. 10) teaching content and

procedures. Kohs (1980) provided a foundational examination of curriculum knowledge regarding music theory pedagogy, and stated that students should be encouraged to think critically about the concepts of music theory as well as have an awareness of alternate viewpoints that conflict with those of the educator (p. 136). Kohs also suggested students should consider alternative viewpoints before formulating their position, and saw the role of the educators as those who encouraged “the acceptance of apparently conflicting and contradictory theories” (p. 142). The purpose of this study was to build on the work of Kohs (1980), and others, to illuminate the sources of curriculum knowledge in popular music educators, and situate them in the pedagogical process of professors who taught popular music theory.

**Knowledge of Educational Goals and Contexts.** The knowledge of educational goals includes the “purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds” (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). The context in which an educator functions, according to Shulman (1987), could either help or hinder their efforts (p. 10), and includes:

Institutions with their hierarchies, their explicit and implicit systems of rules and roles; professional teachers’ organizations with their functions of negotiation, social change, and mutual protection; government agencies from the district through the state and federal levels; and general mechanisms of governance and finance. (p. 9)

Millican (2008) agreed and suggested that a general cognizance of these educational contexts existed relating “to the delivery of instruction [and included] working with parents, administrators, colleagues, and the community” (p. 69).

Labeling the educational goals of the professors of popular music theory in this study was difficult due to the varying nature of each professor's circumstances. Considerations such as the diversity found in university policies, and variations in curricular goals, rendered multiple interpretations of programmatic guidelines. The findings of this study have hence been focused primarily on the educational goals of these professors who taught popular music theory, and has included information relevant to their choices pertaining to the model of pedagogical reasoning and action.

**Knowledge of Learners and Their Characteristics.** Educators must be familiar with multiple aspects of students' circumstances to effectively teach subject matter content. Millican (2008) stated that "skill and knowledge related to the awareness of the social, physical, and psychological development levels of students" (p. 68) was important to pedagogical choices made within the classroom. Aspects such as student learning styles, sociocultural situations, and vocational goals are therefore considered by educators when planning, implementing, and evaluating teaching methods. According to Shulman, educators' pedagogical knowledge "includes an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult" (p. 9) for each learner. This is important because it links the educator's pedagogical understanding to cognitive "research on teaching and learning" (Shulman, 1986, p. 10).

**Cognitive Domain.** Bloom's (1956) Taxonomy of Educational Objectives outlined six progressively advancing cognitive stages of student learning: (a) knowledge, which is the recalling of specific bits of information; (b) comprehension of the information; (c) application of the material in various concrete situations; (d) analysis, or

the ability to break down materials in their component parts and understand the patterns within; (e) synthesis, the ability to put parts together in the formation of a new whole; and (f) evaluation, which is the ability to judge the value of a product for a given purpose (Adams, 2015; Bloom, 1956; Rifkin & Stoecker, 2011). Researchers have since adapted the six stages of Bloom's (1956) taxonomy in a variety of ways. Perhaps the most radical adaptation was made by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), who emphasized active learning by switching each noun in Bloom's (1956) taxonomy to a verb: remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001). This change allowed for a "two-dimensional rather than one-dimensional" (Hanna, 2007, p. 9) taxonomy, with "the noun providing the basis for the knowledge dimension and the verb forming the basis for the cognitive process dimension" (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 213).

This change also provided a way for researchers and educators to assess student learning in music with similar processes to other content disciplines (Hanna, 2007, p. 8). The significance of Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) modernization of Bloom's (1956) taxonomy was considered revolutionary by some because it provided a way for "educators to include the latest theory and research in the field of human cognition" (Conklin, 2005, p. 157).

The integration of Bloom's (1956) cognitive learning theory into music theory pedagogy would require a multi-faceted taxonomy due to the complexity of the discipline. Rifkin and Stoecker (2011) theorized that a new taxonomy was needed to understand student learning regarding aural skills, because the learning process for aural skills required a divergent skill set to teach and learn (p. 155). Adapting Anderson and

Krathwohl's (2001) revised taxonomy, Rifkin and Stoecker (2011) provided an example of how educators could use the revised taxonomy as a tool for music student assessment, which is a crucial part of the model of pedagogical reasoning. During assessment, according to Rifkin and Stoecker (2011), educators evaluate students' ability to:

Recognize (remember previous music events), imitate (recall and repeat previous music events), and conceptualize (analyze and concretize in one's mind); ... apply (the use of learned material in different, musical environments and contexts), improvise (create music within temporal constraints), and evaluate (the ability to judge the value of a product for a given purpose). (p. 160)

Rifkin and Stoecker (2011) found that their adaptive music learning taxonomy could be used as a pedagogical framework to design effective aural-skills exercises and rethink and reevaluate the learning process that exists in a music class. Similarly, Millican (2013) discussed the process of conceptualization and stated that successful teachers "have a clear mental image of the visual and aural aspects [and use] visualizations and conceptions" (p. 51) effectively when teaching.

Although a new taxonomy would aid the pedagogy of popular music theory, it would not account for variances in each pedagogue's assessment of themselves. Although they did not cite Bloom's (1956) work directly, Fernández-Balboa and Stiehl (1995) discussed the metacognitive process of educators, or teachers' awareness of their own mental processes and the ability to reflect upon these mental processes (p. 295). But these processes are not necessarily the same for all educators. As an example, Colombo and Antonietti (2017) found that piano teachers utilized different metacognitive strategies

while researching four piano teachers. Variances in the metacognitive processes of popular music theory educators could result in divergent comprehensions of the subject matter and create varying pedagogical approaches.

While studying aural cognition in popular music pedagogy, Folsie (2004) demonstrated how the aural cognition of harmonic rhythm and function in popular music could create a “more fluid connection between written and aural work” (p. 66). Likewise, while presenting a new taxonomy for undergraduate aural skills, Rifkin and Stoecker (2011) distinguished core music theory knowledge as an integration of aural understanding with analytical understanding. Marvin (2012) asserted that pedagogues increasingly incorporated aural skills with analysis skills in music theory classes and that even where aural skills and analysis skills were taught separately, the courses complemented one another, and both types of skills developed at the same pace. The research in music theory pedagogy thus illustrates a unique amalgam of subject matter understanding that music theory specialists possess—unlike subject matter knowledge in mathematics, sciences, or literature.

**Pedagogical Content Knowledge.** Pedagogical content knowledge is a kind of knowledge unique to teachers (Cochran, 1991; Millican, 2008, 2013; Shulman, 1986, 1987) that combines subject matter knowledge for teaching, which is “content knowledge that embodies the aspects of content most germane to its teachability” (Shulman, 1986, p. 9) with pedagogical knowledge, or knowledge of what makes “the learning of specific topics easy or difficult” (Shulman, 1986, p. 9). According to Shulman (1987), PCK was the most useful category of the knowledge base (KB) for teaching because it represented

“the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues [were] organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities learners, and presented for instruction” (p. 8).

Pedagogical content knowledge was introduced by Shulman (1986) as part of the research program Knowledge Growth in Teaching. The Knowledge Growth in Teaching program was intended to discover where teacher knowledge came from, and what the balance of subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge existed in teachers. Shulman determined there was an imbalance between the assessment of teacher’s “competence in subject matter and pedagogical skill” (p. 4). For illustration, Shulman stated that in 1875, teacher assessment focused overwhelmingly on “subject matter content” (p. 5), while pedagogical methods remained “secondary” (p. 5). This data was juxtaposed to the teacher assessments from the 1980s in which teaching effectiveness was paramount with educational governing bodies (p. 6). Shulman’s goal was to “redress this imbalance” (p. 8) through a collaborative research effort.

Not all scholars considered Shulman’s (1987) distinction between content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge to be fruitful. For example, while exploring the possibility that scholarship and pedagogy could be interrelated, McEwan and Bull (1991) stated that “all content knowledge, whether held by scholars or teachers, has a pedagogical dimension” (p. 318), and asserted that all “subject matter knowledge is pedagogic” (p. 318). The implication made by McEwan and Bull (1991) was that scholars who do not teach also possess pedagogical content knowledge, which contradicted Shulman’s (1987) assertion that PCK was unique to teachers. The assertions

made by McEwan and Bull (1991) were to suggest that scholarship and pedagogy have a symbiotic relationship that should not be separated, and that all scholars should teach, and all teachers should engage in scholarship. Likewise, when researching the development of critical thinking and higher-order thinking skills in a higher education online context, English (2016) stated that “Theory and practice are intended to be linked” (p. 22).

When outlining the Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) theoretical concept, Shulman (1986, 1987) provided a template that researchers have built upon since its inception. Cochran (1991), for example, expounded that PCK was “an integrated understanding that is synthesized from teacher knowledge of pedagogy” (p. 11), and included the knowledge of learners and their learning context, such as students “prior knowledge of the concepts [and] social, political, cultural, and physical environments” (p. 6). Additionally, Cochran (1991) discussed areas subsumed within the PCK theory, specifically the “knowledge of curriculum, knowledge of educational goals and purposes, and knowledge of other content” (p. 11), but suggested an additional area, “knowledge of the environmental context” (p. 11), be included. The environmental context Cochran (1991) introduced included areas such as “school climate, parental concerns, legal issues, and the social context of the community” (p. 11).

Noting the adaptations of Shulman’s (1986, 1987) model of PCK was important to this study to demonstrate the general applicability of the PCK model across disciplines and age groups, and highlight the ability of PCK to be applied situationally. Although most PCK research has been conducted on K–12 educators (Major and Palmer, 2006, p.

620), as previously mentioned, there are some PCK studies involving university professors. In one such study, Fernández-Balboa and Stiehl (1995) sought to gain a better understanding of the “interpretative frameworks” (p. 293) used by college professors regarding their application of Shulman’s (1986, 1987) Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). Fernández-Balboa and Stiehl (1995) also suggested that PCK was not a body of knowledge that could be identified, but rather an “ability that [could] be developed” (p. 294), and discovered that professors’ PCK was “strongly affected by their own belief systems” (p. 304).

A number of studies have been conducted on the PCK of music educators (Crappell & Millican, 2015; Grieser & Hendricks, 2018; Millican, 2008, 2009, 2013, 2017; Millican & Forrester, 2018, 2019). For example, Millican (2008) researched university professors and included administrative knowledge in the study (p. 69–70). In doing so, Millican (2008) further demonstrated the adaptability of Shulman’s (1987) PCK concept. However, research regarding the PCK of popular music theory professors is absent from the literature. This study focused on the pedagogical reasoning and actions (PRA) of popular music theory instructors, rather than their PCK. Information regarding each participant’s PCK has been included as part of this study to the extent that it was important to the educators’ knowledge bases (KB). Likewise, the KB of these professors has been included to provide a basis for discussing the PRA of these pedagogues.

### **The Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action**

Embedded in Shulman’s (1987) article was a transformative process involved in the teaching of subject matter that was unique to teachers. In a keynote discussion for

Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (2014), Shulman stated that this transformative process, identified as the process of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action (PRA), “was the most important part” (2014, 34:10). There are six identifiable components of PRA: initial comprehensions, transformation, instruction, evaluation, and reflection, and resulting new comprehensions. Shulman (1987) discussed these components sequentially, but cautioned that the stages could “occur in different order ... not occur at all ... be truncated, [or] elaborated” (p. 19).

Even though PCK became a dominant framework for researching educators since it was introduced by Shulman in 1987, and was a category "of special interest" (p. 8) within the context of a teachers' knowledge base (KB) for teaching, the KB for teaching was "not a central purpose" (p. 8) of Shulman's (1987) research. Instead, Shulman (1987) emphasized the PRA of educators and stated that educators' process of comprehension, reasoning, transformation, and reflection had been "blatantly ignored" (p. 13) in both educational research and policy. Millican and Forrester (2018), however, suggested that there has been a research shift from studying what teachers know (PCK) to investigating educators' "core teaching practices" (p. 52). The shift of focus from PCK to PRA by researchers could indicate a need to develop new pedagogy systems in emergent fields such as popular music theory, or perhaps that more is known about teacher knowledge than their PRA process. The current study is in line with the observation made by Millican and Forrester (2018) and is focused primarily on the PRA of higher education professors who teach popular music theory.

The influence of Shulman's (1987) model of PRA is often evidenced in

pedagogical research, although not always stated by name. For example, Shulman's (1987) PRA was evidenced in Pella's (2015) discussion of lesson study, which occurs in "cycles of collaborative inquiry through topic selection, lesson design, observations of lessons, analysis of data from observed lessons, and application of new knowledge to inform the next cycle" (p. 82). Similarly, while exploring the PCK of full-time higher education pedagogues in their first few years of employment, Lenze (1995) stated that educators "do not think about teaching in terms of pre-, inter-, and post-action" (p. 12), and suggested more could be learned of their process if researchers discarded "logical, sequential models of decision making" (p. 12). Gateley (2015) also demonstrated the influence of the model of PRA while researching the communities of practice at the Wakonse Conference on College Teaching, and reported emerging scholarly teaching strategies that included: clear goals (p. 36), including the comprehension of the subject matter learning objectives and pedagogical processes; adequate preparation (p. 36), a transformative process which requires the knowledge of students, departmental curriculum, and resources; appropriate methods (p. 36), to ensure the design of instructional methodology had been tailored to specific course goals and objectives; effective presentation and significant results (p. 36), or the implementation of instruction, evaluation of the effectiveness of student learning, and communication of results; and reflective critique (p. 37), or the reflective process by which "both self and peer evaluation to determine what worked, what did not work, and what should be improved in future teaching" (Gateley, 2015, p. 37). Gateley (2015) also discussed effective presentation and significant results in the reverse order (effective presentation was listed

second). By reversing the order, Gateley (2015) provided further evidence of the shifting and combinatory nature of Shulman's (1987) concepts. The following is a brief overview of Shulman's (1987) model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action.

### ***Subject Matter Comprehension and Transformation***

The first area of Shulman's (1987) Pedagogical Reasoning and Action (PRA) model is the comprehension of the subject matter. Before educators can teach new subject matter to students, they must first comprehend the subject matter, purpose, and structures inherent to the subject matter, as well as have a varied understanding of the contents both within and outside of the content discipline area. This first step in Shulman's PRA model is assumed to be true of every educator prior to engaging in dialogue with students. It was assumed that each educator in this study had a good understanding of the subject matter. It should be noted that the amount of these educator's subject matter comprehension was not the focus of this study, but rather the transformative process that led to new comprehensions.

The first step of Shulman's (1987) transformational process is a critical interpretation of the subject matter (p. 16). According to Shulman, this involves the interpretation and preparation of the selected text, new ways of representation, choice of instructional methods, the adaptation of materials based on the "general characteristics of [those] to be taught" (p. 16), and "tailoring the adaptations" (p. 16) specifically for the given students. It was assumed that each educator in this study had taken the time to learn of the specific context for which the student would apply this knowledge, the cultural perspectives in which the student viewed the materials, the specific learning styles, and

the student's previous exposure to the material so that a fruitful transformation could occur. Understanding where these educators located their materials and what their process was for analyzing, interpreting, and selecting them was of the utmost importance to this study. Likewise, delineating how these instructors organized the material, and what educational research they consulted when selecting modes of presentation was another core element of this study.

### ***Instruction and Evaluation***

Instruction is an active and observable process that includes all the “observable features of effective direct and heuristic instruction” (Shulman, 1987, p. 17), which includes the organization and management of the classroom. For the purposes of this study, it is important to highlight that instruction did not simply include a prepared lecture and review of student work, but rather it included the interactive learning environment. The learning environment similar content (popular music theory), but was partially dependent on the transformational process that each instructor has already undertaken. It was also adaptive because each educator and student composite were unique to each class.

Evaluation is equally interactive and relies heavily on an instructor's PCK as some elements of evaluation occur during instruction. For example, according to Shulman (1987), educators may choose to engage with students informally during instructional time through interactive questioning and probing, or evaluation of student answers and reactions to materials, to appraise subject matter comprehension; and judge reactions to praise and criticisms, to refine their teaching approach as needed (pp. 17–19).

Additionally, educators often create and review assignments for each student (p. 17), which provides a formal assessment of student comprehension. I have expounded how the educators in this study implemented instruction and evaluated student comprehension, or more specifically, how they adapted and tailored instruction for their specific students, and how they evaluated student understanding, both formally and informally.

### ***Reflection and New Comprehensions***

Reflection is the act of reviewing the pedagogical process that has occurred to evaluate the “teaching in comparison to the ends that were sought” (Shulman, 1987, p. 19). However, without purposeful steps such as “documentation, analysis, and discussion” (p. 19), the full spectrum of new comprehensions may not occur (Shulman, 1987, p. 19). Kupers, Van Dijk, and Van Geert (2017) noted that the act of reflection is often expected of educators for the purpose of implementing “new policies and interventions into their teaching” (p. 132). To gain a better understanding of how these popular music professors reflected on their process of teaching popular music theory, I have elucidated their reflective thoughts and discussed what new comprehensions of subject matter, students, and self arose from that reflection in chapter 5.

### **The Amalgam of the Knowledge Base and PRA**

The knowledge base (KB) for educators, and their Pedagogical Reasoning and Action (PRA), are symbiotically related. Indeed, one is not possible without the other. All educators who teach do so from their own comprehensions of the subject matter, which is derived from their personal KB. Educators’ KBs are a product of their personal experiences and transformed through their journey through the process of PRA. Of

particular importance in each pedagogue's KB, is a deep understanding of learners and their characteristics. Bloom's (1956) Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain was utilized in this study to account for the student influence on each professor's PRA and to demonstrate possible approaches to popular music theory pedagogy.

### **Summary**

The review of literature in this chapter has been focused on Shulman's (1987) Pedagogical Reasoning and Action (PRA) theoretical framework, the central theoretical framework for this study, the of along with the knowledge base (KB) of educators and the cognitive domain (Bloom, 1956). It was reported that, although scholars have recognized the existence of a KB for teachers, identifying the sources of their KB is somewhat problematic due to the personalized nature of its development. That is to say, each individual pedagogue has a unique KB that has been developed through an amalgamation of their personal experiences and education. Nevertheless, four general KB sources that were identified by Shulman (1987) have been outlined in this chapter, including scholarship in content disciplines, educational materials and structures, formal educational scholarship, and wisdom of practice. The seven specific categories of the KB were also outlined in this chapter: general pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, curriculum knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts, knowledge of educational ends, and pedagogical content knowledge. Bloom's (1956) Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain, along with Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) adaptation of the taxonomy, was also discussed as it is a particularly important part of each pedagogue's KB and is interconnected to the process

of PRA. Rifkin and Stoecker's (2011) adaptation of Bloom's (1956) work was discussed to link current research on aural skill courses, which are part of standard music theory curricula, to the Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain. Shulman's (1987) model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action was also outlined, the steps of this process, including initial comprehensions, transformation, instruction, evaluation, reflection, and new comprehensions. Finally, the comprehensive theoretical lens for this study was discussed, the amalgamation of the KB with the process of PRA.

### Chapter 3

#### Design and Methods

The purpose of this study was to explore the pedagogy of popular music theory in higher education institutions by examining the pedagogical reasoning and action of professors who taught popular music theory courses in higher education institutions. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What resources do popular music theory pedagogues explore, and what are their criteria for inclusion, when selecting curricular materials?
2. How do popular music theory pedagogues prepare (analyze, interpret, transform, and organize) curricular materials?
3. How do popular music theory pedagogues adapt and tailor instruction, as well as evaluate student understanding?
4. How do popular music theory pedagogues reflect on the instructional process, and what new comprehensions of subject matter, students, and self arise from their reflection?

To address these research questions, I adopted a multiple case study design, so the pedagogical reasoning and action (PRA) of educators in this study who taught the structures of popular forms of music could be expounded upon in some detail. Phelps et al. (2005) stated that qualitative research allows for “methodologically flexible and responsive” (p. 79) approaches for the researcher. Flexibility was the key as the PRA of popular music professors who teach popular music theory had not yet been researched, and a multiple-case study allowed for rich data collection.

In a multiple case study, according to Stake (2006), the term quintain represents the “collection of [cases or] the phenomenon exhibited in those cases” (1.3, The Quintain section, para. 2). Stake (2006) explained that when using a multiple-case design, the quintain represented the “target, but not a bull’s eye. In a multicase study, it is the target collection” (1.3, The Quintain section, para. 3). In the current study, the quintain (Stake, 2006) was the pedagogical reasoning and action (Shulman, 1987) of music instructors within undergraduate music programs who taught popular music theory, while each instructor was a case to be studied.

During this study, I utilized an amalgam of processes I found in several multiple case research studies. However, there were two studies, in particular, Gateley (2015) and Villani (2014), that provided the fundamental information on how to structure this multiple case study. Gateley (2015) used a longitudinal multiple case study design based on the work of Stake (2006) to expound on the influence the Wakonse Conference on College Teaching had on faculty from the University of Missouri (Gateley, 2015, p. 9). Although the current study was not longitudinal, Gateley’s (2015) study included data from a span of several years whereas this study collected data during a single semester of college teaching, this study mirrored much of Gateley’s design methodologically.

### **Participant Selection**

This study’s participants were chosen *purposefully* (Evans et al., 2014) and with specific *criteria* (Ghanbari, 2015; Stake, 2006). Evans et al. (2014) purposefully selected three “contrasting educational contexts” (p. 3) from within the Musical Futures (MF) Wales project when conducting a multiple-case study to dive deeper into the findings of

the MF project. The MF project tested the engagement of 11–19-year-olds with various informal pedagogical approaches to popular music at 16 schools and found that the “support and intervention” of the instructor was essential to student comprehension. The three schools selected by Evans et al. (2014) represented the diversity found in the remaining 13 schools. Contextual diversity was essential in this study so that the findings would be relevant to a larger number of pedagogues and researchers.

Stake (2006) suggested three criteria in the form of pertinent questions, the first of which was, “Is the case relevant to the quintain?” (2.2, Selecting Cases section, para. 5). Therefore, each participant in this study taught popular music theory courses that included structural content within an undergraduate level music program at the time this study was conducted. Profiles of each institution and case are outlined in chapters 4 and 5 respectively. Second, Stake (2006) asked, “Do the cases provide diversity across contexts?” (2.2, Selecting Cases section, para. 5). To address diversity of context, an email invitation for participation was sent to professors with varied educational situations who met the aforementioned criteria to provide a broad basis for the final selection of participants. Lastly, Stake (2006) asked, “Do the cases provide good opportunities to learn about complexity and contexts?” (2.2, Selecting Cases section, para. 5). Compton-Lilly (2013) asserted that each case should be “contextualized within particular relationships, social networks, communities, and institutions that in turn are defined by traditions, cultures, beliefs, and policies” (p. 58). Thus, three cases were chosen that represented the greatest diversity of educational situations, thereby affording the opportunity to illustrate the complexity of the quintain (Stake, 2006) in the cross-case

analysis.

Combining a criteria-based selection process with purposeful sampling was modeled in the study by Ghanbari (2015), who initially identified 17 programs that qualified for study through specific criteria. Ghanbari (2015) then employed purposeful sampling to limit the number of sites to what would be feasible for data collection in one year (p. 6). The above criteria for this study initially revealed 29 potential sites, but given the depth of understanding sought from each professors' process of teaching popular music theory, it was not feasible to study all 29 sites. Purposeful sampling was used in the current study to identify three sites with the greatest perceived initial diversity. Participants for this study were petitioned by electronic mail, and an overview of the study was included in the petition for participation.

### **Research Context**

Contextualization data is essential in qualitative research, because "institutional type and organizational culture [both] play a significant role in the impact of faculty development related to teaching" (Gateley, 2015, p. 67). In other words, the environment in which the professors in the current study taught was germane to their Pedagogical Reasoning and Action. Often qualitative research data include "life histories" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 12) to provide a deep level of contextual data, and life histories are utilized in this study for the same reason. Pseudonyms were not given for the institutions in this study so that a detailed contextualization data for each case could be provided for the reader. Written approval was received for the use of site names through participants, and IRB approval to include site names was given. Also included in this study for

contextualization purposes were: research site orientations, including information regarding facilities; an overview of each program, and sequence of courses that each observed course resides; an overview of the students who took these courses, specifically regarding their personal and vocational goals; the programmatic leadership and faculty, to provide information regarding those who influenced the programmatic design in which the professors studied taught; and accrediting bodies for each university, which provided an overarching framework for each institution and professor to adhere.

### **Data Collection**

According to Stake (2006), interviews and observations are among the most common forms of data collection for all case studies (2.4, Data Gathering Across Cases section, para. 1), and both methods were utilized in this study. The data collection was completed in the following way: First, a baseline interview took place to gather information about the participant's view of their institutional context, how the participant prepared and organized the subject matter in preparation for instruction, and what pedagogical choices they had made. This interview was semi-structured to allow for unanticipated questioning based on each educators' responses. See Appendix B for the list of interview questions. I asked each instructor to provide copies of their course syllabus and all pertinent materials for the semester, such as musical scores, visual presentations, and formal assessments that were to be used in class. All documents gathered as part of this study were digital copies and were stored on a password-protected laptop. The documents were then analyzed and coded for pertinent information. I asked each participant to discuss the use of these materials, so I could get a sense of how they

represented the materials using “ideas in the form of new analogies, metaphors, and so forth” (Shulman, 1987, p. 16). This baseline interview was recorded, and the recordings were stored on a password-protected laptop. An interview transcription was provided to each participant for reviewing and editing, and a pseudonym was used to replace each participant’s name before the interview was added to the case report. Data gathered during this initial interview, along with participant input, helped to decide the date of my observation.

I then observed each participant’s popular music class to see how instruction was implemented. The first participant to be observed was Professor South, who was observed using Skype; the second participant to be observed was Professor West, FaceTime was used for this observation; and the third participant was Professor North, who was observed in person. I observed one class taught by Professors South and West, and six classes taught by Professor North. Of particular interest during these observations was how the educators adapted and tailored instruction for the specific students present and how they evaluated student understanding, both formally and informally. I made jottings as I observed, and I retained a copy of any provided materials used in the class, from both the baseline collection and the class itself. Moving from field to desk, I wrote complete field notes and added pertinent data to the field report. After the field report was completed, I engaged in the process of reading the field notes and making analytical memos, which guided reflections for the post-observation interview. After the final interview was completed, pseudonyms were used to replace names within the observational data, then the field notes and analytical memos were added to the case

report.

A final semi-structured interview was conducted to gather data regarding the instructor's pedagogical reasoning and action process. Of particular interest in the second interview was what each educator thought about their preparation and implementation of materials, as well as what new comprehensions of subject matter, students, and self they felt had been gained throughout the PRA process. Focusing the second interview on shifts in "perspectives and practices, and changes in participants' situations and resources" (Compton-Lilly, p. 59) helped to address Compton-Lilly's caution that case studies are "moving and shifting targets" (p. 59) due to their temporal nature. Again, this interview was recorded, transcribed, and sent to the participant for review and editing. I then replaced the participant's name with a pseudonym and added the revised interview to each case report. See Appendix E for comparative interview responses, and appendices F–H for the full interviews.

### **Artifacts**

Each instructor was asked to provide copies of the course syllabus and all pertinent materials for the semester, such as musical scores, visual presentations, and formal assessments that would be used in class. I also searched the websites of each site to gather as many additional program-related documents as possible. The documents obtained through this combination of collection methods included university catalogs, student handbooks, course walks, programmatic standards and assessments, accreditation requirement documents, course policies, magazine articles, homework assignments, and syllabi. Not all of the aforementioned documents were available for each site, and all

documents gathered as part of this study were digital copies and were stored on a password-protected laptop. The documents were then analyzed and coded for pertinent information. I also asked each participant to discuss the use of these materials, so I could get a sense of how they represented the materials using “ideas in the form of new analogies, metaphors, and so forth” (Shulman, 1987, p. 16).

### **Journal**

A reflective journal is often created by researchers when doing qualitative research (Ortlipp, 2008, p. 695), and is beneficial to: the *research process*, specifically regarding decisions made, the perceptions of the researcher, researcher values, and experiences (p. 697); *critical reflections*, that can lead to unplanned adjustments to methodology (p. 699); and *transparency*, specifically regarding the “opinions, thoughts, and feelings” (p. 703) of the researcher. Gateley (2015) applied the technique of journaling when researching the influence of the Wakonse Conference on College Teaching on educators by creating three separate journals, two electronic and one handwritten (p. 72). Although the methodology of this study was partially structured according to Gateley’s (2015) work, only one handwritten reflective journal, rather than two digital and one handwritten, has been kept throughout this research process. Journal entries and data collected from the initial interview and observations were reviewed before the final interview to prepare follow-up questions.

## **Analysis of Data**

The first steps in the analysis of data were taken by reviewing the collected data. Reading and rereading occurred before the data were coded. An in-depth review of the data helped me think deeply about the data that had been collected. In the same way, I listened to the recordings multiple times to gain a solid mental picture of each interview before coding. Reviewing the data brought about some additional clarifying questions, and follow-up conversations were conducted with each participant to fill in the information gaps. Once I was comfortable with my level of understanding regarding the collected data and satisfied that the additional needed data had been gathered and sufficiently considered, the coding and cataloging of the data began. Each case was analyzed separately, and jottings occurred when I noticed a finding that initially appeared common to all cases. Once the individual case analyses were completed, I sifted through the coded data multiple times to discover commonalities and divergences between the cases. Member checks were performed at multiple points, and adjustments made to the case and multi-case files as needed based on participant feedback. The following sections outline in more detail the process for data organization and analysis.

### **Coding**

The development of a coding system was a three-step process: an in-depth review of data for emergent themes, an analysis of Shulman's (1987) model of PRA, and a review of researched-based literature that utilized Shulman's PRA framework. Each of the aforementioned three steps occurred separately. Initial groupings of data were created for the gathered data, and initial coding ideas were developed based on Shulman's (1987)

model and the review of research-based literature. The themes and codes were then combined to develop the coding system for this study. Analysis of the data from this study produced the following emergent themes related to each professors' thinking: curriculum, both in the lack thereof and the need to tailor their curriculum; institutional context, which includes institutional guidelines, governing bodies, and other such influencers inherent to their respective institutions; student considerations, with their sociocultural backgrounds and vocational goals; and teaching context, which includes all available teaching resources and space allotted for teaching. The a priori codes used in the analysis of Shulman's (1987) PRA framework included: Initial Comprehension (IC), Transformation (TR), Instruction (IN), Evaluation (EV), Reflection (RE), and New Comprehensions (NC).

Understanding initial teacher comprehension (pre instruction) is vital to identifying the knowledge growth that occurs throughout the PRA cycle. Pella (2015) sought to identify "pedagogical shifts" (p. 88) in teachers' thinking by identifying the variances between teachers' "comprehension [and] new comprehension" (p. 89) using Shulman's (1987) PRA framework. Pella (2015) first distilled the active parts of Shulman's (1987) PRA framework into three categories: transformation, which included: the preparation, representation, selection, adaptation, and tailoring of instructional materials; instruction and evaluation, which included all aspects of active teaching, the various types of student evaluation and the evaluation of self; and reflection, which included both a reflection of student and self. Although Pella (2015) did not make this claim directly, the implication is that the initial comprehensions and new comprehensions

of each educator are part of their knowledge base (KB). In other words, an educator's initial comprehensions (IC) are a static launching point for the process of PRA, and their new comprehensions (NC) are a landing point that further develops their KB. It became evident throughout the course of data analysis that Pella's (2015) categorization of Shulman's (1987) model of PRA was supported through the data of this study. Each professor's PRA could not be fully explored without accounting for their comprehension of the subject matter (and new comprehensions), which were simply an amalgam of their diverse KB's. The KB category was thus added to the coding for this study. See Table 1 for an overview of the coding used in this study.

### **Case Analysis and Triangulation of Data**

The case report, according to Stake (2006), is created to provide a "summary of what has been done to try to get answers, what assertions can be made with some confidence, and what more needs to be studied" (1.8, Making the Individual Case Report section, para. 1). The individual case reports for this study contained three main sections: contextual information, of each site; background information for each professor, specifically pertaining to their KB; and a response to the guiding research questions of this study, discussed through the lens of each professor's PRA. The case report was developed, in part, by following Stake's (2006) suggestion that a researcher should "every day or so, [identify] a minor topic, a quotation, or even an impression that seem[s] good enough for potential inclusion" (1.8, Making the Individual Case Report section, para. 7). As a final step in the case report triangulation, and before cross-case analysis

began, I sent a draft of each case report to the participants for review and made adjustments based on their recommendations.

**Table 1**

*Coding for this Study*

Theoretical concept	Code	Description
Knowledge Base	KB	General pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, curriculum knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts, knowledge of educational ends, and pedagogical content knowledge.
Initial Comprehensions	IC	A manifestation of each professor's KB for teaching. The comprehension of purposes, subject matter structures, and ideas within and outside the discipline.
Transformation	TR	The selection, preparation, adaptation, and choices of representation of subject matter and materials.
Instruction	IN	The active act of teaching, in all of its forms.
Evaluation	EV	The active act of checking for student understanding in formative and summative ways, and self-evaluation.
Reflection	RE	Reviewing, reconstructing, reenacting and critically analyzing one's own and the class's performance, and grounding explanations in evidence.
New Comprehensions	NC	The amalgamation of new understandings, and learnings from the process of PRA that are added to each educator's KB.

**Cross-Case Analysis and Triangulation of Data**

After the individual cases were completed, I began a comparative cross-case analysis by reading through and making marginal notes on each individual case. Stake (2006) recommended that, during this stage, researchers should develop a "case–quintain dialectic... wherein attention to the local situations and attention to the program or

phenomenon as a whole contend with each other for emphasis” (3.3, Cross-Case Procedure section, para. 2). In other words, the findings of the individual cases should not merge too quickly into assertions for the cross-case analysis. Provisional themes were generated from the research questions, findings that were common to all cases, findings that were common to two cases, and findings that were found only in a single case, but were still perceived germane to the quintain (Stake, 2006). Use of Stake’s (2006) worksheets assisted with the generation of themes. See Appendix C to view the adapted worksheets.

Still attending to the case-quintain dialectic, tentative assertions were made about the quintain, which were used to form an outline for the cross-case report. As themes were developed for each assertion, I moved back and forth between evidence from the case findings to ensure congruency between the findings and assertions. Stake (2006) recommended that triangulation should occur in the cross-case analysis stage through “people who know some of the quintain or related activity” (3.7, Triangulation Across Cases section, para. 3). For this study, those who were most familiar with the quintain were the participants, so a draft of the final cross-case report was shared with each of them, and revisions were made according to their recommendations using track changes for clarity and comprehensiveness.

### **Trustworthiness**

Although the previous sections addressed trustworthiness according to Stake’s (2006) recommendations, which emphasize triangulation, additional measures were taken throughout the course of this study to address the issue of trustworthiness. Shenton

(2004) outlined four main contributors to the trustworthiness of qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The following subsections outline Shenton's (2004) suggestions and how they were addressed in this study.

### ***Credibility***

It was important that credibility was addressed through several different means in this study, such as the adoption of "well established" (Shenton 2004, p. 64) research methods and triangulation of data. Both of which were utilized in this study. Shenton (2004) reported that the "background, qualifications, and experience of the investigator" (p. 68) are important because the researcher is the primary instrument for collecting and analyzing data. To address this concern, I have given in detail my qualifications and experience with popular music performance, pedagogy, and popular music program and curriculum development to establish my credentials in this area. In addition, member checks were conducted at multiple points throughout this study to increase accountability for data integrity and the reporting of those data. Guba (1981) stated that member checks were essential in "establishing the truth value" (p. 80), a point that was also emphasized by Shenton (2004).

The use of thick, rich descriptions for each site and participant in this study was also included purposefully to help alleviate credibility issues. Using detailed descriptions could help promote credibility, because "it helps to convey the actual situations that have been investigated and... the contexts that surround them" (Shenton, 2004, p. 69). Detailed descriptions are important, according to Shenton (2004), as it helps the reader "determine the extent to which the overall findings ring true" (p. 69).

### *Transferability*

The aforementioned thick, rich descriptions also aid the transferability of this study. Firestone (1993) stated that “the researcher has an obligation to provide a rich, detailed, thick description of the case” so that readers can “assess the match between the situation studied and their own” (p. 18). Shenton (2004) agreed:

Ultimately, the results of a qualitative study must be understood within the context of the particular characteristics of the organisation or organisations and, perhaps, geographical area in which the fieldwork was carried out. In order to assess the extent to which findings may be true of people in other settings, similar projects employing the same methods but conducted in different environments could well be of great value. (Shenton, 2004, p. 70)

In terms of the current study, in addition to the detailed descriptions of each site and participant, the diversity of context between those sites also aided the transferability of this study to other similar contexts.

Identifying the possible audiences of this research was also an important step in working toward transferability, as this knowledge aided in the reporting of the findings. This study was thought to be relevant to a number of music theory scholars (Cohen, 2015; Cohn, 2016; Hanenberg, 2016; Heetderks, 2015; Nobile, 2015) and university educators (Cartwright, 2004, Kinchen, 2012). However, Compton-Lilly (2013) cautioned that the transferability (or generalizability) of case-studies might not be immediately apparent and suggested that “hints about what might matter in local communities” (p. 61) be given in the case reports. In chapter six, I have identified pertinent data that exceeds

the confines of this study, and I have made recommendations that could be “tested locally and adapted as needed” (p. 61) to broader situations.

### ***Dependability and Confirmability***

One way to address dependability in a qualitative study is to detail the research process and findings so that that future researchers may emulate the process (Shenton, 2004). Detailing the processes of this study could also allow future researchers to test “the extent to which proper research practices have been followed” (p. 71).

Confirmability in qualitative research, according to Shenton (2004), is comparable to “objectivity in science” (p. 71). Although it would be impossible to remove all bias from qualitative research, every effort has been made during this study to reduce the amount of “investigator bias” (p. 72), which included the triangulation of data and disclosure of researcher positionality. Additionally, written and verbal communication was given to each participant outlining the processes of this study, and member checks were conducted to ensure their validity was represented throughout this research.

### **Limitations**

In a PCK Summit keynote address, Shulman (Biological Sciences Curriculum Study, 2014) outlined five weaknesses of the PCK theoretical concept. The first two weaknesses Shulman identified was that PCK is “emotion and affect free” (31:29), and that the model of PRA disproportionately emphasized reasoning over action (33:45–34:30). Shulman suggested that PRA was “about 85% reasoning, about 5% action, and at least 10% totally obscure” (34:20–34:30). The remaining three weaknesses were that there was not enough emphasis on each teacher’s setting, the social context of students,

or student outcomes (38:15–38:55). The five weaknesses of the PCK theoretical concept outlined by Schulman were accounted for in the interview phase with questions designed to equally emphasize all areas of PRA, and through a detailed reporting of each pedagogue's educational context, to provide an overview of each teacher's setting, and gain insight on the social context of their students and desired student outcomes.

Another limitation is that it was not possible given the scope of this study to account for all of the domains identified by Bloom (1956). Those domains include the affective and psychomotor domains for a complete learning taxonomy (Bloom, 1956, p. 7). The affective and psychomotor domains, the imbalance of the PRA theoretical concept, teacher settings, student contexts, and student outcomes are not the focus of this study, but overlooking these limitations would have had a negative effect on this research because much of what teachers know, and thus how they prepare, is at least in part reliant on their “normative vision” (Biological Sciences Curriculum Study, 2014, 33:00). Other researchers have also identified additional domains that could be pertinent to this subject. For example, while comparing practices used in higher education with the development of higher-order thinking skills, English (2016) discussed three additional domains: the perceptual domain, the experiential domain, and the interpersonal domain (p. 20). English stated that the latter two domains involved all three of the original domains “at some level” (p. 20). Although English's study was not directly related to the current one, it did provide an additional perspective on the way researchers and educators think about learning and the importance of the cognitive domain. Given the scope of this study, it was decided that only one domain should be included. The cognitive domain was chosen

because, according to Shulman (1987), it was closely tied to the knowledge base for teaching (p. 11). English (2016) also asserted that in education the cognitive domain was the most commonly utilized (p. 20).

## **Chapter 4**

### **Site Orientation and Program Overview**

Before any substantive discussion of the cases (professors) or findings (quintain) can occur, it is important that thick, rich descriptions of the context for each pedagogue be given (Firestone, 1993; Gateley, 2015; Shenton, 2004). In this chapter, an orientation to each individual site has been given to provide the necessary background for each case studied, which includes: general background information, such as site location; university goals, such as a mission statement; accolades, such as awards and student accomplishments; and facilities, specifically regarding buildings, equipment, and educational spaces utilized in the pedagogical process of each institution. The site orientation for each institution is followed by a programmatic overview, which was intended to provide further context into the specific program in which the popular music theory courses have been developed and taught. The topics for each program overview include: general information, such as program length and goals; popular music theory courses, along with their topics and sequencing; students, specifically regarding their experiences on campus and accolades related to popular music; faculty, which includes leadership and key pedagogues; and accrediting bodies, which influence both logistical and pedagogical decisions. A brief reflection and comparison of the three sites are given at the end of this chapter.

#### **Cedarville University Site Orientation**

At the time of this study, Cedarville University was a not-for-profit Christian university with just over 4,000 total students located on four-hundred acres in Cedarville,

Ohio. Cedarville Ohio is part of the Dayton metropolitan area, which is situated between Columbus and Cincinnati. Cedarville University has been recognized for excellence in education by a number of different organizations. For example, in 2019 US News and World Report ranked Cedarville the 12th best regional college in the Midwest, fourth best in undergraduate teaching, and number one among Midwest regional colleges for veterans (Overview of Cedarville University, 2019). *Worship Leader Magazine* (WL Media, 2019) had also recognized Cedarville as one of the “top schools” (p. 26) for contemporary music and worship training, as did *Share Faith Magazine* (2017).

Whereas Cedarville was a high-quality educational institution, this distinction was secondary to the larger university commitment to equip students “for Godly service, vocational distinction, and cultural engagement” (Why Cedarville?, 2019). Although the use of the phrase ‘Godly service’ implied vocation in a church, or other types of religious institutions, Cedarville’s vision exceeded those boundaries and included all manner of vocation. At the time of this study, the President of Cedarville University was Dr. Thomas White, who held a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology and modeled the aforementioned faith-based vision intently. Among his qualifications for his position were an aptitude for research and scholarly writing and experience in vocational ministry. Dr. White had a Baptist denomination background, a commitment to invest in students and faculty, and a faith-based perspective on life and education. At the core of Dr. White’s vision for training the next generation of leaders was the “1,000 Days” campaign.

From the time freshmen arrive on our campus until the day they walk across the commencement stage—not counting summer and winter breaks—they’ll be here for approximately 1,000 days. We are intentional in every one of those days about equipping students to enter the workplace professionally equipped and personally motivated to influence their world for Jesus Christ. (White, 2020)

The 1,000 days initiative at Cedarville University included: daily chapel services, with students, faculty, and staff; the requirement of a Bible minor, with an emphasis on prayer, the study of scriptures, and Cedarville’s doctrinal commitments; a liberal arts emphasis, with an emphasis on critical thinking and writing; and the core values of loving God, loving others, conducting oneself with integrity, and always being “excellent in effort” (White, 2015, p. 3). The aforementioned distinctions were important aspects of the culture at Cedarville University, and were included here because of the profound influence on faculty and curriculum.

### ***Cedarville Facilities***

At the time this study was conducted, the Worship department at Cedarville University was located in the Bolthouse Center for Music, a 42,000 square foot space within the Dixon Ministry Center. The Bolthouse Center had a 250-seat recital hall for student performances, and 20 sound-proof practice rooms. Each practice room held an upright piano, grand piano, or digital piano for student use. There was also a lounge for music students located in the Bolthouse center, an instrument wing, faculty studios, a large rehearsal room, and four artist green rooms. Additionally, the Pedagogy and Electronic Music Wing had a music computer lab with multiple student stations, each

complete with MIDI keyboards and Apple computers with music notation and digital audio workstation (DAW) software. Advanced students also had access to a MIDI development room for recording. The Dixon Ministry Center also included: a piano lab, for novice students seeking to pass proficiencies; a Keyboard Pedagogy area, designed with a standard classroom as well as a secondary area set up like a home studio; and the Jeremiah Chapel, an auditorium with seating for 3,400 that was a central focus for the university.

### **Cedarville University Program Overview**

All of the aforementioned pieces of Cedarville's vision were important to this study, because it was the amalgam of these ideas that created the construct for the Bachelor of Arts in Worship (BAW) program. Although graduates from the BAW program at Cedarville were not limited to vocation in a church, this program was designed with that primary goal in mind. The emphasis on vocational church leadership created a unique opportunity for the development of a program congruent with the needs of a specific subcultural demographic, a task that had somewhat of a moving target given the ephemeral nature of musical styles. The primary vocational field for Cedarville graduates was Christian churches in the United States, but more specifically, the BAW program at Cedarville was designed to meet the needs of churches that utilized a contemporary popular music style.

The Bachelor of Arts in Worship program at Cedarville had both a three-year and a four-year track for completion, but according to Dr. O'Neel, who was the head of the Worship program when this study was conducted, most students preferred to complete

their degree in four years. Cedarville also had a Western European style based music program with both a three- and four-year track, which provided students with training for churches that had not adopted a contemporary style of music. Having parallel tracks for Music and Worship training, and having both three and four-year options for completion of these programs, has allowed Cedarville to address the goal stated on the university website to prepare students to lead worship in an “ever-changing climate of modern worship while grounding [them] in the never-changing truth of God’s Word” (About the B.A. in Worship Degree, 2019). It also allowed for some collaboration between styles, such as within the chapel services at Cedarville University. Additionally, the theological and interdisciplinary training included at Cedarville, along with an offering relevant real-world training in multiple styles, provided a robust training ground for future worship leaders.

### ***Contemporary Musicianship Courses at Cedarville***

The popular music theory courses at Cedarville, which were titled Contemporary Musicianship courses, were foundational to the music training therein. Upon arrival at Cedarville, each incoming student took an entrance exam for placement in the appropriate level course. Those with very little or no previous experience with music theory were then placed in an Introduction to Music Theory course, which doubled as a foundational course for the Western European music program. Identifying basic structural elements such as notes, scales, intervals, and chords were all covered in the introductory course. The purpose of the introduction course was to level the understanding of basic musical elements within the incoming freshman class so that a

common foundation could be achieved to study popular music theory. Those who passed the entrance exam were not enrolled in any music theory courses in their first semester, and joined with those from the introduction class in semester two of their freshman year.

There were three Contemporary Musicianship courses at Cedarville University, all of which had been tailored to equip students for the primary vocation of church worship leader. The learning outcomes for each of the three courses contained elements of structure, sight-singing, and aural skills training (see Table 2). There was a symbiotic approach to teaching written, aural, and sight-singing elements of music theory comprehension in the Worship program at Cedarville, in that there was only one course for these combined elements. The integration of the aforementioned elements is divergent from many universities that use separate courses, such as Music Theory and Aural Skills courses, to train students in these topics. This amalgam of topics in the Contemporary Musicianship courses at Cedarville demonstrated the integrated approach to pedagogy that had been established at this university.

### ***Cedarville Students***

The student experience at Cedarville included training in accordance to the five core academic objectives: to glorify God, think broadly and deeply, communicate effectively, develop academically and professionally, and engage for Christ.

The Cedarville graduate exemplifies devotion to the triune God, Christlike character, and faithfulness to the teachings of the Scriptures...evaluates ideas, practices, and theories across disciplines within the framework of God's revelation...listens well, and produces and delivers clear, compelling, accurate,

and truthful messages in a relevant, respectful manner...demonstrates competence and integrity in academic and professional endeavors...[and] lives to further the mission of Christ in the world as an active influence in spiritual, moral, professional, and social spheres. (Mission and Vision, 2020)

**Table 2**

*Learning Outcomes for Contemporary Musicianship Courses at Cedarville University*

Course Title	Learning Outcomes
Contemporary Musicianship 1	Develop analytical skills with contemporary harmonic structures. Demonstrate ability to write contemporary chord progressions, including fifth progressions and chord substitutions. Demonstrate ability to hear and notate melodies, rhythms and harmonic progressions. Sing diatonic melodies at sight.
Contemporary Musicianship 2	Develop analytical skills with more advanced contemporary harmonic structures (Melodic and Harmonic Analysis). Demonstrate ability to write contemporary chord progressions, including fifth progressions and chord substitutions (Charting and Basic Arranging). Demonstrate ability to hear <i>and</i> notate melodies, rhythms and harmonic progressions (Ear-training and Transcription). Sing diatonic <i>and</i> elementary chromatic melodies at sight (Sight-Singing).
Contemporary Musicianship 3	Develop analytical skills with more advanced contemporary harmonic structures. Demonstrate ability to write original arrangements using advanced contemporary harmonic structures. Demonstrate ability to hear and notate melodies, rhythms and harmonic progressions. Sing diatonic and more chromatically advanced melodies at sight.

If the barometer of success for a university is related to their graduating student employment rate, these five academic objectives have been a success, as evidenced by

the 100% employment rate for their Worship graduates (Proof Positive: Job and Graduate School Placement Rates, 2019). In addition to a standard regiment of general education courses, such as math, English, and science, each student at Cedarville was required to have a minor in Bible, spend time each weekday in a chapel service, and participate in an internship program. The daily chapel services for the worship majors had a purpose beyond edification and personal growth, as the worship students led songs and performed during those services under the tutelage of the campus Worship Pastor. There were three or four chapel bands each academic year, with 8–10 students that worked in rotation. Each band had the same members for one academic year once formed, and they practiced two hours per week on average. Although this part of the student experience was not required, it was a highly sought-after addition to the student curriculum because of the inherent value of real-life experience in their field of study. Students in the various chapel bands also gained experience playing with traditional instruments in a contemporary context because of the purposeful cross-pollination of instruments from the traditional music program.

Some Worship students also participated in Lab Bands, which were as the name suggested: bands that existed for the purpose of training, and only performed for an audience under rare circumstances. During their scheduled meeting times, each team member took turns rehearsing the band, performing each song, and providing feedback to band members. After each team member performed these tasks, they themselves were provided with feedback from their peers and professors as a critique of their leadership strengths and weaknesses. The lab band environment created an opportunity for students

to practice their craft in a practical way and gain leadership experience. Providing feedback for their peers also helped students to develop critical thinking skills through the act of evaluating live performances, which was the highest cognitive stage of learning according to Bloom (1956) and Rifkin and Stoecker (2011).

In addition to the lab and chapel band opportunities, there were several audition-based performing groups at Cedarville, which included the Resonance Worship Bands and the Rekindle Worship Band. Whereas both of these teams were made up of 8–10 Worship students, the Rekindle Worship Band was made up exclusively of female students. All of these teams performed regularly at various venues, including campus worship events, recruitment functions, camps and retreats, and even an occasional chapel service. These groups had a minimal time commitment of around two hours of rehearsal time per week, and tour two or three weekends per semester.

The flagship performing groups at Cedarville University were the four HeartSong worship teams. Like the other organized groups at Cedarville, these four groups required an audition, but unlike the other performing bands, there was a stipend for each of the four bands eight members, which was commensurate with the 15 hours per week commitment each student made to participate. Each HeartSong team consisted of vocalists, multiple guitarists, a keyboard player, a bass player, a drummer, and a media specialist. The HeartSong teams performed at chapel roughly two times per month, but were primarily traveling bands complete with their own production team. Since these groups were made up exclusively of students, travel commitments during the semesters were limited to the weekends, and these four groups had a 10-week travel commitment

for the summer months when their academic responsibilities were at a minimum. Although chapel services were recorded live, the HeartSong groups had the distinction of being the only recording group on campus to have recorded an album each of the last eight years. Although the other worship bands at Cedarville were focused on servant leadership at various events, HeartSong provided a more advanced opportunity for students to gain experience in the music industry as paid participants. Worship students also had the opportunity to participate in various musical groups on campus, including; Jubilate Ministry Choir, Concert Choral, Women's Choir, Men's Glee Club, Symphonic Winds, and Orchestra to fulfill their large ensemble requirement.

### ***Cedarville Faculty***

The Worship program at Cedarville University at the time of this study was led by Professor Beth Porter and Dr. Roger O'Neel, who were the Chair of Music and Worship and Assistant Chair of Worship respectively. Although Porter oversaw both the Music and Worship tracks at Cedarville, it was Dr. O'Neel that led the Worship program on a daily basis. Dr. O'Neel held a Ph.D. in Music Theory from the University of Texas, over 20 years of vocational experience leading worship in various churches, frequently spoke at conferences, and had written articles for publications such as *The Church Musician*. Nine additional adjunct or full-time faculty members filled out the remainder of Cedarville's Worship faculty, and they were an eclectic mix of studio musicians, scholars, and industry experts. None of the Cedarville University faculty had an advanced degree in popular music. Cedarville faculty did have an abundance of experience transforming their Western European music theory training into something useful for

contemporary worship settings. The transformational aspect of the faculty's contributions at Cedarville demonstrated a foundational tenant of Schulman's (1987) model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action, namely the transformation of subject matter to something relevant to the students educational and vocational goals.

### ***Cedarville Accreditation***

Cedarville University (CU) held state, regional, and national accreditation through three separate organizations: the Ohio Department of Higher Education, which provided in-state accreditation; the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), which provided regional accreditation; and the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), which provided national accreditation. The guiding principles put in place by these three organizations worked in tandem to affect every course at CU, and thus every faculty members' pedagogical choices were also affected.

The Ohio Department of Higher Education (OHED) was a "Cabinet-level agency for the Governor of the State of Ohio that [oversaw] higher education for the state" (About the Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2019). Cedarville University was granted a Certificate of Authorization by OHED to administer a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Worship. The OHED was designed to be a supplemental accreditation that objectively reviewed individual programs rather than entire universities, and was contingent upon regional or national accrediting bodies, such as the HLC and NASM, to provide specific subject matter guidelines (Ohio Department of Education, 2016, p. 3). The OHED had an impact on the pedagogical process at CU, because a tangible amalgam of formative and summative assessments had been required by the Ohio Department of Education (p. 11).

CU also had the liability of providing “evidence of the need for the proposed program in Ohio” (Ohio Department of Education, 2016, p. 12), which included “data-driven market research that [addressed] collaboration with employers [and the] potential for employment upon graduation” (p. 12).

The Higher Learning Commission was an accrediting body for “degree-granting post-secondary educational institutions in the North-Central region” (About the Higher Learning Commission, 2019) of the United States. At the time this research was conducted, the HLC was present in the following 19 states: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. The HLC had five criteria for accreditation: that the institution’s mission be clear and public, as well as guide operations; that the institution demonstrated integrity in its actions, which included ethical conduct; that high-quality education was provided; that the institution evaluated and improved their programs on a regular basis; and that the resources, structures, and processes were congruent with the universities mission. Similar to the OHED, the HLC provided structural guidelines to undergird the various programs at CU. However, the HLC provided recognized regional accreditation for the university at large rather than on the individual programs. The HLC accreditation and OHED Certificate of Authorization stipulations were complementary to one another, and created a pedagogical framework suitable for constructing programmatic curricula.

The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) was the largest accrediting body for music-related programs in the United States when this study was

conducted, and recognized two basic types of undergraduate accredited music degrees: liberal arts and professional degrees. Both were music degrees, but there were distinctions between liberal arts and professional degrees. For example, liberal arts degrees were required to have between 30–45% of their courses dedicated to music, whereas the professional degree requirements were set between 50–65% music courses (NASM, 2019, pp. 88–89). The percentages broke down into two main categories: musicianship, which was allotted 20–25%, and performance, to which 10–20% was allotted (NASM, 2019, p. 96). NASM also recommended titles for each music degree to help distinguish which type of program it was: Liberal arts degrees included the Bachelor of Arts in Music (BA) and Bachelor of Science in Music (BS), while the professional degrees were titled Bachelor of Music (BM). Cedarville University had both a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Music degrees, and both were fully accredited by NASM. However, the Contemporary Musicianship courses were taught solely within the BA in Worship degree program, which was not categorized as a music degree by NASM standards.

### **The University of Memphis Site Orientation**

To fully comprehend the academic goals and pedagogical decisions made by Professor South, it is necessary to briefly provide an overview of the context in which he taught during this study. In this instance the context includes not only the university, but also the community in which the university resides. Indeed, the rich tradition of popular music in Memphis has not only influenced the programmatic and pedagogical choices made at the University of Memphis, but for many decades has caused musical

shockwaves that have influenced the course of the popular music industry. One such shockwave occurred in Memphis at Sun Records, which is where artists such as Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lewis, and Carl Perkins launched their careers and contributed to the official birth of the Rock-n-Roll era (Sun Joins Singleton Legacy, 2019), which has led many to consider Memphis the birthplace of Rock-n-Roll (Memphis is Home of the Blues and the Birthplace of Rock ‘N’ Roll, 2020). The University of Memphis is a mere six miles from Sun Records. Additionally, several prominent blues musicians began their legacies in Memphis, such as B.B. King and Ma Rainey. There was a strong blues culture present in Memphis, especially on Beale Street, which was declared the official “Home of the Blues” (Memphis: Where Music Legends Made History, 2019) by the United States Congress in 1977. This declaration was a response in part to the groundbreaking stylistic music of the man considered to be the father of the blues, W.C. Handy, whose work with the blues began in 1912 with a song called “The Memphis Blues” (Beale Street Brass Notes Walk of Fame, 2019).

The sociocultural influence of the community was important to the development of popular music studies at the University of Memphis because of the symbiotic relationship between the university and the community at large. Although this research was conducted on a single course at the University of Memphis (Music Theory: Popular Styles), the influence of blues music on the music program at the University of Memphis was evident. For example, the Memphis Blues Uniform worn by the university marching band was an homage to the Blues Brothers, whose style was based on the Memphis blues. Regarding the uncommon band uniform, the director of athletic bands, Dr. Plenk, stated

that the “look was inspired by the Blues Brothers, whose outfits were a nod to the classic bluesman style of coat and fedora, a tradition with very deep Memphis roots—something you might see on Beale Street” (Inventive Designs, 2018, p. 6).

The University of Memphis had over 21,000 students, sat on 1,600 acres in the metro area of Memphis Tennessee, and was less than 10 miles from Beale Street and Sun Records at the time this study was conducted (Overview of University of Memphis, 2019). The university also had over 250 areas of study, and boasted one of the largest schools of music in the southeast region of the United States. According to the Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music website at the time this study was conducted, the University of Memphis had over 400 students studying within 29 different concentrations, administered the only doctoral degree program for music in Tennessee, and held “more performances than any other music organization in the Mid-South (A Renowned Music School at one of the Largest Universities in Tennessee, 2019). Despite the size of the UM School of music, it was a place that students could experience a balance between personalized instruction and the resources of a large, internationally recognized university. The overarching mission present at the University of Memphis, which permeated all aspects of their programs, was the mantra “Driven by Doing” (Driven by Doing, 2019). Much more than a slogan or idea, the Driven by Doing initiative at the University of Memphis was an invitation for students to take action for themselves and their ideas.

### ***University of Memphis Facilities***

There were two music buildings at the University of Memphis, the Music Building and the Communication and Fine Arts Building. The Music Building was the

primary home of the Rudi E. Scheidt school of music and contained: the Harris Concert Hall, the music library, smart classrooms, and offices. The Communication and Fine Arts Building housed the programs most relevant to this study, specifically the Music Industry and Commercial Music programs. However, the use of these buildings was not mutually exclusive in that all university resources are utilized by the various majors therein.

The music library at the University of Memphis had audio equipment, with everything from turntables and cassette decks to computers, and around 20,000 recordings for students to utilize. Also available for student use were 47,000 volumes of books, scores, and periodicals, as well as 17,000 microfilms (Music Library, 2019). There was a computer lab with 16 stations, each one with an Apple computer and a goodly amount of music industry software such as Finale, Sibelius, Digital Performer, Pro-Tools, Logic, Practica Musica, Reason, Pyware, Apple Remote Desktop, and the Microsoft Office suite (Music Facilities, 2019). There were six different types of practice rooms at the UM; regular (no instrument or upright piano), grand piano, organ, percussion, a communication building practice room, and several Wenger practice rooms. The Wenger practice rooms utilized sound isolation technologies, and had the ability to simulate different acoustical settings with microphones and speakers embedded in the walls, and even had basic recording functionalities (Sound Isolation Solutions, 2019). Additionally, there was a 40,000 square foot music center, the Scheidt Family Music Center, slated for construction to begin in 2020, with an expected completion in 2021.

### *University of Memphis Program Overview*

The aforementioned popular music theory course primarily served the Bachelor of Music in Music Industry degree at UM, which had around 100 students enrolled at the time this study was conducted. There were two tracks for Music Industry majors at the University of Memphis, Music Business and Recording, both of which existed primarily for vocational training in each area and did not necessarily emphasize the performance of popular music. That is not to say that graduates of these programs were unable to perform (many Music Industry majors at the University of Memphis performed regularly), but rather that performance was secondary to learning the vocational skills necessary to succeed in the Music Business and Recording industries.

There was also a relatively new Commercial Music degree at UM, which was a performance-based degree. Upon completion of this degree plan, students should exhibit the ability to: comprehend performance practices in the field of commercial music, within the various form thereof; develop a distinctive individual voice and style, specifically through writing and arranging original works; accurately and artistically read, sing, or play any contemporary style required by a contractor (studio recording sessions, background music for advertising or film, live performances, etc.); understand contemporary industry techniques and technology for the purpose of preparing, performing, and recording within “today’s commercial music market” (Commercial Music, 2019).

The Music Industry and Commercial Music degrees were unique among the three sites studied in this dissertation because this degree plan included traditional Western

European music theory pedagogy. Additionally, the Music Industry and Commercial Music degrees were both Bachelor of Music degrees accredited by NASM. This distinction is not to suggest superiority over the other sites in this study, but rather illustrates the uniqueness in programmatic construction. This amalgam of old and new music pedagogy had the benefit of the cross-pollination of styles, which included a shared musical language with the traditional music students who shared the same first two music theory courses. The choice to imbed a rudimentary comprehension of classical music theory into the Music Industry and Commercial Music programs aligns perfectly with the stated goals and objectives. It also granted students the knowledge needed to interact with traditional and popular music performers in their chosen fields. Although the aforementioned format accomplished the programmatic goals, the creation of a separate theory track at the University of Memphis was under consideration so that popular music theory could be grafted into the classical core.

### ***Popular Music Theory Course at the University of Memphis***

As previously mentioned, the University of Memphis had one popular music theory course, which had a prerequisite of music theory and lab 2. Therefore, each student in the Music Industry and Commercial Music programs began their training with the foundational elements of Western European classical music, which included the verbiage necessary to communicate fluently with classically trained musicians in the music industry business. However, aside from the language that was used in describing musical concepts (Nashville Numbers instead of Roman numerals, for example), the basic concepts of music theory are nearly identical. Students who understood triads,

extended chords, secondary dominants, and modulations (to name a few concepts) classically needed only be taught new verbiage and common practice methods to adapt their classical training to something useful for popular music theory. The Music Theory Popular Styles course also doubled as an upper-level elective, and was meant to provide students with a strong knowledge of post-1950 popular music theory.

### ***University of Memphis Students***

The students at the University of Memphis amassed a number of accolades having won “competitions sponsored by organizations such as the National Association of Jazz Educators, Downbeat Magazine, and the Audio Engineering Society, [and] the prestigious NARAS Collegiate Grammy Music Competition” (Music Industry, 2019). Students at UM also had the opportunity to participate in several professional organizations, such as: the Music and Entertainment Student Association (MEISA), which connected students with educators and professionals in the music and entertainment industry; the Audio Engineering Society (AES), which connected students to sound engineers, audio scientists, and other audio technology professionals; and Grammy University, which was the student chapter of the Recording Academy (Music Business, 2019). Additionally, there was a student-run record label on campus, the Blue T.O.M. (Tigers of Memphis), which allowed students to get hands-on training in recording and producing original music.

### ***University of Memphis Faculty***

There were four Music Industry faculty at the University of Memphis, led by Jeff Kline, who primarily taught recording technologies. There were more than 60 supporting

and full-time faculty members in the school of music who contributed to the programs, many of whom were “well-established as singers, songwriters, producers and record company executives” (Music Business, 2019). One example of the supporting faculty at the UM school of music was the songwriting professor Nancy Apple, who won the distinction of “Queen of Country in Memphis by Memphis Magazine’s City Guide, and the Princess of Twang by The Commercial Appeal” (Apple, 2019).

### ***University of Memphis Accreditation***

The University of Memphis held both Regional and National accreditations through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), and the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), respectively. The SACSCOC was both private and nonprofit, and was comprised of the “commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and the Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACSCASI), [which was] the K–12 arm of the association” (College Delegate Assembly, 2017, p. 6). Germane to this study was that the SACSCOC had accredited higher education institutions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, as well as some institutions in Latin America and other international institutions. Although the SACSCOC had not guided the music pedagogy choices directly, like the OHED and HLC at Cedarville, the SACSCOC helped to provide a pedagogical framework suitable for constructing programmatic curriculum at the University of Memphis.

The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), as mentioned earlier, was the largest accrediting body for music-related programs in the United States. Unlike

Cedarville’s program, the Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Worship Arts, the University of Memphis had a Bachelor of Music (BM) in Music Industry, and was in discussions concerning what modifications would be needed to add a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Music Industry at the time of this study. The difference between these two NASM program titles is found primarily in the number of required music courses, and not in the specific subject matter taught. The BM required between 50–65% of the courses be music related for completion, while BA degree plans required between 30–45% music courses.

### **Berklee College of Music Site Orientation**

Berklee College of Music was considered to be the “world’s largest college of contemporary music” (The President, 2019), due in part to the rich history of music industry success enjoyed by Berklee graduates. At the time this research was conducted, 125 Berklee alumni had amassed 295 Grammy Awards and 95 Latin Grammy Awards, along with a number of Oscar, Tony, and Emmy award winners. See Appendix D for a list of Berklee accolades. Aside from the aforementioned accolades, an even larger number of Berklee graduates have had excellent careers as artists, writers, and educators without the same large-scale public accolades.

A foundational tenet of Berklee was “that musicianship could be taught through the music of the time; and that [Berklee’s] students need[ed] practical, professional skills for successful, sustainable music careers” (Mission and Philosophy, 2019). The combination of clear, consistent vision and leadership resulted in a vast and diverse network of contemporary music training. The observations for this study were conducted in person at the Boston campus of the Berklee College of Music, which had 4,562

undergraduates in attendance in their 2018–2019 academic year (Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2019). In addition to the Boston campus, Berklee had 12 Institutes, such as the Berklee Popular Music Institute, all of which were designed to deepen understanding in a music-related field. Berklee’s range of contemporary music training also extended through diverse platforms, such as Berklee Online, where 2,963 students were enrolled within the nine different popular music programs. Berklee’s Valencia Spain campus added 177 graduate students and was Berklee’s first international location. BerkleeNYC operated the same New York studio that “Bruce Springsteen, Paul Simon, Esperanza Spalding, Herbie Hancock, Tony Bennett, Pat Metheny, Lady Gaga, David Bowie, Madonna, Bob Dylan, the cast of Hamilton, and many others recorded iconic albums” (BerkleeNYC, 2019). Berklee College of Music was also deeply committed to providing avenues for their students and faculty to perform their craft. For example, Berklee Global was an initiative that existed “to discover talent and design educational and cultural engagement opportunities for Berklee’s global community” (Berklee Global, 2019). At the time this study was conducted, a total of 95 countries were represented within Berklee Global.

### ***Berklee Facilities***

The Berklee College of Music in Boston is comprised of the best of both new and old pedagogical supports, and at the time of this study all of the classrooms had been fitted with the materials needed to give instruction in contemporary popular music. A few notable features included whiteboards with staves, pianos, audio, and video equipment for all visual and auditory examples created or prepared for class. Additionally, all

classrooms were networked so that Berklee's digital media library could be accessed remotely. The standard music classroom at Berklee had seating for between 10 and 20 students. Keeping the number of students per class below 20 (ideally 15), was important so that the Harmony department at Berklee could remain in compliance with the existing union contract. Small class sizes also benefited students by creating a more intimate educational experience, and allowed instructors to provide more robust feedback.

Berklee had over 350 ensemble and practice rooms (Facts and Statistics, 2019), but the practice rooms did not all have the same equipment due to the divergent needs of the various programmatic emphases. Some practice rooms were empty, but many contained one or more of the following; piano, organ, vibraphone, drum set and cymbals, electric piano, upright bass, bass amp, guitar amp, a set of three timpani, a five-octave marimba, congas, timbales, and various other percussion (Practice Rooms, 2019). The Berklee performance venues included: the Berklee Performance Center, with seating for 1,215; the Boston Conservatory Theater, with 325 seats; the Red Room at Café 939, with seating for 200; the Lee and Alma Berk Recital Hall, with 118 seats; Scully Hall and Studio 401, both were 100 seat conservatory-style venues; the Oliver Colvin Recital Hall, with seating for 96; the Jackson Brown Stage, which provided entertainment to the dining hall; The Loft, an acoustic performance space; the David Friend Recital Hall, Houston Hall, and Zack Box Theater, which were all small 50 seat venues. In total, the aforementioned venues provided seating for well over 2,000 persons, and this is to say nothing of the performance venues open for audition in the greater Boston area that is also rich with musical culture.

Berklee had state of the art MIDI labs, recording studios, and music production suites available for student use. There were five technology labs used for classes and were home to state-of-the-art industry tools and emerging music technologies. There were four production suites that had been professionally designed to allow students to learn how to capture, mix, and produce digital music. Perhaps the most impressive technology at the disposal of Berklee students were the 16 recording studios that offered “multitrack digital and analog recording capability, automated mix-down, digital audio editing, video postproduction, 5.1 multichannel surround mixing, and comprehensive signal processing equipment” (Our Studios, 2019).

### **Berklee Program Overview**

The focus of the subject matter at Berklee College of Music has remained consistent since its inception as the Schillenger House in 1945—contemporary music—but as the definition of ‘contemporary music’ is ephemeral, Berklee had remained adaptive to budding trends in both style and technology to stay relevant to the ever-changing culture. Yet, developing programs for every trend in popular music was not the goal of the Berklee College of Music. Rather, for over 70 years Berklee focused on providing foundational training that was adaptive to contemporary styles regardless of era. Given the aforementioned success of specific Berklee students, along with the large number of students that were not mentioned in the tables above, it is plausible to assume that Berklee as an entity had also influenced contemporary styles throughout the last seven decades.

Berklee College of Music had 12 distinct bachelor's degree programs at the Boston campus, all of which required the core harmony courses, those programs included: Composition, Contemporary Writing and Production, Electronic Production and Design, Film Scoring, Jazz Composition, Music Business and Management, Music Education, Music Production and Engineering, Music Therapy, Performance, Professional Music, and Songwriting. Berklee also had nine online undergraduate degree programs, eight Master's degree programs, and a 12-week summer program, all of which focused on contemporary music.

### ***Berklee Harmony Courses***

Popular music theory was taught at Berklee College of Music in the Harmony courses, and there were four main harmony courses in the sequence: Music Application and Theory (MAT), which replaced Harmony 1, and Harmony 2–4. Each course had multiple sections, as well as entering, non-intensive, and intensive tracks. A placement exam was given at the beginning of each Fall semester to sort each student into the appropriate level and section. All of the aforementioned courses were taught in the Fall, Spring, and Summer sessions. A proprietary textbook sequence had been developed for the Harmony courses at Berklee, those textbooks included *Music Application and Theory* (Mulholland, 2012), *Harmony 2* (Hojnacki & Mulholland, 2015), *Harmony 3* (Nettles, 2007), and *Harmony 4* (Rochinski, 1995)

To fully comprehend the scope of Berklee's training in harmony, one could simply look at the large number of harmony courses offered at their on-ground Boston location alone. For students entering Berklee's program, either as a first-semester

freshman or transfer student, the total number of harmony course sections running at the time this study was: six Fundamentals, 37 Music Application and Theory, 25 Harmony 2, six Harmony 3, and three Harmony 4. There were also between 750–850 returning students who were enrolled in additional harmony sections each semester, and roughly 10 to 15 Harmony courses that were set up as electives. Given that each section can hold a maximum of 17 students, the total number of Harmony courses at Berklee totaled between 130–142 sections, with between 2,229–2,414 total students in those courses.

The Music Application and Theory (MAT) course at Berklee was set up as an entry-level course, and was developed for students with no music theory knowledge prior to their arrival at Berklee. The MAT course included the “aural analysis of contemporary songs, including bass motion, chord function, and aspects of the rhythm section” (Music Application and Theory, 2019). Students were asked to analyze and compose simple songs in major and natural minor keys in this course through various written and keyboard assignments that focused on notation. Diatonic chords, triads and sevenths, along with modal interchange were also introduced in the MAT course. The Harmony 2 course at Berklee led the students into a deeper understanding of the MAT materials and introduced the following new concepts: secondary dominants, linear harmonic continuity and guide tone lines, minor-key harmony, subdominant minor, blues theory and chord progressions, melodic rhythm, form, extended dominant chains, II7 chords for any dominant7 or dominant functioning chord, and basic melody-harmony relationships. In Harmony 3, students built on the foundational information from MAT and Harmony 2 through studying the “elaboration of subdominant minor and modal interchange; and

chord scale theory” (Harmony 3, 2019), as well as were introduced to substitute dominants, diminished chord patterns, and modulation. The Harmony 4 concepts included: “deceptive resolutions of secondary dominants; dominant 7th chords without dominant function; contiguous dominant motion; review of melodic construction, form and melody/harmony relationship; modal interchange; pedal point and ostinato; modal harmony and modal composition; compound chords; and constant structures” (Berklee College of Music, 2019).

During this study, the following courses were observed: Music Application and Theory, Harmony 3 (entering), Harmony 3 (non-intensive), Harmony 3X (intensive), two sections of Harmony 4 (non-intensive), and Harmony 4X (intensive). With the exception of the MAT course, all courses observed during this study at Berklee College of Music in Boston were taught by Professor North.

### ***Berklee Students***

The Berklee College of Music is situated in the heart of Boston, and at the time of this study the program housed a diverse amalgam of students and professors. Students and faculty alike were able to move about town freely with a Charlie Card, a public transit card named after a fictional character who could not pay the fare and was forced to remain on the subway system underneath Boston forever (The History of the T, 2019). Every semester thousands of faculty, staff, leadership, and students at the Berklee College of Music campus in Boston converged in 25 various buildings to discuss, create, and perform current music.

### ***Berklee Faculty***

Berklee College of Music in Boston had a large number of leaders, faculty, and staff to support their number of locations, modes of teaching, and student population. Those individuals most relevant to this study were the 38 professors associated with the Harmony Core on the Boston campus, which taught the 124–134 individual harmony sections on an average of three to four courses each semester per professor. The chair of the Harmony department was George Russell Jr., who grew up playing piano for the local church, which was where he learned to “develop his ear” because “there was no written music at church” (Russell, 2019). The aural nature of Russell’s childhood experience was congruent with Cartwright’s (2004) statement that for contemporary worship teams, “music is usually improvised from chord charts as in ‘pop’ secular music” (p. 12). Much of Russell’s professional training and endeavors were infused with the aural based music methods he began learning at a young age, these included: leading the George W. Russell Trio; performing with various artists, such as Stanley Clarke and George Duke; creating recordings, such as: “*Schlickness*,” “*Worship in the Style of G*,” “*Jesus Is the Cure*,” “*Communion Volume I and II*”; serving as minister of music and chief musician for Jubilee Christian Church in Boston; performing original gospel music works, such as “Clap Your Hands”; serving as the chairman of the Jazz Department at the Pennsylvania Governor’s School for the Arts; and his role as Founder of the Christian Musicians Fellowship of Boston (Russell, 2019).

The remaining Harmony faculty at Berklee in Boston were an eclectic mix of authors, songwriters, composers and arrangers, popular music clinicians, band leaders

and music directors, performers, recording artists, and music producers. Each harmony faculty was an expert in contemporary popular music, and had formal music training in various styles, such as classical or jazz. Formal training was a prerequisite to employment at accredited institutions of higher learning at the time of this study, but the Harmony faculty at Berklee also possessed a good deal of practical experience as well outside of the confines of formal education.

### ***Berklee Accreditation***

Berklee College of Music held both State and Regional accreditations, but did not have national accreditation at the time this study was conducted. Berklee was authorized by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (MDHE), which existed “to ensure that Massachusetts residents [had] the opportunity to benefit from a higher education that [enriched] their lives and [advanced] their contributions to the civic life, economic development, and social progress of the Commonwealth” (About the Department of Higher Education, 2019). Berklee was accredited regionally by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), an entity that provided accreditation for institutions in “Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont, [as well as] three institutions in Greece, three in Switzerland, two in Lebanon, and one in Bulgaria, Bermuda, and Morocco” (About NECHE, 2019). Neither the MDHE nor the NECHE influenced the musical pedagogical processes directly, but rather influenced the logistical considerations, which allowed Berklee to develop their own robust Harmony curriculum based on popular music theory from the 20th century.

## **Comparison and Discussion**

Through the course of the research process, some general themes developed as related to the sites in which the pedagogues of this study taught. Considering the influence each site had on pedagogical decisions, learning environments, and student demographic, a brief comparison and discussion of the three sites was needed to fully develop the pedagogical context for each participant in this study. The following comparison and discussion have been framed in the same manner as each site orientation and program analysis, specifically the comparison and discussion of sites, which includes facilities; and program overview, which includes music theory courses, students, faculty, and accreditation.

### ***Site Overview Discussion***

Each representative site was in a different geographical region of the United States, and as such, had different social influences and State level governing bodies. Cedarville University was the only one of the three institutions from this study to exist in a small community, whereas Berklee College and the University of Memphis existed as part of larger communities. Although physical proximity may be less critical in today's culture due to the advancement of communication technologies, it is possible that geographic location influenced programmatic choices for each institution. The University of Memphis, as an example, with close proximity to the recording and performance industry, chose to supplement their traditional music program with Music Industry and Commercial Music degrees.

Each of these institutions, and their geographic locations, influenced the decision

to include the chosen pedagogues for participation in this study. The selection of participants was made based on the process outlined in chapter 3, specifically the process of purposeful sampling-based in part on the diversity of context. This methodological choice was made in an attempt to address the diversity of context within this research. Each pedagogue in this study chose to apply for a position at each institution because of a perceived congruency with educational goals, and was selected by the leadership over other applicants at each institution because of their 'fit' within the formal context of their respective institutions (vision, stated mission, etc.), as well as the informal context (personality, musical stylistic background, etc.). Although the styles and educational goals at each respective university were different, the processes for selecting pedagogues were similar, as were the key influencers in those selections, such as student educational and vocational goals, each pedagogues' musical experiences and preferences, and level of formal education.

**Facilities.** It was expected that each location would have conventional educational facilities augmented by spaces conducive to teaching popular music and popular music theory. This expectation was met in that all three institutions had music buildings, with dedicated office and recreational spaces; practice rooms, complete with musical instruments; performance venues, congruent with student vocational training needs; MIDI-based computer labs, all with Apple computers and industry-standard software (various notation, DAW, and Microsoft Office programs); library resources, with access to relevant journals, books, and media; and classrooms, with pedagogical resources such as whiteboards, projectors, and pianos.

Although each institution had technologies essential to popular music pedagogy, each professor preferred that students utilize staff (or notebook) paper for taking notes in the educational space provided. The technology in the classroom space was limited to those most conducive to teacher-led pedagogical approaches. This means that if the choice was made to teach popular music theory using more non-formal and informal pedagogical approaches (a live band format for instance) several obstacles would need to be overcome, these include but are not limited to: educational philosophy, specifically regarding the shift from formal to informal methods of pedagogy and assessments; logistical considerations, such as what musical equipment should be in the classroom; and student considerations, such as variations in the students' musical abilities and taste. Whereas it would be difficult to account for all student considerations in any singular curricular structure, it might be beneficial for any institution teaching popular music to have an informed approach when developing an educational philosophy of popular music pedagogy and to think creatively concerning the logistical considerations resulting from pedagogical choices. Would it, for example, be more beneficial for popular music theory to be taught in the context of stylistic band workshops where students could immediately implement the concepts? This type of approach would allow students to *create* (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) music by *synthesizing* (Bloom, 1956) the concepts presented within a classroom context, whereby students would demonstrate the highest level of each respective version of the Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Bloom, 1956) during a greater number of classroom meetings. Given the current curricular guidelines set forth by accrediting bodies and

institutional leadership, along with the logistical and monetary obstacles, this approach may not be easily implemented, but educational spaces do already exist at each of the sites in this study that could house such endeavors.

### ***Program Overview Discussion***

The educational goals of these institutions were where the greatest diversity of context was evidenced during this study, and was directly related to the stated mission and vision of each institution respectively. Cedarville University's BA in Worship program was vocational training for worship leaders within a contemporary church context, and the University of Memphis' Music Industry and Commercial Music degrees prepared students for vocation in the music industry at large. Berklee College's mission was to prepare students for vocation in music related fields, the scope of Berklee's programs included Composition, Contemporary Writing and Production, Electronic Production and Design, Film Scoring, Jazz Composition, Music Business and Management, Music Education, Music Production and Engineering, Music Therapy, Performance, Professional Music, and Songwriting.

One commonality between these programs was the commitment to meeting each student's educational needs as related to their vocational goals, and each program was explicitly designed to provide students with the skills needed for their desired career field. Students' vocational goals should not be overlooked, because it was the diversity of music-related jobs, and requisite skills for those jobs, that created the variations of programmatic choices made by administrators for each respective institution in this study. Therefore, the creation of a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to teaching popular music theory

may be problematic.

**Popular Music Theory Courses.** The sequencing of each site's popular music theory courses was similar, but the content was somewhat divergent. Cedarville University had one Introductory Music Theory course that was used for both the Fine Arts and Worship Arts program, followed by three Contemporary Musicianship courses with elements of theory and aural skills embedded within. The University of Memphis course sequencing for music theory included two Western European courses, Music Theory 1–2 along with Music Theory Lab 1–2, followed by the Music Theory Popular Styles course, which was designed to teach students the verbiage and structure of current popular music practices. At the Berklee College of Music, there were four main harmony courses in this sequence; Music Application and Theory (MAT), and Harmony 2–4, and each course in the sequence had entering, non-intensive, and intensive tracks. Harmony 2–4 at Berklee did rely somewhat on jazz theory, but each instructor worked to tailor the materials to student interests.

There were some commonalities regarding these three diverse sites, beginning with the aforementioned commitment to providing the skills and knowledge needed by each student to succeed in their vocational goals. Therefore, the diversity in curriculum could be considered an alignment of the philosophy of educational constructs, or in other words, the same types of goals and programmatic objectives, but necessarily divergent curriculum based on student vocational training outcomes. At each site, the need for curricular revision was expressed, but the revisions themselves may be divergent given each institution's educational context.

**Students and Faculty.** There were both similarities and differences in the student body and faculty for each site. The similarities included the choice to study and participate in popular forms of music, and the desire to seek vocation where popular forms of music are utilized. Each participant also indicated that students primarily utilized aural-based music transmission methods prior to their arrival at their respective institutions. The faculty at each of the three sites held advanced degrees in classical or jazz music, but had spent years in the personal study and performance of popular music. The commonality here is that each student and faculty member had a similar background story, and path to their respective institutions, autonomous from the variances in the specifics of musical style.

The divergences in students and faculty for each institutional program were manifested in the specific disciplines studied, as each student and faculty member sought specialization in a particular segment of the popular music industry. Students in the Worship Arts program at Cedarville University (CU) desired to become a worship pastor, and the faculty at CU were either current or former worship pastors. Students at the University of Memphis (UM) desired to become professionals in the music industry, or more specifically, in the areas of recording technologies and music business. Students at the Berklee College of Music had an eclectic mix of vocational goals and programmatic choices, which included but was not limited to: Composition, Contemporary Writing and Production, Electronic Production and Design, Film Scoring, Jazz Composition, Music Business and Management, Music Education, Music Production and Engineering, Music Therapy, Performance, Professional Music, and Songwriting. Although all of the

aforementioned programs required advance training in popular music theory, the pedagogues hired to teach in each of these diverse programs, along with the students that chose to study in each specific discipline, converged because of a very specific set of interests, skills, qualifications, and experiences.

**Accreditation.** Each institution held regional accreditation, which provided oversight for institutional logistical considerations, but not specific subject matter content. Berklee held both state and regional accreditation, the University of Memphis (UM) held both regional and national accreditation, and Cedarville University (CU) held state, regional, and national accreditation. The accrediting bodies for each respective institution provided oversight and accountability for the entirety of the sites, but did not delve into the specifics of course content. The only national accrediting body, which accredited UM and CU, was the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), and was music content-specific.

Both CU's BA in Worship Arts and UM's BM in Music Industry programs were tailored to the needs of the students in specific relation to their desired vocation. At UM, the BM in Music Industry was designed to be a professional music industry training program for Music Business and Recording Technologies that required "in-depth development across a range of musical subjects" (NASM, 2019, p. 179), and both areas of study at UM required a pre-described amount of musical training to complement the general education courses. It was also of benefit to the BA in Music Industry students that they received some Western European music theory training before learning current popular music theory, as they would be required to communicate musically with both

idioms in their profession. By contrast, the BA in Worship Arts at Cedarville required vocational ministry and theological training, in addition to the music and general education courses, which were crucial in preparing their students for vocation in their chosen field. Consequently, the BA for Cedarville allowed for “more curricular flexibility and more time for requirements and electives in areas other than music” (NASM, 2019, p 179) than that of the NASM BM programs. According to NASM (2019),

Students music acquire: An understanding of the common elements and organizational patterns of music and their interaction, the ability to employ this understanding in aural, verbal, and visual analyses, and the ability to take aural dictation; sufficient understanding of and capability with musical forms, processes, and structures to use this knowledge and skill in compositional, performance, analytical, scholarly, and pedagogical applications according to the requisites of their specializations; [and] the ability to place music in historical, cultural, and stylistic contexts. (NASM, 2019, p. 100–10)

There were well over 1,000 universities in the United States at the time of this study that offered at least one of the two aforementioned bachelor’s degree programs, Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Arts (NASM, 2019). Because of national accreditation, longevity, and a large number of accredited institutions, NASM as an organization had established a high standard and status in academia as for accountability, recognition, and reputation in the musical arts. Two of the three sites studied, Cedarville University and the University of Memphis, held NASM accreditation, but the accreditation for each of these programs was different. Cedarville University had

Bachelor of Arts programs for their students, and the University of Memphis had Bachelor of Music programs. Although both programs fell under the guidelines of NASM in similar ways, the programs themselves were substantially divergent.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Cases and Cross-Case Assertions**

The purpose of this study was to examine the Pedagogical Reasoning and Action (PRA) of professors who taught popular music theory. As outlined in Chapters 1 and 2, the PRA of educators includes the following non-sequential pedagogical components: comprehension of the subject matter, which in this study was popular music theory; transformation, which included the preparation, representation, selection, adaptation, and tailoring of all related materials accounting for student considerations; instruction in its various forms; evaluation of student and self; reflection of class performance and self; and new comprehensions derived from the instructional cycle. Each case report below has an overview of the sources for each pedagogues' knowledge base, followed by a discussion of the comprehension, transformation, instruction, evaluation, reflection, and new comprehensions for each pedagogue.

#### **Cases**

The process of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action (PRA) was particularly dependent on each educator's knowledge base (KB); therefore, the identification and comparison of each professor's KB during this study was important. The following case findings are organized by professor, and begin with a discussion about each pedagogues' KB. The KB was "difficult to delineate" (Haston & Leon-Guerrero, 2008, p. 49), as was anticipated, and different for each pedagogue. The findings regarding the KB outlined below in the cases reports and cross-case analysis supported Valli and Tom's assertion that the KB was an amalgamation of "the entire repertoire of skills, information, [and]

attitudes” (p. 5) required by educators to be effective in the act of teaching. One unanticipated realization that arose during this study was that a large portion of each professor’s KB was found in their life experiences. For this reason, background information relevant to each professor’s KB was included in each case report. After the discussion of each professor’s KB, a report of each professor’s journey through the steps of PRA is given. Although the PRA steps were discussed sequentially in Chapter 2, as they are here, the findings did not occur in linear order. My findings supported Shulman’s (1987) claim that the stages “can occur in different order... not occur at all... be truncated, [or] elaborated” (p. 19).

***Professor West, Cedarville University***

Professor West grew up in a musical family in a rural area in the Southwest region of the United States. There, he was identified for his musical abilities at a young age when a teacher recognized his abilities to sing harmony at school and offered private piano lessons when he was only nine years old. West’s informal training began at age 11, when after two years of piano lessons he began to play piano for his rural church. This part of West’s journey lasted throughout his formative years until around the age of 20, where he explored various styles of music and informal music-making. His informal music-making experience informed both his understanding and approach to music and has superseded his formal training in some ways. West claimed to be “more of an ear guy,” but was also adept at sight-reading written notation.

West grew up experiencing music primarily in the local church context, but stated it was the jazz paradigm that most influenced his musical “thinking and analyzing.”

West's father was an active Country and Western musician, and influenced him through his service to a local church. Regarding his father, West stated:

My dad was a Country and Western professional night-club entertainer for about 15 years before he met Christ and started going to church. [Then he] became kind of a church musician out of that, learning hymns in particular. So [church music] was my music world growing up.

West's formal training included both classical and jazz vocal training at a university, formal piano lessons from ages 9–11, participation in excellent junior and senior high school choir programs, and a brief exploration into classical piano at the university. In junior high and high school, West participated in choral programs, where he learned how to read choral scores, and this culminated with him making the all-state choir his senior year. During high school, West was also involved with an extracurricular Doo-Wop group, where he and friends focused on R&B music, such as Boyz II Men.

Once in college, West's musical palette expanded to include work with black gospel, classical music, and Broadway. West gravitated toward jazz music after listening to a Harry Connick Jr. CD, and was fortunate enough to be able to learn from someone who toured world-wide for several years as an alto sax player for the Harry Connick Jr. Big Band at the university he attended. All of this occurred concurrently with the expansion of the contemporary Christian music industry, through the Passion movement in specific, a genre that has continued to influence West. Consequently, the music that West performed recreationally was somewhat eclectic, and had elements of country, church music, jazz, black gospel, and R&B in each performance.

As mentioned previously, Professor West's formal training included training in classical piano, vocal methods, and jazz. Although jazz has been considered in many circles to be popular music, it is discussed here as formal training because of the context in which it was taught: It was taught at a university, a formal educational platform, and was taught using traditional pedagogical methods. Professor West was able to assimilate the formal training into his knowledge base, and transform that formal knowledge into something useful for understanding, arranging, and performing in the genres of popular music he was interested in outside of formal circles.

**Professor West's Comprehension and Transformation.** Professor West's comprehension of the subject matter was tied to, and extended from, his personal KB. West had spent much time reflecting on the needs and practices of popular musicians because of his vocational background and personal interests. West also spent a good deal of time considering the contextual needs of vocational music for the church, which helped to inform his pedagogical decisions.

There were several areas of comprehension demonstrated by Professor West. First, West demonstrated an in-depth comprehension of the subject matter (popular music theory), and a knowledge of the nuances required to reproduce it. From his own experience with aural based popular music-making, for example, West learned that the ability to see chord shapes on a guitar was helpful when playing with other musicians. Additionally, West asserted that popular musicians developed a "musical intuition" that allowed them to anticipate harmonic and melodic changes. This belief is akin to the intuition developed by twelve-bar blues musicians, but was also divergent in that the

foundational harmonic and melodic changes were without the harmonic guardrails of the twelve-bar form. The intuition Professor West spoke of was also linked to his belief that many times aural based musicians were not fully aware of how they were able to play the music that they were playing, and often could not name the chords or even the keys in which they were playing. To that end, regardless of the popular musicians' ability to verbalize their harmonic and melodic choices, West expressed a belief that popular musicians had an intuitive ability to understand popular music structurally.

Stylistic integrity was mentioned by West several times in the interviews, as well as during the class observation, evidencing that students' ability to reproduce any style of music they perform with stylistic integrity was a core tenet of West's pedagogical goals. West stated that he valued a diversity of styles and students' ability "to produce those styles with integrity." In emphasis, West added:

When music is written for popular music it's not intended to be played robotically. There's so much stylistic integrity that you can't write down on a piece of paper, even with as many Italian words as you want to describe how your supposed to play this particular phrase.

In other words, West inferred that the mortar of music contained the subtleties where stylistic integrity existed:

Accuracy is not the ultimate goal [when playing popular music]. It's not just pitch and rhythm, it's [also] nuance of sound, time, attack, dynamics, phrasing. All of these nuances that make it really what it's supposed to be.

Although Professor West was unaware of a comprehensive resource for teaching

popular music, he did use a textbook at Cedarville, specifically Harrison's (1995, 1999, 2001) *Contemporary Music Theory* series and Starer's (1997) *Rhythmic Training*, and followed the curriculum developed in advance at Cedarville. It was West's experience that most students came to the university with little or no formal music training, but a good deal of informal training in areas such as church youth groups, social groups, or other musical groups, which according to West, could be problematic. West expressed a belief that "social aspects [could influence] opinions about music or about expectations that sometimes does not help them in an educational environment," and that students often did not feel they needed to know (or did not see the value in) certain aspects of formal training.

Professor West also demonstrated subject matter comprehension in regard to formal training requirements, and was able to communicate formal concepts in informal ways. For example, West compared the skill of reading a book to reading sheet music in that "you've learned the alphabet, you've put words together, words make sentences, [and] sentences make paragraphs." When elaborating on the connection between aural music and a student's ability to speak music before they read it, West stated:

When I teach, I often talk about the difference between how a person learned how to speak a language, and then at what point they learned how to read language down the road. So, obviously we all learned how to speak before we learned how to read...I use those in my pedagogy as well to say, well let's develop both skills.

By approaching aural based musicians in this manner, West demonstrated an essential element of how he approached the integration of formal (written) musical knowledge

with students' existing informal (aural) musical knowledge.

In the first year of teaching popular music theory, Professor West tried to infuse as much of his practical experience as possible into the classroom and met with mixed responses from students. At the time of this study, West was in his second year of teaching the popular music course at Cedarville, and although he still infused his practical experience into the course where appropriate, West utilized the textbook more to drive conversation with his students. In doing so, West demonstrated a fundamental element of Shulman's (1987) *Pedagogical Reasoning and Action*, transformational adaptation. To accomplish the integration of his personal experiences successfully within the classroom, West had to weave together parts of his knowledge base (comprehension) into instruction that was meaningful to his students. This act also demonstrated the fluid nature of PRA mentioned by Schulman (1987) in that each of these areas worked together symbiotically in Professor West's mind. The shift in focus from year one to year two also demonstrated that new pedagogical comprehensions had been reached by West after his first year teaching the subject matter.

The textbook utilized at Cedarville was designed for the training of popular musicians, but was not written with church music specifically in mind, which according to West, had the effect of rendering the textbook "a little bit colloquial in terms of its approach." Although West worked to transform textbook materials into pedagogically meaningful lessons for his students, his efforts were not without difficulty. One of the primary difficulties, according to West, was finding representative materials in local church music to illustrate textbook concepts. For example, West used Shane and Shane's

“Psalm 64” to replace Elton John’s “Saturday Night” from the textbook. This is one example of how West used his background experiences within the church context to tie the course materials into real-life applications to bridge the gap between the course material and real-life usage, which was not always readily apparent to students.

Due to the lack of pedagogical resources designed to teach popular music theory to musicians in the contemporary corporate worship environment, Professor West began writing his own curriculum. The creation of curriculum by subject matter experts is not uncommon, but may not be beneficial if over relied upon. Some music pedagogues may find West’s curriculum useful, considering the new curriculum was a conglomeration of practical resources and lessons designed specifically for the training popular musicians within the Christian music idiom, and were vetted in his classroom. But Grieser (2014) cautioned that “personally-generated instructional strategies might not meet the need of all learners” (p. 191).

**Professor West’s Instruction.** The classroom environment in which Professor West taught was a typical instructional room with light-colored walls, a teaching station, a whiteboard, a projector connected to the teaching computer and document scanner, mounted speakers, and a piano. The students sat at individual chairs with attached desks facing the front of the room. Professor West began the class by allowing students to ask questions; this continued until he was satisfied that all questions had been asked and answered. West began every class meeting in this way, even if it took the entire class period. West considered the question and answer time to be a fundamental part of his instruction because it allowed the students to self-identify the gaps in their knowledge

regarding the previous day's materials, which in turn allowed West to fill in those gaps "right where they need[ed] help."

In addition to the homework review, Professor West had his class sing examples, watched YouTube clips, and listened to examples played on the piano, which provided divergent representations of the course concepts. He also asked students to play specific songs in different genres of music, such as "I'll Fly Away" in a Country music style, to create laboratory situations which exposed students to specific "stylistic integrity things." Professor West primarily integrated jazz theory into a worship context to teach advanced music theory concepts. This pedagogical tool demonstrated West's commitment to teaching more broadly and deeply than was required for the students' perceived educational and vocational goals. West stated that teaching beyond the students' perceived needs was necessary to develop students that were "more equipped than they need to be going into a context, and not just barely cutting it."

Class engagement and relevancy were of the utmost importance to Professor West, and one way that West maintained student interest in instructional periods was by infusing impromptu similes into his lecture time. While discussing different inversions as starting points for voice leading during the observed class, for example, West likened the beginning chordal voicings to different points in which one could begin eating a chicken wing to bolster student engagement. West also used the term "sonic food" when elaborating that some harmonies are currently outside of the students' musical pallet, or personal taste. Considering that the courses in which West taught were part of a sequence designed primarily to train worship leaders for the local church, West used preparation

time to pray and plan for ways to include scripture appropriately into lesson plans.

**Professor West's Evaluation.** It was Professor West's opinion that student and self-evaluation had an interdependent relationship. Summative student evaluations occurred in a traditional manner with grades given for homework assignments, tests, and exams. However, West expressed that the seven summative evaluations in the Contemporary Musicianship courses gave only a "birds-eye view" of how students retained and received the information. Formative assessments occurred in several ways within West's course. For example, there were times when West would facilitate an in-class game to reinforce the learned material, promote student engagement, and provide a way for West to assess each student's level of subject matter comprehension informally. When discussing in class exercises, for example, West stated:

We also do some exercises in a kind of a game format, whether it's spelling chords with a time, or having them time themselves, looking through a piece of music and saying all of the scale degree numbers within a certain time frame, trying to get them to think on various levels and from various angles, whether it's note names, or scale degree numbers, or spelling chords, or sometimes what I'll do is have them spell chords, but one note at a time.

Additionally, West noted that giving opportunities for students to ask questions allowed for an informal "metric for understanding their interaction with the material." Asking for students to provide feedback during class, or to provide a representation of their understanding of the materials, were also barometers of their subject matter comprehension.

According to West, the primary formative evaluation in the Contemporary Musicianship courses was “sight-singing as a group or sight-singing individually.” In other words, West was primarily interested in the students’ ability to remember what they had been told, demonstrate an understanding of the materials, and apply it in a tangible way. Although West did not mention it by name, it is notable that he used formative assessments that outlined the first three steps of Bloom’s revised taxonomy (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001).

**Professor West’s Reflection and New Comprehensions.** When reflecting on the observed class, Professor West felt the class was typical, and that student engagement was good. The class period included a review of homework, and West reminded the students of macro-level goals for the course. Homework assignments helped West to discern if any additional instruction was needed, if any changes were required in content delivery methods, or both. West utilized the homework assignment to tie formative and summative assessments together, which in turn allowed West to make micro-level adjustments to the curriculum. West was using a traditionally summative assessment (homework assignments) in primarily a formative way. West also used the homework assignments as a launching pad for discussion and a starting point for more advanced student training.

Professor West expressed a belief that the nature of teaching to be fundamentally improvisatory, and thought this to be especially true when teaching popular music theory. West expressed that intrinsic motivation, and appreciation for the course materials when the applicability was not readily apparent to students, are motivational hurdles that must

be overcome when teaching popular music theory:

Our content really is teaching past where they are probably going to be required to be in their local church environment. We're also challenging [students] to raise the bar where appropriate as well, and not to just confine themselves to the present context. I find that I have to do quite a bit of convincing, because of the gap between the content that we're studying and the context in which they're going to serve.

Simply stated, the students appeared to not care about the "what" or "how" unless the "why" lined up with their perceptions of church music, and what they desired to learn and produce.

West valued the creation of interactive student-centered learning environments where the application of the curriculum was the focus, and wanted to set up the course as an interactive lab with modern instruments so that students could learn musical concepts by combining "the head and the hands." He described it this way:

In a 15-week period I would choose 15, both classic and contemporary, examples of various harmonic, melodic, or rhythmic concepts and then I would use those to show why they need to know how this structure exists, or why this structure exists, or what harmonies that particular song may bring to the table, in order to make it more applicable.

According to West, connecting the materials in this manner would help bridge the gap between content knowledge and practical application of that knowledge in a church environment. West also stated that this type of approach could address student interest by

showing them the connection between theory and application, and could teach students that “understanding popular music theory [was] not the same as [creating] popular music.”

***Professor South, the University of Memphis***

Professor South spent time training formally on the trumpet in secondary school, and had degrees in music theory from an accredited university. Professor South’s informal training included mostly autodidactic learning of piano, guitar, harmonica, and voice in addition to formal trumpet lessons. Although Professor South had formal musical training, most of his “formal instruction in popular music . . . didn’t happen until [he] was in graduate school.” South did mention that he had a first-year music theory instructor that brought in popular music examples, and he was a teaching assistant for a “pro-pop-music” instructor in graduate school. Professor South also had experience in acapella groups as a singer, arranger, and mentor. All of the aforementioned formal and informal experiences and instruction resulted in an eclectic knowledge base for Professor South that extended beyond the confines of formal education.

**Professor South’s Comprehension and Transformation.** Professor South’s comprehension had a commercial music focus that was related to the students’ educational and vocational goals. The data also demonstrated that South’s comprehensions and transformative process were influenced by the educational objectives of the university and his students at the time of this study. South’s students included both graduate and undergraduates who were majoring in: Music Education, Music Performance, Music History, Music Composition, Jazz, Music Industry, Business,

and Recording Technologies. Some students were artist promoters, recruiters, and recording engineer students who made use of the student-run recording studio and record label at UM. Professor South's comprehension and transformative processes were also influenced by his personal experiences and focus of his previous studies. In the area of topic selection and representation, for example, South utilized mid-90s rap music instead of current rap because he was not yet ready to utilize the newest form of rap:

I don't know what to do with contemporary rap yet, I'm working on it. I'm getting there, but I don't feel like I have a coherent enough understanding of what's happening formally there [yet].

Identifying where popular music theory educators located their materials and what their process was for analyzing, interpreting, and selecting them was of the utmost importance to this study. Likewise, delineating how instructors organized the material and the educational research they consulted when selecting modes of presentation were other core considerations during this study. It was discovered that Professor South's course materials were compiled eclectically from various educational and public sources. For example, Professor South utilized *Music Theory Online*, a journal published by the Society for Music Theory, to access articles on popular music that included color-coded charts, recordings, and diagrams, including diagrams of rap vocal rhythms. Professor South also referenced Kyle Adams and Christopher Mark Spicer as two researchers whose peer-reviewed articles have been useful to South in the classroom.

There are two books that Professor South primarily utilized when teaching popular music theory: Everett's (2009) *The Foundations of Rock*, and Snodgrass'

(2016) *Contemporary Musicianship*. According to South, Everett's (2009) book had good assignment ideas and a good list of songs from 1955–1969, but it had a “little too much theorizing in it.” Snodgrass's (2016) book had examples using the Nashville Number system, which was useful in South's class, because South valued the students' ability to understand and utilize the Nashville Number system.

Professor South frequently used YouTube clips for audio and video examples, but encouraged “caution with internet sources” when looking up harmony or form for any particular song on the internet. Professor South described how he deemphasized harmony and harmonic function in his popular music course:

Every year I end up doing less and less [harmony because] they get a lot of that in Theory 1 and Theory 2, and I don't know how much more of that they need. They do need to know about a few more modal inflections and what makes a style unique, but they don't need to read theorist pontifications on harmonic function in pop music.

**Professor South's Instruction.** During the observation of Professor South's classroom, instruction occurred in two distinctive ways, through the review of one assignment and the preparation for another. South began the observed class by discussing a homework assignment with students who were asked to create a formal diagram of “Telephone” by Lady Gaga, and “All We Ever Knew” by The Head and The Heart. South had spent time in advance of the class meeting analyzing the songs for the day, and had prepared multiple interpretations to share with the students as possibilities. Professor South then provided concise and multi-faceted feedback on this assignment, and he

allowed for additional interpretations in the students' formal diagrams. Regarding student interpretations, South stated:

If you said something and I viewed it a different way, but you gave a good reason for it, sometimes that meant that you got some points back. That's a good thing by the way, and many of you did.

At the core of Dr. South's instruction were various homework assignments, which he termed "Socratic enterprises." All of the assignments in Professor South's popular music theory course were by ear, many of which were transcription assignments, and Professor South only utilized notation in this course when transcribing or discussing melody. The homework, and South's pedagogical approach, were important because the purpose of the assignments exceeded the reporting of a specific answer and allowed South to create an interactive learning environment through classroom discussion. Because Professor South allowed for divergent answers that were well supported, the Socratic environment helped students to gain knowledge from each other as well. This finding was consistent with the assumption that the learning environment would also be adaptive, because each educator and student composite were unique to each class. To that end, each different popular music theory course taught by Professor South would undoubtedly be unique and equally adaptive.

Above all else, Professor South suggested that keeping the class size to 16 or under was important when teaching popular music theory. This specific number of students was chosen purposefully by South so that assigning the students multiple presentations, for example, during a semester is possible. This is not to say that

presentations are impossible with 25 students, but with that many students, presentations “can basically happen [only] once.” Another reason for his insistence on small class size could be tied to his use of Socratic principles when teaching popular music theory, and his dedication to include all students when discussing course content in class.

**Professor South’s Evaluation.** Professor South’s primary formal student evaluation methods were homework assignments and quizzes, with students receiving the majority of feedback on their homework assignments. The homework assignments and quizzes given by Professor South were treated as formative evaluations and were used to guide further student learning. Students were given an assignment to work on individually, they submitted the assignment for grading, and then spent time discussing the variances of answers in class.

Student reactions during class meetings were also crucial to Professor South. After playing an audio recording in class, for example, South checked for comprehension by engaging the students with questions probing questions. Professor South demonstrated that the “on-line checking for understanding and misunderstanding” (Shulman, 1987, p. 18) was an essential part of student evaluation, perhaps even more critical than the summative evaluations. Although Professor south values summative evaluations, he expressed his opinion that summative evaluations should not be too much of a student’s overall grade. Regarding final exams, for example, South stated:

I don’t believe in having final exams, period. I think that having a quiz at the end that is perhaps summative is fine, but to have something that is worth 20 or 25% of their average...I have so little taste for [that].

To de-emphasize summative evaluations, Professor South limited the percentage of any assignment or exam to no more than 10%. Even the final project for Professor South's popular music theory course was worth only 10% of students' overall course grade.

**Professor South's Reflection and New Comprehensions.** Two types of reflection were evidenced by Professor South throughout the interview and observation process: student reflection, which was the consideration of student performance; and self-reflection, or South's critical analysis of his own performance in the act of teaching. Regarding the former, Professor South typically utilized students' performance on homework assignments to ascertain the effectiveness of each lecture. South was also attentive to body language and facial expressions during lecture times, as these were often indicators of comprehension or confusion. Regarding the latter, self-reflection for Professor South was multi-faceted and included peer observations, student feedback (solicited and unsolicited), and student performance on assignments and exams. Professor South also compared the average grades on assignments to see if some were too difficult (or too easy), and made adjustments accordingly.

Few new comprehensions emerged from Professor South's reflective process during this study because the lesson observed had been taught by South several times before. South stated that the first few times he taught this specific lesson, he learned a great deal, but that there were some new comprehensions that Professor South was able to identify. The first was found in the particular assignment used, which was intended to illustrate irregular phrase groupings. During the discussion, South realized that the phrase groupings themselves were odd in their organization, and pointed out that detail out to his

students. Secondly, South realized that if he required his students to submit assignments electronically, it would be easier to add them to a massive database for the songs.

***Professor North, Berklee College of Music.***

Professor North had been involved with various genres of popular music since a young age. His father was a jazz drummer, and his first instrument was the saxophone. North began his journey into learning saxophone by listening to music and trying to imitate the melodies, which ultimately led him into creating transcriptions. North primarily played double bass at the time of this study, but stated he began by playing the electric bass with a deep dive “into the bass tradition.” This deep dive did not include all styles, but rather as far back as he could go without diving into classical repertoire. North’s deep dive into the bass gave him the knowledge to play an assortment of musical genres, which in turn allowed for his participation in “general business” gigs. Regarding his choice to play popular music, North stated:

First of all, pop music is fun, [and] people like to dance to pop music. And [it’s fun to] figure out how to make people feel happy. So, the natural outgrowth of [my] study of popular music was to perform in general business gigs, which ended up being super helpful [in my role] at Berklee.

Although much of his training in popular music came through an informal aural tradition, Professor North’s knowledge base included formal training as well. Professor North held both a bachelors and master’s degree of music with an emphasis in jazz performance at the time this study was conducted.

**Professor North's Comprehension and Transformation.** Given Professor North's previously mentioned in-depth study of the bass tradition, it was not surprising that he demonstrated a high level of subject matter comprehension throughout this research. During the interview process, for example, North mentioned practitioners from multiple genres and eras when asked about what playing by ear and sight entailed. Professor North also stated that it was important to stay informed of current musical trends:

It's my job to have an opinion about all the new stuff that happens. So outside of here, I'm always trying to hear whatever is going on, whatever the new Beyoncé and Jay-Z record is, or whatever else has come out that's new, [and find new] things that are relevant to the subject matter.

Although Professor North continually listened to music to keep his examples current and diverse in style, his selection process for pedagogically useful music was influenced by the sociocultural and political climates in America. When choosing musical examples for classroom edification, Professor North was both cautious and purposeful so that the lyrical message of the music did not supersede the structural content. He stated:

Anything at all is fair game, but I try to be as careful as possible about political, racial, and gender lines. The last thing I want is for anybody in my classroom to [be offended] by a piece of music that I'm playing. I just want [students] to focus on the music.

Consequently, Professor North stated that the adaptation of materials for pedagogical purposes was as much dependent on the initial selection of the materials as anything else.

North's inclusion of sociocultural considerations supported Shulman's (1987) aforementioned statement that instructors must be "adaptive to the variations and background presented by the students" (p. 15).

Another observed pedagogical obstacle for North was a variation in student knowledge. According to North, some students could not hear all of the nuances of popular recorded music well enough to create detailed transcriptions while others could, so North typically created the charts in advance, or during class in front of them to demonstrate the process of creating a chart:

If I bring in a lead sheet, they don't see the thousands of hours that it took to get me to the point where I could write a lead sheet. But, if I draw the voice leading on the board in front of them, [even though] they still can't see those thousand hours, they at least see that it's something that a person can do.

**Professor North's Instruction.** Professor North has taught popular music theory to students who range in knowledge from beginner to advanced, all with similar classroom environments and pedagogical approaches. The classroom observed for this study was, as mentioned previously, typical for many higher education institutions; it contained a whiteboard with lines, an instructor station with a computer and document projector, a stereo, upright piano, and individual student chairs with desks. The classroom required a badge to unlock the door, and several students were waiting outside for Professor North to arrive before class. Upon entering the room, the students began moving the chairs away from the walls and placing them in a series of rows facing the whiteboard and instructor station. During this observation, it was not clear why the chairs

had been placed on the perimeter of the room, but it was interesting to note that Professor North made no request for the students to assemble the rows. Clearly, a classroom routine had been established in advance of the observation. As students entered, North greeted them individually as he walked about the room passing out graded homework assignments and spoke with students about their weekend. It was a little chilly outside, so some students were wearing coats and scarfs. When class began, the transition was both seamless and cordial, which was illustrative of North's stated importance of creating community in the classroom.

The primary reason that the students and Professor North had converged, however, was the instruction of popular music theory. Professor North had developed a three-phase process for teaching popular music theory, which included: developing community in the classroom, breaking through barriers to instruction with the appropriate selection of songs for instruction, and providing community learning opportunities. The culture of community that North created within the classroom had been developed throughout each semester and was not specific to any one classroom meeting or group of students. Looking students in the eye when they spoke, taking their questions seriously, and spending extra time with them were all examples of North's pedagogical process and commitment to student success both inside and outside of the classroom.

In addition to the aforementioned sociocultural considerations, North identified another barrier to student learning: the assumption that students knew popular music already when entering the classroom. North stated, "Because we're dealing with popular music, it's possible [for educators] to fall into a false sense of security that [students

already] know popular music. North's implied point was this: When educators assume existent knowledge, they are likely not to provide substantive teaching in that area. The ramifications of this type of pedagogical oversight could be catastrophic, but may not be immediately apparent, such as: some students could have sought to learn materials through a website that may or may not have addressed the material completely (or correctly); a delay students' knowledge of the content could have occurred, which could have impacted formative or summative evaluations; or perhaps worse, the students could have been left with a void in popular music theory knowledge, which in turn could have had ramifications well beyond the classroom.

Regardless of their talent level, incoming students often lack familiarity with a wide breadth of musical styles and may have developed personal musical preferences for contemporaneous music. North indicated that student preference is a vital influencer for pedagogical choices, and expressed that both a limited perspective of music and personal taste could be barriers to student learning. For this reason, North chose contemporaneous and culturally important music as representative songs to introduce students to musical concepts and then transitioned their hearing to older tunes. For example, North demonstrated modulation with Beyoncé, which most of the students know, and then introduced them to Bobby Darin:

If I can get them to hear Beyoncé doing Love on Top, then I can take them to big band writing in the 1950's. But, if I start with big band writing in the 1950's, they're not [going to] see the relevance of that. But it is the same thing as Beyoncé modulating up a half-step [several times] at the end of her song.

Professor North had a pragmatic approach to ensure that students fully engaged with the subject matter; first, the concepts were written on the whiteboard, then the students listened to the musical example, after which students were asked to compose a musical example. Professor North took students on a journey through the various stages of Bloom's revised taxonomy within the course of a single class meeting, the highest of which was the creation of something new. The concepts in North's course were also scaffolded, and once students had demonstrated mastery of a concept, they were shown how to expand on it.

To engage students in class, North asked students to vocalize the composition examples created in class and encouraged them to bring in their own music to show them how what they had written demonstrated the subject matter being taught. Regarding instructional choices, North expressed that he preferred the use of staff paper and pencil in the classroom to notational software:

They definitely use notation software. But, in my class so much is happening so quickly, that it's faster for them just to write it down on manuscript paper than to try to figure out how to type it in. However, when they hand in projects, they often use Finale and Sibelius.

**Professor North's Evaluation.** Professor North utilized both formative and summative evaluation techniques in the observed courses; these assessments included homework assignments, quizzes, two exams (mid-term and final), and two projects. Although the summative evaluations were more important regarding each student's final grade in the course, the one-to-one formative evaluations held the most meaning for

North because “even the least experienced” student often had a unique way of internalizing concepts. The formative evaluation of individualized interpretations allowed North to dialogue with each student to assess their personal subject matter comprehension. While discussing the utilization of formative and summative evaluations, however, North cited Gardner’s (2008) Multiple Intelligences and suggested that there should be multiple types of tests to account for them. North evaluated himself during each instructional period, and adjusted the discussion as necessary based on interactions with the students: “If they [were] asking me questions about stuff that should have been clear in my presentation in the first place...then I need[ed] to rethink that presentation.”

**Professor North’s Reflection and New Comprehensions.** Although there was no formal process in place, Professor North’s reflection process began immediately following the instruction time and circled around his perception of student comprehension primarily regarding his three-step pedagogical process, drawing structural diagrams of the musical concepts, showing representative examples, and in-class composition exercises. Song selection was also a main focus of North’s reflection, specifically regarding how effectively concepts were demonstrated using a particular song, as well as sociocultural considerations. Additionally, Professor North considered the manner in which he communicated the materials:

Even within that space, I have two ways of always trying to do things. There’s the ‘this is what the textbook says’ and ‘this is what conventional wisdom says.’ [There’s also] a [humorous] version, because I always want to give them an entertaining way of thinking about it, they sometimes remember that better.

The course curriculum itself was not the main focus of North's reflection, due primarily to his inability to change it, but North did reflect on the curriculum to ensure that his adaptations were effective.

When asked about what new comprehensions were formed from the instructional time, North stated that "through implementing this curriculum...there's no end to the amount of stuff to learn." Meaning that as new students interacted with new examples, and one another, there was an ever-evolving interpretation of the subject matter. North admitted to having developed new comprehensions based on his interactions in class, and through the process of preparing course materials when new examples were used. North was also cognizant that any new comprehensions made may not remain pedagogically viable for the next group of students:

Sometimes when I have things that actually work for one group, I'm also aware of the fact that it's not going to work for the next group. So, it's in a constant state of evolution, although it's not in a forward direction.

### **Cross-Case Assertions**

The following cross-case analysis has been reported in the same way as the individual cases above, which included the areas of comprehension, transformation, instruction, evaluation, reflection, and new comprehensions. However, the comparisons of the various areas of the knowledge base have been expanded to account for the quintain (Stake, 2006). As a reminder, the term quintain, or the "target collection" (1.3, The Quintain section, para. 3), for this study was the pedagogical reasoning and action (Shulman, 1987) of music instructors within undergraduate music programs who taught

popular music theory, while each instructor was a case to be studied.

A discussion of the knowledge base (KB) was also included in the following section to elucidate the impact of each pedagogues' KB on their pedagogical reasoning and action. Although no singular source of KB was identified for these pedagogues, it was possible to identify key sources of their KB in the four main areas identified Shulman (1987), which were scholarship in content disciplines, educational materials and structures, formal educational scholarship, and wisdom of practice.

### ***Knowledge Base***

Throughout the research process, it became evident that the KB was so intricately related to the process of PRA, due to the dependency of each professor to their varied KB, that a brief overview of the intersecting areas was necessary to provide a more complete understanding of their thinking. To that end, the PRA and KB of these professors coincided in four main areas: education and experience, which contributed to each professor's KB; student considerations, or the understanding of sociocultural, vocational, and educational situations of each professor's students; curricular considerations, within and outside of their teaching environment; and pedagogical considerations, specifically regarding their teaching environment and instructional styles. The following are cross-case assertions based on the four areas identified.

**Education and Experience.** All of the professors studied were professional popular music theory pedagogues at the time this study was conducted. However, none of the professors studied held a popular music degree. All three professors admitted to having very little formal training in popular music, but the informal nature of their

experiences with popular music, combined with their formal training and resulting credentials, were essential qualifiers for teaching popular music theory. More specifically, although each professor held a degree in music from an accredited college, it was their ability to adapt and apply their traditional music training to popular music performance that was of importance. This practical application of musical knowledge was at the crux of their ability to tailor music theory content to what was needed by the students. Two of the three professors came from a home where family members were active popular musicians, all three began playing instruments at a young age, and all three were heavily influenced by popular music as children.

Formal educational training for all three professors included advanced degrees in music, which emphasized classical music theory, and some experience performing in formal educational settings. The significance of this is that their formal education provided a common core understanding of music theory, and provided each with the academic credentials to hold their current positions as music professors. But as previously mentioned, their primary KB for teaching popular music theory in specific was quite diverse due to their KB having been developed over the course of their lives, and being particularly dependent on their sociocultural situation and personal interests (the latter may have influenced the former). Regarding their formal educational scholarship of popular music theory, none of the three professors in this study had much formal training in popular music pedagogy at an institute of higher education. This is not to say that these professors lacked training in popular music theory, but rather that they lacked formal educational training in the content area; none of the three professors held a

popular music degree.

Although a degree in jazz is considered a popular music degree by some scholars (Krikun, 2017), the institutionalization of jazz pedagogy has led some to speculate that “the traditional ways of transmitting this music have been changed, compromised, or subverted to formal methods of instruction that fit more comfortably in the formal habitat” (Gatien, 2009, p. 95). What Gatien (2009) referred to was an ongoing discussion of how jazz was transmitted, and “how formal teaching and learning has affected our understanding of jazz as a musical category” (p. 96). In other words, there has been an ongoing discussion concerning jazz pedagogy regarding the balance between formal and informal pedagogical strategies, and whether those pedagogies represented a “departure from [an aural] tradition” (Gatien, p. 97). Although those distinctions fell outside the scope of this study, jazz was considered to be formal training for these pedagogues during this study due to the institutions of higher learning in which they attended. However, it was recognized that each pedagogue’s experience with jazz extended beyond those institutions’ boundaries. Indeed, each professors’ informal experience with jazz was germane to their pedagogical approaches regarding aural transmission in music learning. Simply stated, their life experience speaking the language of popular music informed their musical communication with students.

**Student Considerations.** I assumed that educators who taught popular music theory possessed the ability to adapt their instruction for musical students who constructed their knowledge tacitly, and that played music by ear (Lilliestam, 1996, p. 199). Each professor verified this assumption, and the ramifications of this affected how

each pedagogue approached course materials. Although each professor taught similar content, their adaptations were vastly different and dependent on their student population and educational situation. The familiarity of each professor with the contexts of their respective students was crucial in this process, and served as the basis for the fruitful adaptation of course materials. Each professor was also keenly aware of their students' respective backgrounds, the specific music they listened to, as well as their educational and vocational goals. Each professor likewise interacted with students to discover their intrinsic motivations, but was also able to anticipate these motivations in part because of the educational context in which each student had inserted themselves.

Each professor also expressed that most of their students came into the university having primarily learned music in an aural tradition, and many students had no previous formal training in music. Although all three professors perceived this detail as a strength for their students, each professor worked to balance formal training with informal methods of music-making. Given that formal pedagogical methods and summative evaluations were commonplace at their respective universities and that students often preferred informal music transmission methods, each professor carefully balanced formal and informal methods so that student interest was maintained while fulfilling the formal expectations of their university.

Each professor relied heavily on student feedback as part of their evaluation of self, and adjusted their pedagogical approach accordingly. In this area, student performance on summative assessments was seen as tacit feedback, and adjustments to pedagogical approaches were made according to identified areas of need. The professors

in this study also expressed that formative evaluations were more fruitful in assessing student comprehension, and timelier in providing feedback to ascertain if pedagogical modifications were needed. Giving students time to ask questions, probing for student understanding during lectures, and asking students to physically demonstrate course concepts were all viewed as more beneficial to the pedagogical process than student exam performance.

**Curricular Considerations.** All three professors in this study expressed that there was a lack of a predesigned curriculum in the area of popular music theory. Consequently, all participants expressed interest in the knowledge base findings of this study and were particularly interested in discovering new curricular resources. All of the professors in this study agreed that internet-based resources were valuable because of cost and ease of access, YouTube and online journals were the two internet resources mentioned most often. At the time of this study, YouTube had a continually growing, and already expansive, song collection, which allowed each professor to project visual and auditory examples that simply were unavailable to previous generations of pedagogues, both in content and ease of access. YouTube was also a resource the students were already familiar with upon their beginning of each popular music course.

Although there were many scholarly articles regarding popular music theory available online at the time of this study, these were previously unavailable to educators, or at least were not as easily accessed. There were also other internet-based resources mentioned by these pedagogues, but most were less trusted by the study participants. For example, there were ample chord charts and lead sheets for popular music songs available

online, but none of the professors trusted the accuracy of those open-source materials and opted to scribe their own chord chart or lead sheet rather than correct the mistakes found within online resources. These pedagogues' decision to create their own charts and lead sheets is congruent with Grieser's (2014) findings that subject matter experts tended to create and utilize "personally-generated" resources.

At the time of this study, each professor was actively participating in the creation of a popular music theory curriculum, but their specific students' needs heavily influenced each curriculum. Although the fundamentals of their curriculum were the same, they utilized divergent representative repertoire based on their educational context, and all three professors were sensitive to their students' sociocultural situations and the social perceptions their students had regarding lyrical and musical content when creating curriculum. Some commonalities between topics observed during this study included: musical notation, all three professors utilized the western European developed notational system; harmony and harmonic function, based explicitly on the western European scales and consequent chords; secondary function and substitute chords, even beyond their practical application for these specific student groups; musical form, specifically regarding multiple eras and genres; and stylistic nuances, for the purpose of understanding stylistic integrity across genres. None of the professors had a set list of musical examples, but rather a large pool of experience and personal repertoire from which to draw. All of the professors also continually listened to new music to stay contemporary with their students' musical preferences and update their curriculum; this included original student songs. Each professor was also aware that designing curriculum

for specific sets of students could result in ephemeral course materials, lasting only as long as students' current viewpoints on popular music.

**Pedagogical Considerations.** The classroom teaching environments for all three professors were similar, rooms with pianos, whiteboards, and desks, etc.; however, their educational structures were vastly different. The majority of similarities between the professors who participated in this study were found in their pedagogical approaches. It was presumed that the educators in this study would demonstrate constructivist approaches to preparation, instruction, and evaluation throughout their pedagogical process. This presumption was based, in part, on the assumption that educators who taught popular music theory would possess the ability to adapt their instruction for musical students who constructed their knowledge tacitly, and that played music by ear (Lilliestam, 1996, p. 199). However, the primary pedagogical approaches to all three music professors observed classes were more formal than informal, and more teacher-led than student-led. Visuals were presented in the form of whiteboard examples primarily, and audio examples were played over classroom speakers. Further, all three professors utilized summative evaluations such as homework assignments, quizzes, and tests as their official barometer of student comprehension within each class.

Despite the reliance on summative evaluations, each professor that participated in this study expressed that they valued formative assessments over summative assessments, which could suggest that the educational environment created at each university had a heavy influence on pedagogical choices. Removing the educational guiderails in place from their respective institutions could result in more use of informal pedagogies by these

professors, and could be important to university administrators, pedagogues, and future researchers. Karlson and Väkevä (2012) stated: “music that is analyzable according to preexisting academic methods and ideals receives the lion’s share of attention in institutional settings” (p. 56, para 1). In this study, each professor demonstrated this to be true, at least in part. The ramifications of this realization are enormous and could require reform to current educational conventions in this area if constructivist principles are to be fully employed, and perhaps even an adaptation that considers connectivism.

**Summary.** As previously mentioned, Shulman cautioned that the knowledge base (KB) for educators was not “fixed and final” (p. 12), and that much of the KB “remain[ed] to be discovered, invented, and refined” (p. 12). The KB displayed by this study’s pedagogues was vast and difficult to demarcate because of their recreational popular music experience. Their formal training did contribute to their KB for popular music, and their KB was continuously evolving. Each professor took time out of their already busy schedule, sought new musical examples for their courses, dissected new music to understand current musical trends, and engaged with student song selections both inside and outside the classroom. Student interest was also a strong motivator for their continued search for new materials, and each pedagogue sought to tailor their pedagogy to their specific set of students.

### ***Pedagogical Reasoning and Action***

The following cross-case analysis of the PRA of the three professors in this study was structured in alignment with Shulman’s (1987) steps (i.e., comprehension, transformation, instruction, evaluation, reflection, and new comprehensions) sequentially

for ease of discussion.

**Comprehension.** Each professor in this study demonstrated a high level of subject matter comprehension, as expected. However, it was interesting to observe how intricately each professor's comprehension of the subject matter was tied to their KB, and particularly that of their knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of educational ends. Each professor's comprehension of the subject matter had been developed with a particular sociocultural perspective based on their students and educational contexts. One commonality was that all three professors evidenced a sociocultural development of their subject matter comprehension that was congruent to their educational environment. Simply stated, the culture in which each professor taught appeared to influence their pedagogical identity and personal experience directly, which in turn affected their approach to teaching popular music theory.

**Transformation.** The transformation of subject matter for each site studied was mainly influenced by the students' sociocultural background and personal goals and the vision and mission of each institution they taught. Due to sociocultural influencers, such as students' stylistic preferences, vocational goals, and worldviews, a similar process of transformation occurred in each professor, but with divergent pedagogical results. This observation of these pedagogues' transformational process demonstrated constructivist approaches to preparation, instruction, and evaluation. The constructivist approach demonstrated by the pedagogues also showed variations in the process of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action due in part to their educational environments. This finding

supported Allsup's (2010) assertion that student learning is "variable and dependent on the learner's immediate past experiences with the material content of instruction" (p. 77), as well as Lilliestram's (1996) view that educators who taught popular music theory must possess the ability to adapt their instruction for musical students who construct their knowledge tacitly, and that play music by ear (p. 199).

**Instruction.** One of the most emphasized topics regarding instruction by these three professors was class size. All three stated that 16 or fewer students were preferable for the study of popular music theory. This finding aligned with recommendations by Monks and Schmidt (2011), who found that larger class sizes "unequivocally [had] a negative impact on the student-rated outcomes of amount learned, instructor rating, and course rating (p. 15). The negative impact mentioned by Monks and Schmidt (2011) could be inferred to the pedagogues in this study, and they maintained small class sizes due to the impact a larger class would have on their constructive and interactive styles of pedagogy. Singing examples and performing in groups were the most common ways students participated, and all three professors valued student participation a great deal; however, teacher-led music education approaches to pedagogy still dominated the observed classes. Whiteboards were used to illustrate theoretical concepts, professors played examples at the piano, students sat in rows of desks taking notes, and the teacher was still the centric focus of the learning experience.

All three classrooms observed were set up primarily as a lecture room, with the instructor station at the front of the room with supportive resources, and the students in chairs with desks facing the instructor. The classroom setup was representative of the

availability of teaching spaces, but all three pedagogues expressed the desire to teach popular music theory in more of a lab setting. Karlsen (2010) described such a lab setting when reporting on BoomTown Music Education, where students learned primarily in a “rehearsal room, to which the band members [had] 24-hour access” (p. 39). The distinction should be made that the context of this study was limited to the music theory courses in which the professors in this study teach, and that each institution’s program had ample opportunities for students to put into practice knowledge they have gained in the popular music theory courses. All three professors also recognized the significance of the aural tradition in their popular music students, and valued physical acts to connect musical concepts with practical application. Each professor, therefore, included active learning techniques into their pedagogy.

**Evaluation.** Both summative and formative evaluations occurred at each of these three sites. Regarding summative evaluation, the primary assessment devices were homework and exams. To pass one of these popular music theory courses, students needed to score an appropriate grade on summative evaluations. However, each professor expressed that formative evaluations were of greater importance to them as pedagogues when evaluating student comprehension. Consequently, many of the adaptations made by these professors occurred during in real-time through the course of instruction, and were particularly dependent on their formative interactions with students. Additionally, each professor expressed a belief that if a student displayed subject matter comprehension formatively, that student would pass summative evaluations. In other words, these pedagogues could usually predict who would pass a summative examination based on

their formative evaluations, rendering each summative evaluation was little more than a formality for their students.

**Reflection and New Comprehensions.** All three professors in this study admitted to learning more about the subject matter every time they taught it. The repeated increase in each professor's knowledge base evidenced that they moved through the steps of PRA every time a new song was selected. But repetition was not the only reason they moved through the steps of PRA; with every new group of students, these professors had to figure out what worked, and how to most effectively transfer subject matter knowledge to the new group of students. Additionally, although student and peer evaluations were important to the reflective process, these professors constantly reflected on the material and their pedagogy throughout each semester.

### **Notable Differences**

Although the subject matter taught by each professor was the same (popular music theory), each professor had a different teaching context. One apparent reason for this was that the students' vocational goals in their popular music theory courses were divergent. For example, Cedarville University was a faith-based university with biblical training and personal faith grafted into every course, which included the popular music theory course. In contrast, the University of Memphis and Berklee College of Music did not include faith-based training as part of their curriculum.

Another notable difference was that all three professors taught in different academic settings. All three professors had shared knowledge of popular music theory that they imparted to their students, but the academic settings attracted particular students

with particular goals, and thus the information was tailored differently by each professor. At the time this study was completed only one of the three professors held a doctoral degree, but none of the professors held a degree in popular music, a detail that was rendered negligible by the history of informal learning in popular music and each professor's personal experience. The absence of formal popular music training in the professors of this study could bring into question the educational qualifications put in place by most institutions of higher learning for professors of popular music theory, or perhaps demonstrate the need for additional popular music training at the Masters and Doctoral levels.

## Chapter 6

### Discussion and Implications

With this study, I investigated the PRA of popular music theory pedagogues to help researchers and educators develop an informed approach to popular music theory pedagogy. I posited that understanding the PRA of these professors, or more specifically how they represented the concepts found in popular music theory, selected an instructional style (and what style was selected), evaluated student learning, implemented their instruction, reflected on their process, and arrived at new comprehensions (Shulman, 1987), would provide researchers and educators data germane to the contextual development of popular music theory pedagogy. In this final chapter, I addressed each of the research questions and discussed additional questions common to all pedagogues. Suggestions for programmatic and curricular design are made, the need for programmatic accreditation is discussed, and suggestions for further research are given.

### Research Questions

**Research Question 1: What resources popular music theory pedagogues explore, and what are their criteria for inclusion, when selecting curricular materials?**

Professor South explored an eclectic mix of resources from both public and educational sources for his popular music theory *Journal of Music Theory Online* course, including: peer-reviewed journals; books, specifically Everett's (2009) book, *The Foundations of Rock* and Snodgrass' (2016) book, *Contemporary Musicianship*; and electronic resources, such as YouTube. South valued students' ability to understand and utilize the Nashville number system and encouraged students to create their own charts

rather than looking them up on the internet. South's criteria for subject matter inclusion were mostly dependent on student vocational considerations, programmatic requirements from accrediting bodies, and student interest.

Professor West utilized Harrison's (1998, 1999) *Contemporary Music Theory* series and Starer's (1997) *Rhythmic Training* as the primary textbooks and utilized various media, including YouTube clips, to provide auditory examples. Professor West often replaced the textbook examples with representative materials from the Christian music industry to illustrate textbook concepts. His inclusion criteria were tied to students' vocational goals and stated goals of Cedarville University, which included training "Christian undergraduate, graduate, and online students for Godly service" (Why Cedarville?, 2019). Pedagogically speaking, this adaptation of concepts was important because it illuminated West's transformational process, and it demonstrated the need for resources that were adaptive to specific subcultural needs. According to West, finding musical examples relevant to his students' interests and vocational goals was one of the most challenging tasks in his role at Cedarville.

Professor North used the harmony books written at Berklee as the primary text for instruction, but also valued electronic resources such as YouTube because of the ease-of-access and vast amount of available music. North primarily used recordings and charts he wrote to demonstrate concepts, but preferred to utilize the whiteboard to teach and practice concepts so that students could see the concepts constructed in front of them, and participate in their creation. North's criteria for selecting representative works combined subject matter relativity with student interest, and he was cautious not to include

culturally offensive musical examples.

***Discussion of Resources.***

The professors in this study did use the aforementioned textbooks, but in each of the cases studied, the textbooks were of marginal importance compared to other dynamic and interactive resources utilized. Online scholarly journals and YouTube were used primarily, perhaps because these pedagogues sought to use media most familiar to their students. Additionally, interactive resources often included colorful visuals rather than black and white, and some included embedded audio and video examples. At the very least, the diversity of electronic resources allowed for the convergence of materials that would have been impossible to replicate in paper textbooks, and were congruent with the informal learning practices of popular music students.

**Research Question 2: How do popular music theory pedagogues prepare (analyze, interpret, transform, and organize) curricular materials?**

The ways in which each of the professors in this study analyzed, interpreted, transformed, and organized curricular materials were somewhat similar. A surface-level analysis of resources most often occurred in conjunction with the selection of resources, which were based primarily on student interest, personal experience, and student vocational ends. A more in-depth analysis of the chosen curricular materials then ensued in preparation for instruction, and each professor created a personalized interpretation of selected materials. Alternative viewpoints were noted when materials held divergent interpretations, and each professor was aware that additional student interpretations would be present once instruction had begun. Often there are conflicting

interpretations of musical structure and composer intent due to the individualized nature of popular music and its performance. Therefore, each professor exercised discretion and demonstrated stylistic subject matter expertise when preparing curricular materials.

The transformational process of curricular material for each of these professors was similar in that they were all principally interested in relevancy for students, promoting student engagement, and following curricular guidelines as best as possible. But there were differences in their student interests, goals, and educational environment, which made the details (song selection, etc.) of the transformational process somewhat divergent. During the transformation adaptation phase, each professor combined aspects of their knowledge base (subject matter comprehension) in such a way as to anticipate student responses and create moments of class interaction with course materials. Other transformational considerations included what electronic resources to include, and how each resource would be scaffolded within lectures before and after a given class meeting. The organization of curricular materials was individualized and customized based on the aforementioned student considerations, as well as educational goals and institutional guidelines.

**Research Question 3: How do popular music theory pedagogues adapt and tailor instruction, as well as evaluate student understanding?**

There were multiple types of adaptations found throughout the research process, specifically regarding the adaptation of curricular materials, teaching methods, and formative evaluations. Adaptations of curricular materials occurred both before and during instruction. Professor North stated that the adaptation of materials was as much

dependent on the initial selection of the materials as anything else. The adaptation of teaching methods included the acceptance of student interpretations, and allowances for student-led questioning and conversation during class meetings. Regarding the latter, the desire of each professor that each student fully comprehend the course materials resulted in time spent each class revisiting previous material, as well as time during the presentation of new material for students to pose questions. Although each professor's rooms were set up for teacher-led instruction, each professor worked to connect with students throughout instruction, infusing some student-led pedagogical techniques when appropriate. Regarding the acceptance of student interpretations, specifically of the musical structures inherent to the listening examples, as students grew in their skill and knowledge more latitude was given for individualized interpretations. It should not be overlooked that, historically, infused in the heart of popular music performances is an identifiable individuality by the performer; therefore, individual interpretations were also encouraged and, in many instances, celebrated.

All three professors used a combination of homework assignments, quizzes, and exams for summative evaluations, but each thought formative evaluations provided better feedback about what instructional adaptations were needed. To that end, the summative evaluations for each professor remained static, while their formative evaluations were frequent, evolving, and responsive to both the curriculum and perceptions of student comprehension. Nonverbal cues played a part in each professor's ability to evaluate student comprehension, and each professor valued the ability to revisit previous topics, remain longer than anticipated on current topics, and created open dialogues when

necessary about curricular topics. The amalgam of formative and summative evaluations, demonstrated by all three professors, was for the purpose of creating an adaptive learning environment for the students.

**Research Question 4: How do popular music theory pedagogues reflect on the instructional process, and what new comprehensions of subject matter, students, and self arise from their reflection?**

All three professors in this study were experienced popular music pedagogues, which means they may not have had the same reflective results as someone teaching a popular music theory course for the first time. It was to be expected, given the subject matter and pedagogical consideration, that each educational environment and student context would bring about new comprehensions through the reflective process. Due to these pedagogues' busy schedules, however, formal reflections (or dedicated time for reflection) occurred less frequently than informal reflections on the pedagogical process. Therefore, the discovery of new comprehensions primarily occurred organically throughout the study, and not immediately following a class. The types of reflection that were evidenced by these professors included: student responsiveness to curricular materials, such as books, musical examples, and charts; reflection of student homework and exam grades, to see if adjustments should be made, or if a topic should be revisited; pedagogical choices regarding all aspects of their subject matter presentation; and evaluation of self.

For all three professors, the reflection process was evident during the observed classes, but most evident in the minutes following each class period while everything was

still fresh in their memory. For example, Professor North reflected on his pedagogical process, which was: drawing structural diagrams of the musical concepts, showing representative examples, in-class composition exercises, song selection, and the manner in which he communicated the materials. Although all three pedagogues acknowledged that reflection on the course curriculum was fruitful, they also expressed that each new semester required flexibility in the tailoring of instruction because each class held a unique combination of students.

### **Discussion and Recommendations**

Throughout the course of this study, it became evident that pedagogues interested in teaching popular music theory (or perhaps any subject) would be confronted with three fundamental questions:

1. How does one teach popular music theory?
  - a. Are there teaching methods effective in multiple educational settings?
  - b. What sociocultural considerations affect student learning?
  - c. How are popular music classes designed and structured?
2. What curricular resources are available for teaching popular music theory?
  - d. What educational frameworks might be conducive to popular music pedagogy?
  - e. What books, journals, and articles exist that could be adapted for instruction?
  - f. What popular musical examples could illustrate curricular topics in varying ways?
  - g. What electronic resources are available for use in a popular music theory

course?

3. What evaluation methods exist for assessing popular music comprehension?

There is no singular answer to these questions, because the answers are particularly dependent on student and educational context considerations, and influenced by each individual's personal experiences with popular music which means that pedagogues must be prepared for curricular and pedagogical adaptation based on the answers. Vasil, Weiss, & Powell (2019) observed that popular music educators have become more adaptive to pedagogies that “challenge students to think critically, problem-solve collaboratively, and use technology and media efficiently” (p. 85). Based on the findings of this study, it appears that it may be possible to craft effective pedagogical approaches to popular music theory by adapting existent frameworks. The following are reflections and recommendations in response to each of the above questions.

***Teaching***

One of the precepts communicated by the professors in this study was that the students they taught entered their respective programs, having learned music primarily through an aural tradition of music transmission. Consequently, these students often had little (or no) interest in learning to read and write the language of musical formally. Indeed, all three professors expressed the need to demonstrate the usefulness of written skills before student buy-in occurred. This finding aligned with Dean (2019), who researched student perspectives on “the value of notation skills” (p. 74), and found that many students felt notation was “unnecessary for their current practice and future ambitions” (p. 78), except for a limited number of vocations such as session musicians,

teachers, and in musical theater settings. One explanation for low student interest in acquiring notational skills could be that students had negative perceptions of music notation derived from their past experiences, possibly from western European style classical training in their K–12 learning environments. A second explanation could be that student buy-in is linked to their intrinsic motivations. Understanding students' motivations were important to Dean (2019), although intrinsic motivations were not explicitly mentioned. Regardless of why, it cannot be ignored that popular music has developed as an aural art first, and aural-based transmission methods still dominated popular music culture for both inside and outside formal educational circles time of this study.

As an example of the prominence of aural-based transmission methods of popular styles of music, the church that I attended at the time this study was conducted was one of the largest in the United States, and had more than 10 campuses. Musicians for these campuses were either on staff or contracted weekly to play, and many were successful performing artists who traveled and recorded regularly. In that environment, it could have been viewed as essential to use professional lead sheets or charts, but no such resources were created, shared, or otherwise utilized by these music teams. Instead, these musicians were asked to listen to recordings, learn their parts, and come ready to play each part with excellence. This commitment to an aural style of music preparation did not demonstrate a lack of ability for reading charts, or understanding the theoretical concepts undergirding the music, but rather it illustrated the informal nature of this particular style of music.

The pedagogues in this study agreed that a balance between aural and written

pedagogy should be achieved for formal popular music instruction because understanding both the written and spoken languages of music is as vital to a well-rounded education in musical structures as would be the ability to read and write in the comprehension of any given language. This finding supports the assertion by Fleet (2017a), who argued that musical notation held an “inherent value” (p. 166) for students who chose to study popular music at a university, and Dean (2019), who stated musical notation “should be an important part of popular music performance degrees” (p. 78). Given that most popular music musicians begin their journey learning aurally, it may be fruitful for pedagogues to focus primarily on aural pedagogy at first and then shift the balance over the course of instruction to one of primarily written based pedagogy. This could ensure a well-rounded curriculum and allow students to adapt more quickly to formal instruction.

**Sociocultural Considerations.** Many sociocultural considerations affect student learning; among them are: geographic region, student vocational goals, student interests, previous experience with popular music, previous teachers’ pedagogical styles (in secondary school primarily), as well as relationships such as family and friends. Whereas the focus of this study was on the professors who taught popular music theory and not the students, more research is needed in the area of student considerations to detail its influence on professors’ pedagogical process adequately.

**Designing and Structuring Popular Music Courses.** Because of variances in educational contexts, it would be challenging to create a one-size-fits-all course design and structure that would be fruitful in every institution of higher learning. Therefore, what follows is not intended to be the definitive way popular music courses should be

designed and structured, but rather an adaptive tool to provide a framework for the construction of programs and course curriculum. It is my hope that the reader will adapt the following concepts to their educational context.

There are many innovative approaches to program design, and different ways courses could be structured. For example, Boomtown (Karlsen, 2010), founded within the Luleå University of Technology in Sweden, was designed to create a formal music education environment based on informal learning techniques. The program goals at Boomtown were to:

- (a) offer a process-oriented university education for bands and musicians of rock music and related styles, on the music's own terms; (b) to emphasize music-making in groups and attend to peer-directed learning and aural traditions; (c) to welcome a multiplicity of musics and let the students, to a great extent, create their own learning environments, formulate their own knowledge and skill-related ends---and even choose the means why which to reach them; (d) to support the enhancement of musical knowledge by offering courses in songcrafting, sound engineering, and entrepreneurship; and (e) to offer cognitive tools for understanding one's own operations and encourage creative and autonomy in thoughts and deeds. (Karlsen, 2010)

Although this program was no longer running at the time of this study, many of its core educational philosophies were still found in the Luleå University of Technology's Rock Music performance program where the course content was "based on each student's unique background and own artistic goals" and "individually tailored in consultation with

the specialisation coordinator” (Course Syllabus, 2019). The Rock Performance Program also featured instructional techniques and examinations that were selected by students under the guidance of the coordinator.

While none of the professors in this study were cognizant of Boomtown at the onset of this study, all expressed that aural based instructional elements were important to the pedagogy of popular music theory. Professor West, for example, expressed that if he could design a popular music theory course from the ground up, he would create student-centered learning environments through the formation of music ensembles, which was the foundational tenant of Boomtown’s music pedagogy. Boomtown’s example of informal teaching structures supported Green’s (2002, 2008) advocacy and research in student-centered informal-learning course designs.

The collective viewpoints of the professors in this study further validated the view that student interest was important to popular music pedagogy. However, too much reliance on informal pedagogical approaches might have a negative effect, as it might hinder the instructor’s ability to scaffold assignments as the learning goals and evaluation methods would be left primarily to the students. Clements (2012) advocated for balance between teacher- and student-led approaches by capturing the “freshness [or] soul of the organic ways in which music is taught and learned in multiple avenues,” while allowing the pedagogue to “create learning opportunities that will best meet the needs of students in their particular classrooms” (Clements, 2012, p. 8). It is this researcher’s opinion that a blended approach to pedagogy could be an impactful approach to designing and structuring popular music theory courses.

The pedagogues in this study demonstrated that one of the fundamental skills needed to teach popular music theory was adaptability, specifically when addressing the logistical aspects of course design and structure, while simultaneously accounting for the sociocultural considerations of the pedagogues and students. The Backwards Design model (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005) is one framework that could offer the needed flexibility in content and teaching approaches. In the Backwards Design model (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005), pedagogues work to identify desired outcomes, determine what evidence will be acceptable, and plan learning experiences and instruction accordingly (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005, pp. 17–18).

Although useful, the Backwards design model lacks accountability for the various situational factors that influence curricular and pedagogical choices. Fink (2013) created the Integrated Course Design (ICD) framework, specifically for higher education, that augmented the Backwards Design model (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005) by including situational factors. In the ICD model, the learning goals, feedback and assessment, and teaching and learning activities must be constructed symbiotically, with the situational factors influencing all three foundational pillars of this construct equally (Fink, 2013, p. 70), and provided a 12-step process for course design in higher education that was broken into three phases. In the initial phase, pedagogues would identify important situational factors and learning goals, formulate appropriate feedback and assessment procedures, and design activities that would “determine the character of the learning experience for students” (Fink, 2013, p. 111). The final step in phase one was to ensure all the initial components were integrated. In phase two, steps 6–8, pedagogues create a thematic

structure for the course (p. 142), select or create a teaching strategy (p. 144), then combine the two while ensuring all elements are in alignment (p. 153).

The final four steps of Fink's (2013) ICD model include the development of a grading system (p. 156), reviewing the course design for "operational problems" (p. 158), writing a course syllabus (p. 159), and making plans to thoroughly evaluate the course and pedagogy process (p. 159). In the ICD model, situational factors are crucial to every element, and each element influences, or is integrated with, the others. Utilizing the ICD model would allow each pedagogue to tailor their course design and structures to their students' specific needs, requirements of their institutions, and their own experiences.

### ***Curricular Resources***

Each professor in this study discussed the need for the development of curriculum in the area of popular music pedagogy, and all were working to fulfill that need at their respective universities. However, each curriculum being developed by these professors was dependent on their instructional context. In other words, each professor's first priority when designing and adapting curriculum was for the students' benefit at their respective institution, and the final product may not be applicable to situations too far from the educational context of each professor's current educational setting. During this study, the curricular resources utilized primarily by each pedagogue included textbooks, scholarly writings, recorded music, and web-based resources.

**Textbooks and Scholarly Writing for Popular Music Pedagogy.** All three professors expressed the need for a new popular music theory textbook, but as previously mentioned, any attempt to write a book of popular music theory is problematic because of

the fleeting nature of musical taste and changing musical structures. Texts are needed to discuss the foundations of popular music theory, while allowing for the customization of listening examples and assignments. Other texts might be created by tapping into twentieth-century popular music historically, by creating a curriculum for understanding popular music theory as it has developed over time. This approach would not require building a new program from scratch, but rather the augmentation of existing popular music history materials. Texts already exist that discuss popular music from the last century in detail, provide a framework for genres, and give examples of songs from each decade in which to focus. However, some adaptation of these texts would be needed to satisfy sociocultural diversities and student interest. Green's (2014) book, for example, provided a how-to approach to popular music pedagogy using informal teaching methods for educators teaching elementary and secondary aged students with a background in classical music training, and higher education pedagogues could adapt many of the concepts presented.

Although not mentioned by the pedagogues in this study, many of their decisions and pedagogical structures were similar to the suggestions made by Green (2002, 2008), who provided insight into student contextualization issues the college level. Green's (2002, 2008) research was referenced and discussed by many of the researchers reviewed in this dissertation. Green's (2002, 2008) approach relied heavily on informal teaching methodologies, which was of expressed interest to the pedagogues in this study. Green's (2002, 2008) work is considered by some to be at the forefront of popular music pedagogy (Allsup & Olson, 2012), but not all researchers have agreed with Green's

(2002, 2008) heavy reliance on informal teaching methodologies.

The professors who participated in this study also demonstrated both a familiarity with, and reliance on, recorded music and web-based resources as part of their pedagogical framework. YouTube was the most common source for recorded music due to the vast number of musical examples therein. However, the utilization of these resources was primarily for the presentation of materials. The development of an online database of popular songs that represent popular music trends, and demonstrate the historical use of core musical concepts, may be beneficial. Each professor demonstrated a reliance on internet-based resources during this study, and might have benefited from a central database where popular music theory pedagogues had collaborated and shared musical resources.

Given that the foundational principles of music theory have not changed as quickly as musical style and personal tastes, a framework could be created to structure such an online resource. Such a venture could be constructed in a semi-closed system to be a resource for popular music theory pedagogues, which could then be expanded upon by those who teach similar courses. Provided the database was peer-reviewed, it could be created to host non-genre specific songs that have specific searchable features such as having a flat seven in their progressions. Instructors could then draw from the pool of examples when teaching about flat seven chords, or contribute to the communal database when they discover a new song utilizing a flat seven chord. This database could be a stockpile of peer-reviewed resources for popular music pedagogy, which could be contributed to by the very pedagogues teaching at each institution of higher education. It

could likewise include audio and video resources, and other interactive materials.

**Summary of Curricular Resources.** The adaptivity of the various types of aforementioned resources could influence the longevity of popular music theory courses, but core musical concepts will likely remain the same. Those concepts include, but are not limited to: conventional notation devices, such as clefs, notes, intervals, accidentals, beaming principles (etc.); meter and meter signatures, such as simple, compound, and irregular; scales derived from the 12-note equal-tempered tonal system, such as major, minor variations, pentatonic, and modal scales; chords based primarily on triads derived from the aforementioned scales, although quartal and additive chords should be included as substitute harmonies; octave designations, adhering to the current labeling system with C4 being middle C; contrapuntal concepts, such as the relationship between the bass guitar and voice within popular music idioms; chromatically altered chords, such as secondary, mixture, or other chromatically altered chords which may or may not function according to western European conventions; and song form, as are evidenced in popular music. The pedagogical approach to these topics could be adapted using the aforementioned student, teacher, and institutional considerations so that they remain congruent with the identified educational outcomes. For example, it may be more beneficial to teach the Nashville Number system in lieu of Roman Numerals, and voice-leading principles that better reflect current popular music practices where parallel motion is less objectional. It could also be beneficial for pedagogues to use a variety of approaches including both formal and informal methods.

**Evaluation.** There is a need for the amalgam of summative and formative

evaluations. As previously mentioned, all three professors utilized summative evaluations as part of their course instruction, but each expressed that it was the formative evaluations that occurred throughout the semesters that gave them the best knowledge of student comprehension. This raises an interesting question regarding the pedagogy of popular music, specifically; without the educational context provided by the institutions and accrediting bodies, would these professors have de-emphasized or removed summative evaluations (such as a final exam) from their courses? The answer may not be as simple as it appears. Each professor valued summative evaluation methods, but each expressed concern over the weight being given them.

Combining Fink's (2013) Integrative Course Design with Bloom's (1956) Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain, or more specifically Anderson and Krathwall's (2001) revision of Bloom's work, may provide a glimpse into the types of revisions that are needed. The taxonomy levels, from simplest to most complex, outline that students should show the ability to remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create. Considering that highest cognitive demonstration of subject matter content is to create, it is likely that students could have demonstrated the highest level of the taxonomy, the creation of music through the synthesis of concepts learned in class, before the final examination even takes place.

Each professor in this study included aural skills training as a part of their popular music theory pedagogy. As a reminder, Rifkin and Stoecker (2011) tailored Bloom's revised taxonomy for music students specifically, and utilized the taxonomy of the cognitive domain to create two-dimensional assessments for aural skills. Although Rifkin

and Stoecker (2011) returned “evaluate” to the very top of the cognitive model, this evaluation is dependent on students judging “their own creative output in order to reinvigorate the learning process for the next learning task” (Rifkin and Stoecker, 2011, p. 162). In this way, the cognitive process that students underwent was similar to that of educators’ pedagogical reasoning and action in that self-evaluation was intended to bring about new comprehensions of the subject matter.

It would be beneficial to educators if the evaluation methods for demonstrating popular music comprehension were adaptive to the needs of the aforementioned Integrated Course Design process. Vasil, Weiss, & Powell (2019) observed that popular music educators were more adaptive to pedagogies that challenged students to “think critically, problem-solve collaboratively, and use technology and media efficiently” (p. 85). Adapting Rifkin and Stoecker’s (2011) revision of Bloom’s (1956) taxonomy, and applying it to music student evaluations, would give educators a tool for feedback designed to bring about critical reflection by students. It could also allow for the summative evaluation of somewhat subjective, yet vital, musical skills such as improvisation. Utilizing Rifkin and Stoecker’s (2011) suggestions might also allow for summative evaluations that assess subject matter comprehension through the demonstration of higher cognitive abilities, as well as give a lexicon to reflective feedback based on formative evaluations.

### ***Suggestions for Implementation***

The integration of popular music elements into course design is recommended because of growing student interest and vocational opportunities that require modern

musical skills. However, care should be taken when selecting those elements so as not to rely too heavily on auditory based abilities. The three professors studied during this research process provided excellent examples of how popular music theory pedagogy could be approached, by balancing high standards for music theory comprehension with student vocational goals, and keeping within the parameters given in their respective educational environments. From the insights these professors have provided into the pedagogical reasoning and action (PRA) of those who teach popular music theory, some suggestions can be proposed regarding pedagogical practices. The following suggestions are not intended to cover all the possibilities for topics, or how those topics could be approached; rather, I intend to provide a contextual overview of the primary concepts related to popular music theory that could be adapted by pedagogues seeking to implement or revise their curriculum based on his or her own educational context. To further align these suggestions with the crux of this study (PRA), I have embedded the a priori codes for this study when appropriate and connected these suggestions to Shulman's (1987) PRA framework. As a reminder, the a priori codes for this study are: Knowledge Base (KB), Initial Comprehension (IC), Transformation (TR), Instruction (IN), Evaluation (EV), Reflection (RE), and New Comprehensions (NC).

Given that the subject matter is popular music theory (IC), and more specifically that of popular music from the 1900s through the early 2000s, there were some topics identified through the course of this study that fell outside of the traditional music theory cannon that would be beneficial if included in popular music theory curriculum. The subject matter content (KB) identified was representative materials from which popular

music pedagogues drew from, and not intended to be an exhaustive list. As a first example, pedagogues could teach rhythmic principles and practicing rhythmic dictations (IN) in the context of drum kit notation (TR). This approach could have several benefits, such as tying rhythmic exercises and dictations to a context that is both familiar and of interest to students. Teaching rhythmic concepts in this manner would also allow for a scaffolded, multi-layered approach to rhythmic complexity and aural skills training in a way previously unutilized in one- or two-part rhythmic exercises and allow for connections to be made with other modern popular music idioms (TR). This approach would also demonstrate a key component of Shulman's (1987) PRA, or "tailoring the adaptations" (p. 16) to their students.

Utilizing modern recording software and live mixing applications could also help to maintain student interest (TR). Sequentially, the instruction could begin with rhythmic demonstrations using the kick drum (notated properly) until the student has achieved a predetermined proficiency level (IN). Next, the rhythmic examples could be slightly simplified, and the snare added to create a new layer of complexity. This process could continue through the drum set as a whole in the following order; kick, snare, hat, toms, crash, and ride. Connections could be made throughout the course of instruction to both live audio mixing and recorded audio principles, as this would be an appropriate sequencing for the building of a mix. The key justifications for this approach are: student familiarity with the instrument, their interest in working with or on a drum kit, and the alignment with their vocational goals (TR). As a reminder, understanding the specific context for which the student would apply this knowledge, the cultural perspectives in

which the student viewed the materials, the specific learning styles, and the student's previous exposure to the material are all assumed to be accounted for before instruction begins in Shulman's (1987) model of PRA.

In a similar manner, scaffolding music theory pedagogy by using the drums as a foundational rhythmic element, and then adding the bass guitar (upright or electric) should allow for rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic elements to be discussed, and how these instruments function in a popular music context (TR, IN). This additive process could continue in the following sequence of instruments; drums, bass, acoustic guitar, piano or keyboard, and electric guitar. Note that this sequencing is also congruent with live and recorded audio mixing, and moves from the more rhythmic functioning instruments to those with more of a melodic and harmonic function (IC, TR, IN). The aforementioned instruments were chosen based on being considered germane to popular music styles (Rooksby, 2007), and applicable to most (if not all) of the pedagogical elements needed for a well-rounded curriculum in popular music theory.

Absent from the last few paragraphs was the inclusion of the voice, which could be introduced synchronously with the drums in this pedagogical scenario, because the voice is uniquely suited for in-class participatory exercises designed for melody and sight-reading instruction (IN, EV), regardless of a student's primary instrument. Also, the combination of voices in a classroom setting could assist the internalization of harmonic structure, while allowing students to practice listening to other parts and matching the pitch of those singing the same note (IN). Additionally, having students sing scales, or various chords one tone at a time, would allow for the formative evaluation of their

internalization of the subject matter (EV). Ties could also be made between this approach to vocals with live and recorded audio mixing (TR), because vocals and instruments are often placed in separate sub-mixes for adjustments to the overall volume of each group while maintaining the relationship therein.

### ***National Association of Schools of Music***

Although it was not the focus of this study, it was discovered that some universities that developed popular music programs have chosen not to seek National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) accreditation, or at least has not made gaining NASM accreditation a priority. Some examples of these universities include the University of Southern California, Visible Music College, and California College of Music, and Grand Canyon University. There are also a number of trade-style schools and community colleges, such as the Maricopa Community College network, in the greater Phoenix area, who had multiple campuses developing programs in popular music. The choice to forgo NASM accreditation is important because Berklee, which was the largest educational institution for popular music at the time of this study, did not hold and was not seeking NASM accreditation. According to Professor North, persons in leadership at Berklee did not seek NASM accreditation because NASM was “aligned with the 19th-century conservatory model”, and was therefore less relevant to institutions seeking to develop popular music programs. Berklee’s (and other higher education institutions’) choice to forgo NASM accreditation in an academic discipline that has for many years placed a high value on national accreditation for the arts, does call into question the need for reform in NASM standards, or possibly, the need for an alternative national popular

music accreditation body.

### ***Suggestions for Further Research***

There are several ways in which this study could be a foundation for future research. First, integrated into the design of this study was a focus on the cognitive domain (Bloom, 1956), and how it influenced pedagogical decisions, but absent from this study was how the Affective and Psychomotor domains affect popular music pedagogy. It is assumed that research connecting the Affective and Psychomotor domains would provide rich data, which would greatly benefit those involved in popular music pedagogy.

Each professor in this study showed strong interest in the findings related to the knowledge base (KB) for popular music pedagogy. It became evident throughout the course of this study that the KB for these pedagogues was important to their process of PRA; therefore, a study could be conducted to compile resources relevant to the KB. Shulman's (1986) Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) is a framework that could prove useful in the identification of pedagogues' subject matter knowledge for teaching. As a reminder, PCK is a combination of "content knowledge that embodies the aspects of content most germane to its teachability" (p. 9), and pedagogical knowledge, or knowledge of what makes "the learning of specific topics easy or difficult" (p. 9). Elucidating popular music theory pedagogues PCK could be useful to anyone seeking to develop popular music curriculum, or seeking to train popular music pedagogues.

Given the use of technology in popular music performances and recordings, and the increased pedagogy of music technologies in education, a study could be conducted on the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) of popular music

instructors. Like PCK, the TPACK framework is designed to elucidate the pedagogical content knowledge of educators, but Mishra and Koehler's (2006) TPACK framework includes technological considerations as well. Data regarding the technological knowledge of pedagogues might help identify any existing deficiencies in their knowledge base, which could in turn affect their teaching effectiveness and relevancy to current students, and provide a blueprint for needed training. These data could also bring forth a deeper understanding of pedagogues' integration of technology into popular music pedagogy, and be used to report best practices when teaching with technology.

Further studies might also be conducted on students of popular music to gain perspectives on student interests, expectations for learning, and aural abilities entering college. Data concerning what artists and genres students generally listened to, along with sociocultural information of those students, would aid in the preparation of curriculum. One finding of this study was that first-year students of popular music often have a disproportionate amount of aural skill in relation to their ability to read and write music. Even though students often lack the verbiage necessary to express musical concepts, they often demonstrate the ability to produce advanced art aurally. Understanding students' interests, learning expectations, and aural abilities could be important to the design, or re-design, of programs that meet students' vocational training needs.

Given the history and size of the Berklee College of Music, along with their influence and longevity in popular music pedagogy, various studies could be conducted to gather data and report on the variances between the various programs therein. As examples, studies could also be conducted to ascertain the variations in pedagogical

approaches between online and on-campus instruction for both students and pedagogues, or if variances in instruction exist between the 12 majors. Additionally, multiple-case studies could be conducted with the harmony faculty to elucidate key approaches to popular music pedagogy.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Given the newness of a codified research effort in popular music education (PME) at large, and in higher popular music education (HPME) in specific, it is important that the community involved work collectively to develop scholarly resources for the benefit of pedagogues and students alike. However, Reinhert (2018) advocated for flexibility when developing HPME curricular and pedagogical structures to account for the “students who learn music in their bedrooms and off the internet-or whatever medium is in the future” (p. 210). This researcher believes that such efforts should additionally continue to cross the silos of K–12 and higher education institutions and include a global network of topics. I have worked to situate this dissertation within the research being conducted in the area HPME. Throughout this process, I have also begun to adapt my own pedagogy in alignment with the findings of this research. Two examples of my pedagogical adaptations are utilizing drum notation and recorded drums to teach basic rhythms and using popular music recordings for aural analysis. I have made other adaptations to my pedagogy that will undoubtedly be fleshed out in my future research endeavors and vetted through both peers and students.

### **Pedagogical Reasoning and Action**

The pedagogical reasoning and action of professors who teach popular music theory was the crux of this study, and the findings from this study supported the approaches and assessments related to music theory instruction as outlined by Fish et al. (2017, p. 6–7). Regarding the approaches to popular music theory instruction, the professors employed “formal, non-formal, and informal learning methods, chalk-and-talk lessons in theory, [and] music, chart and score reading and sight-reading/sight-singing” (2017, p. 7). Likewise, the approaches to assessment by professors in this study also supported those outlined by Fish et al. (2017, p. 7) as appropriate for assessing popular music theory.

Shulman’s process of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action (PRA) was unknown to the professors prior to this study. Nevertheless, all three demonstrated every step of PRA during this study, supporting the validity of Shulman’s (1987) model as a research tool. Further support for PRA is the longevity of the concept, which was over 30 years at the time this study was conducted. Additionally, like the steps of Shulman’s (1987) model of PRA, adaptability is the key to this model’s usefulness, as evidenced by PRA’s adaptability to any pedagogue regardless of educational context or discipline.

Regarding specifically the pedagogy of popular music theory, throughout this study, it became apparent that there was not a one-size-fits-all approach to popular music theory pedagogy. Suggestions have been made in this chapter outlining possible approaches and common fundamental subject matter concepts from which to begin. However, it is recommended that time be spent considering students’ vocational goals,

and data be gathered pertaining to potential employers' needs before curricular design begins. Further, it is recommended that programmatic design occur free from the confines of curricular concerns, with the goal being to imagine what the program would look like in the perfect scenario. Then, adaptations could be made at the curricular level, with the goal to keep as close to the original vision as possible.

As evidenced by the professors in this study, it is important to design pedagogy with student considerations in mind. Adaptations for students' vocational goals and musical preferences can easily be grafted into new programs and curricula. However, the more challenging undertaking could be the inclusion of aural transmission methods for which popular music is historically known, which is essential if the authenticity of transmission method is important. Therefore, current educational conventions in institutions of higher education may also need to be updated or reimagined in order to adjust to aural transmission methods aptly.

Finally, each professor evidenced both reflection (RE) and new comprehensions (NC) during this study, but none had developed a systematic process for accomplishing either. Creating a process for reflection (RE) and cataloging new comprehensions (NC) might be useful to pedagogues who seek to improve their instruction. After each instructional period, the simple act of journaling could suffice, either through paper and pencil, digital journaling apps, or recording devices. Regardless of the method, purposeful RE and cataloging NC could lead to a pedagogue's personal growth, and result in a more meaningful learning experience for students.

## Appendix A

### Researcher Experience

<b>Higher Education Pedagogical Experience</b>
<p><b>Fine Arts Courses Taught</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Music Theory.</li> <li>• Introduction to Aural Perceptions.</li> <li>• Music Theory I–IV.</li> <li>• Music Theory Lab I–IV (Aural Skills and Musicianship).</li> <li>• Orchestration and Arranging.</li> <li>• Technology for Music Educators.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Popular Music Courses Taught</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fundamentals of Music Theory for Contemporary Worship.</li> <li>• Aural Skills.</li> <li>• Sound Reinforcement and Recording.</li> <li>• Songwriting 1–4.</li> <li>• Arranging 1–2.</li> <li>• American Jazz and Popular Music.</li> <li>• Music in World Cultures.</li> <li>• Rock Music and Culture.</li> </ul>

<b>Higher Education Curriculum Design Experience</b>
<p><b>Fine Arts Courses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Music Theory.</li> <li>• Introduction to Aural Perceptions.</li> <li>• Music Theory I–IV.</li> <li>• Music Theory Lab I–IV (Aural Skills and Musicianship).</li> <li>• Orchestration and Arranging.</li> <li>• Technology for Music Educators.</li> <li>• Counterpoint.</li> <li>• Form and Analysis.</li> <li>• Seminar in Composition.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Popular Music Based Courses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composition with Music Technology.</li> <li>• Production Leadership for Worship Arts.</li> <li>• Sound Reinforcement and Recording.</li> <li>• Songwriting 1–4.</li> <li>• Arranging 1–2.</li> </ul>

- American Jazz and Popular Music.
- Music in World Cultures.
- Rock Music and Culture.
- Music Structures 1–2.
- Fundamentals of Music Theory for Contemporary Worship.
- Aural Skills.

#### **Popular Music Programmatic Design Experience**

- Bachelor of Worship Arts, Media and Production Emphasis (3-year track).
- Bachelor of Worship Arts, Media and Production Emphasis (4-year track).
- Bachelor of Worship Arts, Worship Ministry Emphasis (3-year track).
- Bachelor of Worship Arts, Worship Ministry Emphasis (4-year track).

## **Appendix B**

### **Interview Questions**

#### **Interview 1**

##### ***Icebreaker Discussion Prompts***

- Please tell me about your formal training in music.
- Please tell me about your personal background with popular forms of music.
- Please describe the educational environment in which you teach popular music theory.

##### ***Comprehension***

- Please describe what playing by ear and sight entails, and your experience with both.
- What are some influences, both within and outside of higher education, that you believe affect your comprehension of popular music theory?
- Please describe the types of materials that you feel are appropriate for teaching popular music theory and where have you found these materials.
- Describe the social, vocational, and educational contexts in which your students engage with subject matter materials.

##### ***Transformational Process***

- Please describe your process for preparing materials for instruction.
- Please describe the ways you represent subject matter materials.
- Please describe the ways in which you adapt selected materials for instruction.
- What are your considerations when making instructional material choices?

- What are your considerations when adapting and tailoring instructional materials to your students?

***Process of Instruction and Evaluation***

- Please describe the classroom environment you feel is most conducive for teaching popular music theory.
- Please describe the methodology you use to present subject matter materials.
- Please describe the ways students participate in learning through physical action.
- Please describe the ways in which student evaluation occurs.
- Please describe the ways in which you evaluate your own performance.

**Interview 2 Questions**

***Reflection and new comprehensions process***

- Please describe your process of reflecting and reviewing your instructional process.
- How has this instructional process changed your understanding of the subject matter?
- Please describe the ways student feelings and emotions influenced your pedagogical process.
- In what ways did the physical performance of materials influence your pedagogical process?
- Describe the changes you feel should be made to the curriculum before the next instructional cycle begins.

## Appendix C

### Worksheet 1: Multi-Case Themes

<b>Utility of Cases</b>	<b>Case 1</b>	<b>Case 2</b>	<b>Case 3</b>	<b>Case 4</b>	<b>Case 5</b>	<b>Case 6</b>
<b>Multicase Themes Common to All</b>						
Theme 1						
Theme 2						
Theme 3						
<b>Multicase Themes Common to Most</b>						
Theme 1						
Theme 2						
Theme 3						
<b>Unique Multicase Themes</b>						
Theme 1						
Theme 2						
Theme 3						
Theme 4						

Adapted from Stake (2006)

### Worksheet 2: Assertion Development Matrix

	Themes						
<b>Case 1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Finding 1							
Finding 2							
Finding 3							
Finding 4							
<b>Case 2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Finding 1							
Finding 2							
Finding 3							
Finding 4							
And so on for remaining cases							

Adapted from Stake (2006)

**Appendix D**  
**Berklee Accolades**

Berklee Grammy Winners		
Nick Baxter '07	Thomas Bellino '72 (Vanguard Jazz Orchestra)	Steve Berkowitz '78
Jeff Bhasker '99	Josh Blair '99	Gustavo Borner '89
Stephen Bray '78	Alan Broadbent '69	Paul Boutin '94
Gary Burton '62	Will Calhoun '86 (Living Colour)	Kevin Camp '07
Terri Lyne Carrington '83	Annie Clark '03 (St. Vincent)	Vinnie Colaiuta '75
Paula Cole '90	Charlie Colin '88 (Train)	Carlos Colón '04 (Black:Guayaba)
Clay Cook '98	Jonathan Crone '05	Andrew Dawson '01
Rick DePofi '81	Al DiMeola '74	Ruriá Duprat '88
Jon D'Uva '95	Melissa Etheridge '80	Benny Faccone '78
Donald Fagen '66 (Steely Dan)	Chuy Flores '97	Robert Freedman '78
Bill Frisell '77	Albhy Galuten '68	Marco Gamboa '96
Brian Garten '95 (Mariah Carey)	Gil Goldstein '70	Juan Luis Guerra '82
David Greenbaum '05	Andy Hall '97 (The Infamous Stringdusters)	Tom Hambridge '83
Jan Hammer '69	Roy Hargrove '89	Keith Harris '99
Lalah Hathaway '94	Levon Helm	Bruce Hornsby '74
Rob Hotchkiss '82 (Train)	Byeong-Joon Hwang '99	Bob James '58
Joelle James '11	Jasmine Cephas Jones '09	Quincy Jones '51
Pete Karam '94	Brent Kolatalo '03	Diana Krall '83
Joey Kramer '71 (Aerosmith)	Richard L. Kulsar '90	Alex Lacamoire '95 (In the Heights, Hamilton)
Tim Latham '89	Jason Lehning '94 (Randy Travis)	Fred Lipsius '61 (Blood, Sweat and Tears)
Fernando Lodeiro '07	Jeff Lorber '71 (Jeff Lorber Fusion)	Jeremy Loucas '06
Joe Lovano '72	Gavin Lurssen '91	Natalie Maines '95 (Dixie Chicks)
Aimee Mann '80	Arif Mardin '61	Branford Marsalis '80
Tony Maserati '86	John Mayer '98	Ben McKee '09 (Imagine Dragons)
Justin Moshkevich '07	Jay Newland '84	Stephen Oremus '92

Shafik Palis '01	Chris Pandolfi '03 (The Infamous Stringdusters)	Trey Parker '88
Danilo Pérez '88	Daniel Platzman '09 (Imagine Dragons)	Evan Price '96 (Turtle Island String Quartet)
Thomas Pridgen '03 (The Mars Volta)	Claudio Ragazzi '84 (Pablo Ziegler Trio)	Patrick Robinson '96
Wallace Roney '81	Antonio Sanchez '98 (Pat Metheny Group)	Pernell Saturnino '95 (Paquito D'Rivera Quintet)
Tom Schick '95	John Scofield '73	Wayne Sermon '08 (Imagine Dragons)
Howard Shore '69	Alan Silvestri '70	Charlton Singleton '89 (Ranky Tanky)
Ruslan Sirota '03	Josh Sklair '78 (Etta James)	Allan Slutsky '73
Luciana Souza '88	Esperanza Spalding '05	Erich Talaba '03
Susan Tedeschi '91	Mads Tolling '03 (Turtle Island String Quartet)	Tommy Torres '94
Joe Travers '91 (Zappa Plays Zappa)	Diego Urcola '90 (Paquito D'Rivera Quintet)	Hiromi Uehara '03
Steve Vai '79	Victor Vanacore '74	Alex Venguer '02
Brian Vibberts '91	Eliot Wadopian '80 (Paul Winter Consort)	Brian Warwick '03
Ernie Watts '66	Jeff "Tain" Watts '81 (Branford Marsalis Quartet)	Daniel Weinkauf '84 (They Might Be Giants)
Gillian Welch '92	Dennis White '88	Todd Whitelock '89
Brad Whitford '71 (Aerosmith)	Ben Wisch '76	Anna Wise '10
Linus Wyrsh '08	Alon Yavnai '95 (Paquito D'Rivera Quintet)	Joe Zawinul '59 (Weather Report)

<b>Berklee Latin Grammy Winners</b>		
Alexander Acha '03 (1 award)	Cheche Alara '94 (1)	Alvaro Alencar '93 (11)
Áureo Baqueiro '92 (3)	Nick Baxter '07 (2)	Daniel Bitrán Arizpe '13 (1)
Gustavo Borner '89 (9)	Gustavo Celis '94 (7)	Wesley Cole Switzer '07 (1)
Rodrigo Cuevas '05 (1)	Dario Eskenazi '88 (1)	Benny Faccone '78 (10)
Gustavo Farias '84 (2)	Chuy Flores '97 (1)	Marta Gómez '02 (1)
Juan Luis Guerra '82 (19)	Ben Gundersheimer '94 (1)	Gael Hedding '05 (1)
Paul Hoyle '83 (Albita) (1)	Alex Leader '05 (1)	Gavin Lurssen '91 (2)
Tony Maserati '86 (1)	Justin Moshkevich '07 (1)	Enrique Gonzalez Muller '00 (1)
Sebastian De Peyrecave '04 (1)	Lewis Pickett '09 (1)	Luis Saldarriaga '14 (1)
Sebastián Schon '85 (2)	Joel Someilan '93 (2)	Daniel Thompson '94 (1)
Tommy Torres '93 (2)	Diego Urcola '90 (1)	Alex Venguer '02 (1)
Omar Vivoni '03 (1)	Dave Way '87 (2)	Ben Wisch '76 (1)
Oscar Zambrano '03 (1)		

<b>Berklee Oscar Awards</b>
Melissa Etheridge '80: best music, original song, "I Need to Wake Up," An Inconvenient Truth (2007)
Quincy Jones '51: Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award (1995)
Michael Semanick '85: achievement in sound mixing, King Kong (2006) and Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (2004)
Howard Shore '69: best music, original score and best music, original song, The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (2004); best music, original score, The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (2002)
Eugene Gearty '82: achievement in sound editing, Hugo (2011)

<b>Berklee Tony Awards</b>
Alex Lacamoire '95: Best Orchestrations, Hamilton (2016)
Stephen P. Bray '78: Best Revival of a Musical, The Color Purple (2016)
Bill Elliott, professor: Best Orchestrations, An American in Paris (2015)
Alex Lacamoire '95: Best Orchestrations, In the Heights (2008)
Trey Parker '88: Best Musical, Best Book of a Musical, Best Direction of a Musical, and Best Original Score, Book of Mormon (2011)

Berklee Emmy Awards
David Bondevitch '85: Music Editor, <i>The Huntley</i> (2000)
Don Breithaupt '84: Daytime Emmy, Creative Arts, Outstanding Original Song—Main Title and Promo, <i>6teen</i> (2009)
Alf Clausen '66: Music and Lyrics, <i>The Simpsons</i> (1997, 1998)
Daniel Colman '95: Sound Editing for a Series, <i>Battlestar Galactica</i> , "Daybreak (Part 2)" (2009)
Peter Hastings '84: Achievement in Animation, <i>Animaniacs</i> (1996); Animated Program (for Programming One Hour or Less), <i>A Pinky &amp; the Brain Christmas Special</i> (1996)
Brad Hatfield '75: Original Song in Daytime TV, <i>Sunshine</i> (2006)
Quincy Jones '51: Achievement in Music Composition for a Series (Dramatic Underscore), <i>Roots</i> (1977)
Devin Joseph '88: Sound Editing, <i>Deadwood</i> (2004)
Kevin Kliesch '92: Outstanding Achievement in Music Direction and Composition, <i>Sofia the First</i> (2015)
Rob Mounsey '75: Achievement in Music Direction and Composition for a Drama Series, <i>The Guiding Light</i> (1991) and <i>One Life to Live</i> (2000)
Pablo Munguia '97: Sound Mixing for a Variety or Music Series or Special, 81st Annual Academy Awards (2009) and 52nd Annual Grammy Awards (2010)
Peter Nusbaum '92: Sound Mixing for a Comedy or Drama Series, <i>Scrubs</i> (2007)
Andy O'Reilly '91: Lighting Direction for Electronic Multi-camera Work, XXVIII Olympiad Opening Ceremony (2005)
Trey Parker '88: Animated Program (for Programming One Hour or Less), <i>South Park</i> (2005, 2007)
Brian Riordan '95: Sound Mixing for a Variety or Music Series or Special, 81st Annual Academy Awards (2009) and 25th Anniversary Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Concert (2010)
David Van Slyke '82: Sound Editing for a Series, <i>CSI: Crime Scene Investigation</i> (2003)
Thomas Wagner: Outstanding Nonfiction Series, Producer/Writer: <i>Finding Lucy</i> (2001)
Matthias Weber '91: Sound Editing for Nonfiction Programming, <i>Expedition Bismarck</i> (2003)
Geoff Zanelli '96: Composition for a Miniseries, Movie, or Special, <i>Into the West</i> (2006)

## Appendix E

### Select Interview Responses for Comparison

The following are select responses from each participant in this study. The responses are organized by PRA topic and question, with each professor's response following for ease of comparison.

#### Comprehension

The following two interview questions were designed specifically to gather data about each participants' subject matter comprehension.

#### *Comprehension Question 1*

Interviewer: Please describe the types of materials that you feel are appropriate for teaching popular music theory, and where have you found these materials?

Professor West: I'm actually attempting to write my own curriculum as I go through the semesters with some specific goals in mind, and I'm trying to bring applicable material to the table. I've looked at a couple different curriculum, but because our focus is church music, and in particular popular church music, I have not found anything out there for our specific context. It's an eclectic mix of skill sets that we're trying to get our students to improve in. Most basically, however, it's music theory, aural skills, and sight-singing. So those are the three paradigms that we believe students need to get better at. We do have a textbook; one of the texts is primarily music theory for jazz musicians and popular musicians. In some senses, that book is pretty idiosyncratic the way that it describes things; it even describes things in ways I haven't heard them described in my own education in jazz music.

It also seems a little bit colloquial in terms of its approach, so I've had to work through some issues there. But we definitely use the textbook, as well as the sight singing book that corresponds with it. The sight singing book is pretty basic in terms of singing intervals, using solfege, and working students through various examples to sight-sing. It also has some melodic dictation, which looks at rhythms from a popular music standpoint. But, often we'll use YouTube videos to help develop aural skills, and I'll try and play a lot of examples for them on the piano. I've tried to bring to the table to fit the context of the local church. And honestly, it's probably the most challenging thing that I do, because we do want our materials to be applicable to their vocation, but there's not a tailor-made resource out there right now that is comprehensive enough for our context that would span everything from classical music education to something very rock or black gospel-driven. So, we try to focus on those core music skills; music literacy, being able to hear increasingly complex harmonies, melodies, rhythms, and then being able to reproduce them. Even in written form if they had to, so that they could dictate and write things down in staff notation.

Professor South: Well, recently, I've been using more articles from the Journal of Music Theory Online because it's easy to access, and completely free for the students. Also, because of its digital format, the authors will often have color-coded charts, and that's useful for everything. That's not just for formal diagrams or harmonic charts, but also for talking about the rhythm of vocals in Rap music. They have these remarkably sophisticated charts, and it doesn't have to be black and white

because it's not in print, and often they include sound examples. So, the students hear and see everything, and that's an amazing didactic tool in that particular journal.

I used to require Walter Everett's *The Foundations of Rock*. But, I think the price of that has gone up, and I found myself using less and less of it, so I really couldn't justify requiring them to buy it anymore if I'm going to have them read maybe 20 pages of it. Everett's book is the best resource there is, there's a little too much theorizing in it, but it's a good book, and I've learned a lot from it. Maybe that should be one of my influences too now that I think about it, in terms of how I think about form, that was certainly very useful, and I've gotten a few really good assignments from using Walter Everett's book. He has a list of songs, from his period of course, like 1955 through 1969, of songs with irregular phrase structure, and I assign students two or three songs from that list. So that has been a good resource, and I still use it in some ways, but between that and Music Theory Online. Oh, and there's Jennifer Snodgrass' *Contemporary Musicianship* book, I assign a chapter from that also.

Professor North: The songs themselves, anything at all is fair game, but there are certain lines that I don't cross. I try to be as careful as possible about political lines, and about gender and racial lines, because the last thing I want is for anybody in my classroom to be offended by a piece of music that I'm playing. I just want students to focus on the music. So, we talked about Redbone, this great song by Childish Gambino, it's a really great Aeolian natural minor song. But, its

pervasive use of the ‘N’ word makes it the kind of thing that I just can’t bring in. So, if I’ve found a song and it seems relevant to whatever topic I’m studying, the subject matter and the genre can be pretty much anything. I haven’t brought any country or Christian music in, but I’m certainly not opposed to it. I have actually brought in death metal, and that didn’t work very well.

In the MAT class, because of the way the course is designed, students actually do some transcription. The students still can’t hear all the nuances of the music, so they’re not going to be able to write a really detailed transcription of what’s going on, but they can actually do some basic things in that class. For the rest of it, I just need to transcribe it. So, I have, just like you and just like everybody else here, dozens or maybe even hundreds of transcriptions that are started. I don’t always finish them, but I transcribe enough for me to be able to get my point across. If it’s the kind of thing where it seems like it would be beneficial to my colleagues, then I’ll finish it. So, anything is fair game regarding musical materials, and any song is fair game as long it doesn’t cross boundaries that are going to take away from the reason we’re here by making people feel uncomfortable, and if I’m going to show it, I have to have some kind of visual representation.

### ***Comprehension Question 2***

Interviewer: Describe the social, vocational, and educational contexts in which your students engage with subject matter materials.

Professor West: Within the various teaching roles and opportunities I have had, there’s a reality that a large percentage of students come into the program not having a

whole lot of formal education in music. In fact, more of their education has been informal in nature, having participated in, or perhaps had the opportunity to lead, a youth or college group musically. It is the social aspect of these experiences that forms opinions about music, or about expectations that sometimes don't help them in an educational environment. Sometimes, their attitude coming in is that they are already pretty good, and do not feel they need to be a whole lot better, which leads them to question why they are being asked to learn how to read music. For many of them, this stems from the reality that they have not needed to read music before, and their church has been okay with them not knowing how. All of this can be a significant hurdle we have to address in the first year. If we don't address this in the first year, they're not going to progress at the pace that they need to progress to complete the program. The social aspect of that, and specifically the student's expectations, can also be a hurdle that we have to overcome in the classroom. Students want to know why and how the subject matter actually matters in their future vocational context, and why they should work hard at aural skills and sight-singing. Some of those expectations have been well defined for other fields, like science, math, and English. But coming into an educational context where they already feel competent, which they are to a certain degree, but also having an inflated view of their competence, which can become a hurdle when we try to start educating them in some of those areas.

Specifically regarding their vocation, one of the things I talk with my students a lot about is the relationship between skill and scope. Some of them come in thinking that

they have a good measure of skill, but they often don't realize the scope is way larger than their skill. And so, the further that discrepancy is, the less likely they're going to be able to get a vocation in the direction they want to actually go in. So, I try to help them understand that their skill needs to surpass the scope of vocation that they want. Otherwise, they are probably not going to get a job in their desired field, and even if you do, it may be very stressful because they are going to be asked to do things that they are not quite competent to do.

Professor South: Well educationally, that one's easiest, most of them are in music industry programs, which are primarily pop and commercial focused. Of course, there's the rare student who is a performance major, I've had at least one every year. But, many of them have neither appetite nor taste in popular music and don't really engage with it outside of the class. I had some opera singers who were, for some reason, in the class, so they're the exception rather than the norm. But the other 90% of the students, who do have regular engagement with it, are in popular music ensembles or they are themselves rappers, or DJ's, or something like that. So, a lot perform both vocationally and avocationally, and sometimes that's part of their educational requirements, and sometimes it's not. There's a recording studio and a record label that our students run, so many perform it, many record it, and many promote it. There are also some classes where they have to market, find an artist to market, so many are artists or artist promoters, or recording engineers, and most have experience with at least two out of three.

Professor North: The context limits it, but those are really three things, social, vocational, and educational, that are just gigantic spaces. The social thing is that I'm not really friends with my students. I'm friendly with them, and we have a very casual relationship. But I don't hang out with them, and I think that's a super important that that line is drawn. On the other hand, they are friends with one another, and they do hang out. They go to parties and stuff together. So in my classroom, I try to foster as much lightheartedness as possible while still working hard, and it's all good. That kind of behavior is possible because that's actually how gigs work, you know. Gigs, at a certain point, they cannot even be about the music, there just about the hang, you know. So, fostering that sense of 'it's safe for us to just hang out' is important, even though I still have to draw that line carefully and make it clear that I'm in a different category than they are. Not to create hierarchy, just to model professionalism. So I guess that's one way of looking at the social context.

Vocational context, well, the whole idea is that they're going to become professionals. And so, I feel it's incumbent upon me to model what the vocational context is, and what a professional musician looks like. A lot of students come in here in their first semester thinking things like, 'and then I'm gonna go on The Voice, and then I'm gonna get a contract with this huge record label, and then I'm gonna be starring in movies, and I'm gonna be traveling all over.' Could it be true for one person? Maybe. But that's not what a professional musician's career typically is, and so the other thing vocational wise is that I do my best to be a model for them so that they can watch what I'm doing and decide whether or not it's valid, or

reasonable, for them. I do all the stuff, and I have a career as a professional musician, so they can do all of this stuff and have a career as a professional musician, or maybe they don't want to do all the stuff that I do. Can they still have a career as a professional musician? Yes, if they want to. But at least by having a model they have something to critique

The educational context occurs in a classroom, but some of the students will come to the concert tonight. So, the nature of what we're studying spills out beyond the classroom. I have three office hours because many students just need more help. They still don't know how to spell chords, or they don't know what key we're in, so to be able to spend time with them working one on one to try to help them is super important. So, it's a mess is actually the answer to the question. But generally speaking, as long as I'm the person who's modeling integrity, and just ferociously going after information non-stop, then they see somebody that they want to follow.

### **Transformational Process**

The following two interview questions were designed specifically to gather data about each participants' transformational process.

#### ***Transformation Question 1***

Interviewer: Please describe your process for preparing materials for instruction.

Professor West: I recently transitioned from being a worship pastor and leading services regularly, so I wanted to bring that experience into the classroom to share with the students. Which initially resulted in mixed success; some of the students

appreciated it, and some of the students did not. So, I adjusted my approach to be more text-based, by walking through the text and letting the text be a starting point for conversations with the students. I would then try to contribute real-life examples and application points as well. However, this semester has been much more rigid in the sense of working through the chapter materials. My intention is to focus on the application more towards the end of the semester, or moving into the next class in the series, which I also teach.

Professor South: You know, it's never been easier because I don't have to bring a stack of CDs to class. In fact, I use very little in terms of materials, I basically just queue up YouTube clips, and just get there a couple of minutes early so we don't have to sit through embarrassing advertisements really, but that's mostly the extent of it. I occasionally will print off formal diagrams when we're teaching about form. Also, sometimes I bring other handouts in class to talk about phrase structure or rhythm, but usually a handout that covers whichever parameter we're talking about that day, be it a formal diagram, phrase diagram, annotated harmony, or introducing them to the system of harmony, we teach Nashville Numbers here

Professor North: I dislike and really can't deal with incorrect charts. So, if I'm going to bring in a chart of some type, I'm either going to tell them what the flaws in the chart are, just fix the chart completely in advance, or, and this is really the more exciting thing I think, just draw everything freehand right in front of them. I was telling you about that the other day, and I hope to some degree it made sense.

Tomorrow I'm going to draw more voice leading for the Harmony 3 classes. But I really think that if I bring in a lead sheet, they don't see the thousands of hours that it took to get me to the point where I could write a lead sheet. But, if I draw the voice leading, or draw whatever it is, on the board in front of them, they still can't see those thousand hours. But they at least see that it's something that a person can do. So, there are two kinds of materials; the charts that I bring in, which either are nearly perfect, or the flaws are big enough that I can just say 'that chord is really this thing, or I just draw everything freehand on the board.

***Transformation Question 2***

Interviewer: Please describe the ways in which you adapt selected materials for instruction.

Professor West: One of the main challenges we have is trying to apply the curriculum and the content we have to actual local church music examples. What I try to do is demonstrate how students might use the information if they're going to lead worship somewhere. So, when we're working on understanding three-part or four-part harmony, for example, I may give them an example of how to make a vocal intro or harmonize the melody. Then, we'll look at a melody and harmonize it in three parts and talk about the various strategies involved in doing so. Why they could go a third above and a fourth below in places, for example, or ask them where they are going to put the melody, or even ask them what the range of the melody for this particular song is, and why that might influence their approach to writing harmony. So, every class period, I'm having to adapt the content of our

curriculum to fit the context of the local church and the songs that we're singing on a regular basis.

The book might have an example of Elton John's *Saturday Night's All right for Fighting*, or some other popular secular example, and my goal is to bring that into the context of local church music and show an example of how the same harmony, different song. The last class session, for example, I used *Psalms 64* by Shane and Shane, and we talked about *The Battle Belongs to the Lord*. So, trying to take the same harmonic concepts and display and show them how this song that we sing in church, is like the example in the book. The book's not written from a church music standpoint, and so I'm having to fill in and adapt the examples that they give to be more fitting for our context.

Professor South: Either through homemade charts, graphics, etc., or through the ones that I find in the resources we use. Jennifer Snodgrass' book has great examples of Nashville Numbers and charts using them, Walter Everett's doesn't really have a lot of Nashville Number examples, and Music Theory Online. I don't need to make an example of rap music vocal transcription, and Kyle Adams has a couple of articles on those where he transcribes rap vocals without using music notation. I very rarely use music notation; I'll use another abstract representation, either homemade or from someone else.

Professor North: The answer to that question depends on the class. The students in the Harmony 4X course can already read, and they already know a lot of music. So, I can just throw something on the board, I may not even have to play it for them,

and they already know what it sounds like. The adaptation in that kind of environment is really minimal. Having to change the chart, or step out of the lead sheet and draw the voice leading, or whatever it is, those things are not as relevant for that group of students. But the class you just came from, every single thing is relevant. Every little thing, 'no, this is a bass clef, you were reading it in treble clef,' which actually happens a lot.

Some of the adaptations really just come from tune choice first. If it is pop music let's say, whatever that is, I'm not likely to bring in the most freakish Steely Dan song that I can find to talk about triads for that class that you just saw. We'll talk about other things with Steely Dan, but it's just not appropriate to try, because they just can't hear that it's a Sus 2 voicing, and they're just not going to get it. So, the adaptation really, in that case, is more about choosing appropriate tunes from the start, more than about the transformation of the materials to the environment. In that first class today, the whiteboard was such a mess, but that's because they only needed to see, 'well it has B flat and A flat in the top of the voicing,' and I just draw those two notes and they're like, 'oh yeah, cool.' But in the class you just came from, or the classes you'll see tomorrow, there's a lot more hand-holding. Getting out of the lead sheet, or out of the score or whatever, and saying, 'no, look at this guide tone line, the root is here, and the guide tone is going here, and whatever,' to try and help them.

**Process of Instruction and Evaluation**

The following two interview questions were designed specifically to gather data about each participants' process of instruction and evaluation.

***Instruction Question***

Interviewer: Please describe the classroom environment you feel is most conducive for teaching popular music theory.

Professor West: I think this is a challenge that we're facing. If I could just decide and choose to do it a particular way, I would do it in the context of popular music ensembles. I would have a rhythm section, and I would be working through a song so that they get both the theory aspect of it in real-time, as well as be forced to have to produce that sound. Understanding popular music theory is not the same as producing popular music. And so sometimes, if we go in a classroom environment and we just get too theoretical concepts, or the literacy concepts, we don't get to put them into practice immediately. So, in the current structure, I'm in a classroom, it is very words based, it is very exercise based. You know, I've got my document camera, I've got a whiteboard, but I would love to have somebody on the drums, somebody on a guitar, somebody on a piano, and some vocals in more of a lab music environment. I think the concepts would be better received and better retained, so that's the environment that I would love to create. Where we are learning theory, sight-singing, and aural skills, but we're also producing this music in real-time.

Professor South: The most important thing to me is a small class size. I have taught the class a few times, and I've been experimenting with how to make sure that discussion can still be a part of it. Many of the days are more lecture-based than discussion, but that's not to say that I'm strictly lecturing and not asking questions. For example, just today I assigned them to make some formal diagrams of certain songs that I thought were sort of challenging. They had to make a formal diagram and write about it to defend their answer, and days like that are more conducive to discussion. So, it's really limiting class size.

I had around 14 people the first time I caught the class, the next year, I had 19, and it was just a little too big, whereas some people could get lost. And if they didn't feel like they had to engage with the reading materials, how could I be sure they're going to read when they know there may not be ample opportunity to talk? So, just keeping class size down. Sixteen and under is essential for me. That may seem like an arbitrary number, but sometimes you can squeeze in eight short presentations in under an hour, but if you want them to present and you have 25 students, that can basically happen once in a semester. So, the biggest thing is small class size.

Professor North: So, there are so many barriers just to get to Johann Sebastian Bach. Or just to get to, 'it's just the key of C major,' or whatever. And so, the speed from counterpoint to their brains is pretty slow as a result of those barriers. In our case, because we're dealing with popular music, it's possible to fall into this false sense of security that they 'know' popular music. And so, we can make a bunch of

assumptions as a result. For instance, I may ask, 'you guys know the doo-run-run-run, right'? Well, no, they don't actually know that. They're not sure about Beth by Kiss. They know that there was a Duran, but they're not sure if it was Duran Duran, or if it was something else. These are all barriers.

So, the first thing that I think is really, really important, is that the music itself breaks through those barriers. For instance, when we talk about modulation, I play a Bobby Darin version of Mack the Knife. No one has any idea of what that music is, but like maybe one person out of two classes has heard that song. Or maybe they're even playing it, but out of 30 kids, it's like, one person. But then I play Love on Top by Beyoncé, and all of them know that song, and they all sing along. And so, the first thing about what's conducive is that the barriers are broken down by tune choice. If I can get them to hear Beyoncé doing Love on Top, then I can take them to big band writing in the 1950s. But, if I start with big band writing in the 1950s, they're not gonna see the relevance of that, that It's the same thing as Beyoncé modulating up a half-step several times at the end of her song

Also, I try to look students directly in the eye. When they're asking me questions, I try to take their question seriously. Even if it seems like the answer is, 'well, I just answered that question, and it's right there on the board, and the answer is C major because no sharps no flats,' or whatever. Whatever the question is, no matter how much of a dumb question it seems to be, I want to take it really seriously, because I want them to trust that I'm not going to make them feel bad.

That creates community. To me, if we have community learning, then we totally win. If we have that thing where like, 'I'm just teaching to the three people who totally understand the nuances of whatever silly thing,' then we have a total failure. And if I'm just teaching to the three people who, 'they just can spell chords, and they don't know what key we're in, and they don't know anything about intervals, or whatever,' then we also have a failure, because every other person in that room is going to be bored. You watched somebody fall asleep today. I don't know if you noticed, but there was a kid that fell asleep in class today. And, those sorts of things, I really try to be right on it to bring them back into the thing. He was asleep, but I don't know what his life is like, you know, maybe he hasn't slept in three days because he's got so much going on. And he's a college student, and it's really intense being here, but I know that if he stays asleep, he's going to suffer and everybody around him is going to feel awkward. So, I started calling on him and asking him a lot of questions. Not in a mean 'you better wake up' kind of way, in more of a 'we're all here, sense of community, let everybody be here.' Whether you're tired, or you don't like this song, or you don't even like the kind of music, or whatever, let's all be here. So, community, breaking barriers through tune choices, trying to maintain a professional line, while at the same time creating a personal connection with all of the students.

And, then the third thing is community learning. I'm sure that there are as many teaching styles as there are teachers. There are more teaching styles than there are teachers probably.

*Evaluation Question*

Interviewer: Please describe the ways in which student evaluation occurs.

Professor West: Our primary evaluation right now is through classroom practice, whether it's sight-singing as a group or sight-singing individually. Sometimes I'll be able to tell who the strong sight-readers are, because everybody's kind of leaning on each other in that sense. But sometimes that will create a bit of a group mentality when it comes to singing a particular interval wrong. And so, if they all kind of follow the herd, and it's actually not a major third but a minor third, that's something we'll address obviously in the moment. But giving them singing as a group is one of the things we do. We also do some exercises in a kind of a game format, whether it's spelling chords within a given time, or having them time themselves, looking through a piece of music and saying all of the scale degree numbers within a certain time frame, trying to get them to think on various levels and from various angles, whether it's note names, or scale degree numbers, or spelling chords, or sometimes what I'll do is have them spell chords, but one note at a time. And we'll just go around, so you have to be thinking, 'what chord is it, and what note am I going to have to spell.' Trying to think creatively with exercises that get them out of the book a little bit because they've already done the homework, so all the answers are right there in front of them. So, class time becomes, 'how do we apply this' or 'can I recall this more quickly in the moment.' So, as I can tell their able to pull that information more quickly, it gives me feedback in their thinking process. Obviously, our primary evaluation is in

tests and exams. So right now, we have seven exams total from theory to sight singing to dictation kinds of evaluations. But the exams give us more of the 'birds eye view' of how they're retaining and receiving the information that we have for them.

Professor South: It is a lot of hours of me sitting when I let them choose what they want because I have to listen to everything they submit. Which I don't really mind, because it's the only way I can be sure that they're not going to work together and be absolutely positive that they're working on their own on something, so it's worthwhile, but mostly on their homework. Ten percent of their grade is discussion, so how they participate and perform and do things in class, but the vast majority of it is performance on homework and quizzes. I usually don't believe in having final exams, period. I think that having a quiz at the end that is perhaps summative is fine, but to have something that is worth 20 or 25% of their average, I have little taste for things like that. I never have anything that's worth more than 10% of their final grade. Their final project is 10%, but 5% is the paper, 3% is the presentation, a little bit more's the proposal, but it's mostly just performance on homework, and they get a lot of feedback. It is time-consuming, but I haven't found a better way yet.

Professor North: The syllabus has four exams, which are two quizzes, a midterm, and a final. There are also projects of various types; a midterm project, final project, and homework assignments. So, student evaluation from a formal point of view would be within the structure of whatever aspect of those things we're working on. To

me the more interesting evaluation is, when I do their homework it's like, 'do you get this, are you showing me in this homework that you understand,' in class 'do you understand, because I'm in the key of C and I just asked you what the one chord (tonic chord) was, and you said D. And so, do you know? Are we together?' Those more personal interactions are, for me, the more interesting thing. And that's the method that I use to try and help all the students. And of course, there are some students that never need my help; they never come to office hours, they never study, they don't do any of their homework, and they still get an A because they understand everything so well. But, the evaluation, the formal grade, they're held accountable for those categories; projects, homework, and tests.

But for me, whenever I can make a one-to-one connection so that I can understand how you are processing information, that's the deal. Which means it's a struggle, because there are a hundred students, and some students were absent today, so I don't really know if they're going to understand the stuff we covered because I can't guarantee that they are doing the work themselves. Even so, if they are doing the work themselves, I can't guarantee that they're going to understand it in whatever context it was that they're trying to understand it. So, I just try to make as many one-to-one connections as I possibly can. People who do poorly on tests, I invite, I don't demand, but I do strongly encourage they come visit me in an office hour. So, we can work on some kind of plan. It's really sad when they get to the point of the semester where they either have to withdraw or stay in the

class, and if they don't withdraw, they might fail. I don't want that to happen; I want to get them the first few weeks. I want to understand where we're at and have something in place that can make for a more successful semester.

### **Reflection and New Comprehensions**

The following two interview questions were designed specifically to gather data about each participants' process of reflection and what new comprehensions arose from the process of PRA.

#### ***Reflection Question***

Interviewer: Please describe your process of reflecting and reviewing your instructional process.

Professor West: The class you observed was a pretty typical class in the sense that I tried to start from the last homework that they did, as well as in that particular class I went back to the syllabus to remind them of the big, macro things that we're trying to accomplish in that specific class. I have found that if I repeat the core values of the class often enough, then that can remind them of why we're doing a particular topic in class. Sometimes they forget that, especially mid-semester, when everything's getting busier. So, I start off with the macro ideas, reminding them why we're doing what we're doing, and then moving into questions for the homework. That routine for the students seems to be effective, because it picks up right where they left off with homework, and then we run through questions. This group has been a little more active than some groups in the past, but it just shows that they've done a good job of interacting with the homework. As an educator,

I've always felt like if students aren't asking questions, that's probably not a good sign. And it may be a sign that they haven't really interacted with the material enough to get questions. So, I always look for and give them opportunities to ask questions at the beginning, which gives me a metric for understanding their interaction with the material. It's usually the same students that are doing well that are really pressing into not just getting the homework done, but really wanting to learn the skills and competencies that we're trying to get them to learn. And that time will vary from class to class, if they have more questions, I'm happy just to camp there, because I know I'm hitting them right where they need help. And then I can always put other things off into a future class if absolutely necessary. So, I really try to manage class time based on how many questions they have, how deep we need to go in that particular classes content. From there, I try to go back through and rehearse the homework with them, just to get them to walk through at least one or two more principal things. If I have a student that's lagging behind a little bit, then I want to give them an opportunity to have me walk through them very slowly and give them at least one example of the content one more time.

Along with that, I am praying and planning for opportunities to share appropriate ways to integrate scriptures. I try not to exegete into the class content by trying to force in scriptures, but I do look for appropriate ways to include them. I feel like my instructional process is gaged largely by the interaction that I have with the students, and where I feel like they're connecting. But I felt like the class you

observed that was a really good class for engagement and understanding transfer, as well as those really unplanned for moments like the whole chicken wing thing. That's just teaching out of my context, but it does tend to speak to the improvisatory nature of teaching, and the improvisatory nature of the content that we're looking at as well. I'm just looking for ways to connect, and some of those things obviously aren't planned. I didn't plan for the chicken wing illustration to come out weeks in advance, but I'm encouraged when those kinds of things are coming to mind.

Professor South: I know best how I did in presenting a given topic when I see the homework assignments. If I've given a good range of examples, and if I've made myself as clear as I possibly can, usually the homework assignments end up better. Of course, the assignments have to be properly defined, and well designed, which hasn't always been the case, but if I think the assignment is one that is refined and has been well worked out, that's really the biggest thing. That's how I know that they've comprehended, besides the usual facial expressions, although sometimes it's often hard to decipher boredom from lack of comprehension, but you can usually tell, and I've usually gotten past that.

Professor North: Well, the main thing is to back to the three steps or tiers of how I present something. I draw the algebra of it, then I show tunes, and then we compose. And, in each of those areas, those are really the things that I actually think about. The communication stuff, like 'am I communicating this effectively,' I assume that I'm doing as well as I can, given how much coffee I've had that

day. Or, is it snowing out, or what...there's so many other factors that aren't necessarily directly responsible for how I communicate. I try to be better, I try to be more clear, I try to not use 'obsequious' or 'loquacious,' or something like that; words that are silly. Or, if to introduce a really challenging term, even to say 'tertian,' I always make sure to define it. So, the communication thing I think kind of takes care of itself. It's those three things. When I did the algebra, did I reduce the amount of things I drew on the board to the essential ingredients? Even within that space, I have two ways of always trying to do things. There's the 'this is what the textbook says,' or 'this is what conventional wisdom says. And then the humorous version, because I always want to give them an entertaining way of thinking about it, they sometimes remember that better. Even if they hate that, they remember that instead of what the book says, they still remember it. So that's, I think, a win. When we talk about substitute dominants, I show them the book, and then there's another process where you take G7, and you lower the fifth by a half step, and it turns into Db7#11, which that's 'there you see it, the primary dominant and it's substitute dominant right there.' I call that 'pleading the fifth' (Laughter). And so, there's always a sarcastic thing.

On the other hand is the reflection thing. Did I present the factual stuff as clearly as possible, with as good of handwriting as I can muster? I have terrible handwriting. And then, when I did the sarcastic version, did I spend more time entertaining than I did working on information? That's the other thing that's a constant reflection for myself. The second piece would be the tunes. Am I bringing in

tunes that they respond to? It doesn't have to be positive actually, but if they have a negative reaction to it, is it a stylistic problem, or is it a compositional barrier? So, if I bring in *Baby* by Justin Bieber, they're going to destroy that song. They hate that song, they hate everything that he represents, and they hate the entire realm of Beliebers (fans of Justin Bieber), which is kind of interesting. And so, to bring in a song like *Baby* and grab their attention with this thing and show whatever it is that I would show, gives them an immediate, if though visceral, relationship to that song. On the other hand, I know that I still have to talk about this extended substitute dominant chain. The way that I show this is through *Eternal Triangle*, the Sonny Stitt song. On the bridge it goes Bm7- Bb7- Am-Ab7, you know, down in half steps. Well, that's a stylistic barrier. It goes this fast (Clapping - Song is approximately 280 bpm, but subdivisions are prominent in performance), and it's jazz, and you can't hear all of the nuances of that if you aren't signed up for that kind of music. So tune choice, there's a lot of reflection about that. I can't bring in music that they're automatically going to love, although they always love Stevie Wonder, and they always love Earth, Wind, and Fire. But I can't guarantee that they're going to love, whatever it is that I'm bringing in. So, the question isn't about trying to get them to love it, it's what kind of reaction, and is the reaction something that's worthwhile, or is it too much of a barrier? The next piece is the writing piece. If what we're trying to accomplish is somewhat esoteric, as the topics in Harmony 4 can sometimes be, then I have to assume that what we've written is compositionally solid to begin

with. We can't re-voice these chords as hybrids, or polychords, or whatever, unless they begin functionally strong. So, through the compositional process, I'm constantly trying to figure out, 'well, okay, so what chord are you choosing, all right. But you chose this subdominant functioning chord, but we're in this weak position here. It's more common if you want it to feel like a "two chord" for it to be two beats or a measure earlier than that.' So, there's a reflective process that's involved in that approach that is in the moment. And it's partly, 'am I helping them,' and it's partly, 'do they actually know what they're doing.' Did that answer your question?

***New Comprehension Question***

Interviewer: How has this instructional process changed your understanding of the subject matter?

Professor West: The subject matter that we're covering right now is not very applicable to learning modern contemporary Christian music, because it's more advanced than the current milieu of contemporary Christian music. That's not necessarily a problem, but sometimes the students question the need for it because of that reality. If they were going into a jazz studies major, or a style of music that was going to require advanced rhythms, advanced harmonies, I think they would understand the need for it a little bit more. Through the teaching process, I'm always looking for ways to help them understand if they can be more prepared than they're required to be, that's going to serve them well in the future. And not to let the current context of music be the finish line for them. Because really, a lot

of them would already be done with their training if what they need to do is reproduce a modern Christian song with a reasonable amount of proficiency. So, our content really is teaching past where they're probably going to be required to be in their local church environment, but we're also challenging them to raise the bar where appropriate as well, and not to just confine themselves to the present context. I find that I have to do quite a bit of convincing, because of the gap between the content that we're studying and the context in which they're going to serve. For example, when talking about five-part harmony with ninth chords, minor ninths, elevenths, and sus thirteenths, students are probably not going to use those in most of their local church contexts. But being able to think along those lines and develop their music theory understanding will help them communicate outside of that smaller context. I think this class, in particular, is coming along well, because they're interested in the extended harmony sounds, I found, which helps. If somebody doesn't really enjoy those sounds (extended harmonies), then they can turn their attention off pretty quickly and see it as irrelevant or bothersome that they would be required to understand these kinds of concepts.

Professor South: I don't think it did a lot. I would say the first time I taught that subject matter it did enormously, but this was really a tried and true lesson that I've taught a few times. However, there was one thing that did change. I had taught the System of a Downs song that I discussed at the very end of class before, and I had never grouped the phrases. Or rather, I had never grouped the bars into phrases in

that one, and that's the one thing that changed my understanding of the subject matter. I had previously been talking about that only as an example of irregular meters, and when we started grouping them, what ended up happening was, I realized that the groupings themselves are also irregular. And that was something that I hadn't really thought to listen to, so it helped me listen for what we were talking about a little bit more in some unexpended places. What I ended up finding in that particular song regarding the groupings during the verses, some of them, some of the phrase groupings do not have any meter changes, but no matter what, they all have an odd number of beats. Because, sometimes even if they're changing meters, the sum total of beats in the phrase is something that's normative. And I think it's like 15 beats, then 11 beats, then 17, then 21 or something, in terms of the phrase structures. So, looking at that particular song on that day just gave me a deeper understanding of that, I would say.

Professor North: Well, the first thing I should say about that, is that I was blown away by how much there is to learn in a major key, diatonic, seven-note system, without any chromaticism whatsoever. And so, even when I teach the MAT course, I'm knocked out by how much I continue to learn in that space. And so, the first thing is that I sometimes I do actually wake up with a chip on my shoulder, and I am delighted when the music shows me what I don't know. That's super exciting to me. The great thing about having a Master's degree is I'm no longer scared of what I don't know. How's it changed? Well, the first thing is that I arrived here assuming that I knew a certain amount of stuff. And I knew whatever I was

supposed to know to be able to be in this really amazing place. Only to find out through implementing this curriculum, that there's no end to the amount of stuff to learn. Which means that I can learn every single day that I come in here, and everything can then change; I can change tunes, I can change approaches, and I can change jokes. Sometimes when I have things that actually work for one group, I'm also aware of the fact that it's not going to work for the next group. So, it's in a constant state of evolution, although it's not in a forward direction. If you look at the Darwin theory of evolution and try to say, well 'it's the Professor North theory of the evolution of teaching,' it's not a straight line at all. Not even sort of, it's messy. But, because I'm so excited about learning new stuff, and seeing things that I never saw before, or hearing things that I've never thought about hearing before, every day is a new day. Pretty exciting.

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**Curriculum Vitae**







