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SCHOOL OF MUSIC

**College Theory Curriculum: Using the Philosophical Essence of Comprehensive
Musicianship to Integrate Composition**

A Thesis submitted to
The faculty of the School of Music
In Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Music Education

by

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COLLEGE THEORY CURRICULUM: USING THE PHILOSOPHICAL ESSENCE OF
COMPREHENSIVE MUSICIANSHIP TO INTEGRATE COMPOSITION

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ABSTRACT

While the National Standards for Arts Education emphasize the necessity for nurturing creativity in public schools, the current education system is biased toward performance, undervaluing the teaching of creativity through composing at all grade levels. The systemic avoidance of music composition curricular integration starts at the college-level, where future music educators fail to encounter practical composition assignments in their music theory courses. This qualitative research study examined six college theory professors' perspectives on how well current theory curriculum prepares future students to teach composition and how it might be best implemented. Furthermore, this study assessed shortcomings in developing compositional skill within the available college music theory curriculum. It explored existing literature concerning benefits of creativity in music education. The researcher also demonstrated that the ideals of Comprehensive Musicianship (CM) are a superlative solution to this problem, not as a dogmatic teaching methodology, but by extracting the philosophy that underpins CM. In this light, attention was given to curricular integration by showing how compositional music theory assignments could be meaningfully incorporated in applied and ensemble courses. The efficacy of the proposed theory curriculum was demonstrated with examples from the author's own community college classroom experience. This study was important because it paves the way for K-12 music educators comfortable and knowledgeable in training students to compose music effectively, thereby demonstrating more comprehensive mastery of music fundamentals. Correspondingly, this dissertation could spawn additional composition-focused curriculum development in applied and ensemble music courses.

Keywords: College Music Theory, Music Composition, Comprehensive Musicianship

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to God for walking with and sustaining me these thirty-nine years to present day and forevermore. He has guided me in this project and has provided perfectly timed encouragement to spur me back on track via my wife and my advisors.

I also dedicate this thesis to my lovely wife and sweet children whose sacrifice of giving me times of dedicated focus on this project made its completion a reality.

Finally, this is for the college music student that believed music composition something too lofty to attain and for whom music theory was not meaningfully linked to composing in anything other than mechanical and archaic styles. May this work contribute to empowering future music educators to share the joy of composing with their own students.

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I am incredibly indebted to my lovely wife, Amy, and my wonderful children for their support throughout the completion of this doctoral degree. They have been my cheering section near the finish line, encouraging me to stay the course and to finish strong. I would also like to thank Dr. Carver and Dr. Taylor for guiding me through the dissertation process. Their encouragement and expert feedback were invaluable. I am thankful for those who voluntarily participated in my qualitative research interviews. As current teachers in the field, their expertise helped make a strong case for the inclusion of music composition in theory curriculum and their perspectives offered a myriad of pedagogical procedures that will almost certainly enhance my own teaching practice. I am also appreciative of my mom and dad. Though not musicians themselves, they saw its value and decided that I would take piano lessons beginning around age seven. Unbeknownst to me at the time, it set me on a life-long journey of enjoying music as both passion and vocation. My parents have always encouraged us to pursue higher education and believed that we can accomplish our goals. I am blessed to now receive this same type of encouragement from my in-laws. To conclude, all glory has always belonged to God, without whom, academia easily becomes a puffed-up thing that risks vanity and pride. May I never fall into the trap of believing that I am wise by the standards of this age, but instead choosing to become a “fool” so that I may become wise and knowing that wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Quoting R. S. Peters, V. A. Howard states that for “anybody seeking expertise in any domain—‘values are involved in education not so much as goals or end-products, but as principles implicit in different manners of proceeding or producing’: in a word, the avoidance of narrowness in conduct and content.”¹ Yet, much of high school and community college curricula imposes exactly this narrow construct that focuses explicitly on the ‘end-process’—a successful performance. It does so by teaching the elements of music somewhat detached from one another. This style of teaching practice also reduces music to what is objectively assessable and conspicuously avoids creativity, which is difficult to quantify objectively. The result is that future music educators are robbed from discovering their compositional voice and can be stunted in their ability to critically analyze and teach styles of composition outside their trained comfort zone.

With regard to implementing Comprehensive Musicianship ideology, Allen L. Richardson noted that “teachers do teach as they were taught, they do rehearse as they were rehearsed, and undergraduate and graduate models of this kind of comprehensiveness in laboratory-oriented performance programs are sadly lacking.”² Even while studying at quality institutions, many educators may remember something similar from their past. From this author’s experience as a first-year music student participating in the Eastern Illinois University Mixed Chorus, students learned Vivaldi’s *Gloria* for performance in collaboration with the Eastern

¹ V. A. Howard, “Must Music Education Have an Aim?” in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy in Music Education*, ed. Wayne D. Bowman and Ana Lucía Frega, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 251-252.

² Allen L. Richardson, “Reviewed Work(s): Comprehensive Musicianship Through Band Performance by Brent Heisinger,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1975): 87.

Illinois Symphony Orchestra. The performance was artistically cohesive and deeply moving; many classmates commented that it deepened their love for music. Even so, educationally, the author learned to sing the bass part with correct diction and to play rehearsal parts for the choir at the piano. A cursory Latin translation was given, and most certainly the breath-control, intonation, and sight-singing/sight-reading of the singers improved substantially. However, biographical knowledge of Vivaldi and contextual knowledge of the Baroque era would have to wait until Music History and Literature II – Renaissance and Baroque at the beginning of junior year, and furthermore the ability to synthesize the theory knowledge necessary to trace the first movement's sequence of modulation from D major, to B minor, and then to C# minor would have to wait until Music Theory III in sophomore year. Knowledge of conducting patterns, error detection in an ensemble setting, and how to rehearse a piece of that scope had to wait until Instrumental Conducting and Literature in the very last semester of senior year. This disparate learning of the elements of music in isolation from one another is the normative approach and requires students to have maturity to synthesize them into a composite understanding on their own. This “just do it” (and let me show you how) teaching mentality elicits little critical thinking from students. At best, it creates technically proficient performers with little ability to interpret aesthetic qualities of music. Woefully, it also creates students who embody Richardson's aforementioned quote by teaching their students in the same manner, thereby perpetuating the cycle. In fact, when students receive insufficient training on how to teach the subjects that they are learning, they become ill-equipped to teach creativity in their future classrooms. Morrison asserts “that no longer can a music teacher expect to be successful by only teaching children how

to perform the music of others in a dictatorial fashion, paying little attention to the development of aesthetic decision-making and musical independence of students.”³

As such, this qualitative study applied a historical approach to ascertain the prior inclusion of practical music composition into music theory curricula and sometimes the lack thereof. Further consideration was given to how well theory curricula was meaningfully integrated and cross-referenced across other freshman- and sophomore-level music courses. A secondary purpose to the study was to examine the history of Comprehensive Musicianship and the Young Composers Project (YCP). This significance lies in its ability to yield positive reform in current college music theory practice by extracting the philosophical essence and methodology of CM and YCP. This study also resulted in dialogue from practicing theory teachers on how to integrate composition assignments most effectively and on how to align theory-composition assignments with other music courses. Finally, the researcher offered a case study of its efficacy in his own music theory teaching practice. While the context is for music theory educators, this systematic approach could have wide relevance to music educators of all grade levels and disciplines seeking broader curricular integration and teaching creativity in all music courses.

Background of the Topic

The record of composition and creativity being included as a requirement in K-12 and college music classes is inconsistent at best. The Young Composers Project was an innovative program that sought to tackle this problem but has since faded into obscurity. Comprehensive Musicianship developed out of the Contemporary Music Project. The Contemporary Music Project started in 1963 and was itself a continuation of the Young Composers Project that began

³ Deondra L. Morrison, “Songwriting: A Collaborative Approach to Music Education” (Master’s Thesis, Liberty University, 2021), 8.

in 1959 through a grant by the Ford Foundation.⁴ Even from the inception of the YCP, the philosophies of cross-curricular integration and musical independence were present. Composers placed in schools worked directly with students and teachers, and by experiencing the compositional process firsthand, students were able to achieve a fully formed comprehension of the original composition and the creative process. Composers were given complete autonomy to compose in any style, to the great benefit of diversity of contemporary music for the students. Regarding the YCP, later renamed Composers-in-Public-Schools (CPS), Covey notes that “the most striking aspect of CPS was its nonpartisan stylistic attitude, fueled by the ecumenical approach of the individuals behind it, most of them composers as well.”⁵ There was no aesthetic oversight of the composers, who wrote freely.

Very important for development of its philosophical principles, were the first seminars that resulted from the CMP’s expansion, when its administration was placed under the Music Educators National Conference (MENC). Because of the success of the YCP, “a major grant—\$1,380,000—was made to the Music Educators National Conference in 1963 to establish and administer an enlarged program to be known as the ‘Contemporary Music Project for Creativity in Music Education.’”⁶ From this stemmed the General Memorandum that led to the Seminar on Comprehensive Musicianship held at Northwestern University in 1965. This came from the CMP’s mandate for the “establishment of seminars and workshops to enable school music

⁴ Arlan R. Coolidge, “Reviewed Work(s): Comprehensive Musicianship, the Foundation for College Education in Music; Experiments in Musical Creativity,” *Journal of Music Theory* 10, no. 2 (Winter 1966): 383.

⁵ Paul Michael Covey, “No Restrictions in Any Way on Style: The Ford Foundation’s Composers in Public Schools Program, 1959-1969,” *American Music* 33, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 90.

⁶ Coolidge, “Reviewed Work(s): Comprehensive Musicianship,” 383.

teachers to acquire broader knowledge and need skills to deal with contemporary music.”⁷ The Seminar on Comprehensive Musicianship addressed the memorandum by assigning three groups of participants to consider “Compositional Processes and Writing Skills; Musical Analysis and Aural Skills; and History-Literature and Performance Skills.”⁸

It generated a discussion that had positive benefits about educational reform at the college level. Colleges mulled over how to better integrate music history, theory/composition, and performance to create students who are able to draw deeper associations between all facets of music. In contrasting CM and traditional educational approaches, Leland Bland surmised that traditional college theory courses are limited in their scope, with too much focus “on the Bach chorale as a model for harmonic study.”⁹ By drawing examples from a greater variety of musical styles and eras in music theory classes, students are prepared to make more practical connections. In MENC’s publication, *Comprehensive Musicianship, The Foundation for College Education in Music*, it outlined the finding of the Northwestern Seminar’s three groups. Music Theory was singled out as needing curricular revision to better accommodate contemporary practices. It was also generally agreed that increased training in composition is an essential part of creating capable musicians, regardless of specialty. The second group admonished an advanced understanding of musical form as critical for a “true aesthetic response.”¹⁰ It also encouraged use of more non-Western music and more multi-culturalism. The final group also

⁷ R. Bernard Fitzgerald, “CMP Seminar on Comprehensive Musicianship.” *Music Educators Journal* 52, no. 1 (September-October 1965): 56.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Leland D. Bland, “The College Music Theory Curriculum: The Synthesis of Traditional and Comprehensive Musicianship Approaches,” *College Music Symposium* 17, no. 2 (Fall 1977): 167.

¹⁰ Coolidge, “Reviewed Work(s): Comprehensive Musicianship,” 393.

focused on the need to create aesthetically sensitive performers, not just those capable of mastering technique. All of these desires had lasting impacts on college educational thinking that trickled down into the music educators who received exposure to this philosophy. The Seminar on CMP showed a willingness on the part of the educational community to begin the sometimes-painful process of self-assessment and questioning the status quo with the aim of improvement.

There are also shortcomings in CM as a methodology demonstrated in its ultimate inability to affect much change to the American education system in the years following. This is because any methodology used indiscriminately or in the hands of inexperienced educator can fail to achieve the original philosophical intention of the teaching strategy. Bowman observes that “the altruistic pursuit of methodological purity may serve ends dramatically different than those espoused by practitioners.”¹¹ Methodologies are not inherently good or bad and can certainly be twisted from their original intention. This notion can be easily observed in creative teaching philosophies of inspirational educators that are later quantified and deduced to a set of method books that no longer require critical thinking. Revolutionarily creative educators—like Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, Carl Orff, Zoltán Kodály, and Shinichi Suzuki—inspired students in a way that produced extraordinary results. Over time, their practices were tidily condensed into rigidly demarcated teaching resources and international societies. Used effectively, and with a philosophical bent toward constant curricular evaluation, creativity, and improvement, their ideas are still extremely powerful teaching tools. In some applications, of course, this is not the case, and current education is “markedly technical and means-driven, with remarkably little attention to or concern for ends served.”¹² A better philosophy is “a type of unmapped nomadic wandering

¹¹ Wayne Bowman, “Music Education in Nihilistic Times,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 37, no. 1 (2005): 32.

¹² *Ibid.*

toward an unknown destination that involves crossing borders and, when necessary, abandons traditional ways of thinking.”¹³ In this light, CM is only a tool to foster this type of creativity in teaching and should not be thought of as a strict methodology to adhere to.

The CM teaching experiments in K-12 settings were significant in advancing CM toward current practice and its eventual dissemination through methodologically constructed resources. MENC published a summation of their first pilot projects testing new teaching thought processes in 1966, titled *Experiments of Musical Creativity*. The pilot programs tested CM philosophies in Baltimore, San Diego, and Farmingdale public school classes. The sample classes consisted of various K-12 grades, and the MENC report pays special attention to their learning activities. The activities varied by grade, but had students as young as kindergarten composing songs, experimenting with percussion instruments and irregular meters, and improvising. Kindergarteners used sound effects and learned about the idea of musique concrète. Sixth grade students learned about 12-tone serialism, modes, and quartal, quintal, and secundal harmony, in addition to bitonality and other twentieth-century compositional techniques. The list of recordings used in class was also diverse and encompassed much contemporary art music of the time, including Bartók, Stravinsky, Milhaud, Hindemith, Foss, Stockhausen, Varese, Shostakovich, Barber, Webern, Berg, and Schönberg. The pilot programs also offered training in CM principles to the teachers in the participating schools. In addition to CM ideas, the Farmingdale project included components of Bruner’s spiral curriculum and also a eurhythmic component that had students combine “complicated rhythms and meters with improvised movement of hand and feet as well as use of the voice.”¹⁴ This too shows a powerful strength of

¹³ Rose Sciaroni, “Mapping the Mountain,” *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2019): 7.

¹⁴ Coolidge, “Reviewed Work(s): Comprehensive Musicianship,” 386.

CM philosophy—the ability to be flexibly implement aspects of other teaching techniques. Because CM is more philosophy than method, adding components of Dalcroze’s eurhythmics takes nothing from CM, since one of its chief aims is student involvement and interaction. The overarching theme of *Experiments of Musical Creativity* was to show just how capable elementary students are to understand, and to creatively apply, contemporary idioms when led by an engaged teacher using a structured method for doing so. Following these pilot projects, thirty-six colleges participated in further CM implementation through the Institutes for Music in Contemporary Education. More public schools followed suit and implemented further CM use through the Contemporary Music Project grants. Through this process, “Comprehensive musicianship practices were adopted gradually as the findings of the Contemporary Music Project were disseminated.”¹⁵ Because of the impact CM had on public schools, it necessitated publication of further resources. Addison-Wesley published resources for applying CM to the general classroom, orchestra, and choir ensembles. Later followed more influential books: Garofalo’s *Blueprint for Band*, Sindberg’s *Just Good Teaching: Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance in Theory and Practice*, and O’Toole’s *Shaping Sound Musicians: An Innovative Approach to Teaching Comprehensive Musicianship*. While many of these resources are excellent for improving teaching, they also attempt in some ways to impose uniformity upon CM, whose great strength lies in its adaptability.

Evaluation of Comprehensive Musicianship programs found that there was an overabundant curricular generalization, in an effort to draw associations between the music subjects. In doing so, some of the critical minutiae were left out. Integration between subjects must tread a fine line of showing connections without overwhelming students beyond their

¹⁵ Michael L. Mark and Patrice Madura, *Contemporary Music Education, 4th ed.* (Boston: Schirmer, Cengage Learning, 2014), 118.

current capacity to understand. Integration across disciplines also requires cooperation with all faculty involved toward this common goal. Despite some excellent resources and isolated examples of its successful implementation, little has changed with regard to creativity and integration in music curriculum. Of the aforementioned excellent teaching resources, they risk, as with all innovative teaching, having their suggested repertoire or lesson plan appendices used as a crutch to actually avoid a well-formed, creative teaching philosophy in the hands of an uninspired educator. This supports the previously outlined philosophical notion that CM is not inherently good when utilized to the exclusion of other ways of thinking about music but should be seen as a tool for challenging our thinking about musical creativity.

CM's true strength, then, lies in its philosophy rather than its ability to effect change as a methodology. In fact, any teaching strategy implemented at the exclusivity of others only promotes the standardization and assessment-based teaching trap that our culture is already ensnared by. Szekely states that "the notion of becoming is also tied to a distinctive orientation...characterize[d] as ethical, sustained, and forward looking: that which is in a state of becoming is thus always *in process*, always *open to process*."¹⁶ Rather than seeking to affect positive change at the lower grade levels, change must be implemented at the level of future music educators by training them in composition, integration, and education philosophy. Only with their own well-informed philosophy will they be able to affect positive change in their students. This teaching philosophy should include understanding the value of integration and creativity modelled by CM. Creativity can blossom at all levels of musical knowledge with the right environment. This nurturing teaching environment requires awareness and imagination. Sciaroni defines the terms thusly: "awareness describes the consciousness of creating using available

¹⁶ Michael Szekely, "Musical Education: From Identity to Becoming," in Bowman and Frega, 165.

materials, regardless of intention; imagination is defined as the difference between repeating what is and having the curiosity, willingness, and excitement to burst forth towards the possibility of what might be.”¹⁷ When applied to college music courses, the teaching philosophy extracted from CM has a level of imagination that can help teachers engage students more creatively and holistically, yielding truly independent and forward-thinking music educators.

Theoretical Framework

Per best practices for research design, as outlined by John W. and J. David Creswell, a qualitative research approach was most appropriate for this study, as it “involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant’s setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data.”¹⁸ This research method was used to collect historical data to yield a clear portrait of the current status of music composition’s meaningful inclusion in college curriculum. The study also traced the history of music theory pedagogy, showing how it used to be intrinsically connected to the practice of music composition. Qualitative methodology’s allowance for a more flexible structure also suits the nature of this study, which explored existing literature concerning the benefits of creativity in music education, assessed shortcomings in developing compositional skill within the available college music theory curriculum, and offered best practices for designing music theory curriculum modelling excellence in music composition integration. As such, the work took a grounded theory research approach. The framework for this study is undergirded by scholarly expertise in music theory pedagogy. Furthermore, it provides an in-depth background and the historical significance of the

¹⁷ Sciaroni, “Mapping the Mountain,” 7.

¹⁸ John W. and J. David Creswell, *Research Design 5th ed.* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2018), 4.

Young Composers Project and Comprehensive Musicianship. Finally, it also incorporates inductive content analysis of qualitative interviews conducted with practicing college music theory teachers.

Problem Statement

Several authors, including Kratus, Kennedy, and Sciaroni, have advanced the idea that the evolution of Western Art music to ever greater complexity has led to the term “composer” too often connot[ing] the use of standard music notation, performance in formal concert halls, and an orientation of antiquated seriousness.”¹⁹ From an educational perspective, this has led to a “view of composition as separate from everyday life.”²⁰ Sciaroni, citing other authors, goes so far as to suggest that there is a “God-like role accorded the Great Composers of Western art music such as Beethoven.”²¹ This mode of thinking only enhanced the schism between art music and popular music, and some 20th-century composers seemingly delighted in the distinction. For example, Milton Babbitt declared that “apart from the often highly sophisticated and complex constructive methods of any one composition, or group of compositions, the very minimal properties characterizing this body of music are the sources of its ‘difficulty,’ ‘unintelligibility,’ and— isolation.”²² The implication is that composing is reserved for the select few that invest a lifetime of training in it, and its complexity should be celebrated. In fact, composers not advancing this complexity are branded somehow less-than, and future K-12 music educators come to view

¹⁹ John Kratus, “Nurturing the Songcatchers: Philosophical Issues in the Teaching of Music Composition,” in Bowman and Frega, 373.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Sciaroni, “Mapping the Mountain,” 6.

²² Milton Babbitt, *The Collected Essays of Milton Babbitt*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 99.

composing as not the business of children or laypeople. From this fear of measuring up to ‘true’ composition, educators shy away from introducing composing to children. Educational inexperience and discomfort with composition filters up to high school, and finally—in a self-perpetuating cycle—college music education students avoid composition too, thus avoiding it in their subsequent teaching due to feeling unqualified to lead others. The result is educational bias toward performance, observed in Kratus’ statement that “rarely is compositional ability considered in admissions decisions for preservice music educators.”²³ In North American universities, it is commonplace for performance proficiency to factor heavily into program admittance for music education majors, but no expectation is held for their creative prowess. This performance-minded emphasis continues throughout their college education. Kennedy reinforces this idea, stating that “music education students may experience some exposure to creative music making in their elementary music methods courses, but secondary music specialist programs still focus, in the main, on producing polished performance teachers.”²⁴

This focus on performance at the exclusivity of creativity is damaging to the value of music education and holds up poorly as an analogy to other disciplines. Imagine, for example, a Bachelor’s of English (7-12 Teacher Certification) degree in which the student only reads literature without drafting countless original essays. In fact, most degree plans also require Creative Writing as an elective or a requirement. Music students learn how to perform well and how music is constructed. Their brief forays into composition are constrained to rote theory part-writing exercises that do not effectively train them to have a compositional voice in a way that they can effectively bring to their own students.

²³ Kratus, “Nurturing the Songcatchers,” 373.

²⁴ Mary A. Kennedy, “Creative Music Making Since the Time of Singing Schools: Fringe Benefits,” *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 21, no. 2 (April 2000): 148.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to determine how music composition could be more effectively integrated into college music theory curricula and then further scaffolded through cross-curricular integration in other aligning music courses. The history, philosophy, and pedagogical methodology of the Young Composers Project and Comprehensive Musicianship were considered and gleaned for practices that could yield positive change in current core college music classes. Inquiry was made into how principles from CM could be implemented to the benefit of music theory content. Current music theory textbooks were compared and contrasted through a lens of effectively integrating creative composition and for stylistic variety of musical examples. Furthermore, the most commonly used theory textbooks were investigated for their inclusion of composition and ability to synthesize ideas across applied and ensemble music courses. The author put forth an appropriate theory curriculum that demonstrates possibilities for integrating music composition in the theory sequence and in conjunction with how it could be cross-linked into corequisite courses. Sample lessons were included as appendices. Finally, the author's own teaching practice was used as a case study for the effectiveness and possible obstacles to this method of music theory instruction.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the literature on better integrating creativity in college music theory curriculum design and on how to properly prepare future music educators to implement music composition in their K-12 contexts also. The study produced tangible best practices for training more well-rounded educators and yielded new ideas for theory curriculum construction. This was accomplished through a lens of the inherent value of creative composition to all music educators and students. There is no shortage of sources noting the value of teaching creativity

and it is even included in “the National Standards for Arts Education” which stresses “the importance of fostering creativity in public schools.”²⁵ However, Menard observes that “in spite of recommendations, curricular changes have not been widespread.”²⁶ While there are case studies and scholarly literature lauding the benefits of composition in high school and elementary contexts, most K-12 teachers continue to avoid it. Qualitative interviews are also used to examine and corroborate the validity of this claim.

This study is also significant for its thorough review of the history of music theory pedagogy. This review noted that, for most of its history, music theory was not a standalone discipline and existed to serve the preparation of all musicians to compose and perform. The most widely used current music theory texts were also critiqued for how they incorporate music composition. Furthermore, this study considered the potential benefits of the philosophy embodied in Comprehensive Musicianship by examining the history and philosophy of this movement. The literature gap exists in the insufficient research inquiry regarding the benefits of music composition at the college level. The extensive literature review and qualitative data from active college music theory teachers sought to address this gap. The author posits that without widespread change in college theory courses encountered by all music majors, change in K-12 creativity application will continue to be generally localized or non-existent.

²⁵ Kennedy, “Creative Music Making,” 132.

²⁶ Elizabeth A. Menard, “Music Composition in the High School Curriculum: A Multiple Case Study,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 63, no. 1 (2015): 115.

Qualitative Methodology

A qualitative methodology was utilized for this study, since the purpose of this approach is to investigate phenomena through participants' lived experiences and perceptions.²⁷ To this end, the nine interview questions were open-ended and semi-structured to give participants freedom to provide dense narrative information about the subject being studied. Interviewees were chosen based on having at least a master's degrees in music and actively teaching music theory at the college level. Interviews were transcribed and emergent themes from the interviews were codified for inductive content analysis. Finally, consistent with the recommendations by Creswell and Creswell, the researcher "summariz[ed] the overall findings, compar[ed] the findings to the literature, discuss[ed] a personal view on the findings, and stat[ed] limitations and future research."²⁸

Research Questions

This study considered these concepts further by investigating the research questions below.

Research Question One: In what ways would a music theory curriculum focused more on collaborative music composition prepare students more comprehensively to train the next generation of music educators?

Research Question Two: In what ways can the philosophy behind Comprehensive Musicianship be implemented to the benefit of current community college music theory practices?

²⁷ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2012), chap. 2.

²⁸ John W. and J. David Creswell, *Research Design*, 198.

Research Question Three: In what ways can the methodology of the Young Composers Project be emulated by integrating music theory compositions into applied and ensemble curriculum?

Hypotheses

The first research question is answerable with the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis One: A music theory curriculum focused more on collaborative music composition can prepare students more comprehensively to train the next generation of music educators in terms of creativity in personal pedagogy practice, effective use of technology, and mastery of music composition.

This mastery should begin in the music theory sequence, as it is a course required of all music majors, regardless of future specialization.²⁹ From there, it can be expanded and reinforced through aligning assignments in applied and ensemble courses. College educators can pave the way in helping students convert theoretical information into practical application and should directly model this process to students. Quinton suggests that teacher involvement by playing with students, improvising, or sharing in the composition is also a way to demonstrate vulnerability that helps students be creative. He provides a framework of “preparation, incubation, illumination, verification, and reflection” for creativity that helps the students get the most out of the process.³⁰ Expanded opportunities for creativity in a variety of music curricula helps students build better interconnectivity in their musical knowledge. In a multiple-case study integrating music composition in high school music programs, Menard observed that “students

²⁹ Bland, “The College Music Theory Curriculum,” 167.

³⁰ Caitlin Quinton, “Creativity in Band: Teaching on the Verge of Peril,” *Canadian Music Educator* 53, no. 4 (Summer 2012): 35.

identified enjoyment, improved musical understanding, personal expression, increased interest in music, and understanding composition process as benefits to composition experience.”³¹ Bias toward performance over composition in music education is unjustifiable: “Both the creation of new music and the re-creation of music composed by others are necessary for the flourishing of music in this and future generations.”³² In fact, Kratus continues that it is “only through the act of composing can students develop ‘a point of view’ that allows them to become one with, and reach an understanding of, the music of others.”³³

Research Question Two can be addressed as follows:

Hypothesis Two: The philosophy behind Comprehensive Musicianship can be implemented to the benefit of current college music theory practices by better connecting theory and practical application, familiarizing students with more stylistically diverse musical examples, and training students to be self-sufficient in their problem-solving.

Laura Sindberg notes that “curricula are informed by philosophical beliefs.”³⁴ If so, the philosophical underpinnings of CM would have significant ramifications upon the teacher’s instructional choices. The educational philosophy of CM focuses on fostering integration, breadth and depth of knowledge, involvement, and independence. Especially regarding integration, Heavner observes how it is “closely related to Gestalt psychology in that music is approached as a totality, with a concern for constituent parts and how they relate to the whole.”³⁵

³¹ Menard, “Music Composition in the High School Curriculum,” abstract, 114.

³² Kratus, “Nurturing the Songcatchers,” 373.

³³ *Ibid.*, 380.

³⁴ Laura K. Sindberg, *Just Good Teaching: Comprehensive Musicianship Through Performance (CMP) in Theory and Practice*, (New York, NY: Rowman and Littlefield Education, 2012), 53.

³⁵ Tracy Heavner, “The Applied Music Lesson: Teaching Gifted and Talented Students Utilizing Principles of Comprehensive Musicianship,” *International Education Journal* 6, no. 2 (2005): 171.

The breadth and depth aspect of CM philosophy was a very progressive mindset for its time when first addressed in 1965 and has always been one of its chief tenets. The “breadth” component advocates for great diversity of musical materials that should include non-Western, popular, folk, and jazz idioms. In so doing, it creates versatile performer/educators. In fact, the General Memorandum that preceded the Northwestern Seminar encouraged that “the vantage point for such theoretical and historical studies should be shifted from the 19th century to the present.”³⁶ Yet, in casting a wide net, the General Memorandum also encouraged educators to probe deeper on pieces that lend themselves to peeling back a multi-layered composition. As an example, MENC offered that “a study of rhythmic organization might concentrate on Western art music but also examine a variety of other musics—jazz or musics from Mexico, Africa, or India.”³⁷ This aspect of the CM philosophy is one of its greatest strengths. It permits educators to create highly diversified and personalized content to fit the needs of the community and cultures they serve. In fact, CM is more philosophy than rigid methodology, and in this way, it proves itself to be very flexible for helping students synthesize a more well-scaffolded comprehension of music.

Regarding the third research question, a workable hypothesis would be:

Hypothesis Three: The methodology of the Young Composers Project can be emulated by integrating music theory compositions into applied and ensemble curriculum by facilitating music theory student-composer, ensemble, and applied student collaboration.

³⁶ Fitzgerald, “CMP Seminar on Comprehensive Musicianship,” 56.

³⁷ The Music Educators National Conference, “Contemporary Music Project,” *Music Educators Journal* 59, no. 9 (May 1973): 40.

The Young Composers Project placed young composers (under 35) in public schools as composers-in-residence. The composer would collaborate with the teachers and students to create a body of work that could be immediately rehearsed and performed. On this collaboration Norman Dello Joio said, “Let [composers] write every day and be part and parcel of a whole community’s interest in music. The students were exposed to the living, pulsating guy who’s writing music, and the composers finished a piece and immediately heard it performed, so they knew right where they were.”³⁸ The project led to a break-through in the mindset of the music education community, especially toward bias of only using common-practice era music. This avoidance of music outside that era was due to teachers’ wariness of modern music and the technical demands it imposed on their students. Teachers’ and students’ reticence melted away by having a personal experience to associate with contemporary music. This immediacy of performance and entrepreneurial spirit would be hugely beneficial to the modern music major for applying their music theory knowledge in subsequent score preparation, organizing, rehearsing, and performance of their original work. It could be directly accomplished by giving theory students an outlet for realizing their compositions integrated into their ensemble course curriculum.

Core Concepts

Acknowledging that dissociative learning and absence of creativity offer an incomplete music education, it is demonstrated that the integration of music sub-disciplines and increased classroom creativity through improvisation and composition have inherent value. To better understand the research questions, the concepts of integration and creativity are considered in

³⁸ Norman Dello Joio and Ann Meier, “An Interview with Norman Dello Joio,” *Music Educators Journal* 74, no. 2 (October 1987): 55.

turn. Integration is described as a reduction of “fragmented learning by providing opportunities for students to see relationships in music, such as the relationship of theory to literature, scale to melody, and one style to another.”³⁹ Integration leads to independence through “scaffolding.” In the study that first coined the term, it was found that the “scaffolding” process “enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts.”⁴⁰ Great performing musicians are not automatically great teachers, and without a scaffolding process to train them, they are left to discover good teaching practices ad hoc. Training that prepares students to synthesize and relate diverse styles will ensure that teachers are not confined to a limited range of comfort. Tan, for example, observes, “Music educators may teach Bach chorales and show how the progression I–ii6–V7–I can also be seen in music of the Beatles.”⁴¹ Without sufficient training, many educators cannot draw out these parallels for students and miss an opportunity to be more relevant to their students’ preexisting fund of musical experience.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi defines creativity as “something genuinely new that is valued enough to be added to the culture.”⁴² Furthermore, it has been suggested that creativity is not the hallowed domain of academic ivory towers, but a universal attribute accessible to all.⁴³ Kennedy

³⁹ The Music Educators National Conference, “Contemporary Music Project,” 40.

⁴⁰ David Wood, Jerome S. Bruner, and Gail Ross, “The role of tutoring in Problem Solving,” *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, And Allied Disciplines* 17, no. 2 (April 1976): 90.

⁴¹ Leonard Tan, “Reading John Dewey’s *Art as Experience* for Music Education,” *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 28, no. 2 (Spring 2020): 75.

⁴² Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1996), 25.

⁴³ Among authors who have argued this idea are Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996); David Elliott, *Music Matters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Howard Gardner, *Creating Minds* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1993); Bennett Reimer, “Music Education in the Twenty-First Century,” *Music Educators Journal* 84, no. 6 (November 1997): 33-

points out that “the National Standards for Arts Education also stress the importance of fostering creativity in public schools.”⁴⁴ Therefore, it is extremely valuable to society and, from a Deweyan perspective, needs to be reclaimed for the general education of well-rounded and fulfilled citizens. Dewey viewed *Art as Experience* as a remedy to “restore the continuity between art and the ordinary processes of living.”⁴⁵ This view closely ties to integration also, as it supports a diverse and expanded curriculum for musicians, which yields a democratization that allows teachers to view classical and popular music “in continuous and complementary terms.”⁴⁶ It aligns with tenets of CM favoring diverse repertoire that allows students to make associations across historical periods.

Definitions of Terms

Music Theory encompasses “the properties of single sounds—pitch, duration, timbre—and those of collections of sounds: acoustics, tuning and temperaments, intervals, consonance and dissonance, scales, modes, melody, harmony, counterpoint, rhythm, meter, form, and analysis.”⁴⁷ In current usage, it also “refers specifically to the teaching of the fundamentals or rudiments of music.”⁴⁸ Many music theory textbooks focus largely on *tonal harmony*, which “refers to the harmonic style of music composed during the period from about 1650 to about 1900.”⁴⁹ While accepted in the most widely used theory textbooks, Kostka and Payne’s

38; and Keith Swanwick and June Tillman, “The Sequence of Musical Development: A Study of Children’s Composition,” *British Journal of Music Education* 3 (November 1986): 305-39.

⁴⁴ Kennedy, “Creative Music Making,” 132.

⁴⁵ Tan, “Reading John Dewey,” 72.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Don Michael Randel ed., *The Harvard Concise Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 667.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

definition of *tonal harmony* is problematic and carries implicit bias. It draws an artificial dividing line, as though tonal conventions of harmonic progression and voice-leading suspended in the year 1900 and ceased to be used in current film scores, popular music, jazz music, sacred music, all manners of ensemble arranging, and in a host of other styles and genres. This bias will be considered more in Chapter Two's analysis of currently available music theory textbooks.

Composition refers to “the activity of creating a musical work” and “the work thus created.”⁵⁰ *Curriculum* can be defined as premeditated learning experiences guiding the instruction of a given course.⁵¹ It is worth noting that in addition to planned instruction, there can also be unplanned learning experiences as a result of the intended and outlined curriculum.⁵² For the purpose of this study, the freshman- and sophomore-level music theory sequence will be referenced based on the assumption that it follows the timeline of most conventional university and college degree plans. In this format, there are four semesters of music theory, delineated as *Music Theory 1*, *Music Theory 2*, *Music Theory 3*, and *Music Theory 4*. This is consistent with how participants in Chapter Four's qualitative interview findings teach music theory. For all participants, they operate with a full-term sixteen-week semester. The first two theory courses are taught in Fall and Spring semesters of the freshman year of study, and the last two theory courses are taught in the Fall and Spring of the sophomore year of study. For the purpose of this study, it will also be assumed that each theory step has an accompanying co-requisite *Ear Training and Sight-Singing* course, also designated as levels one, two, three, and four.

⁴⁹ Stefan Kostka and Dorothy Payne., *Tonal Harmony with an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music*, 6th ed. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2009), x.

⁵⁰ Randel, ed., *The Harvard Concise Dictionary of Music*, 150.

⁵¹ Glenn E. Nierman, “From the President’s Keyboard: Standards 2.0—Beyond Discussion,” *Music Educators Journal* 101, no. 4 (June 2015): 7, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24755576>.

⁵² Harro Van Brummelen, *Steppingstones to Curriculum: A Biblical Path*, 2nd ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: Purposeful Design Publications, 2002), 70.

Because of academic freedom, there are significant variations amongst professors regarding what is covered in each theory semester. Even so, for the purpose of this study, it is helpful to demarcate the content that is covered in each music theory course, understanding that they are only approximations, since all professors have differences in their teaching styles. Similarly, universities sometimes have differences in expected student learning outcomes for the placement of materials in the music theory sequence. For our purposes, *Music Theory 1* is comprised of the fundamentals of pitch, including the keyboard, octave registers, staff notation, major and minor scales, major and minor key signatures, scale degree names, and intervals; the fundamentals of rhythm, including duration symbols, beat and tempo, meter, division of the beat, and simple and compound time signatures; the fundamentals of tertian harmony, including triads, seventh chords, lead-sheet symbols, figured bass symbols, and inversions of chords; diatonic chords, including diatonic triads and seventh chords in major and minor keys with their corresponding Roman Numerals for analysis; cadences; and nonchord tones. *Music Theory 2* teaches the principles of voice leading, root position part-writing, harmonic progression, sequences, first and second inversion part-writing, diatonic seventh chord part-writing, and phrase and period structures. Many theory teachers also begin to cover secondary dominant chords in *Music Theory 2*. *Music Theory 3* begins with reinforcing secondary dominant chords and proceeds to teach more chromatic harmonic techniques. These include secondary leading tone chords, types of modulation, mode mixture, and the Neapolitan chord. *Music Theory 3* also teaches binary, ternary, sonata-allegro, rondo, and fugue forms, and may introduce augmented sixth chords. *Music Theory 4* reinforces augmented sixth chords and teaches enharmonic spellings and modulation. It also teaches further elements of the harmonic vocabulary, such as, altered or extended dominant chords and common-tone diminished seventh chords. The second

half of *Music Theory 4* introduces Twentieth-Century experimental techniques and theoretical tools with regard to melody, harmony, rhythm, atonality, twelve-tone serialism, set theory, integer notation, and normal form.

Summary

To effectively posit a credible answer to the aforementioned research questions, extensive study was made into the literature on the positive outcomes of creative composition in all levels of music curriculum. Chapter Two's Literature Review also details the historical narrative of music theory pedagogy and considers limitations of modern music theory textbooks regarding composition. It traces theory pedagogy's roots from medieval treatises to present day, showing how the inception of Music Theory as a separate PhD program in the mid-twentieth century had implications for the integration of composition in theory classes. Studying sources on these subjects revealed a research gap in addressing creativity and composition at the college level with the intention of preparing future educators to better incorporate it in their unique contexts. By examining problems in contemporary education related to the dissociative teaching of music subjects and the general lack of composition in music curriculum, the researcher has outlined a positive solution rooted in the teaching philosophy of CM with the intended result of the future creation of music theory curriculum exemplifying these attributes. Furthermore, this hypothesized solution was tested against the expertise and perceptions of current college theory teachers through qualitative interviews. Finally, this study was intended as one more catalyst for teachers to have a sound education philosophy and pedagogy that realizes the possibilities for enhanced education through the dramatic return of creativity to classrooms. It is critical that future educators have experiences at the college level that prepare them to facilitate creativity in

others. As Kratus notes, beginning students “require an experienced guide, one who has made the journey many times before and is capable of assisting novices to follow their own paths.”⁵³

⁵³ Kratus, “Nurturing the Songcatchers,” 383.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter underscores the need for enhanced curricular creativity by reviewing literature that is apropos. The sections of research inquiry directly attempt to shed light on the proposed research questions. First, consideration is given to how music theory has been historically taught over time starting with the earliest practical texts and tracking it into its institutionalization in the modern college and university. The history of theory's pedagogy is essential as it traces how theory originally went hand in hand with composition, often being taught in practical ways by active, venerated composers. This chronology dovetails nicely into the Contemporary Music Project, where its history and philosophy receive further consideration. Other important trends regarding theory pedagogy from the second half of the twentieth century are discussed congruently. Specifically, it is considered that the invention of Music Theory as a unique PhD discipline is a relatively new development within the last seventy years. Recent research is surveyed for how experts recommend that theory should currently be taught. Also, the most common music theory textbooks are dissected for their ability to produce comprehensively trained, creatively capable musicians.

Brief History of Music Theory Pedagogy

Ancient and Medieval Theory

Music theory pedagogy has a lengthy and rich history of which even many degreed music educators are generally oblivious. Robert W. Wason points out that in the second half of the 20th century, "we have made tremendous progress in our knowledge of the history of music theory; yet, apparently very little has filtered down to undergraduate textbooks."⁵⁴ In fact, music theory

⁵⁴ Robert W. Wason, "The History of Music Theory and the Undergraduate Curriculum," *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* 32 (2018) 131.

has its origins in cuneiform writing from ancient Mesopotamia. One of the early clay tablets, *CBS 10996*, held interest originally for mathematicians, but was found to contain music theory also. Wason notes that, once deciphered, “it was possible to reconstruct the names and placement of fourteen intervals: the seven possible scalar fifths/fourths (counting the tritone) and the seven thirds/sixths, squeezed into a mod-7 octave.”⁵⁵ Because this same pattern is found in Greek *tonoi*, it can be reasonably concluded that “the basic materials of Ancient Greek music theory very likely came from Mesopotamia.”⁵⁶ Pythagoras was alleged to have travelled there, bringing with him his “structural explanation of certain preferred intervals, i.e., their ratios, and started an unbroken tradition of music-theoretical thought that goes on to the present day.”⁵⁷ Moving into the early Medieval Era, music pedagogy was somewhat haphazard. Pietzsch observed that there were “occasional writings, in the best sense of the word,” which were fragmentary and appealed to the “special-interest” nature of a limited readership due to educational accessibility.⁵⁸ Wason comments that “most of the sources are eclectic with regard to theoretical content and equivocal with regard to purpose. Thus, the opposition of ‘speculative’ and ‘practical’ theory as general categories is problematic, at least in the earlier Middle Ages.”⁵⁹ The intention for music theory to be used in practical ways is clear in the landmark achievement of the Medieval Era by eleventh-century Italian monk, Guido de Arezzo. Guido is credited with three revolutionary ideas for

⁵⁵ Wason, “The History of Music Theory,” 132-133.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁵⁸ Gerold Pietzsch, *Die Klassifikation der Musik von Boetius bis Ugolino von Orvieto* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1929), 4.

⁵⁹ Robert W. Wason, “*Musica Practica*: Music Theory as Pedagogy,” in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 47.

music pedagogy: “staff notation, the system of hexachords, and his ‘classroom visual aid’ for sight-singing performance, the ‘Guidonian Hand.’”⁶⁰ Guido’s focus on using music theory with the goal of crafting more comprehensively trained musicians is evident in his own words: “some [students], trained by imitating the [steps of the mono]chord, with the practice of our notation, were within the space of a month singing so securely at first sight chants they had not seen or heard, that it was the greatest wonder to many people.”⁶¹ Because of his dramatic achievements, it is sometimes overlooked that Guido’s *Micrologus* was one of the first treatises on music composition. Wason notes that “approximately one quarter of the work (the last five of twenty chapters) deals with the composition first of monophonic melody, and then ‘diaphony’ (organum). In discussing melody, Guido points out analogies between the structure of speech and melodic phraseology, thus pioneering a grammatical correspondence that would have a long history in subsequent music-theoretical writings.”⁶² Guido de Arezzo makes plain that initial instruction of practicing musicians sought to empower them to also have the ability to compose their own music. The concepts of theory and composition were seen as mutually reinforcing.

The twelfth century saw the evolution of medieval universities emerging from cathedral schools. The first curriculum for music drew heavily from the work of Boethius, and therefore the focus was on classical issues related to musical harmonics. As such, it lost much of its practicality for musicians in training. Aristotelian thinking reemerged by way of the writings of

⁶⁰ Wason, “*Musica Practica*,” 48.

⁶¹ Guido of Arezzo, *Micrologus*, trans. W. Babb, in *Hucbald, Guido and John on Music; Three Medieval Treatises*, ed. C. V. Palisca (New Haven: CT, Yale University Press, 1978), 58.

⁶² Wason, “*Musica Practica*,” 49.

Arab polymath, Al-Farabi, in which music was split into both its theoretical and practical aspects. The theoretical part was further divided into five sections:

- (1) principles and fundamentals; (2) rudiments (“derivation of the notes, and the knowledge of the constitution of the notes . . . and how many their species”); (3) instruments; (4) rhythm; and finally, (5) “composition of the melodies in general; then about the composition of the perfect melodies – and they are those set in poetical speech.”⁶³

Music Theory in the Renaissance

The rise of humanism brought a pronounced change in the course of music theory pedagogy. Music theory pedagogy in the Renaissance Era saw a shift from the traditional approach of teaching music through oral tradition and rote learning, to a more systematic and scholarly approach. This change was also influenced by the study of ancient Greek and Roman texts on music. However, it is worth noting that music was evolving rapidly at that time and focus was on crafting capable practicing musicians and composers. As Wason points out, “it can by no means be presumed that extant treatises on musical composition provide a perfectly faithful picture of contemporaneous musical practice.”⁶⁴ Luckily, most treatises from this time are from active, successful composers and so can be taken at face value. One initial key figure in the development of music theory pedagogy during this time was the music theorist and composer, Tinctoris, who then influenced Gaffurio and Pietro Aron. All ultimately advocated for a more systematic approach to teaching music, emphasizing the study of solmization, intervals, and modes. They believed that students must first be taught the elements of song, which are intervals, modes, and species of melody, in order that they may understand how to use them correctly. Another important figure in the development of music theory pedagogy during the

⁶³ Henry George Farmer, “Al-Farabi’s Arabic-Latin Writings on Music,” in *Studies in Oriental Music*, vol. 1, (Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science, 1997), 14–16.

⁶⁴ Wason, “*Musica Practica*,” 51.

Renaissance was the music theorist, Gioseffo Zarlino. In his work, *Le Istitutioni Harmoniche*, Zarlino emphasized the importance of studying the principles of music through the analysis of existing compositions. In addition to these theorists, the works of other composers and musicians such as Josquin des Prez and Guillaume Dufay also played a significant role in the development of music theory pedagogy during the Renaissance. The approach to teaching music in the Renaissance was also influenced by the study of ancient Greek and Roman texts on music. The rediscovery of these texts, such as the *Elements of Music* by Euclid, and the *Introduction to Harmonics* by Ptolemy, contributed to the development of a more systematic approach to teaching music. In conclusion, the history of music theory pedagogy in the Renaissance Era saw a shift from the traditional approach of teaching music through oral tradition and rote learning, to a more systematic and scholarly approach influenced by the rise of humanism and the study of ancient Greek and Roman texts on music.

Baroque Music Theory Pedagogy

Regarding the Baroque Era, Wason points out that “Western intellectual thought was undergoing a profound transformation stimulated by revolutionary upheavals in science and philosophy. Not surprisingly, the music-theoretical literature of this time reflects a commensurate complexity.”⁶⁵ Despite this complexity and explosion of source material, some overarching developments emerge. The *seconda prattica* reoriented the correlation between pedagogy and practice to be more closely integrated rather than treated disparately. Perhaps more important still was the rise of instrumental music and, with it, the emergence of the major and minor transposable tonal system. Subsequent pedagogical literature followed which attempted to explain this tonal system in a practical way, especially in “figured” or “thorough-bass” manuals.

⁶⁵ Wason, “*Musica Practica*,” 53.

The aim of such manuals was to explain to chordal players, such as keyboardists, theorbists, and lutenists, how to extemporize a harmonic foundation for melodic instruments as part of the *basso continuo*. The early texts were unimaginative and did not require the user to understand the undergirding theoretical knowledge, but simply how to realize the performance when given formulas on how to decipher the corresponding figured-bass symbols. This avoidance is characterized well by the words of Charles Masson regarding his own figured-bass instructional book, who stated, “in this treatise, one will find neither curiosities, nor difficult and embarrassing terms of the Ancients, but only that which is useful in practice.”⁶⁶ Even so, the harmonic language itself with its succession of chords moving in predictable ways toward a clear tonal center catalyzed theorists to codify this system, as evidenced in the works of Rameau, Fux, and Heinichen.

Rameau is a critically important figure to the history of music theory education. In fact, a manuscript only recently attributed to Rameau, *L'Art de la basse fondamentale*, was used in his own teaching and has earned “the honor of being the first real harmony textbook in the modern sense.”⁶⁷ While Rameau was initially unfairly categorized as a speculative theorist, his intentionality from his earliest writings was how to marry theory and practice in a meaningful way. As Wason points out, “For Rameau, it was practice which drove his theory, not the other way around.”⁶⁸ A keystone in Rameau’s works was his *Code de musique pratique*, which is organized into chapters covering rudiments, harpsichord and organ hand positions, vocal production, thorough bass, composition, unfigured bass, and how to improvise a prelude. The

⁶⁶ Charles Masson, “Avertissement” in *Nouveau Traité des regles pour la Composition de la Musique* (Paris, France: C. Ballard, 1699) facs. (New York, NY: Da Capo, 1976)

⁶⁷ Thomas Christensen, *Rameau and Musical Thought in the Enlightenment* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 286.

⁶⁸ Wason, “*Musica Practica*,” 55.

chapters make clear that his foremost desire was to aid in comprehensive musicianship of the performers, while still giving them a deeper understanding of music's construction.

As influential as Rameau was to harmony, Johann-Joseph Fux brought a similar long-lasting influence to explaining treatment of counterpoint in his work, *Gradus ad Parnassum*. It continued to be an incalculably valuable educational resource to the generations that followed. It is less known that, while largely practical, it did contain some speculative material that is not included in English editors' translations.⁶⁹ Rameau and Fux were the dominating compositional pedagogies from this era, but the work of Heinichen gave a tersely designed text on chorale harmonization compositional techniques. This was a teaching style that Johann Sebastian Bach endorsed, and C. P. E. Bach describes the method thusly:

In composition [J. S. Bach] started his pupils right in with what was practical, and omitted all the *dry species* of counterpoint that are given in Fux and others. His pupils had to begin their studies by learning pure four-part thorough bass. From this we went to chorales; first he added the basses to them himself, and they had to invent the alto and tenor. Then he taught them to devise the basses themselves.⁷⁰

The efficacy of this model for J. S. Bach was that this scaffolding of knowledge empowered students to use a variety of compositional techniques that could be adapted to all genres and styles of the period. Bach also used a text by Friedrich Niedt, but the *pièce de resistance* for this style of compositional pedagogy was indubitably the 960-page *Der General-Bass in der Composition* by Johann David Heinichen. Heinichen's text is a comprehensive treatment on how to compose. It was concerned with imparting to students' depth of knowledge far beyond simply deciphering figured bass symbols and included a solid variety of musical compositions for analysis. One clearly visible theme from Baroque Era pedagogy is that the intention of

⁶⁹ See for example, *The Study of Counterpoint: From Johann Joseph Fux's Gradus Ad Parnassum*, ed. and trans. Alfred Mann (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co., 1971).

⁷⁰ H. David and A. Mendel, eds., *The Bach Reader* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co., 1945), 279.

theoretical practice was to craft capable composers, so much so that it could justifiably be thought of as compositional pedagogy taking the lead over the theoretical.

Classical Era Theory Pedagogy

In the Classical Era, many pedagogues continued teaching exclusively from contrapuntal and harmonic instruction built around the practices of Fux and Rameau. A significant stylistic change in Classical music was the importance of the musical phrase regarding melody, and its development led to its corresponding integration into composition treatises from this time. Namely, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Komposition* by Heinrich Christoph Koch attempted to offer a method of melodic composition reflecting this style. His work was the most comprehensive offering of the Era and was divided into three volumes. The first volume necessarily retreads information on harmony beginning with consonant and dissonant combinations of tones, followed by a section that bears resemblance to the “Strict Counterpoint” found in Part I of Kirnberger’s *Kunst*. The second volume is the point of departure. Here it becomes immediately clear that treatment of the melody will be the focus. Koch encourages composers to devise a “plan,” followed by its “realization,” and concluding with its “elaboration.”⁷¹ Koch advocates for the composer to “conceive melody harmonically.”⁷² Also, noteworthy is Koch’s original discussion of modulation, which prepares students to incorporate non-diatonic notes as a way to extend melodies. Parts I and II are really a preface to Part III, in which students are actively composing melodies. To this point, most former treatises abstractly compare music and rhetoric, but Koch’s seeks to give empirical working vocabulary for melodic

⁷¹ Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Komposition*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, Germany: A. F. Böhm, 1782-93) facs. Hildesheim, G. Olms, 1969 and 2000, 52.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 87.

analysis. Koch is still indebted to grammar for the idea of musical punctuation, but his ideas are strikingly on point for phrase analysis found in today's textbooks. Here is an example: "Just as in speech, the melody of a composition can be broken up into periods by means of analogous resting points, and these, again, into single phrases (*Sätze*) and melodic segments (*Theile*)."⁷³ Koch demarcates the end of a period as having melodic and harmonic punctuation, with phrase-types taking their definition from their cadential ending, with the ability to be inconclusive (*Absatz*) or conclusive (*Schlussatz*). He also delineates the possibility of further segmentation within a phrase, as we might call a "sub-phrase," "half-phrase," or "phrase-member" today. Classical ideals of balance and symmetry were already essential to Koch, with the four-measure unit being the perfect model and anything longer being considered as extended or compound phrases.⁷⁴ The musical examples selected are not just his own works, but also those of his contemporaries, including Haydn. While music continued to evolve during the Classical Era, and with it methods for teaching its construction, the era did carry forth a chief tenet of training students in music composition as a means for also understanding the theory of music. The development of conservatories serving the newfound music-educational needs of the middle class during the Romantic Era would unintentionally begin to erode this close connection between theory and composition.

⁷³ Nancy Baker, trans., *Introductory Essay on Composition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 1.

⁷⁴ See also Joel Lester, *Compositional Theory in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 290-293 for detailed description of Koch's method of melodic phrase expansion.

Romantic Era Theory Pedagogy

To this point in history, the focus had been on training a single student, whether through a mentor or reading a text individually, but the emergence of a middle-class at the beginning of the nineteenth century led to the more secure establishment of educational institutions and conservatories throughout Europe. This marked the beginning of the institutionalization and formalization of theory curriculum more characteristic of the Western Art music tradition in colleges and universities today. Wason provides a useful timeline of the opening of significant European conservatories:

The Conservatoire National de Musique et de Déclamation was established in Paris in 1795, followed by the state-sponsored conservatories in Prague (1811), Graz (1813), and Vienna (1817). In various parts of what would eventually be a unified Germany, the famous Leipzig Conservatory opened in 1843, directed by Mendelssohn, followed soon thereafter by conservatories in Munich (1846) and Berlin (1850). By the 1860s, the conservatory movement had spread east to Russia, and would eventually gain a foothold in America as well.⁷⁵

This author shall consider each major European city for its influence on theory pedagogy, beginning with Paris. Because music theory in North America was only beginning to take hold through the migration of ideas from Great Britain, those regions are considered together.

Paris

Paris was a cosmopolitan conservatory with an international faculty. A committee was charged with establishing a theory curriculum, which despite debate succeeded in producing *Principes élémentaires de musique* (1799), five *livres de solfège*, a *Traité d'harmonie* and many teaching pieces for voice, piano, and orchestral instruments over the next ten years.⁷⁶ While the

⁷⁵ Wason, “*Musica Practica*,” 60.

⁷⁶ These texts were a collaborative effort of the Paris Conservatory faculty: Agus, Charles-Simon Catel, Luigi Cherubini, François-Joseph Gossec, Honoré François Marie Langlé, Étienne-Nicolas Méhul, and Henri-Jean Rigel.

Conservatoire also gave eventual instruction in counterpoint and orchestration, our focus will be on their treatment of harmony, as it remains still the primary element of most modern theory texts. The course of study was called *composition théorique*, and founding conservatory member, Charles-Simon Catel, took the lead on crafting the eighty-page text, *Traité d'harmonie*. While Fétis claimed that Catel's text was grounded in the work of Rameau, it was a rough parody whose brevity caused some of the overarching background of Rameau's work to be omitted. Rameau's writing only discussed tertian harmony as part of a larger treatise, but harmony built in thirds was the principal focus of Catel's work. In fact, Catel's writings included a practical heuristic that a single ninth chord was the source of all harmony with remaining tones justified as being suspended tones from previous chords.⁷⁷ The spirit of Catel's pragmatic approach was promulgated in the work of Anton Reicha's *Cours de composition musicale, ou traité complet et raisonné d'harmonie pratique* and also formed the basis for Fétis's text, which was the best-known French harmony book of the century.⁷⁸

Vienna

Vienna differed greatly from Paris in its staid maintenance of much of the eighteenth-century pedagogy with the figured-bass manual remaining an integral part of training for the first half-century. Unlike other parts of Europe, the patronage system and Catholic church continued to have influence on the sponsorship of music. Nevertheless, pedagogues continued to develop new texts in composition, with Simon Sechter being the most notable. His career began as a private instructor with none other than Schubert taking a counterpoint lesson. Sechter's most

⁷⁷ Manfred Wagner, *Die Harmonielehre des ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Regensburg, Germany: Bosse, 1973), 62.

⁷⁸ Renate Groth, *Die französische Kompositionslehre des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Steiner, 1983), 31-42.

substantial work was *Grundsätze der musikalischen Komposition*. It was published later in Sechter's life, but he built this book through a lifetime of sharpening his materials in his classroom teaching. Sechter's fame grew following publication and he eventually taught Anton Bruckner as a composition student. Curiously, Sechter did not allow Bruckner to compose anything original, instead opting to have him work exclusively on counterpoint and harmonic exercises. Bruckner cheekily remarked, "Look Gentlemen, this is the rule, but I don't compose that way," and his one-liner is revealing of hairline fractures taking hold between theory and then current compositional practices.⁷⁹

Berlin

Germany initially had an interesting approach in the work of Adolph Bernhard Marx and Gottfried Weber, who were representative of pedagogues responding to the newfound market of an amateur music-making middle-class. Borrowing from much larger treatises on theory, Weber felt compelled to reduce music theory in his *Allgemeine Musiklehre zum Selbstunterricht für Lehrer und Lernende*, which condensed it to a single chapter titled "Harmony, Melody, Key, and Scale."⁸⁰ Marx was more concerned with performance application which directed his attention to other pedagogical issues. His seven chapters breakdown as: "(1) basic pitch material; (2) rhythm; (3) the human voice and study of instruments; (4) elementary formal structure; (5) theory of form in art-music; (6) artistic performance, with an appendix on playing from score; and (7) music education and music instruction."⁸¹ Wason observed that Marx's "iconoclastic approach is even

⁷⁹ Wason, "*Musica Practica*," 62.

⁸⁰ Gottfried Weber, *Versuch einer geordneten Theorie der Tonsetzkunst* (Mainz: B. Schott, 1830-32), chap. 3, trans. J. Warner as *Theory of Musical Composition* (Boston, MA: Diston, 1842).

⁸¹ K. Hahn, "Die Anfänge der Allgemeinen Musiklehre: Gottfried Weber – Adolf Bernhard Marx," in *Musikalische Zeitfragen*, vol ix, *Die vielspältige Musik und die allgemeine Musiklehre*, ed. W. Wior, Kassel, Bärenreiter (1960), 65.

more evident in his *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition, praktisch-theoretisch* (1837-47).⁸² Marx eschews the normal chapter division of tackling compositional processes separately, such as harmony and counterpoint being treated to their own sections, and focuses instead on practical composition in small exercises meant to immediately ignite the students' creative development. In Marx's estimation, "the point of theory pedagogy is not so much to impart 'knowledge,' but to stimulate creative activity."⁸³ Marx would have used his composition text while teaching at the University of Berlin, where he was named music director in 1833. His ideas were also influenced in part by Swiss teacher, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. Rainbow noted that "it was Pestalozzi's achievement to demonstrate that a child's education depended less upon memorizing facts than on the provision of opportunities to make factual discoveries for himself."⁸⁴ Marx was attempting to do the same in his teaching approach. This bright spot in historical pedagogy foreshadowed the modern Deweyan and comprehensive musicianship aesthetics that art could be for everyone. Unfortunately, it was short-lived. Marx's text was not popular everywhere in Berlin, and a competing text by conservative pedagogue, Siegfried Dehn, also gained some traction locally before becoming the official theory text in Prussia.

Leipzig

The Leipzig Conservatory started in 1843. At the conservatory, Mendelssohn and Spohr had influence in helping secure Moritz Hauptmann as the professor of music theory. Hauptmann had lofty ideals of "returning music theory to the universal significance it had in the Middle Ages," but the truth is his teaching style was a much more mundane application of theoretical

⁸² Wason, "*Musica Practica*," 63.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Bernarr Rainbow, *Music in Educational Thought and Practice* (Aberystwyth, Wales: Boethius Press, 1989), 135.

exercises.⁸⁵ The Leipzig Conservatory also produced two theory textbooks widely adopted all over Europe in the latter half of the nineteenth century. These were the *Lehrbuch der Harmonie* by Ernst Friedrich Richter and the *Musikalische Kompositionslehre* by Salomon Jadassohn.

Wason observed that:

Richter's book turned Gottfried Weber's critical empiricism into textbook dogma, popularizing his use of roman numerals and other notational innovations. Jadassohn's *Harmonielehre*...is hardly distinguishable from Richter's, except that it deals more extensively with chromatic chord-progression owing to the author's aesthetic proclivities and the work's later publication date.⁸⁶

Textbooks from this period began a process not dissimilar to today's theory tomes being published in essentially unchanged subsequent editions. In doing so, books then and now often show a lack of creativity in pursuing new pedagogical ideas and do not seek to address the irrelevance that theory has for relating to contemporary composition. The preeminent theory pedagogue in the latter half of the Romantic Era was undeniably Hugo Riemann. He was a student of Jadassohn's at the Conservatory and University of Leipzig, where he later returned after holding teaching positions elsewhere. Riemann wrote prolifically on a wide variety of topics in music, but his most important contribution was his *Vereinfachte Harmonielehre; oder, Die Lehre von den tonalen Funktionen der Akkorde* (1893), which sought to formalize harmonic practice of the middle- and late-nineteenth century.

England and North America

In England and North America, initial theory pedagogy availability was limited to translations of texts imported from aforementioned sources in other major European hubs. Worthy of note in England was the original voice of Alfred Day in his *Treatise on Harmony*,

⁸⁵ Peter Rummenhüller, "Moritz Hauptmann, der Begründer einer transzendental-dialektischen Musiktheorie," in *Beiträge zur Musiktheorie des 19. Jahrhunderts*, ed. M. Vogel (Regensburg: Bosse, 1966), 11.

⁸⁶ Wason, "*Musica Practica*," 64.

which was subsequently popularized by his friend, George Macfarren. Day's treatise was also espoused by Sir F. A. Gore Ouseley at Oxford, and his ideas were later incorporated into the work of Ebenezer Prout, whose numerous texts were in widespread use in Victorian Britain. Day presented all chords as being derived from seven-note stacks of thirds modeled on the harmonic series. By way of Prout's publications, these ideas were spread in North America also. Early American music education also included translated theoretical works of Catel, Weber, Marx, Richter, and Sechter. There were few indigenous American theory pedagogues, with Percy Goetschius being one. Even so, Goetschius was American-born, but studied in Germany. Wason encapsulates the state of American theory at the end of the 1800s as "a mélange of stultified ideas drawn from the principal European works of the genre."⁸⁷ He also astutely observes that:

With few exceptions, the beginnings of institutional music theory in the New World coincided with a period of its decline in the Old World, for pedagogical music theory in Europe had lost touch with the way in which theory and composition were taught in the eighteenth century, while, on the other hand, largely ignoring the newer compositional developments of the nineteenth century.⁸⁸

It would not be long before the disconnect between theory pedagogy and current compositional practice would be endemic in American academies as well.

Early- to Mid-Twentieth-Century Trends

An honest attempt to craft a harmony text that also took into consideration current compositional practice was made by Ludwig Thuille and Rudolf Louis in their *Harmonielehre* from 1906. Louis and Thuille devoted half of their text to "chromatic harmony." They also included other new techniques and integrated current compositional examples through the music of Richard Strauss and other members of the "Munich School." The book had a sense of stylistic

⁸⁷ Wason, "*Musica Practica*," 66.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

consistency indebted to its repertoire, which emanated “from a ‘school’ of composition, current in the music-critical literature of the time and in subsequent musicological writing.”⁸⁹ In spite of musical changes that would follow, the text was still the most commonly used source in German conservatories in the early 1960s. However, the composition-driven approach of their *Harmonielehre* was not used elsewhere in Europe. For example, Vincent D’Indy was a student who described the Paris Conservatoire’s ‘advanced composition’ courses as being pedantic and taught by a comic opera composer “who had no notion of the symphony.”⁹⁰ Furthermore, Vincent D’Indy found only César Franck’s organ classes to have any compositional value; the experience ignited D’Indy’s desire to see educational reform, leading to the formation of his Schola Cantorum. Wason observed that, much like Marx, “D’Indy regarded the study of compositional craft as essential preparation for the creative act of composition, not an end in itself.”⁹¹

Also influential from this time were the writings of Heinrich Schenker and Arnold Schoenberg. Schenker’s writings gained more importance posthumously, upon the emigration of his followers to the United States, as he never held an academic teaching post. His *Harmonielehre* began by introducing harmony as the first step of analyzing music. It also banished the study of voice-leading to later volumes on counterpoint. Schoenberg was appointed to the Vienna Akademie to rescue it from criticism that its music theory instruction drew in Sechter’s last years. Because of Schoenberg’s lack of a formal degree, his published *Harmonielehre* sought to establish pedagogical authority for his academy teaching practice. In

⁸⁹ Wason, “*Musica Practica*,” 67.

⁹⁰ Vincent D’Indy, *Cours de Composition Musicale* (Paris, France: Durand, 1912) cited in Wason, “*Musica Practica*,” 67.

⁹¹ Wason, “*Musica Practica*,” 67.

his writings, the primary focus was on preparing students to compose in the most efficient way possible. Joy H. Calico offers this portrait: “Unencumbered by the indoctrination of any curricular paradigm, he taught theory and analysis to his students as he had taught it to himself: as the bases for acquiring the craft of composition, and less as independent disciplines.”⁹² Interestingly, personal examples used in his teaching practice were from his tonal works and his pedagogy conservatively proceeded where the “trajectory of a composition course progressed from composing a classically constructed theme to mastering sonata form.”⁹³

Similarities exist between the approaches of Schoenberg and Paul Hindemith. Hindemith also rose to prominence as a composer and performer and lacked a formal degree, yet was still installed in a teaching position at the Berlin *Musikhochschule* in 1927. Hindemith’s experience teaching composition made him realize the extent to which he wished to better understand historical frameworks for theory pedagogy; it even inspired him to learn Latin so he could read Medieval and Renaissance treatises. His forced emigration in 1938 amid the political turbulence of the impending second World War delayed the publication of his ideas, which came in installments between 1935 and 1942, collectively titled *The Craft of Musical Composition*. His contributions included updating ‘fundamental bass’ in a more practical way that could also be adapted to modern styles, including jazz. At the time Hindemith returned to Europe, his text lost traction, as the translation of Schenkerian ideas began to gain a foothold in America. These ideas eventually superseded Hindemith’s to a point where his text was no longer used at all. It would be remiss in consideration of theory pedagogues from this time period not to include Nadia

⁹² Joy H. Calico, “Schoenberg as Teacher,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Schoenberg*, eds. Jennifer Shaw and Joseph Auner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 140. doi:10.1017/CCOL9780521870498.011.

⁹³ Ibid.

Boulanger who, despite not publishing a text, counted a group of twentieth-century master composers including Aaron Copland, Phillip Glass, and Quincy Jones among her pupils. Much like Josquin des Prez, her pedagogical practices were not codified, but she “demanded of her students the full mastery of traditional practical skills of score-reading, solfege, and figured-bass realization.”⁹⁴

The Contemporary Music Project, Comprehensive Musicianship, and Modern Pedagogy

This chronology has led straight to our point of inquiry, the Contemporary Music Project (CMP) which brought about Comprehensive Musicianship (CM). As indicated in Chapter 1, this project was an important reform in the mid-1900s “that would have significant impact on the pedagogy of music theory in North America,” albeit “more short-lived.”⁹⁵ Its source was the Ford Foundation grant, which financed residencies for composers in public schools beginning in 1959. CMP was properly established in 1963 and sought “to modernize and broaden the quality and scope of music education at all levels.”⁹⁶ The project particularly took aim at the chasm between contemporary music of the time and the general public. In that vein, seminars and workshops were conducted through this period bringing “together composers and musical scholars from a number of disciplines to discuss ‘comprehensive musicianship,’ yet another attempt to rescue a theory curriculum that had lost touch with music of its own day.”⁹⁷ The ‘comprehensive’ ambition of the movement addressed the fact that “a synthesis rarely occurs between courses within the general area of musicianship or between musicianship courses and

⁹⁴ Wason, “*Musica Practica*,” 70.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ MENC, *Comprehensive Musicianship; the Foundation for College Education in Music*, (Washington D.C.: CMP/MENC, 1965), 3.

⁹⁷ Wason, “*Musica Practica*,” 70.

professional studies; the student receives very little opportunity to develop a comprehensive view of his entire field.”⁹⁸ These sentiments were shared by educational reformers, Pestalozzi and A. B. Marx, of the early 1800s. Referenced briefly in Chapter 1, the resultant workshops were forward-thinking in challenging educators to consider whether current practices really were the best way for students to learn theory. For example, the 1969 workshop had pre- and post-workshop questionnaires to elude teaching professionals’ thoughts on the educational practices tested. Interestingly, perceptions changed radically over the course of the workshop regarding whether “skills in musical analysis are prerequisite to the development of skills in composition.”⁹⁹ In fact J. David Boyle noted that:

Two-thirds of the participants agreed with it on the preworkshop measure, but on the postworkshop measure the trend was reversed—nearly two-thirds of the participants disagreed with it. The use of creativity and compositions as vehicles for developing musicianship by many of the faculty of the workshop apparently had a great influence on the participants’ attitudes toward this statement.¹⁰⁰

Clearly there was an openness and curiosity for improving teaching practice rather than assuming current practice to be infallible. It also shows the temporary favor shown to composition within theory pedagogy application. In fact, Leland Bland asserted that:

The effectiveness of the college music theory curriculum depends upon a design which will assure that students are involved early in thinking about musical structure and in seeking applications of knowledge gained in theory courses. The theory instructor cannot realistically expect to maintain interest for very long if students are forced to deal almost exclusively with details without some applications in broader contexts. Even in the beginning stages of theoretical study when the means are limited, courses should be designed to present material in usable forms which allow students a degree of success and satisfaction. The material should be arranged so that basic thought processes are established from the onset and then broadened through the refinement of techniques. Opportunities should be provided for continual practice in the synthesis of materials from

⁹⁸ MENC, *Comprehensive Musicianship*, 5.

⁹⁹ J. David Boyle, “Teaching Comprehensive Musicianship at the College Level,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 19, no. 3 (Autumn, 1971): 333.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

seemingly diverse sources so that students will eventually be able to transfer knowledge and skills to a variety of musical situations.¹⁰¹

He makes a convincing plea for the inclusion of composition in theory curriculum even in freshman-level courses.

CMP's zenith of impact came in the 1960s and 1970s as pedagogues were more open to experimentation in combining and synthesizing the disciplines of harmony, counterpoint, and aural skills. CMP also caused some teachers and textbook writers from the time to include stylistically diverse musical examples more heavily, including jazz, world music, and examples from their present day. It also saw a temporary resurgence of active composers teaching music theory. This was the case for Robert Cogan's *Sonic Design* from 1976. Cogan noted how he was "invited to join a nationwide effort funded by the Ford Foundation and Music Educators National Conference called Institutes of Music in Contemporary Education, with the idea of renewing approaches to music study nationally."¹⁰² He followed up to confess that "much in these innovations...on a national scale was decimated in the following decades."¹⁰³ As foreshadowed, the openness to curricular creativity was once more abandoned without lasting impact aside from isolated instances. Even so, pocketed implementations of CMP ideals remained, as was the case for Cogan, who oversaw "the creation of a Graduate Music Theory program at [New England Conservatory] that [he] then led for more than forty years, which was able to sustain the global and transformative aspirations begun in the 60s."¹⁰⁴ The nature of Cogan's teaching practice,

¹⁰¹ Bland, "The College Music Theory Curriculum," 167.

¹⁰² Lawrence Shuster, "Global Musical Possibilities: An Interview with Composer-Theorist Robert Cogan," *Analytical Approaches to World Music* 4, no. 2. (September 2015): 13.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

which included jazz, popular music, and music of other cultures, persuasively gives the philosophy of this aspect of the CMP:

The way to do [integration], I believe, is to eliminate from the outset any historical or cultural bias in approaching music. We have to drop assumptions that there is one ruling, primary music culture. For one thing, that is not true for many students, who often encounter music from diverse cultures. An inclusive approach can present problems, but such problems are artificial compared to the problems presented by imposing a single culture. I am not saying that every musician must be a generalist across every domain of music. But it does seem to me that music theory and teaching should be able to conceive their categories inclusively rather than exclusively. And that musicians should understand the place of their specialization within the larger musical ecology.

There is no shortage of current literature for review agreeing with these general philosophies of Comprehensive Musicianship and the Contemporary Music Project to be assessed in the section to follow. Yet, their influence did not evoke widespread curricular reform.

A counter-prevailing phenomenon would adversely affect the proliferation of composition in current music theory teaching practice. This trend was “the professionalization of music theory as an independent academic discipline.”¹⁰⁵ Ironically, Hindemith was influential in this respect, as he started the first professional degree program in music theory, which “focused heavily upon the study of historical documents of music theory as well as the analysis of contemporary music.”¹⁰⁶ Hindemith faced opposition, but nevertheless, “insisted that theory should be offered as a separate major and not combined with composition.”¹⁰⁷ After Hindemith’s vacancy of his Yale post, it was filled by his former student and continued to evolve further afield from whatever application-based and contemporary composition components that Hindemith initially conceived with his Collegium Musicum concerts, which stopped at that

¹⁰⁵ Wason, “*Musica Practica*,” 71.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Allen Forte, “Paul Hindemith’s Contribution to Music Theory in the United State,” *Journal of Music Theory* 42 (1998): 10.

point. The Yale degree design prevailed against a competing Princeton degree synthesizing composition and theory. Wason noted that “the teaching of practical music theory to students – hitherto the domain of composers and performers in most conservatories and universities – was increasingly taken over by scholars who were trained within the growing number of PhD programs where degrees in music theory were offered,” and that there is “little precedent in the past for this occupation.”¹⁰⁸ The trend was not without noteworthy benefit—namely, the enhancement of considering voice-leading in combination with harmony through Schenker’s work and the development of ‘atonal’ and set theory through Forte’s contributions. Even so, this trend had the unintended consequence of dissociating theory and composition. Patrick McCreless points to the harmonic upheaval from the late nineteenth into the early twentieth century as pushing theory in this direction. He illustrates the conundrum in which music theory found itself:

For musical composition the new ideology introduced a tension between a traditional, eighteenth-century compositional aesthetic, which turned on the conventional *Satzlehre* of harmony and counterpoint and the rhetorically based *Melodielehre*, and the more recent aesthetic of genius and originality, which encouraged composers to transcend these traditional practices and to learn their craft by studying the works of the greatest masters, against whose standard their own originality would be measured. In music theory the new ideology reconfigured the entire discipline. We have seen that most seventeenth and eighteenth-century theory was ultimately directed toward practicing musicians—composers and performers—who would learn from theory the practice of a relatively stable musical style. But in an era that valued originality, and thus change over stability, the question necessarily arose as to whether theory should take as its task the preservation of the traditional stability (by teaching the traditional music-theoretical virtues), the explanation of that stability (the development of theories to explain how musical practice works), the pedagogy of originality (the teaching of original composition, to the extent that such a thing is possible), or the explanation of that originality once it is brought into existence (analysis).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Wason, “*Musica Practica*,” 72.

¹⁰⁹ Patrick McCreless, “Rethinking Contemporary Music Theory,” in *Keeping Score: Music, Disciplinary, Culture*, eds. David Schwarz, Anahid Kassabian and Lawrence Siegel (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1997), 28-29.

McCreless suggests that music theory tried to accomplish all of these things. The result is the theory discipline being overextended. Furthermore, music theory is placed in a constant battle with itself, in which, the practical requirements to proficiently apply music theory are pitted against the erudition being sought as a scholarly discipline. Consistent with Wason, he observes that these decisions have repercussions in pedagogical practice: “In its new form music theory claimed a sophisticated scholarly knowledge, turning itself into a new *musica theorica* and repressing its *musica practica* traditions to gain entrance to the academy.”¹¹⁰ Wason harshly recapitulates that “the status of the professional music theory instructor seems to have ironically returned at least in part to that of the speculative *musicus* of medieval lore – who is a ‘knower’ but not necessarily a ‘doer.’ To that extent, the academization of music theory may be seen to have come at a cost.”¹¹¹ So while Comprehensive Musicianship and the Contemporary Music Project offered thought-provoking ideas on how to effectively restore the integration of theory and practice that had been modelled throughout previous centuries of music history, it has not prevailed as the current practice. As seen in the next sequence of reviewed articles, there is no dearth of sources advocating for composition, but much like the conversation produced by CM, knowing how we wish music theory to be taught does not always alter and reinvigorate the practice.

¹¹⁰ McCreless, “Rethinking Contemporary Music Theory,” 38.

¹¹¹ Wason, “*Musica Practica*,” 73.

Modern Recommendations for How Music Theory *Should* Be Taught

Music intelligentsia happily discourse lauding the value of creativity across undergraduate curriculum. In fact, review of existing literature suggests that early integration of creativity in music theory can serve the dual function of making music students more immediately engaged in content and can increase retention. In spite of this knowledge, teaching practice for music theory has remained largely unchanged for decades. As previously stated, the revised National Association for Music Education (NAfME) standards have four chief tenets: responding, connecting, performing, and creating. The ‘creating’ directive is supported by further guidance as to what constitutes creativity. These anchor standards are: “generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work; organize and develop artistic ideas and work; and, refine and complete artistic work.”¹¹² The impetus for creativity is increasingly found in academic literature. For example, the College Music Theory Society Task Force produced a *Manifesto* calling for curricular reform “in all institutions in ways that enhance and support creativity.”¹¹³ Yet the aim of secondary music classrooms is success in performances, festivals, and competitions. Kladder and Lee argue that “this focus has reduced creative thinking in the music classroom and prompted academic discussion about the need to enhance creative thinking.”¹¹⁴ Furthermore, they assert that “the types of pedagogy in these classrooms remains predominantly teacher-centered as well, which has been argued as antithetical in developing creativity.”¹¹⁵

¹¹² Jonathan Kladder and William Lee, “Music Teachers Perception of Creativity: A Preliminary Investigation,” *Creativity Research Journal* 31, no. 4 (2019): 395-396.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 396.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 395.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Ergo, there are many potential pitfalls when setting out to create a curriculum that is exciting and accessible to incoming young adults pursuing a music degree, especially considering most teachers initially learned the content themselves in a lecture-based style. First, there are developmental factors in play for the learners themselves. Conkling observes that “most undergraduates can be characterized as emerging adults in the midst of identity explorations.”¹¹⁶ Students are, in fact, using “their lessons, classes, and ensembles as means to explore their personal capacities and the suitability of a professional career in music.”¹¹⁷ A well-crafted music course curriculum must take into account where a student is in this process, and the class content should be appropriate to its placement in the student’s degree sequence with regard to the student’s maturation. Also, music students have diverse learning styles. Howard Gardner outlines separate intelligences including musical, linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.¹¹⁸ Therefore, constructing a curriculum to provide equitable opportunity for success to all students can be a daunting task because students enter with different modes of learning, different levels of musical proficiency, and different socio-economic backgrounds.

From this author’s teaching practice, South Texas community college students face all these challenges and more. Whereas only nine percent of music majors are Hispanic on a national level, at South Texas College (STC), 95 percent of the student population is Hispanic.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Susan W. Conkling, “Understanding Undergraduate Music Learners,” in *Oxford Handbooks Online* (Oxford University Press, 2018), 10.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (New York, NY: Basic Books, Harper Collins, 1993)

¹¹⁹ Ray Pedraza, “STC first in Texas, Third Nationwide for Enrolling and Graduating Latinos,” *South Texas College News* (August 2020) <https://news.southtexascollege.edu/stc-first-in-texas-third-nationwide-for-enrolling-and-graduating-latinos/>

Conkling notes that Hispanic students tend to graduate with more student debt, which in turn can delay their graduation. Her statistics also confirm that the “underrepresentation of black and Hispanic students in undergraduate music degree programs suggests that inequity of resources and access to music education exists prior to enrollment.”¹²⁰ In her estimation, this disparity is such that “that even for some whose knowledge and skills are well suited to a music career, stable employment in music may eventually be out of reach.”¹²¹ Many STC first semester music students perfectly fit this scenario and would make excellent musicians and educators in terms of their musical potential. Sometimes, however, the struggles of needing to contribute to their families financially or requiring an extra semester beyond their financial aid to properly achieve technical proficiency on their instrument can derail them from completing their Associates Degree. While a well-crafted curriculum cannot solely carry the burden of retaining these students, research suggests that it can play a vital role in actively drawing students into a sense of belonging in the music program. LaSota and Zumeta point out: “scholars have investigated the role of community colleges in increasing students’ academic and social integration on campus, constructs that have been shown to be correlated with higher levels of college persistence in 4-year institutions (e.g. Braxton et al. 2004; Tinto 1975).”¹²²

It is imperative that freshman-level music curriculum be designed to immediately move music students to active participation in the content. Weimer advocates that educators move away from a linear, lecture-based teaching model toward “active learning strategies that allow

¹²⁰ Conkling, “Understanding Undergraduate Music Learners,” 11.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Robin R. LaSota and William Zumeta, “What Matters in Increasing Community College Students’ Upward Transfer to the Baccalaureate Degree: Findings From the Beginning Postsecondary Study 2003-2009,” *Research in Higher Education* 57 (2016): 155.

students firsthand experience with the content.”¹²³ Specific to music, Conway elaborates that “active strategies involve singing, moving, playing instruments, creating sound, composing, improvising, listening and evaluating music.”¹²⁴ This imperative for active participation is especially true for the more “academic” classes, such as Music Theory, which are in dire need of curricular innovation. Music Theory, when presented as solely a lecture course, can be disengaging for students. Furthermore, it is an excellent opportunity for teachers to build positive environments through collaboration and mentorship to facilitate student retention. Conway states this regarding freshmen: “for some students, the freshmen year is a scary transition... These students need advisors, mentors, and professors who can help them learn to manage their time... They also need to see good role models and they need to interact with upperclassmen who have made the transition to college smoothly.”¹²⁵ Music Theory One is a gateway course to continually more advanced theory requirements, and therefore, if students struggle with the content immediately, they can become demoralized. Coupled with the aforementioned challenges common to community college students, this can be enough for them to stop pursuing a music degree altogether. A broader integration of music composition, creativity, and more diverse examples into a music theory classroom can be a superlative solution. Conway observes that “real-world experiences such as putting theory, history, or introduction to music content into performance settings help students to bridge between abstract and concrete learning.”¹²⁶

¹²³ Maryellen Weimer, *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2013), 118.

¹²⁴ Colleen M. Conway, *Teaching Music in Higher Education* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020), 17.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 65-66.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.

Dewey viewed *Art as Experience* as a remedy to “restore the continuity between art and the ordinary processes of living.”¹²⁷ This view also supports a diverse and expanded curriculum for musicians, which yields a democratization that allows teachers to view classical and popular music “in continuous and complementary terms.”¹²⁸ Notably, this is also a chief tenet of Comprehensive Musicianship. This approach is important for establishing rapport with college students. When professors are dismissive of students’ current musical interests and experiences, students are in turn less receptive to broadening their own musical horizons when prompted by the teacher. While developing curriculum, it is imperative to be cognizant of the student population being served. As a predominantly Hispanic-serving institution, it would not connect well with students to only use theory examples from Austro-German composers at South Texas College. Most theory texts do just that, and therefore do not translate with highest effectiveness to all student populations. According to Ewell, of the seven most popular music theory textbooks, “98.3% of the music that we teach from these seven textbooks is written by whites.”¹²⁹ He continues that “if one were to count examples from Austro-German composers, one would surely see a clear example of the belief that music from German-speaking lands of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early-twentieth centuries provides the best framework for music theory.”¹³⁰ Conway reinforces this sentiment, noting that “schools of music are sometimes

¹²⁷ Tan, “Reading John Dewey,” 72.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Philip A. Ewell, “Music Theory and the White Racial Frame,” *Society for Music Theory* 26, no. 2 (September 2020): 4.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

steeped deeply in classical music traditions and it is important to help students be more aware of musical styles and genres outside of that tradition.”¹³¹

Accredited university music schools face no pressure to perpetuate this narrow focus on Western masterwork analysis. In fact, their governing body, the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), gives broad guidelines on musicianship skills that all majors should achieve, with the acknowledgement that those skills should be acquired in ways that best serve the student population. For example, NASM directs that all musicians should have “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.”¹³² Furthermore, NASM’s recommended “Common Body of Knowledge and Skills” required for college accreditation includes three major tenets of Comprehensive Musicianship: competency in composition, diversity of repertory, and synthesis of musical knowledge.

Regarding “Composition/Improvisation,” NASM states that:

Students must acquire a rudimentary capacity to create original or derivative music. It is the prerogative of each institution to develop specific requirements regarding written, electronic, or improvisatory forms and methods. These may include but are not limited to the creation of original compositions or improvisations, variations or improvisations on existing materials, experimentation with various sound sources, the imitation of musical styles, and manipulating the common elements in non-traditional ways. Institutional requirements should help students gain a basic understanding of how to work freely and cogently with musical materials in various composition-based activities, particularly those most associated with the major field.¹³³

Regarding repertory, NASM directs that “students must acquire basic knowledge of music history and repertoires through the present time, including study and experience of musical

¹³¹ Conway, *Teaching Music in Higher Education*, 87.

¹³² National Association of Schools of Music, *National Association of Schools of Music Handbook 2022-23* (Reston, VA: NASM, 2023), 105.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

language and achievement in addition to that of the primary culture encompassing the area of specialization.”¹³⁴ Finally, in alignment with CM, NASM recommends that “while synthesis is a lifetime process, by the end of undergraduate study students must be able to work on musical problems by combining, as appropriate to the issue, their capabilities in performance; aural, verbal, and visual analysis; composition/improvisation; and history and repertory.”¹³⁵ In this light, rather than accredited institutions facing restrictions, they are actually guided by NASM to better serve their students through diversity of musical languages included and by developing student proficiency in composition. Interestingly, NASM accreditation has little direct impact on individuals teaching college music theory. Reevaluation for NASM schools occurs on a ten-year cycle, and while a theory class might have a single observation at that time, the immense scope of the reaccreditation process focuses on the health of the music department as a whole and is not able to delve deeply into the amount of creativity being integrated in the theory curriculum.

The Reality of Current Music Theory Textbook Design

In order to argue that true creativity in theory curriculum is tangential and formulaic at best, it is critical to thoroughly review the available pedagogical textbooks. This study surveyed *Tonal Harmony: with an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music*; *The Complete Musician: An Integrated Approach to Theory, Analysis, and Listening*; *Music Theory Remixed: A Blended Approach for the Practicing Musician*; *Concise Introduction to Tonal Harmony*; and *The Musician’s Guide to Theory and Analysis*. Summaries, excerpts, and examples observe what is and is not included regarding creative exercises and stylistic diversity of musical examples. These texts were also scrutinized for adherence to the philosophical principles of CM. Three

¹³⁴ NASM, *National Association of Schools of Music Handbook 2022-23*, 105.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

such underlying principles are integration with other classes, use of composition, and inclusion of musical examples beyond the canon of Western Art music. Specific consideration was given to how initial chapters setting up the fundamentals of music are presented to compare how identical theory rudiments are taught. This study also investigated how each text presents augmented sixth chords as a survey of whether teaching methods and exercises evolve as students reach more advanced harmonic language.

Tonal Harmony

In Stefan Kostka and Dorothy Payne's *Tonal Harmony*, Chapter One walks students through the fundamentals of music. It specifically presents in sequence: the keyboard, octave registers, notation on the staff, the major scale, the major key signatures, the minor scales, minor key signatures, scale degree names, intervals, inversion of intervals, and a concluding summary of the first chapter content.¹³⁶ In the textbook, there are checkpoints along the way for students to practice the skills being acquired. These are supplemented by a corresponding workbook, in which the practice exercises carry the insipidness of rote interval, scale, and key signature practice. The figure below, focused on interval practice, is characteristic of these exercises.

¹³⁶ Kostka and Payne, *Tonal Harmony Music*, xiii.

C. Notate the specified intervals above the given notes.

1 P4 2 m3 3 m6 4 M2 5 P4 6 P5 7 m2 8 P5 9 M7 10 m7

11 M3 12 P8 13 M6 14 m7 15 M3 16 M7 17 P8 18 P5 19 M6 20 m3

21 m3 22 M2 23 M7 24 M5 25 m6 26 m7 27 P4 28 M7 29 M6 30 m3

31 M6 32 M3 33 m3 34 M3 35 P5 36 m2 37 m6 38 m7 39 M7 40 m2

41 m6 42 M2 43 P4 44 m3 45 m7 46 P5 47 m6 48 P5 49 M7 50 m2

51 P5 52 P4 53 m3 54 m7 55 M2 56 P4 57 M6 58 m6 59 m2 60 M3

8 Tonal Harmony

Figure 1: *Workbook for Tonal Harmony: Exercise 1-5b, Interval Practice*¹³⁷

Pedagogically-speaking, it should be noted that drills over the foundational syntax of the musical language for which speed is desirable are not superfluous and have their place. However, conspicuously absent are any exercises that require students to integrate this knowledge in more creatively applied ways. In *Tonal Harmony*, augmented sixth chords are tackled in Chapter Twenty-Three. The lesson is subdivided into the interval of the augmented sixth; the Italian, French, and German augmented sixth

¹³⁷ Stefan Kostka and Dorothy Payne, *Workbook for Tonal Harmony: with an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music*, 6th ed. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2009), 8.

chords; and a chapter summation. Once more, checkpoints and examples illustrate the intended concept. At this point in the text, students would have more advanced knowledge and the examples given reflect this. Excerpts are taken from Mozart, Beethoven, Kenneth Miller, and Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, with the greater preponderance coming from Beethoven and Mozart. The given self-test exercises practice a diversity of skill including literature analysis, isolated augmented chord spelling and identification, and part-writing. The part-writing (shown in Figure 2) comes the closest to a creative endeavor but is crafted in such a way that only one or two correct answers are possible.

D. Supply the missing voices for each of the following fragments. All but exercise 5 are four-part textures.

1
F: ii_2^4 $F\#m^6$ V

2
Bb: IV^6 II^+6 i_4^4 V

3
a: i Ger^+6 i_4^4 V⁷

4
G: IV^6 ii_2^4 Ger^+6 i_4^4 V⁷

5
d: i V^6 V_2^2/iv iv^6 II^+6 V

E. Analyze the harmonics implied by this soprano-bass framework and try to include a $F\#^7b$ and an example of mode mixture in your harmonization. Then complete the piano texture by filling in two inner parts in the treble-clef staff, following good voice-leading procedures.

F. Analyze the chords specified by this figured bass, then make an arrangement for SATB chorus.

Exercise 23-1 See Workbook.

Figure 2: *Tonal Harmony*: Self-Test 23-1, 6d, Augmented Sixth Part-writing¹³⁸

The workbook requires analysis assignments using the works of Schumann, Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven. In this way, the workbook fails to demonstrate the Comprehensive Musicianship ideals for using stylistic diversity of examples and disregards tonal harmony's use in contemporary practice. Furthermore, neither textbook nor workbook seeks to show how the

¹³⁸ Kostka and Payne, *Tonal Harmony*, 410.

materials can be meaningfully synthesized in other music courses or to make use of collaborative assignments.

Concise Introduction to Tonal Harmony

In *Concise Introduction to Tonal Harmony*, fundamentals are tackled in Part One over the span of the forty-three pages. Chapter Zero explains notation of pitch and rhythm; Chapter One deals with scales; Chapter Two covers intervals; and Chapter Three clarifies triads and seventh chords. The chapter summaries include “test yourself” sections. Again, while being perfectly suited to reinforce core concepts, they contain no creative impetus for integrating the ideas into the practice of music composition. Augmented sixth chords are covered in Chapter Thirty-One under Part Four. The chapter summation practice examples focus on spelling and identifying augmented sixth chords and on recognizing errors in part-writing for these chord types. A representative example of the homework is given in Figure 3.

(Image removed to comply with copyright)

Figure 3: *Concise Introduction to Tonal Harmony*: Test Yourself, Chapter 31¹³⁹

Chapters Zero through Three offer no examples of the concepts being used in music literature and make no effort to require students to apply the concepts to performance-based music classes. Chapter Thirty-One includes examples by Chopin, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Beethoven, Schubert, Louise Reichardt, Fernando Sor, Dmitry Bortniansky, and Vincenzo Bellini. From this list, there is only one female composer represented and the rest are entrenched in the Romantic-Era Western tradition. No contemporary examples are given.

¹³⁹ L. Poundie Burstein and Joseph N. Straus, *Concise Introduction to Tonal Harmony* 1st ed. (New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Co., 2016), 296.

Music Theory Remixed: A Blended Approach for the Practicing Musician

In *Music Theory Remixed: A Blended Approach for the Practicing Musician*, Holm-Hudson sets out to balance “the popular and classical approaches to music theory, while also balancing the analytical aspects of music theory with its practical or pragmatic aspects.”¹⁴⁰ In this pursuit, it succeeds in including more stylistically diverse musical excerpts. For example, an excerpt of Aerosmith’s “I Don’t Want to Miss a Thing” is mined for first inversion chords alongside Haydn’s *Piano Sonata in C Major, Hob.XVI:35 (i)*.¹⁴¹ In this text, Part One combines fundamentals and diatonic harmony, with Chapters One through Four covering pitch, scales, intervals, rhythm, chord types. Before launching in, Holm-Hudson’s text also includes an unconventional “Prelude: Setting the Stage” chapter which provides three listening studies to discuss texture and to facilitate a broad discussion of what constitutes music. Its intentionality is to draw students in before launching into theoretical practice. The textbook chapters have level mastery checkpoints scattered throughout to practice concepts. Consistent with other books, a hefty number of utilitarian exercises reinforce key signature and scale spelling and identification in the self-test component at the end of the chapter. An example is shown in Figure 4 below.

(Image removed to comply with copyright)

Figure 4: *Music Theory Remixed: Self-Test 1.3, Dimensions of Pitch*¹⁴²

Chapter One does try to include a single improvisation exercise in the “Apply This!” that follows the self-tests. Here students are given the imperative: “choose a pitch that you can sing or play comfortably. Create an improvisation (or, if you wish to write it down, a composition) based

¹⁴⁰ Kevin Holm-Hudson, *Music Theory Remixed: A Blended Approach for the Practicing Musician* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), xxii.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 221.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 35.

exclusively on that one pitch. Make that pitch as interesting as you can by varying its rhythm, its dynamics, its articulations and timbre.”¹⁴³ Regarding augmented sixth chords, “Chapter 24: Chromaticism 1: The Neapolitan and Augmented Sixth Chords” provides relevant content. Again, “Self-Test” and “Apply This!” sections are present. While the musical selections are more stylistically diverse, there is no composition or creative content to be applied by the student. In this way, the textbook aligns with CM’s recommendations on contemporary examples, but not on assignments requiring collaboration and synthesis to other areas of music.

The Complete Musician: An Integrated Approach to Theory, Analysis, and Listening

One curious dichotomy common to some reviewed textbooks was their simultaneous recognition that there are implicit obstacles for students learning music theory, while at the same time perpetuating the same methods for teaching the content that have made it seem inaccessible to first-year students. The preface of Laitz’s textbook acknowledges that “music students often suffer through their theory and aural skills courses, viewing them as not particularly relevant—perhaps even painful—sidelines of their musical studies.” He admits it “is a shame, because an unsatisfying experience with theory early on in students’ studies frequently has a negative effect on their attitude throughout their college years and beyond into their professional lives.”¹⁴⁴ Ironically, Chapters One A, One B, Two, and Three begin wading through the fundamentals of pitch, scales, key signatures, intervals, rhythm, meter, two-voice counterpoint, triads, and seventh chords using language that can be cumbersome and pedantic for students. For example, regarding how accidentals apply to the same note throughout a single measure, Laitz describes it thusly:

¹⁴³ Holm-Hudson, *Music Theory Remixed*, 39.

¹⁴⁴ Steven G. Laitz, *The Complete Musician: An Integrated Approach to Theory, Analysis, and Listening*, 4th ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), xxvii.

“Accidentals operate on pitches, not on pitch classes. Composers often add courtesy accidentals in parentheses to clarify ambiguities. If a composer wishes to continue the alteration, he or she must repeat it in subsequent measures.”¹⁴⁵ With its launching musical example, intended to hook the student in, the author is already having students consider the “hierarchy of pitch and meter” in Bach’s *Violin Partita in E Major* in search of larger melodic contours in a way that feels Schenkerian in its approach.¹⁴⁶ Regarding the stylistic diversity of examples to help students relate to a wide variety of musical contexts, musical excerpts in Chapter One A are taken exclusively from the “masters”—Bach, Mozart, Schubert, and Beethoven. Similar to other theory textbooks, there are exercise interludes scattered throughout and review questions punctuating each chapter. An example is given below:

¹⁴⁵ Laitz, *The Complete Musician*, 11-12.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

SCALE DEGREE	NAME
$\sharp 7$	
$\flat 7$	<i>subtonic</i>
$\hat{6}$	
$\hat{4}$	

-
4. Using the letters W (whole) and H (half), write the pattern corresponding to the **major scale**.
-
5. Using the letters W (whole) and H (half), write the pattern corresponding to the **natural minor scale**.
-
6. List the three types of **minor scales**.
-
7. **Relative keys** share the same [tonic/key signature], whereas **parallel keys** share the same [tonic/key signature].
-
8. **Simple intervals** are [less/more] than an octave, whereas **compound intervals** are [less/more] than an octave.
-
9. Name two intervals, one **augmented** and one **diminished**, that equal a tritone.
-
10. List the **generic intervals** (unison through octave) that will always belong to each category of label:
1. Diminished/Perfect/Augmented:
 2. Diminished/Minor/Major/Augmented:
-

Figure 5: *The Complete Musician*: Chapter Review, Chapter 1A Musical Space¹⁴⁷

Augmented sixth chords are the topic of Chapter Twenty-Four. The way they are explained is consistent with other texts. Again, the examples favor only the giants of Western art music. Exercise interludes require students to spell the chords and identify them in examples, while the chapter review gives short answer questions on important terminology; no creative application of

¹⁴⁷ Laitz, *The Complete Musician*, 43.

augmented sixth chords in composition is given. Similarly, no synthesis of theory principles to other areas of music or collaboration are included.

The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis

In Clendinning and Marvin's textbook, *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis*, the authors aspire to use "student-centered pedagogy that features clearly written prose" and a diverse body of recorded musical examples throughout the book. This is immediately evident in that even as students begin practicing labelling pitches, they do so with an excerpt of Lennon and McCartney's "Eleanor Rigby."¹⁴⁸ The prose is absent a sense of reading "academese" and is straightforwardly appropriate to the level of reading comprehension for students just entering college. Clendinning and Marvin offer tools that deal with common student mistakes in this same conversational approach. For example, they elucidate that "when you write pitches on the staff, place the accidental before (to the left of) the note head, the main (oval) part of the note. When you say or write the letter names, however, the accidental goes after the letter name."¹⁴⁹ Each chapter contains "Try It" opportunities for students to apply concepts being learned. Despite the strong accessibility for students learning the rudiments of music, conspicuously absent again are any creative application exercises. A representative example of minor scale application is given below:

(Image removed to comply with copyright)

Figure 6: *The Musician's Guide to Theory*: Try It #7, Variability in the Minor Scale¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Jane Piper Clendinning and Elizabeth West Marvin, *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis* 3rd ed. (New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Co., 2016), 10.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 99.

The elements of music are considered in Part One of the text and are presented at a considerably slower and more in-depth pacing than other examined books. In fact, this portion of the book spans over two hundred pages alone, as compared to *Concise Introduction to Tonal Harmony*, which moves through fundamentals in only forty-three pages. Augmented sixth chords are the subject of Chapter Twenty-Seven, which also covers the Neapolitan chord. Consistent with other books, students are limited to isolated chord spelling examples and identifying the chords in musical excerpts. The exercise requiring the most critical thinking in this chapter for students is a directive to “find one N⁶ and at least two different types of A⁶ chords” in their applied instrumental or vocal repertoire.¹⁵¹ This particular example does align with CM ideology in its requirement for students to apply their newfound knowledge by using it in their other music classes.

Further Consideration of the Corresponding Workbooks

In concluding this survey of current theory textbooks, it is worth clarifying that the corresponding workbooks that accompany the examined textbooks supplement the same types of activities shown in the reviews above. As demonstrated by Kostka and Payne’s *Tonal Harmony Workbook* example in Figure 1, the workbook assignments mostly mirror their textbooks and favor having students practice fundamental skills or analyze excerpts largely taken from Western Art music. Mostly, workbooks do not require creative applications of music theory accomplished using methods that feel like actual composition projects. However, the accompanying workbooks allow for substantially more exercises and assignments than the textbooks can include. In some instances, this means the workbook includes a few composition-based assignments. Even so, the

¹⁵¹ Clendinning and Marvin, *The Musician’s Guide to Theory and Analysis*, 568.

instances of creativity are so few that they are easy to catalogue and feel haphazard regarding the consistency of their implementation.

For example, the workbook for *Concise Introduction to Tonal Harmony* contains only one creative example in all of Part One, spanning Chapters Zero through Three. The isolated instance comes from Chapter Zero over fundamentals and requires to students to finish four-measure examples by composing rhythms appropriate to the meter. The example is shown in Figure 7:

(Image removed to comply with copyright)

Figure 7: *Concise Introduction to Tonal Harmony Workbook: I. Writing Rhythms*¹⁵²

Similar to the other workbooks, *Concise Introduction to Tonal Harmony Workbook* also fails to include any composition-related assignments in Chapter Thirty-One over augmented sixth chords, aside from realization of figured-bass exercises consisting of no more than four measures. The analysis excerpts in Chapter Thirty-One of the workbook follow even more closely the Western canon, using Mendelssohn, Schubert, Brahms, Beethoven, and Schumann.¹⁵³ No contemporary examples are used, and no workbook assignments require knowledge to be applied to students' concurrent classes.

As mentioned previously, Kostka and Payne's *Tonal Harmony Workbook* fails to use a broad variety of examples for analysis and infrequently does creativity. The first instance where composition is integrated does not occur until Chapter Five's "Principles of Voice Leading," where students are asked to compose a simple four-measure melody that conforms to the given

¹⁵² L. Poundie Burstein and Joseph N. Straus, *Concise Introduction to Tonal Harmony Answer Key* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Co., 2016), 11.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 339-348.

Roman Numerals.¹⁵⁴ The focus of the assignment is not on creativity but on following rigorously defined rules that will prepare students to be successful with part-writing. The workbook does include one assignment requiring composition in the chapter dealing with augmented sixth chords. The example is shown in Figure 8 and is a better model for teaching composition, considering the pedagogical practices that will be suggested in Chapter Four's qualitative interview research findings.

- I. Given next are mm. 1 to 2 of a four-measure phrase. Continue the passage to make a period (parallel or contrasting) that ends with a PAC in the key of the dominant. Include an augmented sixth chord.

The image shows two systems of musical notation for a piano score. The key signature is D major (two sharps: F# and C#). The first system contains two measures of music. In the first measure, the right hand has a half note chord of D major (D, F#, A) and the left hand has a half note chord of D major (D, F#, A). In the second measure, the right hand has a half note chord of D major (D, F#, A) and the left hand has a half note chord of D major (D, F#, A). The second system is empty, with two staves (treble and bass clef) and a brace on the left, intended for the student to complete the phrase.

Figure 8: *Workbook for Tonal Harmony*: 23-1, I. Augmented Sixth Chords¹⁵⁵

The consistent suggestion from interviewees, described in full in Chapter Four, is that composition assignments should be used to integrate multiple concepts in a single project for students. In the assignment shown in Figure 8, students must include an augmented sixth chord and complete a period that successfully cadences in the dominant key.

¹⁵⁴ Kostka and Payne, *Workbook for Tonal Harmony*, 35.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 238.

Clendinning and Marvin's *The Musician's Guide Workbook* continues their broader use of diverse musical examples, in terms of both style and genre. For example, "Assignment 1.3" has students identifying whole- and half-steps in the music of Joel Phillips, Mozart, Scott Joplin, and Willie Nelson.¹⁵⁶ In Chapter Twenty-Seven, dealing with augmented sixth chords, the workbook actually includes fewer diverse examples, instead favoring some of the typical Western composers: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and Haydn. No composition is used in this chapter, other than four-measure part-writing assignments requiring the tenor and alto lines to be added. An example typifying the analysis required in this workbook chapter is shown in Figure 9.

(Image removed to comply with copyright)

Figure 9: *Workbook for the Musician's Guide to Theory: Assignment 27.7-I, Analysis*¹⁵⁷

The overarching theme from all surveyed textbooks and workbooks is that composition is infrequently integrated. *The Musician's Guide* and *Music Theory Remixed* both make efforts to incorporate popular and jazz music examples composed more recently, in addition to the conventional Western music canon. The other texts do not make this effort and rely on a very limited range of "master" composers for their excerpts. Also, no textbooks have processes for integrating composition in ways that involves collaboration with applied or ensemble students and classes.

While the critiques of these textbooks are straightforward in their assessment that composition is somewhat lacking, it is very necessary to also acknowledge the great erudition contained in these books. Each book represents countless hours by the authors and editors spent

¹⁵⁶ Jane Piper Clendinning and Elizabeth West Marvin, *Workbook for the Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis* 3rd ed. (New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Co., 2016), 8.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 333.

building rigorously constructed learning methods for students to gain the comprehensive analytical skills typically needed in Western Art music. Like many of Chapter Four's qualitative interview participants, the researcher was trained with Kostka and Payne's *Tonal Harmony* curriculum. Countless musicians are indebted to the quantity of practical assignments contained in these workbooks and textbooks aimed at reinforcing the fundamental concepts of music. Without learning these core concepts, those who have been fortunate enough to learn composition in other music classes would have been significantly less prepared to attempt the craft. Additionally, these texts have strong teams behind them that regularly prepare subsequent editions. Updates to these current textbooks may gradually ameliorate some of the proposed criticisms regarding stylistic diversity and integration of music composition.

Summary

The reviewed literature here reveals several conclusions that will have implications later. The literature shows how throughout the course of music theory history its teaching used to focus on the practical nature of preparing composers and in styles that were contemporary. Music Theory as a separate discipline has only been institutionalized in the last hundred years, with the result of unintentionally relegating theory to analytical discourse on music composed by masters of the past. The philosophy of Contemporary Musicianship, as brought into existence through the Young Composers Project, was a bright spot in recent history of theory pedagogy, albeit short lived. Academic dialogue from recent journals and essays largely promotes that composition would still be beneficial to music students at the college and K-12 levels, but the existence of such suggestions seems not to have significantly altered theory's pedagogical trajectory. Due to the institutionalization of Music Theory, music theory textbooks typically evolve little through their various editions and have incorporated almost no meaningful creative

composition integration. This is mostly true for these textbooks' corresponding workbooks as well. Simply put, the literature review makes the case that composition was historically a normal part of musicians' training by way of music theory, but is now largely missing. The qualitative methodology and data to follow in Chapters Three and Four seek to answer how currently-practicing college educators feel about these trends, as well as what values or disadvantages they see in a theory curriculum with more purposeful composition integration.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This qualitative study examined the perceptions of college music theory instructors about the efficacy of available music theory curriculum to adequately incorporate music composition for students in a way that is useful in their future teaching practice. Educators were presented with the ideologies of Comprehensive Musicianship. Importantly, from the CM ideology is the belief that by incorporating composing in styles other than common-practice era classical music into the curricula, students will interact with music that is more relevant to their lived experiences and feel prepared to teach the same open-minded repertoire creativity as future educators. It is also worth elucidating how closely CM ideals follow the National Standards for Arts Education. Mark and Madura state that “the National Standards...are not that far afield from the expectations of the methods described in [their Chapter Five] and are perhaps closest to the CM goals outlined above.”¹⁵⁸ Mark and Madura decry that the most neglected standards are those on composition and integrating music with other disciplines, and without students being trained in the oft-neglected National Standard Four, to “compose and arrange music,” Western Art music could cease to exist in a future tense.¹⁵⁹

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to discover the heretofore undocumented perspectives of college music theory teachers on the practicality of the available curriculum for yielding students who are capable of composing and teaching composition. This chapter thoroughly explains this study’s design by highlighting its methodology, as well as the research questions and hypotheses that guided the intentionality behind it. This chapter also describes the

¹⁵⁸ Mark and Madura, *Contemporary Music Education*, 128.

¹⁵⁹ *National Standards for Arts Education* (Reston, VA: MENC, 1994).

study's setting, participant selection, instrumentation, and procedures. The chapter concludes with a data analysis plan and ethical procedures followed by the researcher throughout the process.

Design

For this study, a qualitative case study approach was used. A qualitative methodology was most appropriate, as its aim is to allow participants the freedom to share their perceptions, life experiences, and deeper insights into the problem based on their expertise in the subject material.¹⁶⁰ Similarly, many other music education researchers focusing on teachers' perceptions of areas for pedagogical improvement have conducted qualitative studies. For example, Sommer Helweh Forrester conducted a qualitative study to better comprehend four pre-service music teachers' discernments regarding an urban service-learning initiative.¹⁶¹ Following a qualitative case study methodology, Forrester conducted semi-structured interviews with four pre-service teachers. The case study design being used allowed her to generate an in-depth, complex understanding of the phenomenon being explored.¹⁶² In another example, Micki Michelle Berlin used semi-structured interview questions to gain insights from K-12 educators evaluating her created popular music lesson plans for how they would work in their individual contexts.¹⁶³ The phenomenon typically explored in case study research is multi-faceted, which requires the

¹⁶⁰ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, chap. 2.

¹⁶¹ Sommer Helweh Forrester, "Community Engagement in Music Education: Preservice Music Teachers' Perceptions of an Urban Service-Learning Initiative," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 29, no. 1 (2019): 26-40.

¹⁶² Robert K. Yin, *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (Sage Publications), 2017.

¹⁶³ Micki Michele Berlin, "A Model for the Development of a Popular Music Listening Curriculum," (PhD diss., Liberty University, 2022), 74-76.

origination of new ideas and the illustration of theories.¹⁶⁴ Thankfully, as John and J. David Creswell now observe “there is some consensus as to what constitutes qualitative inquiry,” and that the impetus for “qualitative writers...to discuss the characteristics of qualitative research and convince faculty and audiences as to their legitimacy” has subsided.¹⁶⁵

To ensure alignment with current research, interviews were conducted via Zoom video conferencing to allow participants to be in a comfortable setting of their choosing and to facilitate creation of transcripts for codifying the information. In this current study, the researcher completed thematic coding, after first electronically recording and transcribing each interview in preparation for text analysis. The data analysis required the researcher to classify and interpret the text from the semi-structured interview questions to allow for an idiographic approach. This approach allowed the researcher to focus on each of the individuals being interviewed and emphasize their distinct perceptions and life experiences.¹⁶⁶ In Chapter Five, these life experiences and perceptions are examined in conjunction with the historical study conducted in Chapter Two.

¹⁶⁴ Helena Harrison, Melanie Birks, Richard Franklin, and Jane Mills, “Case study research: Foundations and methodological orientations,” In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 18, no. 1 (2017).

¹⁶⁵ John W. and J. David Creswell, *Research Design*, 180.

¹⁶⁶ Jacqueline B. Persons and James F. Boswell, “Single case and idiographic research: Introduction to the special issue,” *Behaviour Research and Therapy* 117 (2019): 1-2.

Questions and Hypotheses

Research Questions

The following research questions were used in this study:

RQ1: In what ways would a music theory curriculum focused more on collaborative music composition prepare students more comprehensively to train the next generation of music educators?

RQ2: In what ways can the philosophy behind Comprehensive Musicianship be implemented to the benefit of current community college music theory practices?

RQ3: In what ways can the methodology of the Young Composers Project be emulated by integrating music theory compositions into applied and ensemble curriculum?

Hypotheses

While there are typically no hypotheses in qualitative methodology, study of national standards and the literature review that preceded this author's qualitative interview research strongly suggested that it could be logically inferred that strengthening the integration of composition in college theory curriculum could have positive benefits for future music educators and was in alignment with the most commonly neglected national standards. As such, the working hypotheses were as follows.

RQ1: In what ways would a music theory curriculum focused more on collaborative music composition prepare students more comprehensively to train the next generation of music educators?

H₁: A music theory curriculum focused more on collaborative music composition can prepare students more comprehensively to train the next generation of music educators in

terms of creativity in personal pedagogy practice, effective use of technology, and mastery of music composition.

RQ2: In what ways can the philosophy behind Comprehensive Musicianship be implemented to the benefit of current community college music theory practices?

H₂: The philosophy behind Comprehensive Musicianship can be implemented to the benefit of current community college music theory practices by better connecting theory and practical application, familiarizing students with more stylistically diverse musical examples, and training students to be self-sufficient in their problem-solving.

RQ3: In what ways can the methodology of the Young Composers Project be emulated by integrating music theory compositions into applied and ensemble curriculum?

H₃: The methodology of the Young Composers Project can be emulated by integrating music theory compositions into applied and ensemble curriculum by facilitating music theory student-composer, ensemble, and applied student collaboration.

Participants

For this study there were six participants, with the final number being confirmed by data saturation. Citing K. Charmaz's *Constructing Grounded Theory*, the Creswells suggest "that one stops collecting data when the categories (or themes) are saturated: when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new insights or reveals new properties. This is when you have an adequate sample."¹⁶⁷ Patricia Fusch and Lawrence Ness concur, reinforcing that data saturation occurs in qualitative research when there is redundancy in the answers provided by participants and with no new information being gleaned.¹⁶⁸ For this researcher's study, participants were selected

¹⁶⁷ John W. and J. David Creswell, *Research Design*, 186.

¹⁶⁸ Patricia I. Fusch and Lawrence R. Ness, "Are We There Yet? Data Saturation in Qualitative Research," *The Qualitative Report* 20, no. 9 (2015): 1408.

based on a convenience sampling for their proximity and for fulfilling the requisite criteria. Consistent with Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim definition, this sampling method is a type of non-probability sampling, in which the researcher recruits participants due to their convenience and eligibility.¹⁶⁹ For this study, participants by necessity met the following criteria:

1. Each participant has at least a master's degree in music.
2. Each participant has taught at the college-level and has at least one year of college music theory teaching experience.

Obliging participants to meet these conditions strengthens the data's reliability.¹⁷⁰ For anonymity, participants will be referenced in the order of their interview completion as Participants One through Six. Limited demographic information was collected relating to years of teaching experience and educational background relevant to their teaching expertise.

Instrumentation

For the six interviewees, the same nine semi-structured interview questions were used (see Appendix E) and conducted by the researcher in a private setting via Zoom video conferencing and coordination was made with the interviewees to ensure their confidentiality during interviews. The interview questions were guided by the problem statement, research questions, and findings from the literature review. Feedback regarding the interview questions was also secured from two external auditors to ensure unbiased questions that focused securely on the relevant topic. Creswell and Creswell state that "the procedure of having an independent investigator look over many aspects of the project (e.g. accuracy of transcription, the relationship

¹⁶⁹ Ilker Etikan, Sulaiman Abubakar Musa, and Rukayya Sunusi Alkassim, "Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling," *American journal of theoretical and applied statistics* 5, no. 1 (2016): 1-4.

¹⁷⁰ Rafat Rezapour Nasrabad, "Criteria of validity and reliability in qualitative research," *Journal of Qualitative Research in Health Sciences* 6, no. 4 (2018): 493-499.

between the research questions and the data, the level of data analysis) enhances the overall validity of a qualitative study.”¹⁷¹ Milagros Castillo-Montoya proposes an even more in-depth review of questions and recommends the author and auditors to examine “the [interview] protocol for structure, length, writing style, and comprehension.”¹⁷² He states that the questions should “promote a positive interaction, keep the flow of conversation going, and stimulate the subjects to talk about their experiences and feelings.”¹⁷³ Interview questions were also screened during the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval process and previewed by the researcher’s thesis Chair. Adjustments were made by the researcher when requested through the feedback garnered.

Procedures

Commencement of the study required prior approval from the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB), which was secured (see Appendix A). After securing IRB permission, the researcher began contacting potential participants via email to recruit them for the study (see Appendix B). Due to the convenience sampling, potential participants contacted were college instructors and university professors from the south-central United States. The recruitment email sent explained the purpose of the study, its requirements, and requirements for participation. The researcher then confirmed that respondents held the required credentials and teaching experience which included:

1. Each participant has at least a master’s degree in music.

¹⁷¹ John W. and J. David Creswell, *Research Design*, 201.

¹⁷² Milagros Castillo-Montoya, “Preparing for Interview Research: The Interview Protocol Refinement Framework,” *Qualitative Report* 21, no. 5 (2016): 826.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

2. Each participant has taught at the college-level and has at least one year of college music theory teaching experience.

Semi-structured private interviews were then scheduled with the confirmed participants. They were also emailed the consent form (see Appendix C) and interview questions (see Appendix E) in advance for their consideration. Consent forms were signed and returned digitally before completing the interviews, which were accomplished via Zoom video conferencing to allow for privacy, a natural setting, and ease of transcription. The consent form provided participants with an overview of the study's purpose, requirements, maintenance of confidentiality, and the level of risk associated with taking part in the study. The study contained essentially no risk, as interviewees were simply discussing their perspectives, experiences, and expertise regarding college music theory instruction. Furthermore, participants were made aware that they had the ability to recuse themselves from the study at any time without repercussions, should they wish.

During interviews, each participant was asked the same pre-formulated nine open-ended interview questions, and interview durations varied from fifteen up to fifty minutes depending on the gregariousness of the participants. The researcher maintained the ability to ask follow-up questions if needed for clarity and to also take notes on participants answers and their non-verbal behavior. This is consistent with Creswell and Creswell's recommendation that in qualitative studies, the researcher takes on the role of a "key instrument," meaning that while "they may use a protocol—an instrument for recording data—but the researchers are the ones who actually gather the information and interpret it. They do not tend to use or rely on questionnaires or instruments developed by other researchers."¹⁷⁴ As such, this researcher actively took notes in a field notebook, in addition to generating a recording transcript. The field notes were also

¹⁷⁴ John W. and J. David Creswell, *Research Design*, 181.

digitized along with the transcript in preparation for data analysis through codifying important recurring themes in the text. Furthermore, this researcher sent transcripts to the participants of their respective interviews for final review to ensure *member checking*. In this process, participants review the interview transcript to verify the accuracy of the summative data.¹⁷⁵ Any discrepancies pointed out by the interviewees were amended by the researcher to ensure more comprehensive accuracy. Doing so lent additional trustworthiness to the interview data.

Data Analysis

Regarding data preparation, the researcher transcribed each of the interviews, in addition to observation notes taken during the sessions. Data was also analyzed using NVivo 14, a qualitative software program that aids in isolating codes from the collected data. NVivo is a tool used by many universities and research institutions. The researcher also used a qualitative codebook for analysis, which emphasizes themes emerging from the transcript data with specific quotations incorporated that underscore and support the emergent theme. The researcher also followed an *inductive content analysis* (ICA), by which researchers examine commonly used words, phrases, and ideas in a dataset to identify any recurrent topics. Vears and Gillam describe ICA as a common methodology for “text-based data, either written transcripts of verbal interactions or documents created in written form.”¹⁷⁶ They proceed to explain that “in very basic terms, ICA essentially involves producing an overall summary of the content of different individual texts in a data set (for example, a set of interview transcripts or referral letters). The critical feature of ICA...is that the analysis is built up inductively, from a close reading of the

¹⁷⁵ Linda Birt, Suzanne Scott, Debbie Cavers, Christine Campbell, and Fiona Walter, “Member checking: a tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation?” *Qualitative Health Research* 26, no. 13 (2016): 1802-1811.

¹⁷⁶ D. F. Vears and L. Gillam, “Inductive content analysis: A guide for beginning qualitative researchers,” *Focus on Health Professional Education* 23, no. 1 (2022): 112.

texts rather than searching the text for a pre-determined list of content items.”¹⁷⁷ In this way it involves *iterative coding*. In this process, “the codes are identified by the researcher within the data itself, or as is often said “arise” (Bennett et al., 2019; Sousa, 2014) or “emerge” from the data (Lichtman, 2014; Morse, 1994).”¹⁷⁸ This methodology can work well for the field of music as evidenced in a study by William J. Wenglicki that focused on equitable access to music education in the high school setting.¹⁷⁹ Similarly, Gabriel Woods used ICA for his approach when gathering perceptions of high school principals on music education professional development opportunities.¹⁸⁰ For this author’s study, a case study design was employed to better understand college music theory teachers’ perceptions of how adequately the curriculum prepares music education majors to teach creativity in their future K-12 classrooms. The author conducted semi-structured interviews with six college and university educators, which were analyzed using ICA methodology. Through this data analysis process, the author was able to find four different themes that yielded answers to his research questions. For example, regarding professors’ viewpoints regarding the potential benefits of better integrating music composition in theory curricula, they recurrently believed that it generated new neural pathways, more application-based mastery of the content, gave students confidence to be creative, and enhanced their ear-training and improvisation skills.

For this study, the field notes data collected during the participant observations was also analyzed in triangulation against the interview transcripts to lend further credibility to the study.

¹⁷⁷ Vears and Gillam, “Inductive Content Analysis,” 112.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁷⁹ William J. Wenglicki, “Equitable Access to High School Music Education: A Qualitative Explanatory Single-Case Study of Principals’ Decision-Making Processes,” (PhD diss., University of Phoenix, 2020).

¹⁸⁰ Gabriel Woods, “Principal Perceptions on the Inclusion of Music Education and Professional Development Opportunities: A Qualitative Study,” (PhD diss., Liberty University, 2021), 54.

Triangulation is simply using multiple data collection methods to enhance the reliability of the conclusions drawn. Creswell and Creswell note that “if themes are established based on converging several sources of data or perspectives from participants, then this process can be claimed as adding to the validity of the study.”¹⁸¹ In Chapter Five, the accrued participant interview data is also triangulated with the literature review to assess possible consistency between interviewees’ perceptions and data from other experts in the field. Renz, Carrington, and Badger concur, stating “that the use of triangulation has the potential to increase the validity of the study, decrease researcher bias, and provide multiple perspectives of the phenomenon under study.”¹⁸² For the observations analyses, this researcher conducted a content analysis on field notes, searching for similarities between the participants and in relation with the semi-structured interviews.

Trustworthiness

Establishing a research project’s trustworthiness is paramount, as it is critical for establishing “whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account.”¹⁸³ The onus is on the researcher to convey additional steps taken verify the accuracy and credibility of their findings. Creswell and Creswell also note that trustworthiness is synonymous with *qualitative validity* and other similar terminology, stating that “terms abound in qualitative literature that address validity, such as *trustworthiness*, *authenticity*, and *credibility*.”¹⁸⁴ Several methods were employed to undergird this project’s

¹⁸¹ John W. and J. David Creswell, *Research Design*, 200.

¹⁸² Susan M. Renz, Jane M. Carrington, and Terry A. Badger, “Two strategies for qualitative content analysis: An intramethod approach to triangulation,” *Qualitative Health Research* 28, no. 5 (2018): 827.

¹⁸³ John W. and J. David Creswell, *Research Design*, 199.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 200.

qualitative validity. These include the aforementioned triangulation, but also member checking, use of vivid descriptions to convey findings, clarification and examination of researcher bias, allowing for balanced or opposing viewpoints, and use of an external auditor to review the project. These processes are also consistent with recommendations for reliable qualitative designs per the Creswells' *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*.¹⁸⁵

The member checking used by this researcher allowed participants to review transcripts of the interviews and notes to ensure accuracy of data collected. Furthermore, participants were presented with “parts of the polished or semi-polished product” including “major findings” and emergent themes.¹⁸⁶ Doing so gave interviewees a chance to comment on the findings and enhance the authenticity of the study as an additional counterbalance to any implicit researcher bias. The chapter that follows (Chapter Four: Presentation of Findings) also seeks to present a richly descriptive narrative in an effort to “transport readers to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences.”¹⁸⁷ Additionally, efforts were made to reflect on any bias the researcher may bring to the project through honest self-reflection. Excellent qualitative research “contains comments by the researchers about how their interpretation of the findings is shaped by their background, such as their gender, culture, history, and socioeconomic origin.”¹⁸⁸ The researcher also used *epoché* to set aside any preconceptions about the interviewed participants and the studied research topic. Epoché is refraining from any conclusion for or against something in order to obtain tranquility of mind as a launching point for phenomenological inquiry. This is

¹⁸⁵ John W. and J. David Creswell, *Research Design*, 200-201.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 200.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

supported by Dan Zahavi who further cites Amedeo Giorgio. Amedeo Giorgio “insisted that an adaptation of the phenomenological method to the human sciences essentially requires that the researcher ‘brackets or disengage from all past theories or knowledge about the phenomenon’ and ‘withholds existential assent of the phenomenon.’”¹⁸⁹ In this way, preconceived beliefs about music composition’s place in college theory curricula and any prior knowledge of the interviewed college educators’ context was temporarily suspended in order to approach the subject with freshly impartial eyes and an ataraxic mind. Finally, two external auditors impartial to the project served as a panel of experts to cross-examine the proposed interview questions against the project’s research questions and methodology. The Creswells recommend that “this auditor is not familiar with...the project and can provide an objective assessment of the project throughout the process of research or at the conclusion of the study.”¹⁹⁰ Taken collectively, these parameters are intended to produce a high level of qualitative validity for the study.

Ethical Procedures

Ethical procedures were also rigorously followed during the course of this study. The researcher completed requisite Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) modules regarding ethical considerations in research. Doing so ensured knowledge on the part of the researcher of maintaining a code of ethics throughout the study. Furthermore, the researcher applied and obtained permission from Liberty University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) as shown in Appendix A. IRB approval also required their independent review of the researcher’s recruitment email (Appendix B), consent forms (Appendix C), and interview questions (Appendix E) to ensure they were ethically worded and constructed. This is consistent with

¹⁸⁹ Dan Zahavi, “Applied phenomenology: why it is safe to ignore the epoché,” *Continental Philosophy Review* 54 no. 2 (June 2021): 260.

¹⁹⁰ John W. and J. David Creswell, *Research Design*, 201.

Creswell and Creswell's acknowledgement that "the IRB committee requires the researcher to assess the potential for risk to participants in a study, such as physical, psychological, social, economic, or legal harm."¹⁹¹ Each interview participant was required to first read and sign the consent form, which gave an overview of the study's purpose, what would be required of the participants, maintenance of privacy and confidentiality, and the minimal or absent risk involved in participating in the study. It was found that generally no risk was associated with the study, since participants were only discussing their perceptions and experiences regarding music theory curricula. Moreover, study participants were informed that they could opt to be removed from the project at any time and without any repercussions.

Regarding identity concealment, participants were made aware that they would not be referenced in the study through any identifying information. Instead, each participant is referred to numerically in order of participation (e.g. Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.). Interview data was stored on a password-protected laptop computer to which only the researcher has the password and stored in his locked office or locked personal residence. Consistent with the university's IRB guidance, all participant data and information will be permanently deleted after a period of five years. Member checking also served dual function as an ethical procedure, as it served to give the interviewees an opportunity to view their interview transcript to ensure the accuracy of their words and ideas as truthfully reporting their perspectives.

¹⁹¹ John W. and J. David Creswell, *Research Design*, 91.

Summary

This chapter comprehensively elucidated the qualitative methodology used for this study, by explaining its design, research questions, hypotheses, participants, instrumentation, procedures, how data was analyzed, establishment of qualitative validity, and assurance of ethical procedures. To that end, it was clarified that this study examined college teacher perceptions on how well music composition is currently integrated into music theory curriculum and how or whether it should be more meaningfully accomplished, which directly links to the proposed research questions. The participants complied with IRB requirements of consent and with consistent procedures and instrumentation regarding how the interviews, generated transcripts, and follow-up member checking would proceed. The data was codified and thematically sorted with several safeguards to enhance its trustworthiness including epoché, member checking, data triangulation, rich descriptions, and external audit support. The researcher also followed a historical study of music theory's integration of composition. The historical analysis was useful for understanding the qualitative data in the context of larger pedagogical trends. Ethical guidelines were meticulously followed throughout the study. The results of the codified and sorted data are the topic of Chapter Four immediately following.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

As presented in the Literature Review (Chapter Two), research upholds the value of composition and creativity being integrated across all music curricula. Historically, the two disciplines were very closely connected; in fact, it could be observed that music theory only exists because of music composition. Tracing the history and current state of music theory pedagogy shows weaknesses in how well students are being equipped in this respect. Educators are also not being exposed to the philosophy of Comprehensive Musicianship and little effort is made to incorporate its ideals of synthesis of subjects, use of creativity, and collaboration. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify perceptions of college educators regarding the efficacy of current music theory curriculum to train future K-12 teachers to incorporate creative composition in their classrooms. Interviews were conducted via Zoom video conferencing for the convenience of participating college faculty and to allow ease of transcript creation, following the receipt of consent forms from participants.

Results

Participants offered responses to nine semi-structured questions, which were then studied using text analysis to become immersed in the responses of the six participants. Using open coding of participants' recurring words and phrases allowed these concepts to be extracted and sorted so that overarching themes could emerge. Words and phrases were classified for the purpose of categorical aggregation which yielded categories based on the primary themes emergent from the interviews. Questions One and Two established the educational background of the participants, with the former querying, "What is your educational background in music and what do you consider your greatest areas of teaching expertise?" and the latter stating,

“describe your background teaching music theory in terms of levels taught, years of experience, and areas of strength.” Also, relevant was the first part of Question Four, which asked “What was your music theory experience like as a college student?” Interviewees’ responses were thorough and diverse, regarding areas of expertise, and are well-detailed in the description of participants. This is followed by five subthemes relating to the problem statement, three subthemes relating to Research Question One, three subthemes addressing Research Question Two, and one subtheme connecting to Research Question Three.

Description of Participants

This aided in discovering commonalities and differences for the participants. Six respondents were interviewed for this project at which point the saturation point began to suggest redundancy of thematic answers for the text coding. Due to the nature of the questions, participants needed a master’s degree in music and some college music theory teaching experience. For the study, two participants are currently teaching music theory in a university setting and four are currently teaching in a community college. Participants mean level of teaching experience was 18.83 years. Respondents included three females and three males and were all Caucasian. Three respondents had terminal degrees in music beyond the master’s level. Areas of specialization were also evenly split: three participants had master’s or doctoral level of specialization in theory or composition, while three had primary specialization in an instrumental or vocal performance area. Participants’ answers to interview questions one and two are worthy of further depth, as they will have implications later.

Educational Experiences and Areas of Expertise

Regarding participants’ educational backgrounds, significant detail was given which informs their varying perspectives. There were also shared commonalities. Here the

distinguishable emergent themes were (1) that all participants had a passion for music that began early in life; (2) that all had significant college or university teaching experience, including multiple other institutions, in addition to their current teaching context; (3) that those not specializing in Theory or Composition directly had a diminished amount of theory coursework at the graduate level relative to those who did specialize in it; and (4) that mostly everyone felt that composition was not integrated much into their freshman- and sophomore-level theory courses.

First, many interviewees began studying music and demonstrating a passion for it from a young age, a passion which only intensified as they became serious about pursuing music as a lifelong career. For example, Participant One stated:

All right, well, I started taking violin lessons when I was five, and I started piano when I was 10. Um, always was doing singing, as well, at church and stuff, so I took lessons up until I went to college. I went to college and got my Bachelor's, Master's, Performer Diploma, and Doctor of Musical Arts all in Violin between the years of 2004 and 2012. And my greatest areas of teaching expertise would be my applied instrument, violin, and viola which I picked up along the way, and then I'm also good at theory and history in music.

Participant Four's Question One response focused on her college background, but later in Question Four of her interview, she also relayed early-age music studies, stating:

I grew up between San Antonio and Laredo in a very small town, um, my parents put me in piano lessons when I was six, and I took piano lessons all through elementary school, junior high, and high school. I wasn't ever a great pianist, and I didn't have a great piano teacher, but you know, for better for worse, I played, and I could do that, and I went to college, and the only reason I didn't have to be in fundamentals was because I took the exam and barely passed it. But the reason I passed the exam is I went to band camp every summer and the summer before I started college, I was like oh they have this, you know, elective class you could take because you had to take two electives. So, I took, you know, horn choir, and then I decided to take this music theory class.

Participant Five had a similar experience:

Um, so regarding music, I was fortunate to start piano lessons, um, from a young age, and that continued on and...until a point where I became kind of more serious about music. I started studying from a local university professor, and then I earned my bachelor's degree in piano, um, and also in music composition and completed a master's degree, also in

music composition. Um, greatest areas of teaching expertise? Really, um, I've taught all the levels of freshman and sophomore music theory. Um, and have been doing that for something like 15 years now. Um, so that's definitely an area of strength and something that I most enjoy, but I've taught a wide host of other courses as well, um, including applied lessons and piano and composition and, um, also the class piano sequence here of Class Pianos One, Two, and Three.

Participant Two noted having band training in clarinet in middle and high school and experience singing in church from a young age. She proceeded to outline a wealth of teaching experience, stating it thusly:

Okay well I'll try to sum this up quickly, but my background is extensive. I've been teaching at the college level for 30 years now and have pretty much taught everything in music curriculum. Um, my area of expertise or my major is voice and choir. Um, but I fell into teaching Theory and uh and liked it. And uh, so I don't know, I think my expertise is kind of in a little bit of everything without sounding like I'm bragging because I've taught everything. I've taught theory for 30 years; I've taught music appreciation for 30 years; I've had choirs for 35-40 years. I taught voice, you know more than 30 years with voice. So, I just feel...I feel comfortable and solid in all of those areas.

Ultimately, all participants had extensive music training at the university-level and prolonged teaching experiences in a variety of contexts. Participant 6 stated: "My Educational Background is in Music Performance-Percussion. I have degrees from UT – Arlington and UL – Lafayette." Participant Four had taught different levels of theory at five other universities prior to her current tenure-track post. Participant 6 referenced numerous years of teaching experience at the middle and high school levels before his current collegiate post. Interviewees that directly specialized in Music Theory or Composition alluded to more extensive upper division and graduate-level coursework that specifically reinforced skills more relevant to composing and analyzing music. This included Participants Three, Four, and Five. For example, Participant Three commented:

Well, I went to a small school, and we had a lot of theory. We had to take five theories, and then we had Form and Analysis and Orchestration and Counterpoint. So, we had way more than the curriculum I teach now. Um, but I think at the time you could have degrees that were bigger than 120 hours or 124 hours, and so I think maybe in, um, maybe in

earlier times some of the music degrees had more stuff. And also, I came from a smaller school where I think it might have been easier to do some of that stuff. So, my experience is I had way more theory than what the current students do now here at this school where I teach now.

Participant Five only had a master's degree, but by specializing in composition also had dramatically more coursework directed to that area. He stated:

Yeah, I had a really great composition, uh, I'm sorry, music theory experience as a college student, I would say. Uh, so, I had four semesters of music theory; I had a, uh, Form and an...like an 18th century Form and Analysis class and a 20th century, uh, techniques type of class...Form and Analysis class that I enjoyed both of those very much, and those were very helpful. I had an Orchestration class. I had a 17th century Counterpoint and a semester of an 18th century Counterpoint class. So, two semesters of Counterpoint, two semesters of Form and Analysis, uh, Orchestration: all of this was at the undergraduate level. I took an honor's graduate-level Form and Analysis class my senior year of undergrad. Um, and then into grad school I had yet a different, um, Analytical Techniques, I think it was called, and in which, we also did, you know, different, uh, analyze structures and different compositions still and had to write about it. Um, and then I took...in grad school I had Theory Pedagogy. Um, so it was extensive...what I had to do. Um, but I think that's unique to Theory and Composition Majors, uh, for better or worse.

Participants Three and Four also had experience teaching upper-division and graduate-level theory and composition related courses, which gives further insight into similar classes they had at the master's and doctoral-level. For example, Participant Four outlined some of her many teaching experiences:

But, I did get to teach a lot of graduate classes, um, when I was at Illinois. So, I taught Schenkerian Analysis; I taught 20th Century Analysis; I taught Music Theory Pedagogy, lots of 18th Century Analysis, 19th Century Analysis, and you know, courses like that...of that sort of ilk. And also, the graduate, um, remedial graduate theory course. I did that a few times, and then following my five years at Illinois, I then taught as a lecturer for two years at the University of North Texas, and when I was at UNT I taught theory, um, what did I teach? Oh! I can't remember anymore it was a long time ago. (laughs) Um, I did teach graduate, uh, Music Theory Pedagogy, um, and in addition to that I taught, uh, Advanced Aural Skills, and I taught the musical Form and Analysis classes, which were interesting because they were upper division, but they were also dual enrollment courses for graduate students who didn't have a Form and Analysis course on their degree plan.

Some of those not majoring in composition had awareness of the differences in their training and its effect on their abilities. For example, Participant Two noted that:

I was one of those rare voice people who like actually got theory, and enjoyed it, and, um, even kind of toyed around with the idea, uh, in in grad school of maybe, uh, thinking about majoring in theory. My...one of my theory professors...was kind of pushing me in that direction, but I didn't, um, I don't think it probably would have been the right choice for me down the road, but uh, it was kind of interesting to think: what if? Um, if I had taken more theory, maybe I would be able to compose. I don't know; I don't know.

Participant 6's coursework was typical of a non-composition major but prepared him better than most, as his applied teacher and theory teachers were also composers. He stated: "I was fortunate to have an amazing music theory experience at the University of Texas at Arlington. I took Music Theory from Dr. George Chave (music composer), and he was outstanding! I felt prepared to start composing music after Theory, Ear Training, Orchestration, and Form & Analysis." For Participant 6, "the kicker...was that [his] main percussion teacher at UT-Arlington - Dr. Michael Varner, was also a composer. Arranging and Composing were part of Applied Percussion Lessons."

Also, consensus among participants was that composition was not included much in Music Theories One through Four in their own educational experience as students. Regarding her training, Participant Two observed: "the only class I did composition in which was Counterpoint and that's why it scared me. Because I had never, uh, been forced to compose. You know, I had learned how to harmonize a given melody, one that was given to me. I feel more comfortable doing that with...than coming up with the melody on my own." Those specializing in composition felt equipped by their studies to compose, but not necessarily as a result of their theory classes. Participant Three speaks to this instance, stating: "yes, I think, yeah, I was prepared to do that, but not because the curriculum was necessarily purposely built that way, but just because it was the nature of the environment I was in, so..." In these participants'

experiences, their composition lessons allowed them the opportunity to more creatively apply and practice the content being learned in theory, but their non-composition music peers were not able to synthesize the information in this same way. Participant 6 stands as the exception to this rule but due to the anomaly that his applied percussion professor directly integrated and required students to compose in their lessons.

Table 1. Participant Characteristics

Gender	Ethnicity	Education	Years Taught	Expertise	Teaching Environment
Female	White	DMA	12	Violin Performance	College
Female	White	MM, ABD	35	Voice Performance & Music Ed.	College
Male	White	DMA	19	Composition	University
Female	White	PhD	19	Music Theory	University
Male	White	MM	15	Composition	College
Male	White	MM	13	Percussion Performance	College

Source: Fieldwork 2023

Table One gives summation of general participant characteristics. As referenced above, areas of expertise could generally be divided by those specializing in Theory or Composition and those specializing in a different performance area. As shown in Table One, the terminal specializations given in order for Participants One through Six were Violin Performance, Vocal Performance, Composition, Music Theory, Composition, and Percussion Performance.

Subthemes Supporting Problem Statement

From their answers to the questions, categories of subthemes arose that aided in forming a response to research question one. It is shown again here for convenience:

Research Question 1: In what ways would a music theory curriculum focused more on collaborative music composition prepare students more comprehensively to train the next generation of music educators?

The first categorical theme to emerge was establishing support from other professional educators that the problem statement (see Chapter One) is justifiable. This proposed problem is

that undergraduate music degrees prepare students to perform and to understand how music is constructed but fails to actually empower students with the ability to compose or to teach others to compose. Interview questions three through six outline participants expertise and understanding on this issue. From these questions, the subthemes determined that (1) there was general agreement that there are major benefits for all music majors knowing how to compose before graduation, (2) there were inadequacies and limitations with textbooks and/or instructor-created theory curriculum for integrating composition, (3) professors generally felt that their own student experience in music theory was not sufficient for training them in composition, and (4) that K-12 and college curricula favor teaching performance over composition, in spite of creativity being a National Core Arts Standard. These five subthemes articulated by the interviewees make the case that there is a problem and reform is needed. Their perceptions on what that reform should be and how it might best be implemented are articulated in the subthemes supporting the research questions.

Consensus that All Music Majors Should Learn to Compose

The interviewees generally spoke positively about the benefits of composition and consensus was that it was crucial for all music majors to graduate knowing how to compose at least at a utilitarian level. Answers supporting this theme generally emerged from the final part of Questions Three and Four, which are: “Do you believe music majors should have a basic knowledge of how to compose when they graduate?” and “Are you comfortable composing music?”

All participants felt that music majors should have a functional level of compositional ability upon graduating, except for Participant 3, whose responses will be considered separately. Consistently given reasons on why all music majors should know how to compose were that

understanding the compositional process gives them the ability to apply music theory concepts and that it enables them to improvise and to quickly arrange or rearrange music as needed to suit their context. Participant 1 asserted that “it’s useful. It’s good for their brain and good for them to just understand how the process works.” Participant 2 gave personal examples of how she uses composition to create score reductions or reharmonize chords to fit a particular instrumentation.

Her full response is shown below:

Yes. If nothing else, uh, I tell them this all the time that I, that I use music theory in my own teaching, um, every day. Um, when I, every time I sit down at the piano to play for one of my voice students and my piano skills are adequate, but they’re not...nobody’s gonna hire me for anything, and I also have actual physical injuries to my left hand, and so there are some things where my left hand does not work the way I want and so I frequently on the fly, you know, instinctively know what to put in, what to leave out in the music to try to stay true to the composer’s original intention, but at a skill level that I can kind of at least kind of throw it down on the piano and get through it enough for them. In choir, uh, you need to be able to—I guess this isn’t so much my own composition but how to maybe arrange something or adapt something—um, my choir as you know is not always very large, but I want sometimes to do things with more extended harmonies and look for something that’s written for a six part or eight part choir and I don’t have enough voices. What can I do to, um, make that work with my group? How can I adapt it? What part can I leave out? What could be covered by the piano? What is the most important part of the chord, um, and those are things I just do instinctively now because of years of experience. But, if you don’t know how to look at the harmony, you don’t know how, um, to change something on the fly. You don’t know how to read a C clef or how to, uh, rewrite the C clef into a clef you’re comfortable reading, which is usually—not usually—which is what I do if that happens. Um, they need to be able to know how to do that, and I don’t know if they always get that.

Participant 4 gave similar real-life examples of band directors needing to compose original excerpts to seamlessly segue contest pieces. In her estimation this practice was fairly routine from anecdotes shared with her by other band directors. She noted that:

I mean, I have memories of my old high school band director where, you know you have your three pieces because this is Texas, and there’s always a beginning, a middle piece that’s slow, and then a fast piece at the end, and sometimes we would have our show, and our band director was like, ‘I just don’t like the way it ends; it’s not quite done,’ and so he would often, like, compose something at the end—like a series of chords or a progression or something to, like, sort of create a closer for us. And I mean that was fairly commonplace, and there were plenty of other, uh, band directors that I met over time who

would write like sort of segues in between the three pieces that were required for contest and that was fairly standard. So, I think knowing how to do that even as a band director is something you need to know, and I'm sure that's the case for choral directors and other directors as well.

She also underscored how this knowledge is critical for future jazz directors, stating that “if you're doing jazz, I mean, knowing how to, you know, play and improv and do all that requires composition skills, and so it's something that I'm passionate about.” She also spoke directly on how composition embedded in theory gives students the tools to use what they learn. From her own teaching practice, she gave the following example: “Or I'm teaching them how to write a period structure, and it's like, it has to have a little melody and it's got to end on a, you know, half cadence or something, and so I just play some little ditty...just a one-line melody with one hand and they're just like ‘how'd you do that?’ I'm like you... ‘you're learning how to do this too,’ you just haven't realized it yet.” In her estimation, a student that only sees examples of period structures without practicing writing them, does not emerge with the ability to do so. Participant 5 offered helpful thoughts regarding all majors knowing how to compose for their future ensemble directing practice. He stated that:

I think it's really critical, um, and especially if we include the word arranging in that, um, then I think even the majors that are not composition that don't imagine themselves as composers or needing to compose, really look back—from what I've heard also from other professionals—find themselves looking back and wishing to feel more equipped in that area. Um, from anyone directing almost any type of ensemble, uh, guitar ensemble, choir ensemble, string ensemble: they often—from what I've heard—find themselves needing to make their own arrangements. Uh, especially at the community college level, it's not a given that you'll have, uh, equal representation of instruments for your instrumentation. So, you might be directing a woodwind ensemble where all of a sudden you have, you know, one saxophone and two bassoons and oboe—you know, some non-standard grouping—and it's not uncommon to hear from colleagues that because there doesn't exist, you know, decent arrangements for this kind of odd group that they have...they find themselves needing to do the arranging themselves. Um, so, even the majors that aren't really aware of it, they need it more than they know. I think, yeah, I think it's absolutely critical.

Participant 6 offered perspectives consistent with the others and noted that in his teaching practice he used composition and arranging all the time to make original indoor drumline and percussion ensemble compositions. He reinforced that “including some basic elemental composing in music theory is essential for the modern-day musician!”

Most survey participants felt comfortable composing themselves, especially when considering it to mean at least at a functional level in their teaching practice. As noted, Participant 6 routinely “arrange[s] music for Marching Bands, Indoor Drumlines and compose[s] chamber percussion works.” Participants 3 and 5, who specialized in composition directly, answered most favorably. For example, Participant 5 answered thusly: “Absolutely, uh, absolutely comfortable with that. Um, I do arranging for different ensembles: for our Jazz Ensemble and for other student ensembles, um, and also just for myself when I have time as a creative endeavor. It’s something I enjoy very much.” Participant 3 simply answered: “You know, I mean, yeah, because I mean that’s what I am. I’m actually a composer who happens to teach theory.” Those specializing in other areas gave more modest answers. The violin specialist is capable of composing but prefers not to. The music theorist emphasized her ability to compose in the style of others, specifically to quickly create in-class examples, but self-effacingly denoted that “models and real composition are two different things.” The voice teacher displayed the most insecurity, answering “Absolutely not; absolutely not. Um, I’m very intimidated by it.” This is revealing of an undercurrent among non-composer participants that they only perceive it as true composition if it is extremely original and approved by other experts. For example, in her previously cited response, Participant 2 earlier referenced a great deal of skill and comfort with improvising to reduce vocal scores and with rescoring harmonies within an arrangement to fit the choir ensemble. As a follow-up to the “are you comfortable composing” question, she relays “I

had to write a two-part invention, you know, it was...it was just horrifying, and I did it. I wrote it, and it's technically correct and did all the modulations and the theory aspect of it. Is it inspired and very creative? Probably not, but it is technically correct." To this extent, it seems the participant is more capable than she views herself, which was also true for Participant 4.

Over the course of Participant 3's transcript, he became increasingly open to thoughts of how composition could be beneficial to music students that are not majoring in composition, but his initial answer, regarding all music majors learning to compose, was "Well, okay, I'm not really sure that I do completely agree with that. Um, I think it's okay to have an introduction maybe. Um, but I don't know that average music majors necessarily need to know how to compose—much the same way the average clarinet player doesn't need to know how to play the trumpet." He goes on to clarify his answer:

And so, uh, for me composition is as another step where you use the theory tools. Um, or maybe don't use the theory tools—know whether you are using the theory tools or not—and creating, but does the average music major need to have composition skills? I'm not so sure they do, except maybe in an introduction way to maybe get them used to being creative in some sort of way. I think the creative aspect and I don't know that that has to be done necessarily through composing. It can be done through improvisation. It can be done through all kinds of different means. So classical composition training, as I understand it, I don't know how necessary it is for everybody.

He appreciated the irony that as a composer he did not integrate much in his class, in contrast to his theorist colleague who does, stating "I have some colleagues who are theorists who teach theory, and that's what they do. They're theorists, and the funny thing is they actually do composition in their classes. They do little exercises and have them write little projects and stuff." Even so, in his interview, he goes on to later discuss two or three composition activities that he typically has his students do in theory class.

Taken compositely, participants mostly agreed that composition was beneficial to all music majors. Despite this belief, the next emergent subtheme from their answers reveals they

believe composition is mostly not being adequately included in either their own curricula or in the theory curricula as they experienced it as students. Finally, interviewees demonstrated comfort and proficiency composing themselves either directly through their affirmative answers or implicitly through references of their ability to do composition and arranging tasks for their ensemble and classroom settings. In this way, the non-composition specialists also seem to regularly need arranging, improvising, and composing skills in their professional practice.

Limitations of Theory Curricula for Integrating Composition

Most instructors were transparent that they perceived their own theory curriculum as not adequately training students in composition and with the major contributing factors being time limitations in combination with the amount of content being taught and the sometimes-remedial level of entering students. Parts of Questions Three and Four supported this subtheme, by asking “how well do you feel your current theory text or curriculum prepares students to compose or teach composition” and, in reference to their student experience “how well did it prepare you to teach composition or to compose in idioms that are most relevant to your context?” Referencing how well their content taught creativity, Participant 2 bluntly stated that “I don’t think it does; to be honest...there’s really no aspect of creativity in it at all. Even when we do Kostka and Payne book in Theory Two on how to write a melody it’s still with very, very strong rules and constraints.” Regarding students, Participant 1 noted “that a lot of [students] are just trying to get the basics of theory.” Participant 3 concurred that their theory curriculum does not really prepare students to compose or to teach composition but bearing in mind he does not set out to with his class. He stated: “Um, I don’t...I don’t think it really does, but I’m not really looking for books that do. Um, so I mean all books have usually have some activities or something that could

maybe be, um, reimagined as an activity, but um, I don't think it really uses too much, and I don't emphasize that much in my classes either. So, it's not a...it's, uh, not a big deal for me."

Even Participant 4, who does a solid amount of composition integration in her actual theory class agreed that textbooks are insufficient in this respect. Her self-assessment was:

I don't think that the theory textbook we use right now does that at all. I teach that, but my textbook that we have used that we use at this university doesn't teach that at all. Um, I will say that it does have an introduction to, uh, four-part writing by using counterpoint, and so I mean, it does teach the rules and guidelines for first and second species counterpoint. So, I guess you could learn to compose, um, at a very limited sort of ability, uh, just using those rules and guidelines, but outside of that, it doesn't really teach how to compose anything.

Participant 6 contrasted in this respect, stating "at STC, I teach the Fundamentals of Music. For that class, I have used Tonal Harmony – by Stefan Kostka, Dorothy Payne, and Byron Almén—for part of the course...All the basics for getting started down the road to composing are in most theory textbooks." Regarding his curricula, Participant 5 agreed, but lamented a desire to better integrate composition in the future, saying:

Really not a lot. Um, and I wish it did. It's something I'd like to expand in. Um you know, the main factors that keep me from doing it, I would say, are time. Um, there's such...there's so much content that we have to cover that feels kind of dictated toward us. Um, we need to be in alignment with our local universities when students do transfer, and so I know what they need to get through to feel like they've...there won't be any surprises for them when they transfer, and so, time is a real factor with that. Um, so, currently it feels already pretty smashed in to get them covering everything adequately that I know they'll need when they transfer but having said that I certainly see the value in it, um, and the little bits of it that we do I would like to incorporate more, um, of it in the future.

His frustration of not having sufficient time to do so is echoed from his peers. Time constraints were a significant factor for professors not including music composition in their theory curriculum and, as a broader theme, was interspersed throughout various other interview questions as an overarching idea common to all participants. For example, Participant 2

explained how tight a fifteen-week semester feels just to cover the basic materials of the theory class being taught. She noted that:

There's so much...so many fundamental things that they have to know that I can't, um, there's just no time within the 15-week parameter of the semester to maybe squeeze in some time for some creativity. Um, other than the really basic, um, how do you do this and even when, you know, I have them...when we learn harmonic progression, when they get to pick their own chords, they're like afraid to pick anything other than following the circle progression, of getting outside of the circle progression. Um and, making something that maybe sounds fresh or original. Um and I, and you know, I just you know, I don't know how I could find a way, um, to make that better for them because I do think it would be a good thing, but I don't know if there's time with our student, with our students, with our student population.

In her subsequent answers she also pulls in that there are distinct course learning outcomes required by the state of Texas that are an obstacle for fitting in additional creative class assignments. Participant 3, the composer who mostly prefers not to incorporate composition into his theory classes, added that there is a serious investment of class time to prepare students for composition-based assignments. Without doing so and tightly delineating the assignment's parameters, the students are overwhelmed and responses risk being chaotic and missing the intended formal or harmonic procedure of the assignment entirely. For his 12-tone assignment in Theory Four, he noted that "even doing that [he] feel[s] like [he] has to take a week of a unit just to explain how [students] begin...how to use the tools of notation, programs and things like that." Consist with others, Participant 6 observed that "the obstacles to compositional integration in Music Theory are that you would make early theory courses too difficult or move too quickly." Of the participants, Participant 4 currently implements composition across more of her curricula than others. Still, she stated: "even for me like, I don't have tons of time to do this for every single lesson or for every single topic that we do, which is why I usually reserve them for the end of the semester."

A closely related theme often interwoven with having enough time to implement creativity was the idea that students enter college or university with deficiencies in their theory knowledge that must be remediated before including composition in theory becomes a realistic possibility. Participant 6 believed that “finding a blend and balance is the key.” When discussing obstacles to composition integration, Participant 5 tied these two subthemes together, stating:

So, obstacles, you know, I've already kind of referenced I think time is a major obstacle. Student, um, the level of students as they come in is...can be an obstacle if they're remedial. You know, then they're already struggling to just understand how to read music, and so, trying to get them to the next level of how to put notes on a page is a whole other challenge.

Participant 1 concurred, simply saying that “it's just more like students would have to get used to doing [composition assignments], where some of them already have a hard enough time with just basic assignments.” For Participant 3, this particular obstacle is a major factor for his choice to minimize composition inclusion in his class curriculum. He offers an example that illustrates this point: “It's really hard with a freshman. Let's say she plays the flute, right? But maybe she's not very good at it yet. She's a freshman and we're asking her to potentially compose, and she doesn't have the skill set on an instrument yet?” Which regard to potentially teaching composition to students with no theory background he gives a different analogy: “It is tough because they don't have a tool set. It's like they open up the toolbox and they're looking in there and they see a pair of pliers and a screwdriver and that's all they got. They don't have a ratchet set yet. They don't have a hammer yet. They don't have any of this stuff yet.” Participant 2 cites a reason for supplementing her textbook material with her own examples, stating that:

I have a lot of worksheets and things I've just kind of come up with on my own where I felt like maybe, particularly with our students at our school coming in with sometimes next to no background in in music theory at all: they can't read, they can't count, they can't do any of these things, where I've come up with exercises that I...that sometimes are a little simpler. Um, breaking it down to an even lower level so that they can practice the skills they need.

Despite her successes, Participant 4 faces these familiar challenges also. Her account focuses on students' commitment to homework and work ethic for the amount of time it can take to compose:

I was like nothing I'm teaching in this class is hard. There's nothing that you cannot do. What kills all of you is the fact that you just don't do your homework, and if I had a dollar for every time I say, 'please for the love of all things holy, just do your homework,' I'd be a millionaire, and I wouldn't have to teach. But you know, and it was...it was a problem at other universities too where I taught, but here it's just like...

These subthemes were challenges universal to all professors whether they did include composition, wished to include it better, or did not include for these exact reasons.

Professors' Own Student Experiences in Music Theory

While this theme was summarized as professors largely perceiving that their own theory training was inadequate for preparing them as composers, this does not convey all the necessary nuances. Better articulated, the lower-division theory courses alone would not have been enough to make all professors comfortable with composition. The participants specializing in composition were very comfortable composing, but this was largely due to their seven or eight semesters at the undergraduate level of Applied Music Composition. Other participants were divided on whether they currently feel comfortable composing, but those that did feel equipped, cited owing it largely to upper division, graduate, and doctoral level courses in Form and Analysis, Counterpoint, Orchestration, Theory Pedagogy, and similar courses, rather than the music theory sequence. Of the non-composition specialists, Participant 6 was the exception in this regard, but he relayed an experience more akin to those of the composers. In his experience, he was able to synthesize learned theory content in his applied percussion lessons since his professor was having him also compose during their instructional time. Also, his theory professor was a composer who incorporated composition assignments into his theory courses.

Participant 3 offers the mindset for the composers regarding their experiences:

I'm not sure because my composition teachers were my theory teachers. So, in the morning, I saw them for theory, but I also saw them for my lessons, and so for me, it was the same person. And, I had in my undergrad/graduate years I had two different people, but they were...they were still my theory professors, and so for me: yes it did prepare me to teach that because it was the same guy teaching me all the stuff, and the classes were small because I went to a really small school, and so sometimes the theory classes were even more like a lesson because there might only be four or five of us in some of those. And so, yes, I think, yeah, I was prepared to do that, but not because the curriculum was necessarily purposely built that way, but just because it was the nature of the environment I was in.

Because composition majors often had their theory teach again for applied composition, they had an easier time synthesizing the information being learned in their lessons, but admittedly not because it was being practiced in the theory classroom. Later in the discussion, Participant 3 had this revelation:

And out of all those [teachers], very few of them put composition into the theory curriculum, and I almost wonder—this is kind of in hindsight—just kind of came upon me now that we've had this conversation, I almost wonder if that's why I am the way I am. Because I saw the composers that I took lessons with teaching theory, but not really incorporating what we did in our lessons into the theory curriculum.

Most interviewees seem to have had a similar experience that in turn informed their own ways of teaching theory. Participant 5 acknowledged a similar experience to Participant 3. While he personally felt that his college experience prepared him to compose, he stated the following regarding non-composition majors:

I think that's unique to Theory and Composition Majors, uh, for better or worse. So, um, you know from what I've heard from other from students or seen on degree plans more recently: not all students are getting that type of experience. Um, so, mine...my experience did prepare me to compose and to teach composition, uh, in my context and to try to integrate it better into my classes.

As alluded to previously, Participant 4 had the most favorable experience in college, in this respect, and it seemed to carry forward into her own teaching practice, but even so, she noted that "one of the things that I always thought was cool was when we would have a composition

project at the end of the semester—and not every professor did it.” In support of this theme, Participant 4 agreed with anecdotes from other participants that it varied widely on whether a teacher would incorporate composition but was usually the exception rather than standard practice. Part of Participant 2’s answer is referenced previously, but she felt similarly ill-equipped, stating: “but actually coming up with the idea, um, you know I would have to say sadly it did not prepare me.” Participant 1 noted having to do some small composition projects in her classes, depending on the semester and teacher she had. Even so, she detailed that “[she’s] much more comfortable with...performing someone else’s composition.” She laughed and added that “if they’re like, oh now you need to write a symphony...I’m like that wouldn’t even work.” As a whole, the group of participants found commonality in that theory courses from the first two years of study by themselves were not sufficient to comprehensively prepare them to compose or to teach others to do so.

K-12 Curricula Skewed in Favor of Performance

For this issue participants unanimously agreed that the K-12 music curriculum favors performance over creativity, especially in the middle and high school levels. Interview Question Five inquired “Do you feel that K-12 curriculum teaches both equally well,” and Question Six probed “Do you believe most K-12 music educators are comfortable teaching creativity?” Responses formed the basis for this subtheme. Several interviewees expressed uncertainty, since they are not directly teaching in that particular context and can only go off knowledge from their network of area contacts and from visiting high schools for recruitment purposes. Such was not the case for Participant 6 who did not quibble, citing his years of experience teaching at that level. He confirmed the favoritism given to performance, stating: “I taught middle school and high school music before I moved to the collegiate level, and from my numerous years there, I

saw the performing side emphasized much more than the creative side. The performing side of music was connected to competitions, and while this can serve as a great vehicle for a musical experience, it can sometimes serve only one side of the spectrum.” Participant 1 asserted that “they probably do a little bit more with performing than creating...especially guessing on how big they’re into the whole UIL and competitions and all that.” Participant 2 concurred: “Well, I, again um, I don’t know what, uh, K-12 music educators are doing, but if they’ve been taught the same way I’ve been taught, I would say the answer is probably they don’t feel comfortable teaching creativity.” Consistent with pressures imposed on college faculty, she acknowledged time constraints as an equal stress for K-12 educators, adding that “as far as actually creating music, um you know, I don’t, again, I don’t know if they have time.” She recognized that the arts as a discipline also tend to get shortchanged in favor of making students proficient in other subjects. Here are her thoughts:

The arts are not...given the, you know, the amount of time, particularly in elementary school, that...they should be considering all the studies show how what a huge impact...all aspects of the arts, visual, performing arts, um, do for children’s development, their self-esteem, their ability to be creative, their ability to express themselves. Yeah, so I would venture to guess that they probably are not comfortable teaching it.

To answer Question 5, Participant 3 bluntly commented “No, I don’t. I don’t think so.” His commentary on the state of K-12 was perhaps the most scathing, and in his justification, he asserted: “I don’t think the K-12 curriculum actually teaches music. I think it teaches button pushing to rhythms, and I think that’s why it’s so challenging to do what we do at the college level is because we’re dealing with a mixed bag of people who maybe can play an instrument really well, but they don’t know anything about music.” He later admits that this plight is not universal to all schools, stating:

You know, yeah, so I don't think the K-12 curriculum does. Now some schools have theory curriculum and that includes a composition component in high school. I mean I had high school theory, and we did composition in high school theory, and I had a wonderful experience before I even got to college. And so, some students have that experience, and I think in that regard in the school systems that are...that are able to, um, provide that service they probably are preparing them pretty close to what they need.

He later notes that "it's not the public-school teacher's fault" and that "it's just a systemic thing."

He expressed frustration and uncertainty on how it could be changed for the better. Participant 4 also succinctly and eloquently summarizes the challenges faced by middle- and high-school-level teachers in her response:

I think that in the state of Texas, uh, there's an emphasis on performance and not necessarily on the creative side. Um, we are always a...well our system is set up for performance and for contest. And so, teachers don't have the luxury of time to move away from the things they're working on for performance and for contests to work on other skills, which is also one of the reasons I think why students come to college unprepared in terms of like what they know in theory and aural skills and things like that. Because those are things that could very easily be taught in conjunction with the performance aspect of what we do, but there are...enough...there aren't enough hours in the day to do all of those things, and I think that a lot of teachers end up just spending all their time like working to get through to the next contest and working to do, you know, all of those things.

It is worth noting that her response also connects directly to subthemes of time constraints on teachers and students being underprepared when they reach the college level. She noted that jazz band might be a singular bright spot, as those students are afforded the opportunity to learn improvisation, which can then be a gateway to composition and applying theoretical principles. She says that "outside of that one niche little area, I don't think anyone else is studying composition or working on the creativity side nearly as much." Participant 5 echoed aforementioned sentiments:

My perspective would be limited to what I know and have heard, um, from others because I have not actually taught K-12 directly. Um, but I don't think so—especially here in Texas from what I know, you know, with the pressure toward UIL a lot of these students are being, uh, and band directors are being pressured to get the students to a high level on a very small, streamlined number of pieces so that students reflect really well at

contest on what they can do. Um, so, there's heavy pressure to perform well certainly. So, I think performance is stressed. Not only that, I think performance is stressed to an extent where sight-reading is not even stressed as much as college teachers would wish. Instead, students are kind of taught really well on a very few pieces, uh, at the exclusion sometimes of sight reading well.

Participant 6 cemented the solidarity of opinion in this regard, agreeing that creativity is lack in middle and high school levels.

Interview Question 6 gave participants an opportunity to express opinion on whether teachers' discomfort with including creativity was a credible causality for its poor execution in K-12 curriculum or not. In this case, answers varied more but definitive subthemes still emerged. Some interviewees focused on time pressures placed on K-12 teachers by the state, administration, and community to perform well above all else. An equal measure did note that teachers were likely ill-equipped in the areas of composition and creativity to effectively teach it to their own students. Those that favorably spoke about teachers being capable of teaching creativity offered mostly anecdotal evidence of elementary-level incorporation of improvisation, creativity, and simple composition. Participant 1 illustrates some of these ideas. She thought K-12 teachers were capable, but mostly lacked the time and support, stating:

I think so. I don't know if they're purposefully going about it, though. I don't know if they...if they view what they're doing as part of creativity, or if they're specifically doing exercises with the students for that or if they make them do little composition things. I think they would think that they're comfortable teaching creativity, but I don't know if they do, and I don't know actually if their administrators let them do much outside the standard curriculum, so that I'm not...I'm not quite sure about.

Participant 2 suspected that K-12 educators were poorly equipped, assuming their training was similar to hers. From her year of teaching elementary, she did report that:

I did teach K-12 actually one very long year of my life, um back in the 80s, back in the 80s, since a long time ago. Um and uh, I did try and add some aspect of improvisation with students. Um, we had Orff instruments in our/my classroom, and you know, I...we would be learning certain, um you know, they play a little, um, what's the word, like a drone underneath something. Or they would have a pentatonic scale, and then I would say

‘just play anything.’ Well, one part of the group played a drone to kind of just give the, um, the piece the sense of a harmonic foundation. Then, uh, have them improvise within the pentatonic scale a little bit, um, but again I met with these kids, I don’t know, two hours a week.

To this end she spoke favorably that elementary school has less performance pressure than higher grades, which naturally allows more space for organic musical discovery with students.

Participant 6 thought that:

This is a split decision. It is hard to put math to this; only my experience at a few different schools and participating in team teaching at varied levels might illuminate this. From what I saw and experienced with other teachers, teaching creativity was quite challenging for a few people. Some of this was student related, but there needed to be more training and understanding of the general approach to teaching creativity in music. The remedy for this was musical exploration with improv on the instrument regardless of the genre, style, or idiom.

His answer highlights that improvisation could be a good starting point for teachers developing comfort in the creative sphere and also acknowledged that K-12 teachers may need more training in this respect. In concord with Participant 6, Participant 3 answered that he thought it was “a mixed bag” and remembered how his high school choir director was also the theory teacher and had them do composition projects. He said, “it’s kind of one of those case-by-case basis and maybe how excited the teacher is about doing it.” As the participant who came in intentionally not including composition in his own theory curriculum, he made this astute observation to Question Six: “How much experience...if they ever did any themselves might be helpful. You know, we were talking about how I don’t really have them do much. I could see that being a problem when they go to be a teacher themselves, and if they have to do some theory, they maybe have seen theory taught a lot, but they haven’t really seen much composition.” In this way, he almost doubles back on himself to admit that K-12 teachers might not be successful without seeing composition modelled to them in their own college education. Participant 4 thought educators to be capable, but lacking time and opportunity to implement it well. Her

answer also cites elementary school as being a more creative opportunity and reminisced about her student teaching in the following example:

I think more so the elementary level. Um, when I did my student teaching, which I guess now was a million years ago, but when I did my student teaching, I was at a junior high/high school, but then I was also at an elementary school. And when I was at the elementary school level, I remember like we did a lot of composition with our students. It was like let's learn these intervals. So, we're like 'so-mi-so-so-mi-so-so-mi-la-so-mi, so-fa-mi-re-do.' You know, we do all the little hand signs, and we do our little, you know, different melodic snippets and things. And then it was like 'now you try writing a song with just these little notes.' You know, and they would have to like...we had like a staff written on the floor like in masking tape. You know, it was on carpet, and they had little squares that they would sit or circles, and they would sit on their circles, but the circles were the same size as a note head that could fit on this, you know, staff, and they'd have to go like up to the staff and stand in a place. And we would write songs, and then we'd sing their songs that we've made.

She was also the only participant to point out that class-size can be a major deterrent for including creativity, as classroom management can become an issue. She noticed that:

I think it also depends on how large your group is. Like in an elementary school classroom, you're going to have probably 30 students or less, maybe 35, but it's not going to be a huge class. But if you're dealing with like a 200-piece band or 100-student orchestra, you know, like or a choir with like tons and tons of voices, you have to make sure that you're maintaining order and all of those things too.

Participant 5 thought teachers were not prepared. His response also reinforced UIL pressures and the insufficient upper-division composition and theory curriculum for music education majors.

Here is his response:

I would also guess no—especially at the 8th through 12th level. Um, the local band directors here all came out of programs that are also pretty local. You know, for the most part, not exclusively. But we're kind of an area that's, you know, a little bit farther away from some of the big metropolitan hubs here in Texas, and so, you know, our students are trained locally at the neighboring university. And I know what type of training they're getting, um, and then, like I had just referenced, they're not getting a lot of composition in their work. So, these teachers are coming into the classroom and taking that experience—or lack thereof—into their own students. And also, like I said, the pressure to, um, be great, you know, sound good performance-wise and for marching season and for UIL and for concerts. Um, so I don't think they're emphasizing creativity. Are they comfortable with? It probably widely varies based on their interests and their background, but as a whole I would think that it's less than would be desirable.

Notice that taken compositely there is actually continuity among the answers that the farther students advance in K-12 education, the more time constraints and performance pressures erode the ability for directors to include composition.

College Curricula Skewed in Favor of Performance

Themes of curricula being skewed in favor of performance continued into discussions of college-level curricula and how college music degree plans are generally constructed. These subthemes emerged from the last part of Question 5: “What about college curriculum and why?” Participant 1 leads off with “unless you’re actually a declared composition major, you know, you’re in ensemble and you’re in lessons, and so you do spend more time performing than actually creating.” Participant 2 agreed that creativity is not being taught as it should be, again citing pressures to be in compliance with state learning outcomes. Participant 3 highlighted the difference in degree plans between composition majors and other music majors, which was a recurring subtheme across other participants’ answers. Here is his initial response to Question 5:

Well okay, so we’re just starting a composition degree, so I’ve tried to beef up the theory offerings in that degree because I’m looking at my experience, and I’m like, yeah...you gotta have if you’re gonna be a composer, you just simply have to have more classes and those things. And so does the average music major get enough theory and/or composition stuff? The answer is no. I don’t think so, and does a composition major get enough? Well, the answer is probably yes or more so than anybody else. You know, um, the average composition major probably has a few more classes such as counterpoint, orchestration, some contemporary techniques...things that are very common to the composers. Are they more prepared in the end in that regard from a theory sense? Yes, probably so.

In this response, theory is not the deciding factor on whether all majors will be prepared to compose, as it is assumed that theory is not incorporating any true composition training. It is the applied lessons and upper division courses counted on to help composition majors know how to integrate the theory they are learning. Other majors do not share this benefit. Participant 3

continues: “the average music major though, say like the trombone major, or the singer? No; I don’t think four semesters of lower level and then a form and analysis class is enough.”

Participant 4 noted that degree plans do not always serve students well but spoke favorably that this could be changing. Even so, she stated “I think that we still emphasize this sort of conservatory education of: you must do Theory One, Two, Three, Four; you must do Ear Training One, Two, Three, Four; you must do Form and Analysis; you must learn these things.”

In her own practice, Participant 4 is pushing forward to improve this aspect:

I’m making an effort, and I’m trying to change, you know, and I’m making them compose more too because it’s like ‘your voice matters and what you’re doing matters.’ And if I want you to be able to go out and feel like your voice can be heard and deserves to be heard because it’s trained, and you’re a specialist, you know, then you have to practice doing that here. So, I think it’s good to incorporate it more.

Participant 6 saw college curriculum as superior to K-12 curriculum in this respect, stating: “at the college level, students are studying music as professionals in training, so training in creativity and performing are much more balanced and blended.” Similar to his treatment by his own professors, he incorporates arranging responsibilities for his students into their percussion lesson and ensemble courses. Participant 5 had a similar answer to number 3. His lengthy answer contrasts degree plans of instrument or vocal performance majors and music education majors in contrast to composition majors and is worth recounting in full:

For this I think it would be, um, it would very much depend on what a student is majoring in, and furthermore, I think it’s worse than it used to be where now the state dictates or mandates, um, how many credit hours can be in a music degree. So, um, so there’s pressure on that end too. But I know for our students helping them transfer, you know, and articulation agreements we’ve had with other universities, I will see their degree plans for the junior and senior level, and I’ll see that especially for music education majors or music performance majors—that are not composition—that it’s very few courses at the junior/senior level that are helping students take the theory that they’ve learned to the next level and actually implement it effectively. Um, so for example, our neighbor partnering institution: they take one semester of Form and Analysis, and that’s about it. Uh, you know that a voice major, you know, might would have Vocal Pedagogy, and you know, uh, a diction in different languages and Opera Workshop, and they’d have

performance-based things, but the...they'd be pretty light on, um, theory. Same for really most other instruments and especially for students that then are going to have the education track component and student teaching and the education classes. There's not a lot of room in the degree to give them additional theory, and so they don't. Um, so they're pretty limited to just what they get in Theories One through Four and Form and Analysis. And because I know from other professors that it's pretty similar—that they also run into time—so they're not teaching composition in their theory classes. So, students aren't learning how to connect the dots on how to take the theory they understand and actually apply it to a more creative and open endeavor like composition. So, no I don't think so.

Simply summarizing participants' thoughts, the vast majority of music majors do an extensive amount of performance and the requisite amount of understanding how other people's music is constructed, but on the main do not take coursework requiring them to apply that knowledge into creative endeavors of their own.

Subthemes Related to Research Question One

The five subthemes related to the problem statement given in the previous section show deficiencies in theory curriculum without engaging in possible solutions. The subthemes for the three research questions that follow came about from interviewees having the opportunity to provide their narratives regarding how to improve theory pedagogy. Questions Seven and Eight queried how theory lessons could be constructed to more meaningfully integrate composition and what benefits doing so would yield for students. In this way, these questions directly sought solutions from the panel of experts regarding Research Question One. Emergent themes included: (1) students being more confident in composing, teaching creativity, and using composition-related technology; (2) the benefits of consistency with including composition in small increments that gradually increase in difficulty across the four semesters of theory and even into Form and Analysis courses; and (3) the value of composition integration related to teaching form and for combining multiple techniques learned in the semester. Question Nine was, “is there anything that you would like to add about the topic of including composition in

music theory curriculum?” This question also supported the development of codifying the recurring topics. These three questions also gave a great deal of insight and commentary on Research Questions Two and Three to be considered later in turn successively.

Building Confidence in Teaching Composition, Composing and Using Technology

Students being more confident to compose themselves and to teach their own students were commonly cited benefits resulting from superior composition integration in theory courses. This subtheme from participants’ answers was directly in alignment with the researcher’s Hypothesis One: A music theory curriculum focused more on collaborative music composition can prepare students more comprehensively to train the next generation of music educators in terms of creativity in personal pedagogy practice, effective use of technology, and mastery of music composition. Participant 5 thought the benefits of integration “could be huge...if the performers and the educators also had the tools and the craft to be creative and to teach composition or creativity and were equally strong.” Participant 2 agreed verbatim and commented that “the benefits are huge. You know...just to not have students feel that the creative process is intimidating.” She articulated that college students who are not intimidated by composition could fearlessly bring this craft into middle and high school classes more effectively for their own pedagogical practice. To his initial response, Participant 5 added that there is a misperception among education and performance students that somehow composition is too lofty to attain, where one must somehow already be a fully formed expert to be permitted to practice it. He imagined a world:

...where composition was not just, uh, this you know ivory tower thing that’s only accessible to those that spend their entire lives, you know, studying, um, theory or composition but is kind of brought down to a level where others can use it and understand it and be effective with arranging and composing. I think it would be hugely beneficial. And they would take that into their future context also, or their future classrooms, and help students, you know, help their students thrive and be creative.

While Participant 3 favored very limited inclusion of composition into his own theory curriculum, he did acquiesce that composition integration can provide dramatic benefits to improvisation, creativity, ear training, and even the ability to perform more imaginatively. His full response is shown below:

I think whenever people are being creative, you know, that is a benefit. It opens their mind to processes that maybe they don't normally use. I mean, we like to think they use them, right? We like to think that when they practice their instrument, and they're playing somebody's music, they are being creative in their concept of line. They're being creative in their concept of phrasing. We like to think, yeah, this is...you know, they're being creative, but *this* is the next step in that creative process to opening the mind to this idea of: what do you actually hear, and can you create that on the page? So, yeah. I think...I think one of the biggest benefits you get is ear training. Right? You...it helps your ear to try to write down things you think you're hearing. Um, it helps your ability to be spontaneous because ideally, you're probably at a piano or at an instrument trying to come up with ideas, and so it helps your ability to think quickly, be spontaneous, and hear better. And so, these are the core things that I think some...just even moderate composition training can help a person do.

His list of benefits would be desirable for any future band or choir directors' tool kit and give proof that the value of composition also transcends into performance and aural advantages. This manner of thinking resonated in Participant 6's answer also. He stated: "The benefits are vast! Students will start to look at music as more language-based, similar to expressive communication. The cool thing is that this will also help to produce professional musicians that are much more comfortable in musical conversation and storytelling!" In response to Question 9's concluding thoughts on composition integration, Participant 4 stated: "I think just, in general, more people should do it more often." She added: "and I think that trying to find more ways to incorporate composition is a good thing for our students, and I think it makes music real for them, and I think it makes what we're doing in our class a little more real." Finally, she noted that "real world applications are always good." She also pointed out that early exposure in theory classes to composition can help students discover aptitude and enjoyment for the craft to such an

extent that they even occasionally redirect their course of study or at least make decisions about continuing to practice it into their future education-based contexts. It can also encourage them to take Applied Music Composition as an elective, which enhances their future skills even further.

She stated:

Now that we've been doing these projects, and they do them every semester, I have a lot of students who didn't know they were composers say, 'I want to study composition.' And now that we actually have a composition degree here, so many more students have joined or decided to take composition lessons where they would have never done so otherwise because they'd never had the opportunity to compose. You know, so even if they're not doing a fantastic piece, or even if they feel like they have these major limitations because I only want them to write X, Y, or Z. You know because that's what the point of the project is. It's like you can take this, and you can build it, and you can do something else with it. And some of them end up going on and taking composition lessons, and then you know, have gone off and done their master's in composition. It's like, did I play a little part in that? I don't know, but, you know, it's kind of cool.

The summative subtheme based on feedback from participants was that any additional composition added helped students emerge stronger in the craft for themselves and as more holistically trained teachers for their future students.

Regarding technology, anecdotes from participants yielded a subtheme that early exposure to composition can spur student interest in improving on composition-related software and technology. It was also suggested that the inverse is true: that music technology can generate student interest in theory and composition. Several participants referenced the connection between composition and digital audio workstation (DAW) software or notation software. For example, Participant 4 has many students elect to do their theory-composition projects using software. She specified:

Like I always told my students, like, they write it in MuseScore because I was like you can do it in Finale or Sibelius or any of these things, but you have to send it to me as an XML file so I can open it up in whatever software. But it's like, I also said we'll listen to it in XML or on MIDI, you know, but if you don't like the way that sounds, you can also perform it yourself, or you can find a peer to do it for you.

For Participant 1, interest in DAW software-based composition can also work in reverse and lead students to a desire for more formal theoretical training. When students are not discouraged, technology and theory can complement each other in tandem very well. She relayed that:

I think more and more even people who have no background in it—even students who can barely read music—they come to me and they're like 'oh yeah, I like, you know, I write music and I dabble with stuff.' But maybe, you know, with pop music style they're doing more and more, you know, with their guitar and their synthesizer. Maybe they're writing their own music at home.

Participant 3 also reinforced this thought process, stating: “you can sometimes have students that'll come in and they're really good on a DAW. They can do some sequencing, and then she makes cinematic music, and they can do some pretty cool stuff, but that doesn't translate too well into common practice harmonic idioms that we're asking them to build a foundation from.” He expressed desire to see DAW-based skill be connected to and enhanced by matching theory knowledge, adding that “we want to foster that type of creativity, but we want it to be at least informed, and I think sometimes it's hard to be informed about it until you've had several classes of theory first.” Other participants did not explicitly reference technology, but it was implicit in their desire for theory assignments enhanced with composition that are directed toward development of a distinct skill set. Reexamine, for example, Participant 5's articulated belief that all music majors should know how to arrange music: “from anyone directing almost any type of ensemble, uh, guitar ensemble, choir ensemble, string ensemble: they often—from what I've heard—find themselves needing to make their own arrangements.” Dictating parts by hand is tedious and can be illegible for performers when poorly notated, so there is intended agency here that composition-based theory assignments simultaneously train students to functionally use music technology in preparation for their future contexts. Participant 6's answers did not directly address this, but in advance of the interview, he expressed desire to use the question prompts to

practice his audio production skills for generating a podcast-level quality recording. His preconceived interview answers afforded extra time, which he used to demonstrate the digital audio workstation technology that he practices with students. Participant 6 showed great proficiency in Final Cut Pro, Logic, and Pro Tools as a result of him learning from percussion professors who were also composers. For him, early college exposure to composition paved a road that culminated in his ability to seamlessly combine his music theory knowledge with his sound production mastery to create professional-level recordings of his own compositions.

Effective Composition Integration in Small Increments

This extracted subtheme and the next resulted from participants' answers on how composition might be effectively integrated for maximum benefit and to avoid possible obstacles. There was a high yield of responses that in theory curriculum, a best practice for composition integration would be to incorporate it in small increments that gradually ascend in difficulty over the scope of the four semesters of freshman- and sophomore-level music theory. It was also suggested in multiple accounts that compositions can function as excellent larger project assignments once or twice a semester because there is a significant amount class time required to prepare students for the work. All agreed that rigorous guidelines were needed to help students best focus their creative endeavors. Furthermore, it was consistently noted amongst participants that a little foundation in the ability to read music is essential before having them attempt composition assignments. To this point, Participant 1 observed:

So um, I think it's it'd be very natural and very normal to integrate, um, a little writing assignment once you get past the whole like F-A-C-E and like Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge or whatever. You know, once we get beyond just reading music. It's well...and I know, you know, when we do Theory Two, we have the whole part-writing and stuff. In a sense, that's being creative within certain boundaries.

Participant 1 also points out that, to a limited extent, part-writing is learning the rules to compose and implementing them on a small scale. Other participants touched on this, with some believing part-writing is not technically composing since it is tightly controlled and limited in its creative scope. For example, most Music Theory workbook part-writing assignments are written to have only two credible ‘correct’ answers at which students should arrive. These subthemes persist in

Participant 2’s answers, where she states:

I do try, um, when we’re learning like non-chord tones and different things like that to give students a very, very basic four-part thing with just like nothing in it and have them add non-chord tones, as a way to, you know, dress up the piece to make it more interesting, um and that type of thing. Uh and again, you know that would take up a whole day of class or a whole week right that I can’t sacrifice, but I would like to do more of that.

In this way, she views part-writing as a creative component of the class in concurrence with Participant 1. If part-writing is viewed as a preparatory activity for composing, most professors felt there was no culminating opportunity for students to remove the training-wheels and apply part-writing guidelines in actual original compositions or arrangements. Participant 2’s response above also underscores the persistent theme that, while beneficial, composition projects can require a significant investment of class time to prepare students for their assignments. She also speaks consistently with the emergent subtheme among her peers that composition serves students best when incorporated in manageably small assignments that can gradually advance in difficulty. She stated that:

I’d just like to be able to find a way to do it...if there was a way to like add little bits of [composition] into every aspect of theory along the way. Um, even when we’re learning fundamentals, um you know, learning about chords, you know, what would be a fun way to arpeggiate a chord...I mean, you know, as a way of just breaking it up. Um, I know whenever we start talking about inverting chords, you know, a lot of students that just really like blows their minds, ‘like oh my God.’ You know, I’m like well, ‘you listen to music like this all the time.’ If it were written in such a block, you know, how bland is that? And it’s not very interesting. Um, but um, it’s trying to find a way. Maybe just do it in such a sneaky way—not sneaky, but um, subtle way.

Participant 3 questioned whether part-writing work in Music Theory Two was legitimately composition, due to its lack of creative investment by the students. He offered this example: “Like you give them a figured bass line, and you say, ‘you need to put all the parts in.’ Well, some would say well that’s composing, but I don’t think it’s composing. I think it’s just following contrapuntal rules and harmonic rules to come up with an idiom that is standard from a long time ago.” Even so, in response to Interview Question 7 about how to best incorporate composition, he answered in accord with the other participants, stating:

Well, okay, so I think...I think the...probably the best way to do it is really small exercises. Especially at the beginning, and I think it would need to be exercises that are really tightly constructed so that the creative aspect of it is not an open free-for-all. Um, you would need to have specific, um, prompts to get the student to do what you want—as in you need to use this chord, this chord, and this chord. It needs to be this many measures long, and it needs to contain this, this, and this for example. So, I think it’s not so much...I don’t know that I’d even call that as much a composing, as much as, following through a system of guidelines almost. Um, but I guess it is actually composing, right? But, I think for it to work in a theory class—especially at the earlier levels—it has to really be bulletproof, uh, bulleted items I mean. Like, you need to do this, make sure you do this, have this in place, and make sure you do this, and I think that’s the only way you’re going to find success. Because if you just say, ‘hey, make it...make an eight-measure thing that is about what we’ve talked about,’ most students don’t even know how to start.

The topic appearing again in his answer was the need to do small, tersely organized exercises appropriate to the skill level and content being studied. In his and other participants’ estimation, without rigorous guidelines, students feel overwhelmed on how to proceed due to the innumerable paths that a composition could take. Well-articulated instructions also circumvent student frustrations that arise when they try to aurally incorporate musical materials that they are not ready to use. Students may not realize it on their own, but their theoretical ability to implement rhythms is not finely tuned enough to actually notate what they imagine. Participant 3 continued:

Before you can even do that, you almost...you almost have to have a lesson on just how do you take a melody and put rhythm to it? How do you diversify your rhythms? How do you tie across the bar line? How do you...there's so many things that we teach composers that in order to teach that in a theory class, you have to have a lot of time to add that in. So, yeah, it has to be really kind of narrow focused, I think.

He acknowledged that rhythm tends to be the most difficult aspect of students composing original materials, adding that:

And so, yes, I think you gotta have it stepwise: do this step, then this step, then this step. I think you really have to work on rhythmatizing rhythms...I...or melodies, I mean. I think if there's one thing that beginning people have terrible time with, like you were saying, it's the rhythm. So, you could even take like a cantus firmus, and say, okay, let's take this cantus firmus and let's, uh, put rhythm to it so it sounds like a melody that could be played on the oboe, or you know, something like that. I think that's probably the biggest hurdle is the rhythm challenge.

From the scope of his answers, he is also in agreement with Participant 1 that the more foundational theory knowledge the student has, the more expansive the composition can be, and that some initial reading skill is helpful before embarking on composition-based theory assignments. Also, relevant here is Participant 6's previously shared quote of taking care to avoid making "early theory courses too difficult or move too quickly." Because Participant 4 already directly implements composition into her coursework, she had definitive thoughts about pedagogical practices for doing so. Here is how she successfully includes composition in her classes:

I say like at the collegiate level, um, anytime we're talking about musical forms or cadences or phrases or things like that: like step one is always let's talk about what this is. Let's analyze some that are good models from you know the literature—whether that literature be you know Bach to Brahms, whether it's something written last week. We can find plenty of examples for them to examine, listen to, and analyze, and then from there it's like try part-writing some of these things, you know, in like a very specific model with very specific guidelines and rules and this and that. You know, and then it's like okay so, you've shown that you can do that. Now the next step is compose a piece that actually does this or compose a phrase that actually does this that sounds musical more so than the, you know, four-part harmonic thing you've just created over here. You know and have them figure out like what are the elements that are required to make that work and how that would sound.

Her teaching practice directly models a scaffolded increase in difficulty and a slow broadening of student independence. She also introduces every new concept by analyzing music that demonstrates the technique being learned. Only then does she follow up with application through composition projects. Participant 6 echoed this approach and advocated for:

Taking a modern-day song and breaking that down: Rhythm, Melody, Harmony, Form and Flow, might connect well for a compositional template. Focus on one musical idea at a time to build the song. There are no wrong answers for composing. You can start with melody or harmony first. Some of us write the form or a basic rhythm as the starting point. Essentially, we are deconstructing a written song to lead us into composing an original song.

For Participant 4, time is still a factor, and so composition work will often represent larger comprehensive projects in her classes. She observed: “even for me like, I don’t have tons of time to do this for every single lesson or for every single topic that we do, which is why I usually reserve them for the end of the semester.” Some participants expressed a possible obstacle being how to effectively grade work that affords students more creative leeway. Here Participant 4 offered useful advice:

As an aside, one of the things I’ve done that’s helped this is I make them do a template for their composition projects now where they have like basically...they’re creating a key for me. So, I go here’s your composition, but on page one, you have to tell me where your credential six-four is, and you have to tell me where your, you know, applied chord is, and you have to tell me where it is, you know, so that I can find it.

This also ensures that students do in fact understand the chord that they integrated, as well as requiring them to successfully explain where they placed it in their musical composition. In her closing comments, she drove home the viewpoint that compositions should be incrementally and persistently incorporated for best effect, and that ideally there should be logical continuity of this progression across the entire first two years of music theory coursework. In this respect, her students benefit from having her as their instructor for the entire course sequence; this way, they

are not disrupted by different teaching philosophies regarding composition, but instead maintain her steady flow of composition projects. She articulated it thusly:

I think just, in general, more people should do it more often. And I think one of the ways that it can start is by starting with at least one big project per semester, and it can always be like a final exam, or it can be like in lieu of an exam or in addition to an exam or something like that. But you know, give students the opportunity to start composing, and if you're part of a department where you're going through and making sure that the curriculum is graduated, and you move from like certain topics in Theory One to then Theory Two, Theory Three, Theory Four—why not set it up in such a way that the projects themselves grow, as well? You know, and so since I'm the only person on the Brownsville campus, and every kid who rolls through Brownsville is going to have me for all four semesters. You know, that's one of the things that I've done is set up my composition projects so each one builds. You know, and so that by the time they do get to Form and Analysis, they're like 'I can't believe I've composed this big huge thing.' And it's like, well I mean, it's not that much of a stretch when you think you already know how to create a phrase; you know how to create a sentence or period; you've turned that into a periods...you know, you've turned that into a, you know, binary or ternary form project—which can be large as well. You know and so you just keep expanding.

Participant 5 reached the same conclusions. He asserted that:

I absolutely think it could work. I think it would work best if it was done in small increments, um, where it could build up slowly over time. You know, where they do a little exercise in Theory One and a little bit in Theory Two, in Theory four...Three and Four, and then that kind of gradually, uh, crescendos in terms of difficulty of the types of compositional exercises they're doing.

He reminded that “even then, [he does] have to take time to kind of break it down and prepare them for it. So, it definitely does take some out of their class time to do it.” In this way, he also reinforced the theme that composition exercises in theory should be wisely and judiciously executed, and that students must be well-prepared for them to ensure the best chance of success with the creative parameters given.

Using Composition to Master Music Form Structures and Combine Techniques

Participants also suggested that composition in theory classes can be especially effective for teaching musical forms. Participant 4 had the most thorough and class-tested commentary for this subtheme:

One of the things that I do here is my students compose every single semester, um, if they're undergrads. So, my Theory One students compose four measure phrases, and I set them up to where they're actually writing period structures, but they don't know that yet because they don't learn that 'til Theory Two, but they end up writing them, and they sound like period structures if they do it right. And then they write period and sentence structures in Theory Two, and then in Theory Three, they write binary and ternary forms, and then in Theory Four, they sort of break away from that for a bit, and they write like a 12 tone, you know, piano trio or string quartet piece. And then they come back when they do Form and Analysis, and I give them the option of writing either a theme and variation form with like five variations and, uh, you know, original theme. Or they have to write, uh, a Sonata form or a Rondo or a Sonata Rondo or something like that, you know. So, they've got...they start small, and they just build every semester, and it grows so that when they finally get to Form and Analysis, they're like 'I can't believe that I'm not a composer and I just composed a, you know, 200 measure, you know, Sonata form,' and it's like 'yes, you did.' You know because it's all just building blocks on something you've learned previously.

Notice her logical, steady advancement from the smallest building blocks of music toward complex and lengthy forms, such as Sonata-allegro form. Participant 4 accomplishes this incremental advancement over a five-semester window of what is conventionally a two-and-a-half-year span. The students are not overwhelmed, as they are able to start with straightforward four-measure phrases. Participant 4 also uses these assignments to have students demonstrate knowledge about multiple formal and harmonic techniques learned over the course of the semester. Combining concepts into a single project avoids the potential impracticality of spending too much class time on incorporating composition assignments for every technique individually. Her example below illustrates her pedagogical procedure:

So, you know, like to give an example of what I do with my Theory Two students: we get as far as talking about secondary dominants or applied chords. So, it's like you're going to write your sentence, and you're going to write a period and somewhere over the course of these two pieces that you're composing one must be major; one must be minor; one must be in simple meter; one must be in compound meter; one has to have a credential six-four in it; one has to have a passing or pedal six-four; one of them has to have a, you know, modulation; one of them has to have, you know, a six. You know, there's all these different like little elements that they're required to have, and so we talk about that, and they've been adding these things in their little four-part things that they've done all semester long, but now it's like—can you put this in an actual real piece of music?

Codifying other participants' answers revealed similar phrases reinforcing this theme. Participant 1 touched on form and on combining multiple music theory concepts into a single composition assignment, when she observed:

I don't think it'd be hard at all to make little assignments where they have to write something. Um, especially once they get to the level where they're talking about form. It actually is very normal to integrate a little composition assignment on form. You know, even something like, a round, you know, write a melody that works with itself. Um or um, yeah, fugues, uh, 12-tone is fun because it doesn't have to sound good. So, it can be anything, or you could do a 12-tone in the form of a waltz if you wanted to—like some sort of combining stuff.

Participant 2 referenced combining harmonic progression with the formal elements of periods and sentences. She expressed the desire to include more composition in her theory teaching practice in order to give students the opportunity to move beyond the formulaic textbook examples so as to “make [their] music not sound so predictable.” Participant 3's answers were the least congruent, as he mostly chooses not to integrate composition into his coursework. In this instance, his answers serve as a counterbalance to the other participants and show the types of challenges encountered when incorporating composition into a theory class. He stated: “obviously it's valuable to learn composition. I mean, I'm pro-composer; I'm pro-composition, right? I guess I'm just not pro-teaching composition in theory class.” One reason offered for his reticence in this interview segment was that, because of the differing nature of composition versus performance or education degrees, there were radical differences in students' perceptions of composition assignments embedded in music theory curriculum. Here is his anecdote:

Yeah, and you know, uh, a kind of my own personal experience the last several years: I would have composers come to their lesson with me, and they say, ‘oh do you want to see the thing I did for form and analysis class? She's making us compose a blah-blah-blah.’ Or whatever... They'd show it to me, and usually pretty good actually—the projects were. But it was really too easy for them almost. It was almost like because they'd already had several semesters, or even years, of composition lessons, it almost seemed like a task that wasn't even really needed for them, and then other students who had never done it found it extremely hard.

In this example, he finds stark contrast between the composer doing composition projects in theory class and the general music major doing so. He followed this statement with uncertainty on his choices though. Immediately following, he said “some of [the non-composition students] found it really easy too. You know. And so, I don’t know. I’m...I just I think there’s value in it. I just I don’t do it myself, and I don’t know. Maybe I, maybe I should try.” Participant 5 is straightforward in his belief that composition in theory is extremely beneficial for students. In his interview, formal structures in music were connected to the thought of music gradually increasing in difficulty over the sequence and with students slowly working towards sonata-allegro with larger, more complex forms. He also believed in combining techniques for assignments and for keeping composition assignments relevant to the materials being studied. He gave this example from his teaching practice:

In my class, in Theory Four at least, they do some composition. I have them do some non-traditional scale exercises where they write simple melodies that put to use, um, like a Bartok scale or like a hexatonic scale or an octatonic scale, um, or one of the modes of the pentatonic scale. So, they’ll do some work of having to think in these different scales that they’re introduced to, or a whole tone scale. They’ll do an exercise like that. They’ll do a 12-tone row composition.

By combining 20th-century melodic techniques into a single composition assignment, Participant 5 said his students more efficiently and comprehensively demonstrate their theory knowledge. As referenced previously, Participant 6 also advises teaching multiple techniques in a single assignment through rhythm, melody, harmony, and form using a compositional template. His perspective rounds out the collected emergent topics related to Research Question One that students would be better equipped to compose and teach the craft, especially related to form and the skill of implementing multiple harmonic and melodic techniques in a single composition.

Subthemes Related to Research Question Two

Thematic coding also generated mutually shared phrases correlating to Research Question Two, shown again below for convenience.

Research Question Two: In what ways can the philosophy behind Comprehensive Musicianship be implemented to the benefit of current community college music theory practices?

As outlined in Chapter One, the philosophy behind Comprehensive Musicianship (CM) adheres to the belief that music sub-disciplines should feel less isolated and more interwoven in their connectivity and synthesis of knowledge between theoretical and practical application. Other chief tenets of CM are that music examples should be stylistically diverse and that students should gradually develop self-sufficiency in their problem-solving. As such, here are the major subthemes rising from participants' answers: (1) students develop a truer mastery of theory content by being able connect it to other things being learned; (2) stylistically diverse examples make content more relevant to students and ensure they are well-prepared musicians; and (3) there are great mental health benefits for theory students and, if they are music education majors, their future K-12 students when students are provided with a creative outlet and empowered with their own compositional voice.

Synthesis of Knowledge Across Music Subjects

Regarding the benefits of composition, the inductive content analysis revealed synthesis of knowledge across musical subjects as a recurring topic. Participant 1 stated:

I think it would maybe also make it more, um, like concrete rather than this abstract thing of like 'okay in some pieces of music there are non-chord tones.' It's like, 'no, here in this piece of music I just wrote it; I made some non-chord tones.' So, I think it might help solidify some of the stuff we're trying to teach them if they're actually doing it hands-on in an actual piece of music.

This is congruent with the philosophy behind CM, which will be later explored in Chapter Five. Sentiment among participants was that without composition integration, students had difficulty applying their theory knowledge to other environments. Because of this some students even struggled to understand how the content was useful for future application in their specific context. Participant 2 observed how composition and improvisation are intertwined and that enhanced composition integration could yield benefits in performance practice for applied lessons. Here is her example: “And if they, if they’re doing Baroque music and they want to do it stylistically...particularly in voice you have a Da Capo Aria, you need to...you should if you want to follow performance practice do ornamentation on the return of A. And how do you come up with ornaments?” In her estimation, theory work designed to assist composing in a certain style also aids preparation for a student to then improvise in the same style or to write out the ornamentation they will use. Participant 3 also spoke of the value of improvisation as a skill that helps students synthesize what they are learning. He does this class activity:

Sometimes, I’ll have students do improvisational things. A lot of times I’ll do this in ear training—so, for example, like a parallel period or a contrasting period. And, I have one student sing the first phrase, end on a half cadence...have the second student make up a phrase to go with the first phrase. So, they’re trying to, um, improvisation with each other, but then it comes out sounding like a parallel period or a contrasting period or something like that. So, I might have students do things like that, and then also you know of course there’s always activities where it, I guess, it might be called composing.

Participant 3 also imagined that the true aim of theory is creating more comprehensively trained musicians as performers, educators, and composers. He specified: “I think...just carrying over theory concepts that you and I teach them, right? And you’re like, well, I mean it’s because for so many of them, they think these are just classes I got to get through, and they don’t realize that’s supposed to help you play your instrument better.” Participant 3 also noted that his own training in composition affords him a different perspective to other sub-disciplines, stating:

I think it gives me a different perspective teaching theory though. I think I teach theory differently...because I'm coming at it from a composition perspective, and when I look at harmonic idioms and I look at different things I'm like this is what the composers tend to do, and this is how they tend to do it, and this is why they tend to do it. Um, so I think that training has given me a different insight into how to teach theory.

By extension, it could yield similar benefits for students. Participant 4 noted that composition and creativity “are things that could very easily be taught in conjunction with the performance aspect of what we do.” The value of helping students apply knowledge creatively across the entire gamut of learned musicianship was a cornerstone for why she integrates it in her theory classes. She states:

It's one of the things I emphasize to my own students a lot. It was like, the whole reason you're learning this theory is so that you're learning paradigms, and you're understanding like conceptually what's going on in the background of the piece so that you don't just open up an Etude book and go note-note-note-note-note-note-note-note-note-note. You're like, oh, arpeggio in the key of F, or you're doing this or here's a scale, you know, like you can break it down into things that you're familiar with because you understand the language and the syntax, which is all theory is. You know, like those things, and then it starts to make more sense, and I was like had I known that as a high school student, it probably would have made me a much more efficient practicer/performer/player—all of those things. But a lot of times, I think teachers don't feel like they have that luxury to spend time working on that stuff.

Participant 6 also recognized these positive outcomes in an excerpt from a previously shared quote, that “students will start to look at music as more language-based similar to expressive communication” and that “composition in music theory is an important topic of discussion in music literacy.” Participant 5 offered a response like Participant 1: “Feedback I get though is that students tend to enjoy it, and I think it helps them more concretely cement, uh, in their mind what some of these processes really mean. Um, so I think it takes...helps them take what they're learning in theory a step further, when we do make time to...to do this.” In these ways, all professors observed value in having students apply theory knowledge through composition with

the hope that the creative thinking required would positively impact aural skills, applied interpretation, and ensemble performance.

Stylistically Diverse Musical Examples and Compositional Projects

To recapitulate, Comprehensive Musicianship believed in breadth and depth of knowledge and encouraged accomplishing it through the use of musically diverse source material. CM sought to reset theory back to its supporting role for contemporary composition practice, evidenced in their belief that “the vantage point for such theoretical and historical studies should be shifted from the 19th century to the present.”¹⁹² Similar philosophies regarding musical examples emerged from participants as a subtheme. For instance, Participant 6 expressed: “I also create custom Rhythm Studies, Melody Studies & Harmony Studies from modern-day music within the last few years. Students seem to enjoy a blended classical and modern approach to music fundamentals.” Regarding literature for analysis, Participant 2 shared:

I’m always open for suggestion. I’m...I try not to be the kind of person to think that my way is the only way. Um, I’m always open to try something new, and um, that’s how we grow as people and that’s how hopefully, you know, the teaching doesn’t become stagnant. Um, and that I’m always discovering new things, uh you know, but teaching voice even within myself as a singer on, um, things that still trying to deal with issues with my own voice, and um, challenging myself with different types of literature to try and always...still trying to become better at what I do.

Participant 1 noted the value for students composing or analyzing contemporary idioms in addition to masterworks, citing the connection to student interest and engagement, stating: “with pop music style they’re doing more and more, you know, with their guitar and their synthesizer. Maybe they’re writing their own music at home.” Participant 3 underscored the value of students practicing composing rhythms that were appropriate to a wide variety of stylistic contexts,

¹⁹² R. Bernard Fitzgerald, “CMP Seminar on Comprehensive Musicianship.” *Music Educators Journal* 52, no. 1 (September-October 1965): 56.

stating: “And if you’re trying to have students write music that’s idiomatically correct— like in the Classical style, or in the Baroque style, or you know whatever—then it’s even more important that you do that to emphasize the rhythm tendencies of say what Mozart might do.” He also recommended using contemporary styles, noting that:

Maybe that should be the first step. Um, here’s a little, whatever, arrange it for trio of some sort. Um, maybe that. And, then there we’re just dealing with moving registers potentially. You know, um, they still have to do a harmonic analysis, and they still have to think through things that way. Maybe that’s the first step is trying to arrange, and then make the leap into creating in the style of. I’m not sure, but there might be a way to do it.

Participant 4 had the most relevant commentary and examples on this subject. She believed that colleges can and should integrate a much broader diversity of musical examples. Here is her logic:

I think that there’s a big push...first examine what we teach and why we teach and how we teach it. And I think that trying to add more pieces by women and marginalized composers and some of those things and looking at the different styles of music and composition and, you know, what’s seen as good music, you know, because that’s changing. I mean because when we were in school I mean, I’m assuming it’s the same for you as it was for me, but when I was in school, you studied the classic Bach to Brahms composers, and you only looked at, you know, Western-white-male-dead composers from that small time period, and anything else was seen as exotic or peripheral to what we’re doing. And I think that just by bringing in like Latin American music and bringing in, you know, mariachi music and bringing in music from other places and playing it for my students and going ‘have you heard this; what do you think of it; what do you know, like, could you write something like this; is that worth doing?’ You know, and having those discussions I think is good, and it’s happening at the college level, but it’s happening slowly.

She had frustration for why it is evolving slowly in her opinion:

Part of it is because there’s a lot of people who are already in colleges and universities who are full professors and have been doing this for a very long time and change is hard and change is difficult. And there’s a lot of new people coming in who’ve just been in, you know, big doctoral programs that are starting to explore these issues and are talking about these things, and they’re coming in going like ‘let’s change, let’s change,’ but the old people who’ve been there teaching five...five loads per year are like ‘I’m tired; I don’t want to do this anymore.’

She shared specific class activities substantiated by their success in her own pedagogical practice:

For me, given that I'm from South Texas, whenever I teach like I and V—I tell this story to lots of people because I think it's kind of funny—but when I teach I and V, I always bring in like folk tunes, and I was like 'okay so we're gonna learn how to harmonize these folk tunes with I and V.' And so, I bring in all these like folk tunes, but they don't know half of them. You know, all the folk songs I learned when I was in elementary school we really shouldn't sing anymore because a lot of them are terrible, you know. We've kind of decided not to do those, and so then I bring them in more obscure ones that I know, but they don't know the obscure ones. So, I'm like, okay fine, so I bring in these mariachi tunes because most of our mariachi tunes are, you know, you can harmonize them with I and V...So, we're working on them, and we're doing "Cielito Lindo," and we're doing, um, you know, "De Colores." And we learned how to put 'I's and 'V's under all of it. And they're like, at the end, they're like 'can we sing,' and I'm like 'yes, we can sing,' and they're like 'do we have to do it in solfege?' 'No, you don't have to do it in solfege.' So, then it turns into this giant fight about who knows Spanish and who doesn't because of course you know South Texas, obviously most of our students know Spanish, but then there's a large percentage of our students who don't speak Spanish.

From her account, this classroom activity accomplishes several things that lecture-based teaching alone does not. Participant 4's use of traditional Spanish-language folk songs values and legitimizes students' own culture, builds rapport between professor and students for shared musical experience, and makes students more receptive to other musical examples they study together. Participant 4 states that:

They know more about me in that one lecture than they knew before. Even though I could just open my mouth and tell them. They don't...it doesn't really connect with them until they see like the music that I listen to is the music she listens to, and it's okay and worthy of study in a collegiate classroom. And we can talk about the, you know, like there's a whole bunch to unpack there, and I think it's just interesting how it all sort of plays out.

She offers this final statement, summing up how composition helps students transfer their theory knowledge to other classes and encourages students' interest in contemporary idioms:

I think that trying to find more ways to incorporate composition is a good thing for our students, and I think it makes music real for them, and I think it makes what we're doing

in our class a little more real. Because I think they just come to our class...my class is always at eight or nine a.m. You know, and they're like it's this thing I have to do like eating broccoli. I don't like; it...it's just this thing, you know, but it's like if I can turn it into real music or make it seem relevant to what they're doing, then it becomes that much more interesting.

Diversity of examples makes students more well-rounded and also helps them identify their own musical experience as being an intrinsically valuable starting point from which they can securely begin their musical exploration.

Composition for Student Mental Health and Empowering Students with a Voice

The subtheme of composition improving mental health is not as widespread across participants' answers but remains a dynamic thought consistent with the ideology of CM and worthy of inclusion. Some participants spoke about the positive power of all students believing they have a compositional voice and, considering the pressures students face, the mental benefits of such a creative outlet. Participant 4 stated:

I'm making an effort, and... I'm making them compose more too because it's like 'your voice matters and what you're doing matters.' And if I want you to be able to go out and feel like your voice can be heard and deserves to be heard because it's trained, and you're a specialist, you know, then you have to practice doing that here.

Participant 5's perceptions most cogently present this theme:

And they would take [composition] into their future context also, or their future classrooms, and help students, you know, help their students thrive and be creative. Um, you know, there's a lot that is beneficial that we know in terms of, uh, neural pathways and different ways of thinking...critical thinking, problem solving with composing, and you know, also just... there's a lot of stress and anxiety that current K-12 students feel on the back...on the back side of the pandemic. Um, you know, the mental health issues are greater than ever I think for...for kids and for young people and for students. And so, creative outlets also we know are hugely beneficial to that as well. You know, to have a creative outlet for students would be wonderful I think for their mental health and for the pride that they can have then, you know, in themselves of creating something that is theirs. I think would be really nice, um, and couldn't be understated.

He follows up that a creative outlet "would make them more engaged in [his] course and, um, maybe even help retention...make them feel like they had a voice in the process of what they're

learning.” Participant 2 concurred, offering: “I think the benefits are huge. Um, just gaining confidence in themselves and being able to express themselves: I think that’s really what it’s all about.” She offered that her anxiety about composing might be shared by students. Furthermore, Participant 2 believed that a teacher capable of empathetically including composition might assuage those fears and help students find their own musical voice. She stated:

Just to not have students feel that the creative process is intimidating, and I think a lot of that for me with my feelings of intimidation about composition, uh, come from a lack of not doing it and then also that need I have for perfection and that need for, um, making, you know, making ourselves vulnerable and putting a part of ourself out there that’s unique to us and then having your teacher critique it.

Participant 6’s analogy to the syntax of language led to his conclusion that composition “produce[s] professional musicians that are much more comfortable in musical conversation and storytelling!” He reinforced that the goal of a music degree is not to create automatous performances that technically deliver all the right notes. The real aim of music education is to equip players able to artistically interpret music and to create or improvise their own music when necessary. In most participants’ estimation, creativity provides these advantages and promotes quality mental health. Themes related to Research Question Two showed strong feelings from the participants that theory classes should better prepare students to apply the content being learned to other music-making activities. Participants also felt strongly the a greater diversity of music examples should be used and that practicing composition is favorable to mental health issues.

Subtheme Related to Research Question Three

Missing from the discussion to this point was how the CM philosophy of collaboration might positively affect theory curriculum. A subtheme emerged relating to Research Question Three, which stated: In what ways can the methodology of the Young Composers Project be

emulated by integrating music theory compositions into applied and ensemble curriculum? While hypotheses are not always needed for qualitative research questions, the participants' answers directly connected to the ideas contained in Hypothesis Three, which states: The methodology of the Young Composers Project can be emulated by integrating music theory compositions into applied and ensemble curriculum by facilitating music theory student-composer, ensemble, and applied student collaboration. Participants agreed that (1) students profit from having to collaborate with peers early in their degree sequence in theory classes, and (2) the dialogue of including composition in theory courses should have a parallel conversation about integrating composition in other music classes. The interconnectivity of these two ideas from respondents' answers made it convenient to combine them in the following section.

Collaboration Generated from Composition Integration Across Aligned Classes

Participant 6 bluntly contended: "Composition in music theory is an important topic of discussion in music literacy. That being said, for this to work and be practical, the applied music program needs to be a parallel conversation so that this will stand the test of time and work at all levels: College and University." Without bringing theory compositions to life, the implication is that students are not able to evaluate their work for future improvement. Students must be given opportunity to hear what worked well or not in their compositions so that they understand more clearly how to improve. Linking the projects with applied or ensemble courses solves this issue by providing the realization of compositions. Participant 5 stated that he "wouldn't mind overhauling...a good part of [his] Theory Three and Four curriculum to better integrate composition...and get students to collaborate." Participant 4 again gave examples from both her student experience and her teaching context. As a student, she observed that:

When I actually had to compose my own piece then it was like 'oh I have to listen to this and they're gonna play it in front of my peers, and I don't want to be embarrassed, and

you know. And sometimes you would go talk to your peers, and say like ‘can you do this; is it possible?’ And it’s forcing you out of your comfort zone and also making opportunities for you to talk to people about ‘hey, what’s the instrumentation’ because like in Theory Three or Four like I haven’t taken instrumentation, or you know, orchestration yet because that was a junior-level course or a senior-level course. So, I could go and ask my friends ‘hey is this note possible on your instrument?’ It forces you to start thinking beyond your own little, like, I play French horn, and I play piano, and I don’t know anything outside of that, you know. So, I could go ask a string player ‘can you do this, is this possible? Or a clarinet player like...is this an okay range for you because I have no idea,’ you know. And so, those things I think were interesting because it gets you out of your comfort zone and has you working with other people, but also forces you to take the things you’ve learned and do something creative with it.

The teacher’s inclusion of composition forced students to collaborate, which led to learning from their peers outside of class time. From her own classroom experience, she offered the following directives:

You can also perform it yourself, or you can find a peer to do it for you, and there’s always like two or three students in the class who like play everyone’s pieces on piano. They just like sit in a practice room and play them all, and I was like, you know, now everyone from Theory One on knows that there’s this one kid in their class who can just sightread everyone’s piano stuff. You know, and they also listen to their critiques too because when that piano student sits down and says, ‘bro, this piece...you can’t play that.’ You know, they have to go back and fix it. You know because he tells them why, and they’re like oh, well, if I want so-and-so to play it for me, then I have to be good and fix it, you know.

Participant 4’s collaboration assignments assist students in building a network of professionals-in-training as future resources and help them learn from each other. A broader cross-disciplinary integration is consistent with methods promoted by Comprehensive Musicianship and the Young Composers Project.

Summary

In summary, a great deal of information was gleaned from the nine semi-structured interview questions regarding participants’ perceptions and experiences drawn from their expertise in teaching music theory and from their own formal training. Regarding their music training, it was determined that most participants began studying music early in life; their studies

only amplified in their university instruction as they honed their specific area of specialization. Furthermore, all had a tremendous amount of teaching experience ranging from K-12, college, and university prior to their current institution of employment. Those who directly specialized in Theory or Composition had a greater amount of composition-related coursework at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and almost every interviewee perceived that composition was not integrated significantly in their freshman- and sophomore-level theory classes.

Subthemes arose that naturally aligned with suggestions in the problem statement. These included general agreement that: all music majors should have basic knowledge on how to compose before graduation; that current textbooks and theory curriculum poorly integrate music composition; that participants' student experience in music theory was insufficient regarding composition; and that K-12 and college curricula teach performance preeminently over composition. As will be considered in the next chapter, these problems directly match the textbook critique and scholarly literature examined in Chapter Two. They also show the lack of CM ideology in current theory pedagogy practice, as theory classes fail to implement the main tenets of CM.

There were also emergent themes that naturally affiliated with the research questions. Specifically, participants articulated that integrating composition in music theory makes students more confident in composing, teaching creativity, and using composition-related technology. Interviewees suggested that students benefit most when composition assignments gradually ascend in difficulty across the four semesters of theory. Furthermore, participants believed composition works especially well for teaching formal structures in combination with diatonic and chromatic harmony. Participants also agreed that students develop a superior grasp of theory content when they practice connecting that knowledge to other areas of music through

composition assignments. When a wide variety of analysis examples are used, in terms of style and genre, participants believed that the examples established rapport with students and better prepared them for the variety they are likely to encounter in their future jobs. Participants also answered regarding the favorable effects of composition on mental health. Finally, consensus among participants was that students develop better as musicians through theory-composition projects that consistently necessitate collaboration with their peers. Additionally, interviewees affirmed that the discourse on composition integration would do well to have a matching exchange about amalgamating composition into other music classes too.

Emergent themes were categorized into sections by how they related to the problem statement, or secondarily to the most closely related research question. In Chapter Five, the emergent topics and findings related to the research questions will be examined in conjunction with the reviewed literature and current college theory teaching practice to ascertain implications regarding how composition integration in theory curricula could best be accomplished. The findings will be analyzed to discover what suggestions they hold for college music education.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Summary of Study

This qualitative study sought to probe the discernment of several college theory instructors regarding the integration of composition and theory curriculum; specifically, how well it currently does so, and how it might be better accomplished. Impetus for doing so was borne from a review of current literature, which generally concludes that, while creativity is a National Standard for Arts Education, “studies of the implementation of the standards have continually found that Content Standards #3 (Improvising), #4 (Composing), and #8 (Integrating music with other disciplines) are often neglected in music classrooms, while the other traditional content areas continue to dominate.”¹⁹³ Sources examined revealed that, historically, this was not always the case. Instead, literature suggests that the disconnect between composition and music education is a development of the institutionalization of music theory in the twentieth-century. The lack of composition integration is certainly the *modus operandi* for the most widely used theory textbooks of present day in North America, which were also necessarily reviewed for the scope of this paper. This project was correspondingly viewed through the philosophical lens of Comprehensive Musicianship, which closely aligns with the National Standards for Arts Education. Similar to the National Standards for Arts Education, Comprehensive Musicianship is also lacking in current classroom implementation. To this extent, interview participants also rendered feedback regarding the benefits of curricular integration across sub-disciplines, the need for more stylistically diverse analytical and compositional examples, and the value of student collaboration. Professional educator interviews, current literature on best teaching practices in

¹⁹³ Mark and Madura, *Contemporary Music Education*, 128.

music theory, theory pedagogy history, CM ideology, and current theory textbooks were used to synthesize a strong case for increased inclusion of composition in theory classrooms.

Summary of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to discover the current state of the integration of composition into typical theory curriculum, how music composition could be more effectively integrated into college music theory curriculum, and how composition could then be reinforced through aligning it with corresponding music courses that students would be taking simultaneously. There is precedent for these ideas in the models of the Contemporary Music Project and the Comprehensive Musicianship movement that initially ignited pedagogical ingenuity but then fell out of common usage. This study also solicited qualitative input from theory professors with a great deal of combined teaching experience on whether and how these practices could be best implemented. This project was born from the nagging problem that “composing is rarely taught to prospective music educators, and many music teachers feel less competent to teach composition to their students.”¹⁹⁴ In literature, there was a gap regarding college educators’ perceptions about how well music theory classes accomplish composition instruction and regarding the absence of a philosophy on how to best approach integrating composition into theory curriculum. The interviewed participants persuasively urged that composition should be taught to all musicians and that current theory curriculum is generally inadequate for doing so.

¹⁹⁴ Kratus, “Nurturing the Songcatchers,” 373.

Summary of Procedure

Using a qualitative study design gave the six participants opportunity to share rich narratives drawn from their extensive music theory teaching expertise that were dense with information; their answers were thematically categorized for further examination alongside secondary data from the literature review. Participants were chosen as a convenience sampling from the south Texas region after securing IRB approval and participant consent. A great deal of critical qualitative data was transcribed and interpreted. The remainder of Chapter Five elucidates how the findings of Chapter Four relate to current research, shares limitations inherent in the study, offers recommendations for further related research, suggests what implications the results have for music theory pedagogy, and concludes with how these implications can then be used to improve current music theory teaching practice. These implications are also analyzed to help educators avoid possible challenges inherent in a broader integration of composition into music theory curriculum.

Summary of Findings: Research Question One

Introduction

The inductive content analysis of interviews affirmatively found that including composition in music theory coursework instilled confidence in students for composing, teaching creativity, and using associated technology. These subthemes responded directly to the proposed Research Question One. Conversely, results showed that most professors did not experience enough composition training in their theory courses to prepare them to confidently compose or teach the craft. Synthesis of composition knowledge occurred elsewhere in their degree sequences, especially for those who studied composition as their primary craft. Participants also agreed that current theory textbooks are insufficient in this respect. Those that wished to

integrate composition more effectively in their classes cited state-mandated objectives, time limitations, and poorly equipped incoming students as primary barriers for doing so. Interviews and reviewed literature agreed that students were equipped poorly because K-12 curriculum also favors performance over music composition. Finally, participants believed composition to be most effective when applied in small increments, using the synthesis of multiple theory techniques into a single project, and when used to teach musical form.

Obstacles to Composition Proficiency: College Theory Texts and Teaching Practice

As previously referenced, there are genuine impediments to achieving Research Question One. For the scope of this study, the foremost of these was the insufficiency of theory textbooks and curriculum design for preparing all music majors to compose and subsequently to teach composition. The problem was not limited to a single theory textbook. Participant 2 was using Kostka and Payne's *Tonal Harmony*, while Participant 4 was using Steven Laitz's *The Complete Musician*, but both offered mirroring statements of: "to be honest...there's really no aspect of creativity in it at all," and "I don't think that the theory textbook we use right now does that at all." As demonstrated in Chapter Two, this dissertation considered most major theory textbooks available and drew similar conclusions. Surveyed textbooks included *Tonal Harmony: with an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music*; *The Complete Musician: An Integrated Approach to Theory, Analysis, and Listening*; *Music Theory Remixed: A Blended Approach for the Practicing Musician*; *Concise Introduction to Tonal Harmony*; and *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis*. Even in later chapters of these books, whereby students have acquired greater theory prowess, authors mostly opted not to include compositional projects that aligned with the curriculum. As previously referenced, Chapter Twenty-Three of *Tonal Harmony* checks students' knowledge through isolated augmented sixth chord spelling, identification, and part-

writing. Most interview participants did not favorably view part-writing as an especially creative or compositional activity, due to the nature of its limited “correct” outcomes. This is reinforced through a previous quote from Participant 2 that “even when [she] do[es] Kostka and Payne book in Theory Two on how to write a melody it’s still with very, very strong rules and constraints.” Furthermore, textbooks fail to explain how part-writing exercise concepts can be meaningfully linked to current practice. In this light, *Tonal Harmony* includes no real composition integration, and other textbooks operate similarly. The brief history of music theory pedagogy offered in Chapter Two reinforced these findings regarding composition not being included in current textbooks or standard teaching practice. Observed previously, the history of theory pedagogy reveals a slow decline and then complete severance of music theory from music composition. One major twentieth-century development partially provoking this change was the implementation of Music Theory as a distinct specialization from Music Composition. In spite of some benefits, Robert Wason states that “there has also been a serious loss with the dedicated study of theory: the connection with musical composition as a living, evolving entity seems to have been cut, once and for all.”¹⁹⁵ He continues with a powerful observation that is worth recounting in full:

We might say that the history of pedagogical music theory began with composers of standing teaching their craft, and reached its zenith with the great treatises of the Renaissance and Baroque eras, almost all of which were penned by composers who attempted to convey a contemporaneous and living language to students. The intimate connection between theory pedagogy and musical composition began to weaken in the nineteenth century with conservatory epigones teaching the compositional craft. And despite a few exceptions, in the twentieth century this connection was largely severed.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ Wason, “*Musica Practica*,” 73.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

Even into the twenty-first century, researchers of music education seem to promote creative integration and collaboration in writing, but pedagogical applications by actual educators are lacking. Conway advocated avoiding a lecture-based model in favor of drawing students into the educational process through active collaboration; Gardner pointed out that learning is complicated, and that students possess multiple intelligences for learning that teachers would do well to engage. Yet, in Participant 4's words:

Having those discussions, I think is good, and it's happening at the college level, but it's happening slowly. And part of it is because there's a lot of people who are already in colleges and universities who are full professors and have been doing this for a very long time and change is hard and change is difficult. And there's a lot of new people coming in who've just been in, you know, big doctoral programs that are starting to explore these issues and are talking about these things, and they're coming in going like 'let's change, let's change,' but the old people who've been there teaching five...five loads per year are like 'I'm tired; I don't want to do this anymore.'

Her comments from contemporary practice feel vaguely reminiscent of the false starts that plagued Comprehensive Musicianship from actually being put into widespread practice and taking hold at a national level. Mary A. Kennedy observed that:

In surveying the role of creative music education during the decades prior to the 1970s, one sees some progress and some remaining hurdles. Although the music education profession clearly professed a belief in the value of creative music education, initiatives and programs...had been spawned by visionary individuals and had taken hold in certain areas of the country. Selected music educators included creative music activities in their classrooms, but a significant gap still remained between the theory and general practice of creative music education.¹⁹⁷

It was the opinion of interviewed participants that this gap remains despite research by scholars that reform is needed. Interviews indicated that lasting success calls for multi-pronged reform, some parts of which exceed the scope of this study. Even so, recommendations from veteran theory teachers about classroom-tested composition projects serve as a great starting point for curricular change. Educators could use these practices and ideologies to rebuild their curriculum

¹⁹⁷ Kennedy, "Creative Music Making," 145.

in a way that better integrates composition and achieves composition proficiency for music education majors to carry into their future classrooms. Since much has been observed to this point about the generally insufficient training in composition, it is worth considering what amount and type of training would be appropriate for all music students. To that extent, historical and qualitative research align to allow a perspective on what constitutes a sufficient amount of composition training for all music majors. Further articulated in the sections below, music students should emerge from theory courses with the ability to compose original music that demonstrates all melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and formal structures and principles learned across the entire sequence of Music Theories One through Four. Cited in Chapter Two, NASM's recommendations regarding composition are useful to recount here:

Students must acquire a rudimentary capacity to create original or derivative music. It is the prerogative of each institution to develop specific requirements regarding written, electronic, or improvisatory forms and methods. These may include but are not limited to the creation of original compositions or improvisations, variations or improvisations on existing materials, experimentation with various sound sources, the imitation of musical styles, and manipulating the common elements in non-traditional ways. Institutional requirements should help students gain a basic understanding of how to work freely and cogently with musical materials in various composition-based activities, particularly those most associated with the major field.¹⁹⁸

A musician sufficiently trained in composition should also have abilities most appropriate to their future contexts. Not only might a Music Theory Three assignment require students to compose a ternary form that incorporates modulations, augmented sixth chords, secondary dominant chords, and appropriate part-writing, but, when possible, assignments could easily be tailored so that the clarinet student is composing the piece for a woodwind quintet, while the violist is composing for a string quartet. Notice that NASM's definition does not just include

¹⁹⁸ NASM, *National Association of Schools of Music Handbook 2022-23*, 105.

composing music that is derivative, as part-writing would be considered, but also includes the ability to apply theory concepts to the creation of original music.

Empowering All Music Students to Compose and Teach Composition

Research Question One queried what benefits might arise from teaching all music majors to compose during theory courses. Taken compositely, participants spoke overwhelmingly in favor of the idea that all music majors need compositional skills for their future employment. Their proposed benefits echoed or reinforced the surveyed literature. To that extent, the prevailing sentiment was that composition for all music majors, especially music educators, would prepare them to better teach creativity in their future K-12 classrooms. Interviewed non-composition specialists stated they wished to have had more training in their undergraduate studies. As referenced in Chapter One, John Kratus pointed out that composition is not typically taught to prospective music educators.¹⁹⁹ A study of Florida K-12 music educators discovered that improvisation and composition were the areas that the teachers felt the least capable to teach and demonstrate.²⁰⁰ As acknowledged elsewhere in the literature review, this insecurity of teachers has led to student deficiencies in these areas of the National Standards for Arts Education. In fact, the National Assessment of Educational Progress in Music in 1997 showed that “in the composition of two measures of music to demonstrate the ability to use notation, approximately 69 percent received an overall score of inadequate.”²⁰¹ There was only a nominal increase of competency in the 2008 NAEP Arts Assessment test in the same area from 28 percent

¹⁹⁹ Kratus, “Nurturing the Songcatchers,” 373.

²⁰⁰ Susan Byo, “Classroom teachers’ and music specialists’ perceived ability to implement the National Standards for Music Education,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 47, no. 2: 111-123

²⁰¹ Mark and Madura, *Contemporary Music Education*, 220.

to 33 percent adequate.²⁰² Taken collectively, Kratus's statements, the state of K-12 student composition performance, and interview responses lead to a conclusion that future teachers would strongly benefit from more training in this respect, with the serious potential to impact NAEP student scores in the future regarding creativity. Participant 2 summarized that "the benefits are huge...just to not have students feel that the creative process is intimidating."

Participants agreed that an added bonus for theory-composition training was the opportunity to simultaneously make students comfortable in music-related software and technology. Participant 4 has students do composition projects in her theory courses and use MuseScore, Sibelius, or Finale. In doing so, they gain additional skills for navigating notation software that they will need regardless of their professional context. Participant 3 noted that some students enter college proficient in DAW technology, which can actually lead to their interest in theory and composition. Participant 6 demonstrated extensive mastery of notation and recording technology that he taught to students during their applied percussion lessons, noting how critical it is for their future. In his book *Using Technology to Unlock Musical Creativity*, Scott Watson articulates how well creativity and technology go together for preparing students:

Leading students in meaningful creative activities must go beyond simply providing helpful technology tools or even offering instruction in using those tools. Thousands have a working knowledge of computer music notation software, such as Finale and Sibelius, or music production programs, such as ProTools. Does that make them all composers or music producers? In one sense, yes, and in another sense, no. Some would say that only a handful of these 'operators' write or produce music artistically. Others could point to the subjective nature of art and to how vocational training is rarely the goal of music education anyway. Regardless, creative musical activities provide the perfect environment for grooming the kinds of aesthetic sensibilities that should accompany technical knowledge in our music students at all levels.²⁰³

²⁰² Mark and Madura, *Contemporary Music Education*, 221.

²⁰³ Scott Watson, *Using Technology to Unlock Musical Creativity* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3-4.

Even for mature musicians, the constant evolution of music software requires a good deal of trial-and-error practice for gaining proficiency and comfort in their use. Starting students in this journey early in their degree almost certainly accelerates their facility in using technology for upper division coursework when necessary.

How to Teach Composition in Theory Curriculum

Existing research and participants' answers also gave insight into excellent pedagogical practices concerning how to integrate composition into theory curriculum most effectively. Well-executed composition projects in theory classes should be accomplished in small increments, appropriate to the ability of the students, gradually increasing in difficulty, combining multiple techniques learned, and culminating in helping students advance from simple to more complex musical forms. Participant 4 offered the most comprehensive models, as she used composition the most in her teaching practice, rather than expressing desire to incorporate more, as several other participants did. In her approach, she starts by discussing the concept; she then uses models from past and contemporary music literature for students to analyze. This is followed by isolated part-writing exercises for the technique being studied, and finally, she provides clear guidelines for creating an original composition that demonstrates the concept. Here is her process:

At the collegiate level...anytime we're talking about musical forms or cadences or phrases or things like that: step one is always let's talk about what this is. Let's analyze some that are good models from...the literature—whether that literature be...Bach to Brahms, whether it's something written last week. We can find plenty of examples for them to examine, listen to, and analyze, and then from there...try part-writing some of these things...in like a very specific model with very specific guidelines and rules and this and that. Now the next step is compose a piece that actually does this or compose a phrase that actually does this that sounds musical more so than the four-part harmonic thing you've just created over here. And have them figure out like what are the elements that are required to make that work and how that would sound.

Even participants who felt they should do more composition-related assignments offered examples of simple composition assignments employed in their classes. Participant 6 suggested

students deconstruct a modern-day song as an analysis. They in turn use this analysis as a template for constructing their own original composition. Participants 3, 4, and 5 incorporate 12-tone composition in Music Theory 4 classes. All participants felt that students needed to feel secure in the concept before composing for it. It was also pointed out that, because explaining composition projects takes time, the composition assignments can work well when reserved for critical junctures in the semester, as in a final project. Projects should progress slowly, incrementally advancing in difficulty at a rate that students can understand. Participant 3 stated “probably the best way to do it is really small exercises. Especially at the beginning, and I think it would need to be exercises that are really tightly constructed so that the creative aspect of it is not an open free-for-all.” He later noted that, “I think you gotta have it stepwise: do this step, then this step, then this step.”

It was also pointed out that composition is an excellent vehicle for teaching formal structures in music. Participant 4 combines form and the idea of incremental difficulty advancement in the following passage:

My Theory One students compose four measure phrases, and I set them up to where they're actually writing period structures, but they don't know that yet because they don't learn that 'til Theory Two, but they end up writing them, and they sound like period structures if they do it right. And then they write period and sentence structures in Theory Two, and then in Theory Three, they write binary and ternary forms, and then in Theory Four, they sort of break away from that for a bit, and they write like a 12 tone, you know, piano trio or string quartet piece. And then they come back when they do Form and Analysis, and I give them the option of writing either a theme and variation form with like five variations and, uh, you know, original theme. Or they have to write, uh, a Sonata form or a Rondo or a Sonata Rondo or something like that, you know. So, they've got...they start small, and they just build every semester, and it grows so that when they finally get to Form and Analysis, they're like 'I can't believe that I'm not a composer and I just composed a, you know, 200 measure, you know, Sonata form,' and it's like 'yes, you did.' You know because it's all just building blocks on something you've learned previously.

Suggested best practices also included combining multiple techniques into a single assignment. These approaches of scaffolded withdrawal of the teacher as guide in the creative practice and simultaneous student ascendance toward musical independence are also consistent with Comprehensive Musicianship ideology. This is corroborated in the literature review and can be a factor in student motivation also. For example, Conway:

found that students will complete work that they view to be authentic to the discipline. The professor must work to generate assignments that require students to interact with the course content in the same that music professionals might. Music theory and history projects that can relate in some way to what the music students are studying in applied lessons or ensembles are good examples of authentic assignments.²⁰⁴

Sadly, the antiquated “rules” of part-writing for a Baroque chorale are not immediately engaging for students. In this instance, students are done a disservice because textbooks fail to show the connection between past and current practice and how chorale part-writing, in fact, can be very relevant for composing multiple melodies contrapuntally. In this author’s teaching practice, it can be frustrating when a concept needs explanation first to its relevance or worse still, explaining that a concept is in fact probably not relevant to their future construct, but they will be expected to know it for transferring to their upper-level classes. Theory curriculum and textbooks need to rationalize clearly to students the value that lies in part-writing exercises for contemporary practice, rather than expecting them to accept figured bass idioms without any contextual relevance. Doing so would steer the conversation away from teaching only Baroque processes to instead teaching how polyphony has evolved from Baroque to present-day. This would also be congruent with CM’s advice to use more stylistically diverse music examples and free professors to discuss the modern use of loops and the inclusion of polyphony in everything from J. S. Bach to Jimmy Eat World, Relient K, and Springsteen’s “Blinded by the Light.”

²⁰⁴ Conway, *Teaching Music in Higher Education*, 140-141.

Seeing contemporary examples would better prepare students to attempt their own compositions integrating these procedures. When a student perceives that it is their original composition and not an exercise, they are more invested in its quality, aware of its real-life application, and connect it to aural skills by listening and assessing what they have created. Incorporating this process gradually throughout the theory sequence in a logical way can be very effective for students.

Summary of Findings: Research Question Two

Introduction

The philosophy behind Comprehensive Musicianship was its greatest strength, more so than any one methodological guide produced, and would certainly benefit college music theory instruction. Codifying the interview themes reinforced this statement, revealing that students garner better mastery of theory when they are forced to connect it to other areas of musical knowledge and when there is a wide variety of styles and genres analyzed and used as compositional models. Interview results and expert commentary from literature were in complete agreement on these two topics, which have strong implications on how music theory pedagogical practices can be improved.

Synthesis of Knowledge Across Music Subjects

Theory lessons are at-risk for forgetting to ‘do’ music as suggested by Elliott’s philosophy, which reminds educators that while students are:

capable of grasping considerable amounts of formal knowledge about music and listening, formal knowledge should not be acquired without integral relationship to students’ active and authentic music making. The special kind of nonverbal knowing-in-action required for artistic music making is easily overwhelmed by the emphasis schooling tends to place on verbal knowledge.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ David Elliott, *Music Matters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 260.

This is a key tenet of Comprehensive Musicianship and was reinforced by the case study participants' answers. Participant 2 asserted: "So, I think it might help solidify some of the stuff we're trying to teach them if they're actually doing it hands-on in an actual piece of music." Participant 6 stated that "composition in music theory is an important topic of discussion in music literacy." Participants 3 and 4 both noted how composition and theory knowledge are intended to also help students perform and interpret music better. Participant 2 gave anecdotes directly linking composition and improvisation skills. All participants, regardless of how they perceived their compositional ability, noted that it was these skills and this integrated thinking that allowed them to quickly synthesize information. As educators, they all found it crucial to be able to perform, arrange, improvise, compose, reharmonize, and all sorts of practical music skills extemporaneously for their classroom contexts. Cited earlier in Chapter 1, Leland Bland further articulates that "for those in music education, the theory curriculum should provide the training to view compositions from so many viewpoints and levels that the structure of the music itself suggests ideas for teaching that music."²⁰⁶ His follow up auxiliary declaration perfectly encapsulates the aim of composition integration under the philosophical ideology of CM:

Rather, the successful theory program should provide experiences with systematic and consistent methods for assimilating ideas from seemingly diverse sources and for adapting theoretical concepts to various musical situations. 'Assimilating' and 'adapting' are key words, for they emphasize the necessity for applying knowledge and skills to a variety of situations—most of which are different from the context in which the knowledge and skills were first acquired.²⁰⁷

Leland's statement also makes the case for the next subtheme. Students cannot adapt to diverse situations of style and genre if they have not experienced any.

²⁰⁶ Bland, "The College Music Theory Curriculum," 174.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

Stylistically Diverse Musical Examples and Composition Projects

The Contemporary Music Project and Comprehensive Musicianship both believed that analytical examples needed unfettering from bondage to the canon of common-practice era composers. Only in doing so would educators be prepared for whatever future new music they might be required to teach and guide their students through. Case study participants agreed.

Participant 6 used contemporary examples and noted “students seem to enjoy a blended classical and modern approach.” As quoted in Chapter 4, Participant 4 stated:

When I was in school, you studied the classic Bach to Brahms composers, and you only looked at, you know, Western-white-male-dead composers from that small time period, and anything else was seen as exotic or peripheral to what we’re doing. And I think that just by bringing in like Latin American music and bringing in, you know, mariachi music and bringing in music from other places and playing it for my students and going ‘have you heard this; what do you think of it; what do you know, like, could you write something like this; is that worth doing?’ You know and having those discussions I think is good.

Noted in Chapter 1, the Contemporary Music Project seminar on Contemporary Musicianship in 1965 saw a host of music professionals agree that the paradigm for analysis should shift to include present practice. From Chapter 2, doing so would reflect how music theory had been taught for most of its history prior to the twentieth century. Frustratingly for music education, to borrow a cliché, it seems like talk was and still is cheap. Simply knowing and agreeing to these things did not instigate widespread curricular change. Colleen Conway and Philip Ewell both observed this phenomenon, with Ewell pointing out that “for over twenty years, music theory has tried to diversify with respect to race, yet the field today remains remarkably white, not only in terms of the people who practice music theory but also in the race of the composers and theorists whose work music theory privileges.”²⁰⁸ His survey of primary theory textbooks found less than

²⁰⁸ Ewell, “Music Theory and the White Racial Frame,” 1.

1.67% of examples to be by non-white composers.²⁰⁹ From the theory textbooks surveyed for this project, consistent observations were made. Most examined theory textbooks avoided popular music examples as well. Here it can be seen that if an enterprising and astute educator, like Participant 4, wishes to include diversity of examples, they must do so without the aid of a textbook to draw upon. Lack of diversity in music examples is an inexcusable blemish for music theory yet continues to persist. When well implemented, diverse examples develop rapport and common ground with students for a shared musical understanding. Participant 4's class anecdote is worth repeating here: "I bring in these mariachi tunes because most of our mariachi tunes...you can harmonize them with I and V...So, we're working on them, and we're doing 'Cielito Lindo,' and we're doing... 'De Colores.' And we learned how to put 'I's and 'V's under all of it." The result is mutual respect shared between herself and her students. Students also realize their fund of musical experience is worthy of respect and study. She explained: "they know more about me in that one lecture than they knew before. Even though I could just open my mouth and tell them. It doesn't really connect with them until they see the music that I listen to is the music she listens to, and it's okay and worthy of study in a collegiate classroom." In this way, the music discipline still lacks a global or universal way of constructing music theory to apply to cultures and contexts outside of Western Art Music. Educators and students would benefit from textbooks being reimagined through this part of Comprehensive Musicianship's viewpoint.

²⁰⁹ Ewell, "Music Theory and the White Racial Frame," 4.

Summary of Findings: Research Question Three

Introduction

In contemplating how the methodology of the Young Composers Project could be emulated in theory courses, there was consensus between reviewed literature and interview evidence that linking theory-composition projects to ensemble and applied classes would work best. By collaborating, applied and ensemble students could perform the theory-compositions of their peers for immediate assessment and improvement. Doing so was also assessed by interviewees as certainly providing benefits to students, including better synthesis of knowledge across disciplines, development of independence in student learning, an entrepreneurial mindset, and building of a peer-network of future professionals (which also boosts student engagement in the program and retention). Findings suggest this could be best implemented by having students' collaboration in theory classes simultaneously integrated with other aligning applied and ensemble coursework.

Collaboration Generated from Composition Inclusion

Collaborative creativity across congruent music courses can also be especially powerful for engaging students and using “content as a vehicle to establish a knowledge base and then promote lifelong learning in the content.”²¹⁰ For example, STC Music Theory students compose jazz pieces for an assignment. They contact members of the STC Jazz Ensemble class to perform their pieces, and during jazz class time they talk about their compositions' conception. In turn, jazz students give them constructive feedback from a performer's point-of-view on the accuracy and legibility of the notation. The Jazz students then come and perform the pieces for the author's Music Appreciation and Music Theory classes, who then are prompted to write a group

²¹⁰ Weimer, *Learner-Centered Teaching*, 118.

essay or analysis. The Music Appreciation and Theory groups present their papers back to each theorist-composer who get valuable feedback from different perspectives on the emotional effectiveness and structural integrity of their original pieces; the Jazz Ensemble concurrently gains insight on the quality of their performance. Referenced in Chapter One, collaborative creativity works best when the teacher is also vulnerable and models this process. Caitlin Quinton states that “the creative music teacher is both a musician and a collaborator, but s/he also plays many other important roles.”²¹¹ To this extent, the teacher can actively lead and model this process at the outset.

Curricular creativity through active learning is essential to assist with the retention of community college students in particular. By integrating music composition, collaborative learning, and musical examples relevant to these students, college educators can assist them in developing a sense of community with each other and help them build interconnectivity in their base of knowledge. It will not eliminate their struggles, but it can diminish their academic struggle and validate their passion for music as a future career choice. Commentary from interviewees supported this idea. As noted in Chapter Four, Participant 6 contended that integration of composition in theory only works when it is combined across the rest of the coursework, stating, “Composition in music theory is an important topic of discussion in music literacy. That being said, for this to work and be practical, the applied music program needs to be a parallel conversation so that this will stand the test of time and work at all levels: College and University.” Participant 4 used composition collaboration in her classes and found that it facilitated building student friendships within her classroom; also, her students learned from each

²¹¹ Quinton, “Creativity in Band,” 35.

other and became aware of one another's strengths. Shared previously, her anecdote is relevant here:

[Creative collaboration] forces you to start thinking beyond your own... 'I play French horn, and I play piano, and I don't know anything outside of that.' So, I could go ask a string player 'can you do this, is this possible? Or a clarinet player like... is this an okay range for you because I have no idea.' And so, those things I think were interesting because it gets you out of your comfort zone and has you working with other people, but also forces you to take the things you've learned and do something creative with it.

To build this curriculum, educators could look to the Young Composers Project for methodological and philosophical ideas. As noted in Chapter 1, considering the factions of competing compositional styles in the 1960 and 1970s, it was impressive that the ideals of Dello Joio assured no compositional restrictions were placed on students, where they could be encouraged to discover their unique voice. Paul Covey offered that:

In sum, [Composers in Public Schools] sponsored the dissemination of contemporary music of all kinds. The organization was dedicated to allowing each of its composers to develop according to his or her own aesthetic sense. This approach resulted from the desire of its administration to expand as much as possible the musical horizons of student ensemble members and their directors, helping them become more willing and informed performers and auditors of contemporary music.²¹²

A college curriculum designed in this way would also better prepare students for Research Question One's original goal of allowing them to bring this mindset and compositional skill to their own future K-12 students.

Limitations

By its qualitative design, there are limitations inherent to the procedures used. Referenced in Chapter Three, until more recent times, the onus was on researchers to convince their audience of the legitimacy of their qualitative procedures. Even with failsafe measures to shore up qualitative validity, it can be difficult to generalize to other contexts, "since the intent of this

²¹² Covey, "No Restrictions in Any Way on Style," 113.

form of inquiry is not to generalize findings to individuals, sites, or places outside of those under study.”²¹³ Also, the research included a small sample consisting of six interviewed respondents. The limitation for this study related to the small number of interviewed participants and that it was regionally specific to the Texas education system, where themes might not be universally shared with other systems. While the participants are actively teaching in South Texas, this study was strengthened by the diversity of participants’ academic pedigree and teaching posts prior to their current employment. As referenced in Chapter Four’s “Description of Participants,” interviewees hold degrees that range from Indiana University, Louisiana State University, Rutgers University, the University of Illinois, Texas Tech University, and a host of others. Similarly, they have held teaching posts in a variety of states, which aids in negating potential bias and supports the idea that this study might be replicable to offer broader generalizations about the state of college music theory in the United States.

Even so, with the small sample size, bias is also possible. Participants can have vested interest in painting their context in the most favorable light. In this study, there existed possible limitations due to recall bias in which individuals might not have recollected their experiences with absolute accuracy. Also possible was confirmation bias since the researcher had the task of analyzing and making inferences from the information obtained from the participants. To alleviate this, the researcher used data triangulation by testing interviewees’ insights against a thorough literature review through a critical approach. This is consistent with the Creswells’ recommendation to “triangulate different data sources by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes.”²¹⁴ Empirical data might have

²¹³ John W. and J. David Creswell, *Research Design*, 202.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 200.

undergirded this effort further, and the ways in which it could have done so are shown below in recommendations for future study. Even so, initial choices were made on the appraisal that statistical data would not have accurately provided the narrative-rich commentary from the teaching expertise, perceptions, and beliefs of the respondents that were crucial to this project.

Recommendations for Future Study

As indicated in the limitations, this study was isolated to six participants from the South Texas region. It would be recommendable to replicate this study in other areas to verify whether educators in those regions provide consistent results. For example, R. K. Yin demonstrated that qualitative case studies could be generalized to broader theory.²¹⁵ The Creswells state that “the generalization occurs when qualitative researchers study additional case and generalize findings to the new cases. It is the same as the replication logic used in experimental research.”²¹⁶ Replicating findings in other areas would assess nuances specific to music education in those regions and consistency would strengthen claims found in this author’s thesis.

Since this dissertation focused on qualitative research, additional quantitative research would also be helpful. Implications from the literature review suggested that the institutionalization of music theory and the subsequent upsurge in college theory being taught by these newly-minted Theory PhDs caused a shift toward the pedantic nature of its current pedagogy and away from the more fluid, composition-minded model from its past. However, in this project’s research, the Music Theory specialist (Participant 4) actively incorporated composition in her theory courses, while the composer (Participant 3) purposefully chose not to do so. In fact, noting this very irony, Participant 3 stated: “Maybe that’s a different research

²¹⁵ Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, chap. 2.

²¹⁶ John W. and J. David Creswell, *Research Design*, 202.

project, but I would be curious to know is it common for composers who teach theory to not really teach composition in their theory classes? Is it common for the theory PhDs to actually do composition in their theory classes?” His questions are valid and, in this instance, a more broad and less deep quantitative survey divulging the percentage of Composition, Theory, and other specializations who teach freshman- and sophomore-level theory courses would supplant our conjecture with definite answers. Such a quantitative survey could also gather simple answers as to which specialists most commonly include composition in their curriculum.

For incorporating composition, time constraints are a serious obstacle due to state-mandated course objectives. Furthermore, music degrees have a credit-hour cap for financial aid, and anything beyond that limit is not eligible for students to receive reimbursement. For this reason, students often rigidly follow their degree sequence. Research into whether reform is possible in the state and national legislative spheres for easing either barrier would be beneficial. Research considering what benefits might be achieved from requiring one semester of applied composition for all majors might also yield thought-provoking answers. As a point of action, this dissertation gives K-12 educators supporting evidence to petition their administrators and stakeholders regarding the importance of creativity and how it is not being currently implemented to its full potential, despite being a national standard. Finally, research and practical application on how to build a complete music theory curriculum adhering to the philosophy of CM and with collaborative composition would give a new alternative to current textbooks that largely ignore creativity.

Implications for Practice

There are several implications to be drawn from the study that could positively influence current practice and spur active inquiry by other researchers and pedagogues on how to keep music theory and composition evolving in ways that reflect current music syntax and adequately train all musicians for the future. Interviews revealed that almost all educators used composition, arranging, or improvising in their current construct, even if they never imagined being called to do so. Experts in literature reiterated the same need for students to have these skills. Interviewees also felt improperly trained in this respect unless they directly studied composition. Furthermore, interviewees mostly felt that their personal teaching practice was insufficient in this aspect, with several even indicating it was because they had feelings of inadequacy for teaching composition. All interviewees and the literature review of available theory textbooks were harmonious in their assessment that meaningful composition assignments were woefully lacking. Because of state-mandated constraints on how many credit hours can be in a degree, it is unlikely that college programs would be able to address composition proficiency through adding composition-specific courses. Therefore, the logical placement for developing students' compositional skills is in theory curriculum.

Implications derived from this study show that curricular music theory reform at the college level, while not without challenges for its design, is an enterprise worthy of the effort due to the benefits it could evoke. The greatest benefit to creation of such a curriculum would be empowering a generation of future music educators not to be intimidated by composition or composition technology and to feel comfortable teaching simple, creative composition at the K-12 level. Even so, this study discovered a multitude of other skills that would aid students. It was assessed the curricular integration of composition with diversity of analytical examples would

broaden students' ability to adapt to any current or future styles and to have a more synthesized knowledge of how theory and composition relate to the other facets of music. This study confirmed that the educational philosophy of Comprehensive Musicianship is a helpful viewpoint for working toward this goal. Composition integration also helped students develop a network of future professionals by requiring collaboration with their peers to realize their compositions. An unintended discovery is that if more college music students, and by extension music educators, were aware of the historical narrative of music theory, it could influence their perceptions regarding how to teach it most effectively in the future. Research results also imply that college theory teachers should implement composition projects that incrementally increase in difficulty and scope. Another best practice from this study is using composition to teach musical form in theory classes.

This study also reinforced the revelation found elsewhere in current literature that even if K-12 educators were better equipped in this respect, they still face real challenges by way of time constraints due to performance pressures arising from competitions, concerts, and marching performances. These factors are directly linked to how school music teachers are perceived and can influence funding and pressures placed on directors by administration. The implication here is that stakeholders should be educated as to the benefits of easing performance pressure on K-12 teachers and students to make more room for music literacy, theory, and composition.

Conclusion

Noted earlier, answering the primary research question means first acknowledging that real barriers to composition integration exist that must be deconstructed before working toward a different future. The sequence of the problem is important. The work of this study, from interviews and related studies, confirmed hypotheses as to the underlying root of students'

insecurities with composition. This root is that creative integration by K-12 teachers is not the deeper underlying problem. The origin of this problem is the training these teachers receive at the university level for learning to apply composition on their own. To address the problem more holistically, curriculum should be revised at the college level. Without doing so, results will not filter down to future K-12 music educators. Once that is achieved, teachers still must contend with external pressures from parents and administration. Students performing well for competitions, marching season, and concerts is expected of teachers at the expense of teaching other music skills. Reforming this expectation could be the topic of further study.

Educating all music majors in composition through their theory curriculum and accomplished in such a way that requires collaboration across applied and ensemble subdisciplines through the philosophical bent of Comprehensive Musicianship would give students a better synthesis of knowledge and help them be equipped to deal with a broader variety of styles and musical syntax. In concluding, this author would be remiss not to point out an obvious possibility that incorporating creativity would also enhance students' enjoyment of their studies. According to Csikszentmihalyi, all those who regularly practice creativity differ in some ways, "but in one respect they are unanimous: They all love what they do. It is not the hope of achieving fame or making money that drives them; rather, it is the opportunity to do the work that they enjoy doing."²¹⁷ Cited in Chapter One, Caitlin Quinton simply adds: "I would argue that personal happiness and fulfillment are important because they make life worth living. I believe that schools have a responsibility to teach students to seek fulfillment by helping them to pursue the things they love to do."²¹⁸ Students of all ages face a very different world today with

²¹⁷ Csikszentmihalyi, *Creativity*, 107.

²¹⁸ Quinton, "Creativity in Band," 35.

the proliferation of technology and social media. American students also face an environment with exacerbated political turmoil, economic inflation, and health anxieties from the recent Covid-19 pandemic. Talbot, O'Reilly, and Dogra state that “global connectivity and social media can contribute to anxiety.”²¹⁹ Rebecca Zarate asserts: “that which can pass along (the idea of anxiety being transmissible) creates social constructs of consensual definitions leading to panic-based behaviors. An example would be how toilet paper flew off supermarket shelves during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.”²²⁰ Assisting students in capturing joy in their educational journey in a way that also grants them superior training should be a task worthy of our impassioned advocacy. Participant 5 reminds us that:

There's a lot of stress and anxiety that current K-12 students feel on the back...of the pandemic. The mental health issues are greater than ever...for students. And so, creative outlets also we know are hugely beneficial to that as well. To have a creative outlet for students would be wonderful...for their mental health and for the pride that they can have...in themselves of creating something that is theirs.

As evidenced in Participant 4's teaching anecdotes, students are not likely to hold up an exercise-in-a-box with pride on how they remembered to double the bass and take their Neapolitan chord successfully to the dominant. They are very likely, however, to proudly show the 80-measure ternary form composed in Music Theory 3 for which they have collaborated with their piano-major peer to perform for the class. In doing so, they will have unwittingly synthesized theory knowledge to a real-world application that prepares them to share this joy with their future teaching context. Additionally, they will have accomplished it in a way that would have made the founders of the Young Composers Project and composer-theory pedagogues from the larger

²¹⁹ Amelia Talbot, Michelle O'Reilly, and Nisha Dogra, “The ‘snowflakes’ of modern society: a qualitative investigation of female university students' anxiety about adulting,” *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, ahead-of-print (2023): 4.

²²⁰ Rebecca Zarate, *Music Psychotherapy and Anxiety: Social, Community and Clinical Contexts* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2022), 85-86.

swath of music history proud. As such, it is a worthy mantle for theory educators to take up and wield for the creation of new curriculum targeting these ambitions.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: IRB Approval

Date: 6-9-2023

IRB #: IRB-FY22-23-1258

Title: College Theory Curriculum: Using the Philosophical Essence of Comprehensive Musicianship to Integrate Composition

Creation Date: 3-18-2023

End Date:

Status: **Approved**

Principal Investigator: Daniel Cather

Review Board: Research Ethics Office

Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Limited	Decision	Exempt - Limited IRB
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Key Study Contacts

Member	Joshua Carver	Role	Co-Principal Investigator	Contact
Member	Daniel Cather	Role	Principal Investigator	Contact
Member	Daniel Cather	Role	Primary Contact	Contact

Appendix B

Recruitment Email

Dear Fellow Music Educator:

As a student in the School of Music at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Music Education degree. The purpose of this research is to determine the viability of integrating music composition more directly into college music theory curriculum. It is hypothesized that this pedagogically-sound framework will equip future secondary music educators to better teach composing in their own classrooms. This study seeks to create a curricular framework for teaching music composition in tandem with music theory. A music theory curriculum focused more on collaborative music composition can prepare students more comprehensively to train the next generation of music educators in terms of creativity in personal pedagogy practice, effective use of technology, and mastery of music composition.

You are invited to give your professional input and expertise regarding my study. Participants must be music educators with a master's degree in music and with current or previous experience teaching Music Theory curriculum at the college level. Participants will use their theory teaching background to answer questions evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of current music theory curriculum, especially through the lens of how practical it is for yielding creativity through composition in students.

Participants will receive interview questions in advance to allow time to reflect on their music theory teaching practice. This will be followed by a scheduled zoom interview to discuss your ideas and feedback to the interview prompts for about 15 minutes. Participation will be completely confidential, and no personal identifying information will be disclosed.

The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you agree to participate in the study, please sign and date the consent form and return a digital copy via email to the principal investigator. After you have read, signed, and returned the consent form, the interview questions will be emailed to you for your perusal. An interview will be scheduled within a week to discuss your feedback.

Sincerely,

Daniel Pierce Cather
DME doctoral candidate
[email address redacted]
[phone number redacted]

Appendix C

Consent Form

Title of the Project: College Theory Curriculum: Using the Philosophical Essence of Comprehensive Musicianship to Integrate Composition

Principal Investigator: Daniel Pierce Cather, Doctoral Candidate at Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be 18 years of age or older and be a music educator with a master's degree in music with current or previous experience teaching Music Theory curriculum at the college level. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this research is to determine the viability of integrating music composition more directly into music theory curriculum. It is hypothesized that this pedagogically-sound framework will equip future secondary music educators to better teach composing in their own classrooms. This study seeks to create a curricular framework for teaching music composition in tandem with music theory. It is believed that a music theory curriculum focused more on collaborative music composition can prepare students more comprehensively to train the next generation of music educators in terms of creativity in personal pedagogy practice, effective use of technology, and mastery of music composition.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

Answer a series of interview questions that you will receive by email prior to the interview. The approximate duration of the interview will be between 15-20 minutes.

Interviews will take place via zoom and will be recorded.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study; however, there is potential to directly benefit future music students through the creation of a theory curriculum that better equips them to fulfill the national standard of creative composition in their future classrooms.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms/codes. Interviews will be conducted virtually to ensure privacy.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question and may withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Daniel Pierce Cather. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact Mr. Cather at [redacted] or [redacted] You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Joshua Carver at [redacted]

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

- The researcher has my permission to video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Appendix D

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Appendix E

Interview Questions

1. What is your educational background in music and what do you consider your greatest areas of teaching expertise?
2. Describe your background teaching music theory in terms of levels taught, years of experience, and areas of strength.
3. When teaching music theory, do you reference a textbook? How well do you feel your current theory text or curriculum prepares students to compose or teach composition? Do you believe music majors should have a basic knowledge of how to compose when they graduate?
4. What was your music theory experience like as a college student? How well did it prepare you to teach composition or to compose in idioms that are most relevant to your context? Are you comfortable with composing music?
5. Creating and performing are both National Core Arts Standards for music. Do you feel that K-12 curriculum teaches both equally well? Please elaborate on why you think so. What about college curriculum and why?
6. Do you believe most K-12 music educators are comfortable teaching creativity? Please elaborate.
7. How do you think a lesson template could be constructed to meaningfully integrate composition into a theory lesson?
8. If you taught theory curriculum with more purposeful composition integration, what are some obstacles you envision? What are some benefits you envision?
9. Is there anything that you would like to add about the topic of including composition in music theory curriculum?

Appendix F: Interview Transcripts

Interview Transcript: Participant 1

Researcher: So here is question number one: What is your educational background in music and what do you consider your greatest areas of teaching expertise?

Participant 1: All right, well, I started taking violin lessons when I was five, and I started piano when I was 10. Um, always was doing singing, as well, at church and stuff, so I took lessons up until I went to college. I went to college and got my Bachelor's, Master's, Performer Diploma, and Doctor of Musical Arts all in Violin between the years of 2004 and 2012. And my greatest areas of teaching expertise would be my applied instrument, violin, and viola which I picked up along the way, and then I'm also good at theory and history in music.

Researcher: Okay, great.

Participant 1: And Music Appreciation.

Researcher: Right, right; you can't forget to appreciate that music!

Participant 1: Right!?

Researcher: Very good, thank you; thank you. All right, um so describe your background teaching music theory in terms of levels taught, years of experience, and areas of strength.

Participant 1: Um, on an official level the theory that I've taught has been here at STC Theory One and Theory Two which I guess is equivalent to a year the first year of theory. Um, years of experience, um, trying to remember when I first did it here not my first...maybe...did my picture just go purple?

Researcher: Uh-huh.

Participant 1: Can you still hear me okay though?

Researcher: I can still hear you okay.

Participant 1: Okay, that's weird. Um, maybe I've been doing it for like four or five years here. I don't remember the exact time when I started. Um, on a non-official level I've been doing Theory tutoring before coming here to STC. Um uh, not everyone had strengths in theory, so they'd come to me, and I would be their tutor. Um, let's see, areas of strength, um, I really like basic theory teaching them, you know, the very bottom level of theory, and I love doing Roman numeral analysis with students. Um, I haven't had a chance to do 20th century theory, but I actually like all the extended techniques and matrices and all of that kind of stuff too. So um, I would say the hard stuff and the easy stuff, and I'll leave the in-between stuff for someone else to do. You know—that the boring, you know, just romantic music or something.

Researcher: Right, I like it. Extended techniques—very good. Um, great, now I gotta remember my own questions. Uh, when teaching music theory do you reference a textbook?

Participant 1: I mean, I don't hold a textbook to the students, but I, um, give them photocopies of my...the textbooks that I used for, um, both for like explaining stuff. We go...I use musictheory.net like constantly, which is perfect for first semester of theory, but in case, in some instances, it doesn't go into deep enough detail or give enough examples, so I use like, uh, Tonal Harmony, stuff like that. Um, so I'll photocopy their explanations for some things, and then I'll also photocopy a lot of their examples from their workbooks, and we'll use that as the as their homework.

Researcher: Cool. Very good. Um, let's see...how well do you feel the current text or curriculum prepares students to compose or teach composition?

Participant 1: Um, I think it prepares them well enough if that's what they want to go into, um, because they know how to write music. They know...we talk about consonance and dissonance and that idea; we talk about, um, chord...I guess chord progressions: just knowing like in common western music, if you hear the leading tone, we want it to resolve. We talk about resolution; we talk about, you know, cadences and doing, you know, unexpected things or expected things, and how we/I do try to talk about, you know, why composers would maybe choose to end a piece on a deceptive cadence if they wanted to like shock the audience, or make it funny, or make, you know, they're rebelling against their parents, and it's coming out their music, or something like that. So, I've tried to make it a little practical, uh, knowing that a lot of them are just trying to get the basics of theory, not necessarily actually go into composition, but they could if they wanted to. Now that they know how music functions, and how they can, but now that they know the rules and then can break the rules.

Researcher: Great. Um, let's see—do you believe music Majors should have a basic knowledge of how to compose when they graduate?

Participant 1: I do. I think they should at least know how to compose, even if they're not planning on using it. Um, it's useful. It's good for their brain and good for them to just understand how the process works.

Researcher: Great. Um, what was your music theory experience like as a college student and how well...

Participant 1: Um...

Researcher: ...are you to teach, um, well I guess question 'A' first.

Participant 1: Sure. Well, I mean I had, um...when I went to IU, they actually had more than just four semesters of theory. They had five semesters of theory and five semesters of ear training, which I found to be very helpful. I really enjoyed theory. Um, to me, it's sort of like math, and I like math, so there we go. So, I had I had a fun time in theory as a college student.

Researcher: Very cool. Um, and how well do you think it prepared you to teach composition or compose in idioms that are most relevant to your context?

Participant 1: Um, I did have to do like little composition projects. You know, like, you need to write a little fugue; okay, now you need to write a little minuet; now you need to write a 12-tone composition. Um, I remember one time I did a Gregorian chant, as well. Um, so it prepared me to do little pieces, but um, I don't know...I...you know if they're like, oh now you need to write a symphony, I'd be like well, no...that...just shoot me now. I'm like that wouldn't even work.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 1: Um, and the next question you know are you comfortable with composing music? I don't...I'm creative, but I don't ever feel like composing. I don't have little melodies going in my head where I'm like, 'oh I just got to get this down on paper.' I'm much more comfortable with, um you know, performing someone else's composition. Again, if I needed to do like a 24 bar Fugue for a class I could, but otherwise no I don't. So, I could compose, but I don't want to compose.

Researcher: Sure, that makes sense; very good. Um, great. Let's see—so creating and performing are both National Core Art Standards for music. Do you feel that K-12 curriculum teaches both equally well and kind of why or why not?

Participant 1: Um, this I can only guess because I don't...I don't have public school K-12 teaching experience. Um, at least not necessarily with theory. Um, from the music educators I've talked to here, I think they do include theory. You know, they go over scales and half steps, whole steps, and key signatures and Rhythm and stuff. I don't know...I don't know if they go over how to compose. Um, they might have some improv classes every once in a while, or like have a drone, you know a D major drone, and then be like okay guys we're just gonna try something on top of it. So, I don't...I...but they probably do a little bit more with performing than creating I would say. Especially guessing on, um, how big they're into the whole UIL and competitions and all that. So there the emphasis is probably more on performing than creating I would guess.

Researcher: Sure. And then what about college curriculum and why would why do you think so?

Participant 1: Um, probably the same actually because unless you're actually a declared composition major, you know, you're in ensemble and you're in lessons, and so you do spend more time performing than actually creating. Although I think more and more even people who have no background in it—even students who can barely read music—they come to me and they're like 'oh yeah, I like, you know, I write music and I dabble with stuff.' And I'm like 'how are you doing that when you can't play a scale,' but you know.

Researcher: Right, right.

Participant 1: But maybe, you know, with pop music style they're doing more and more, you know, with their guitar and their synthesizer. Maybe they're writing their own music at home.

Researcher: Right, they're cheating. (laughs) Yeah, right right. I always...you can only create/compose as good as you can perform, I think.

Participant 1: Yeah.

Researcher: If you can't play it, I don't know.

Participant 1: Yeah, I don't know what you're doing then.

Researcher: Right. Uh, let's see. Great, let's see: do you believe most K-12 music educators are comfortable teaching creativity and elaborate?

Participant 1: I mean, I...I think so. I don't know if they're purposefully going about it, though. I don't know if they...if they view what they're doing as part of creativity, or if they're specifically doing exercises with the students for that or if they make them do little composition things. I think they would think that they're comfortable teaching creativity, but I don't know if they do, and I don't know actually if their administrators let them do much outside the standard curriculum, so that I'm not...I'm not quite sure about.

Researcher: Great. Um, let's see: how do you think a lesson template could be constructed to meaningfully integrate composition into a theory lesson?

Participant 1: Um, I don't think it'd be hard at all to make little assignments where they have to write something. Um, especially once they get to the level where they're talking about form. It actually is very normal to integrate a little composition assignment on form. You know, even something like, a round, you know, write a melody that works with itself. Um or um, yeah, fugues, uh, 12 tone is fun because it doesn't have to sound good. So, it can be anything, or you could do a 12 tone in the form of a waltz if you wanted to—like some sort of combining stuff. So um, I think it's it'd be very natural and very normal to integrate, um, a little writing assignment once you get past the whole like F-A-C-E and like Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge or whatever. You know, once we get beyond just reading music. It's well...and I know, you know, when we do Theory Two, we have the whole part-writing and stuff. In a sense, that's being creative within certain boundaries, so.

Researcher: Great. Um, if you taught theory curriculum with more purposeful composition integration what are some obstacles you envision?

Participant 1: Um. (pause)

Researcher: Or do you envision any obstacles?

Participant 1: The only obstacle could be the students not wanting to do it, but that goes for any assignment. Um, I don't know if now there are like AI's that will write their assignment for them. Uh, maybe not/maybe. Maybe at some point that will come. Like, some Theory students will be like 'hey there's this AI that like will do my part-writing for me.' Okay, well, uh and probably they could, it could spit out a 12-tone row for them, but I don't see why you'd need an AI to do that for you. So um, not that many obstacles really it's just more like students would have to get used to doing that where some of them already have a hard enough time with just basic assignments.

Researcher: Sure, sure, right. Take the student ability, yeah.

Participant 1: Yeah, some students might not be very good at it, but you know. It, some, that kind of assignment would almost not be like, well, how well is it done, but like did you do it and like did you do it honestly on your own just for the experience. So yeah, the benefits then, um, it's always good for the brain when you try new things and when you're creative. Um, it makes new neural pathways and all that good stuff. So, I think...I think it would it would maybe also make it more, um, like concrete rather than this abstract thing of like 'okay in some pieces of music there are non-chord tones.' It's like, 'no here in this piece of music I just wrote it; I made some non-chord tones.' So, I think it might help solidify some of the stuff we're trying to teach them if they're actually doing it hands-on in an actual piece of music.

Researcher: Sure. Yeah, sometimes I think there's a disconnect where we'll teach it to them, and they can't apply it to any other area of their musical knowledge. Like it, yeah. Um, great and then finally, is there anything you would like to add about the topic of including composition music theory curriculum?

Participant 1: Um. I think it's a good idea! (laughter)

Researcher: Great and that's actually it. So, okay thanks a lot, and uh yeah, I appreciate it very much!

Participant 1: Yeah, no problem at all! This is for your, uh, dissertationy thing?

Researcher: Yes, let's see. I'm gonna try to knock off the recording.

Interview Transcript: Participant 2

Researcher: All right. Cool, well thanks again for agreeing with this; appreciate it very much.

Participant 2: I'm not sure what kind of expertise I have here, but I will offer my best.

Researcher: No and it'll be great. So, let's see, first question: what is your educational background in music and what do you consider your greatest areas of teaching expertise?

Participant 2: Okay well I'll try to sum this up quickly, but my background is extensive. I've been teaching at the college level for 30 years now and have pretty much taught everything in music curriculum. Um, my area of expertise or my major is voice and choir. Um, but I fell into teaching Theory and uh and liked it. And uh, so I don't know, I think my expertise is kind of in a little bit of everything without sounding like I'm bragging because I've taught everything. I've taught theory for 30 years; I've taught music appreciation for 30 years; I've had choirs for 35-40 years. I taught voice, you know more than 30 years with voice. So, I just feel...I feel comfortable and solid in all of those areas. So yeah.

Researcher: And the next one's kind of related: describe your background teaching music theory in terms of levels taught, years of experience, and areas of strength.

Participant 2: Um, well I have taught theory for, um, 30 uh yes 30 years: yeah 24 here at South Texas College and six years at Allen County Community College in Kansas which is where I first started teaching theory. I was the only, uh, music instructor at/for the entire school. It's a very small school, and so I had baptism by fire, basically having to come in and hit the ground running teaching these classes. So, I've taught all levels of undergraduate theory: Theory One, Two, Three, and Four; Sight-Singing/Ear Training One, Two, Three, and Four many, many, many, many times. More times than I even know that I've taught. Um, I...having taught all levels of theory, I would say my preference is Theory One and Two. Um, because I feel like my personality or where I feel really comfortable is particularly dealing with beginners, and uh, um, although I don't have a lot of patience in some aspects of my life, for some reason I have a lot of patience with students at that level. Uh so, um, I feel that that's probably where I'm most comfortable, but as you know last year, I did teach Theory Three and Four and really enjoyed it. I hadn't taught in about, I don't know, nine/ten years, something like that, and um, really did enjoy the experience, but also realized that now One and Two is probably where I would prefer to be but can teach the others if needed. So yeah.

Researcher: Very good. Very, very good. Um, let's see when teaching music theory do you reference a textbook?

Participant 3: I do, um, I generally reference particularly Koska and Payne, um, for, um—that's the Tonal Harmony book I believe—for particularly for part-writing. I like the way that they teach part-writing. Um, the way they just break down every rule into a chapter so the students can immerse themselves in trying to master those particular concepts to where it becomes second nature—at least that's my hope. Um, and I also use Benward, and Benward has lots of really great exercises for, um, just practicing, practicing, practicing how to build chords; how to do this how to do that; um, and then I have a lot of worksheets and things I've just kind of come up with

on my own where I felt like maybe, particularly with our students at our school coming in with sometimes next to no background in in music theory at all: they can't read, they can't count, they can't do any of these things, where I've come up with exercises that I...that sometimes are a little simpler. Um, breaking it down to an even lower level so that they can practice the skills they need. Um, that they lack so that they can actually do the work that's in the...in the textbook. So that's kind of how, um, kind of what I do.

Researcher: Great, um, and how well do you feel your current theory text or curriculum prepares students to compose or teach composition?

Participant 2: You know, I've really thought about this because, uh, I don't think it does to be honest. Um, there's really no aspect of creativity in it at all. Even when we do, uh, in the Koska and Payne book in Theory Two on how to write a melody, it's still with very, very, very strong rules and constraints, but I think that's also good because it's like learning. You know, when you learn, um, you know we learned to speak and communicate before we learn to read and write and so for students who have a background, you know, who have an interest in composition are probably already writing music so it kind of gives them the music grammar that they need. Like what makes a good melody, what give you a feeling of coming to a cadence point, particularly in tonal harmony. Um, so I do think that that aspect is good. Um and, you know also I feel maybe I drop the ball some there myself in that there's so much...so many fundamental things that they have to know that I can't, um, there's just no time within the 15-week parameter of the semester to maybe squeeze in some time for some creativity. Um, other than the really basic, um, how do you do this and even when, you know, I have them...when we learn harmonic progression, when they get to pick their own chords, they're like afraid to pick anything other than following the circle progression, of getting outside of the circle progression. Um and, making something that maybe sounds fresh or original. Um and I, and you know, I just you know, I don't know how I could find a way, um, to make that better for them because I do think it would be a good thing, but I don't know if there's time with our student, with our students, with our student population.

Researcher: Sure. I understand; yeah, I think that too. Um, let's see—do you believe music majors should have a basic knowledge of how to compose when they graduate?

Participant 2: Yes. If nothing else, uh, I tell them this all the time that I, that I use music theory in my own teaching, um, every day. Um, when I, every time I sit down at the piano to play for one of my voice students and my piano skills are adequate, but they're not, um, they're not, you know, nobody's gonna hire me for anything, and I also have actual physical injuries to my left hand, and so there are some things where my left hand does not work the way I want and so I frequently on the fly, you know, instinctively know what to put in, what to leave out in the music to try to stay true to the composer's original intention, but at a skill level that I can kind of at least kind of throw it down on the piano and get through it enough for them. In choir, uh, you need to be able to—I guess this isn't so much my own composition but how to maybe arrange something or adapt something—um, my choir as you know is not always very large, but I want sometimes to do things with more extended harmonies and look for something that's written for a six part or eight part choir and I don't have enough voices. What can I do to, um, make that work with my group? How can I adapt it? What part can I leave out? What could be covered by

the piano? What is the most important part of the chord, um, and those are things I just do instinctively now because of years of experience. But, if you don't know how to look at the harmony, you don't know how, um, to change something on the fly. You don't know how to read a C clef or how to, uh, rewrite the C clef into a clef you're comfortable reading, which is usually—not usually—which is what I do if that happens. Um, they need to be able to know how to do that, and I don't know if they always get that.

Researcher: Right, great. Yeah, and I think with some of these questions, maybe they missed that, but like arranging, I think too. You know, of being grouped in there that, uh, is definitely practical for them.

Participant 2: And if they, if they're doing Baroque music and they want to do it stylistically, uh, particularly in voice you have a Da Capo Aria, you need to, uh, you should if you want to follow performance practice, um, do ornamentation on the return of A. And how do you come up with ornaments, and uh, you know, I don't always feel that I come up with the best, but I always try.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 2: Always try to come up with something

Researcher: Right.

Participant 2: Um, to be stylistically correct.

Researcher: For sure. Um, what was your music theory experience like as a college student?

Participant 2: My experience I feel was really good. I had excellent teachers, um, good mentors. Um, I enjoyed it. I was one of those rare voice people who like actually got theory, and enjoyed it, and, um, even kind of toyed around with the idea, uh, in in grad school of maybe, uh, thinking about majoring in theory. My...one of my theory professors—well Maribeth's dad—was kind of pushing me in that direction, but I didn't, um, I don't think it probably would have been the right choice for me down the road, but uh, it was kind of interesting to think: what if? Um, if I had taken more theory, maybe I would be able to compose. I don't know; I don't know. Um, but I did think, you know, I took a vast amount of different types of theory courses. Um, you know undergraduate just normal Theory One, Two, Three, Four, um, Form and Analysis, and then grad school, I took whatever they offered. The...whatever special topics they were offering at that time, so I took a wide variety of things. I even took, I did take, uh, a Counterpoint class, uh, which was very scary for me. Um, and other, you know, other special topics. I even took Theory Pedagogy when I was doing doctoral work, which I'm really glad I took that class, uh, not knowing I would end up teaching Theory. So, um, very wide...a lot amount of theory courses that I took.

Researcher: Good. Um—and I guess you kind of touched on this—how well did it prepare you to teach composition or compose in idioms that are most relevant to your context?

Participant 2: Not at all. (laughs) To be really honest. Um, the only class I did composition in which was Counterpoint and that's why it scared me. Because I had never, uh, been forced to compose. You know, I had learned how to harmonize a given melody, one that was given to me.

I feel more comfortable doing that with...than coming up with the melody on my own. Um, so it really didn't prepare me in that, uh, respect, um, but you know, I can analyze the crap out of something, but as far as, uh, or arrange it, or redo it in some way. But actually coming up with the idea, um, you know I would have to say sadly it did not prepare me.

Researcher: And I guess that kind of is linked to the last part—are you comfortable with composing music?

Participant 2: Absolutely not; absolutely not. Um, I'm very intimidated by it.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 2: To me, to be really honest. I just, you know, I, um, when I had to write a two-part invention, you know, it was...it was just horrifying, and I did it. I wrote it, and it's technically correct and did all the modulations and the theory aspect of it. Is it inspired and very creative? Probably not, but it is technically correct.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 2: Yeah.

Researcher: Let's see, uh, creating and performing are both National Core Arts Standards for music. Do you feel that K-12 curriculum teaches both equally well and why or why not?

Participant 2: I really don't know because, I mean, I did teach K-12 actually one very long year of my life, um back in the 80s, back in the 80s, since a long time ago. Um and uh, I did try and add some aspect of improvisation with students. Um, we had Orff instruments in our/my classroom, and you know, I...we would be learning certain, um you know, they play a little, um, what's the word, like a drone underneath something. Or they would have a pentatonic scale, and then I would say 'just play anything.' Well, one part of the group played a drone to kind of just give the, um, the piece the sense of a harmonic foundation. Then, uh, have them improvise within the pentatonic scale a little bit, um, but again I met with these kids, I don't know, two hours a week.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 2: You know, so how much could we do. Um, I did teach the older students how to count, that's for sure. They learned how to read rhythm, which I think is very, very important. Um but, I don't know what's going on in K-12 curriculum today because I'm not in that world. I don't teach Music Ed. so I really don't feel like I can answer that question. Um uh, actually you know, on what is going on in K-12. I hope they are.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 2: I hope they are.

Researcher: Sure. Yeah um, and then what about college curriculum in terms of performing versus creativity and why or why not?

Participant 2: Oh, I...you know, I don't think the creativity is being taught like it should. Um, it certainly wasn't taught for me, and I can't really. Um, I know within my classroom, with my theory students again as much as I would like to be able to offer them, um, I don't know if like I said in the 15 weeks of so much that we have/were required by the state with the course learning outcomes required by the state of Texas, um, where we could shoehorn that in.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 2: And still cover everything that we're supposed to cover, and I think we're doing students a disservice actually. You know this has really made me think about this, and um, maybe people wouldn't get to be my age and be afraid to compose music.

Researcher: Right, yeah.

Participant 2: It's kinda sad; it's kinda sad. (laughs)

Researcher: Um, yeah and that's been, you know, in the...of course the irony of all this is like these are great ideas, I've enjoyed reading and writing about them, but I still feel the same time constraints pull, you know, in terms of integrating it...

Participant 2: Yeah.

Researcher: ...currently while juggling these things. It's like I haven't reinvented, you know, curriculum, but definitely the thought is, I think, there was a point I don't know in the last 70 years or so where it's almost like they made composing intimidating. You know, or like essays like Milton Babbitt of like who cares if you like music. It became so esoteric that it was sort of like Beethoven can compose and the rest of us are just you know...so I think that a lot of, uh, the guess with all this is a lot of K-12 teachers feel the same pressure and don't integrate it for kids and then that filters up all the way through college, where you know performance continues to be a big pressure, um, and then a lot of us come up short, I think, or at least don't know how to connect the dots what we're learning with how to apply it. Um but, sorry that was probably too much editorializing.

Participant 2: No, I mean I agree. Yeah.

Researcher: Uh, let's see, so question six: do you believe that most K-12 music educators are comfortable teaching creativity? Please elaborate. I know this one may be kind of not easy to answer.

Participant 2: Well, I, again um, I don't know what, uh, K-12 music educators are doing, but if they've been taught the same way I've been taught, I would say the answer is probably they don't feel comfortable teaching creativity. Um, I...you know, when I did teach public schools which of course been a long time ago, um, you know, I would try to incorporate movement, um, with the little ones. You know, just trying to teach them like steady beat to play music, and we would walk around in a circle, and I would have them, um, you know move their bodies to it, uh, to try just to connect physically with what they were hearing or how the music made them feel. Um, or you know, activities where you they would listen to classical music, um, you know, Saint-Saëns' *The Carnival of the Animals* is always really great. Um and, you know, they have

piece of paper and crayon and they just, they move with the colors to/with what they're hearing and that type of thing. So that's an aspect of creativity or at least emotional connection to what they're hearing or how to physically move to the music. Um but, as far as actually creating music, um you know, I don't, again, I don't know if they have time.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 2: Um, the arts are not, uh, given the, you know, the amount of time, particularly in elementary school, that, uh, they should be considering all the studies show how what a huge impact, um you know, all aspects of the arts, visual, performing arts, um, do for children's development, their self-esteem, their ability to be creative, their ability to express themselves. Yeah, so I would venture to guess that they probably are not comfortable teaching it. There's probably always that one crazy one out there who's just all out there doing it, but I would say for the norm probably not.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 2: But that's just my guess. Not really 100 percent sure on that.

Researcher: Sure. Uh let's see, how do you think a lesson template could be constructed to meaningfully integrate composition into a theory lesson?

Participant 2: I'm not really sure. Um, to be, I mean just to be really, really honest with that. Um, I would be open to learning something about that or having someone help me with something like that. I do try, um, when we're learning like non-chord tones and different things like that to give students a very, very basic four-part thing with just like nothing in it and have them add non-chord tones, as a way to, you know, dress up the piece to make it more interesting, um and that type of thing. Uh and again, you know that would take up a whole day of class or a whole week right that I can't sacrifice, but I would like to do more of that.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 2: I really would. Um, and be able to spend more time on harmonic progression—on how to pick chords that, um you know, make your music not sound so predictable. You know being grammatically correct, but you know again in creative writing in language, you know, it's not always about writing the most perfectly constructed sentence. It's what's in that sentence and what and how do you make it fresh and interesting, um, to capture your reader's attention or the listener's attention. And, it's the same in music, but again if you don't have that good grammatical foundation in either, it's not going to read well; it's not going to sound good; it's not going to be so, it's like how do we find that balance.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 2: I'm not really sure how to do more than what I already am and be able to do it in a way that it doesn't take away from what we're required to do.

Researcher: Yeah, that makes sense. Um let's see, if you taught theory curriculum with more purposeful composition integration what are some obstacles you envision and...

Participant 2: Time. The benefits are huge. You know, I...just to not have students feel that the creative process is intimidating, and I think a lot of that for me with my feelings of intimidation about composition, uh, come from a lack of not doing it and then also that need I have for perfection and that need for, um, making, you know, making ourselves vulnerable and putting a part of ourself out there that's unique to us and then having your teacher critique it. I think could be quite, um well I know, it's quite painful.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 2: If they don't like it. If there's so much wrong with it.

Researcher: Right, and um, I think knowing for our students that there will be quite a bit of mediocrity in which they...what they generate but kind of being okay with that. That, uh, they'll get better through that. I don't know.

Participant 2: And you know I know that on an intellectual level that you have to start somewhere, but emotionally it's still hard. There's something you worked really hard on that you thought was good and then find out, you know, it's... you know, it's not really all that great, but you know, who are we to judge what is great? Right? So um, I don't know, but I/you know, I think the benefits are huge. Um, just gaining confidence in themselves and being able to express themselves: I think that's really what it's all about.

Researcher: All right and then, finally is there anything you would like to add about the topic of including composition and music theory curriculum?

Participant 2: Uh, I'd just like to be able to find a way to do it, and I don't know how, but um, you know, it wouldn't necessarily...if there was a way to like add little bits of it into every aspect of theory along the way. Um, even when we're learning fundamentals, um you know, learning about chords, you know, what would be a fun way to arpeggiate a chord. I don't know. I mean, you know, as a way of just breaking it up. Um, I know whenever we start talking about inverting chords, you know, a lot of students that just really like blows their minds, 'like oh my God.' You know, I'm like well, 'you listen to music like this all the time.' If it were written in such a block, you know, how bland is that? And it's not very interesting. Um, but um, it's trying to find a way. Maybe just do it in such a sneaky way—not sneaky, but um, subtle way. Yes, sneaky, uh, to where that they don't even necessarily realize that that's what they're learning so that then maybe they're not scared by it or intimidated by it. Uh, you know, I always say that I... when people ask me why I don't compose, and I...you know I said, 'there's just not a song in me that's trying to get out,' but I think maybe there is. I don't know. I don't know. Yeah, it's kind of sad, but yeah.

Researcher: Yeah, no well, thank you a lot for, um, your time and taking the time to answer. Um yeah, I agree and I...the sneaky way I think is right, I don't know, where I think that would also maybe be a solution for not dominating class time if it was really, really small snippets of something and kind of simple, but aligned with what they're trying to learn for the week.

Participant 2: Right, and I mean, I don't, I don't know um, if I could come up with it because again this is my own, I guess, my own aspects of low self-esteem, and I don't feel like I'm creative enough to come up with it, um, if I'm being really brutally honest with myself. Um, it...you know I always say I'm not a very creative person, but then I look around and I'm like 'yes I am.' I'm a very creative person. I look at my home; I look in my garden; I look at this and, um and uh, it's like yeah. Or even just interpreting music—being able to take what's on the page and bring it to life takes...it is an art form in itself, and I think that is something that I do very well. I just can't imagine coming up with the ideas for it myself as a composer.

Researcher: I think arranging is a creative process or, like you said, being able to on the fly reharmonize something, you know, I think all of those things matter too and to some extent equipping students to do all that is stuff they'll almost use more.

Participant 2: It's practical. Yeah.

Researcher: Yeah, um yeah, and with composing, I mean, I think if students do it more there's a component of a craft. I like thinking of like Brahms would reference it kind of as a craft or kind of being okay to just, uh, like practice it I guess, you know, and not have to...

Participant 2: Noodle around yeah, yeah...

Researcher: ...alleviate the pressure of always the product...what the product is created.

Participant 2: Right.

Researcher: Yeah, well appreciate your thoughts very much and...

Participant: Thank you.

Researcher: ...I feel kind of the same that, yeah, there's some great ideas and time is such a pressured factor that it's hard to integrate, um, but same way, maybe this will inspire me to see how I can sneak more things in, um...

Participant 2: Well, I'm always open for suggestion. I'm...I try not to be the kind of person to think that my way is the only way. Um, I'm always open to try something new, and um, that's how we grow as people and that's how hopefully, you know, the teaching doesn't become stagnant.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 2: Um, and that I'm always discovering new things, uh you know, but teaching voice even within myself as a singer on, um, things that still trying to deal with issues with my own voice, and um, challenging myself with different types of literature to try and always...still trying to become better at what I do.

Researcher: Yeah, I think that's...I think that's great. I think that's the only way we keep fresh, you know, because otherwise there's kind of no in between. Either we do...you think that way or else you kind of become stagnant.

Participant 2: Yeah.

Researcher: That's good.

Participant 2: Alrighty.

Researcher: I'm gonna bump off the recording thing.

Interview Transcript: Participant 3

Researcher: All right, um, great. So, let's see...so, first question: uh, what is your educational background in music and what do you consider your greatest areas of teaching expertise?

Participant 3: Yeah, so all my degrees are in music. So, my undergraduate is in music education. Um, I was studying, um, I was a flute player, but I was taking composition lessons that whole time too, but the little school I went to didn't have a composition degree, so I did a music education degree, and then when I finished that I went, um—I did that at Pittsburg State University, a small little school in Kansas—and then when I finished that I went to Wichita State University and did a masters in theory/composition—that's basically just a composition degree with a few extra theory classes is what it was—and then after I did that I went and taught, uh, community college for four years. I was a band director and taught music theory in the morning and then did the band and the jazz band in the afternoons. And then after I did that, I got into the University of Oklahoma and did my doctorate in composition. And after I finished that up, I taught adjunct for a couple years, and then I got my job down here in South Texas. So that's kind of my journey: how I got to where I am. As far as the classes I teach the most, I had the most experience, with...gosh, I've been teaching music theory since I was a master's student because they had me teaching some theory classes. Um, I've taught composition lessons a long time too. I've taught all the ear training and all the different types of theory courses...graduate level too. I've taught, um, just about everything really. Um, but as far as the ones I've taught the most: every single semester I have theory, ear training, and composition. I do those all the time. And the other ones, now that we have more help at the school—the other professors—I don't have to teach everything all the time like I used to. So, I'm kind of stuck in what I got now, which is kind of nice for a change.

Researcher: Sure, yeah, that makes sense. Yeah, and by doing community college, you know what it is to juggle, uh, well and to juggle everything too.

Participant 3: Yeah, you have to do everything. I know when I did community college, I was the band director; I also had to do the Jazz Band; I taught theory in the mornings, but I had to teach lessons during the day. You know, um, saxophone lessons, uh you know, flute lessons, clarinet, whatever the lessons were because I was the instrumental person.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 3: And uh, I had to teach music appreciation at night. I mean it was a lot of classes. I think it prepared me, uh, to teach a lot of courses though. So sometimes when professors get their job, they teach only like three classes or so, and they don't...haven't really had the experience of teaching lots of courses, but the community college level you get experience teaching a lot of stuff, and you have to learn really quickly. And so, it's helpful actually.

Researcher: Sure. Great, um, let's see...so I think we kind of caught this—um, in terms of your background teaching music theory, levels taught, years of experience, and areas of strength within theory?

Participant 3: Yeah, so um, how many years have I been teaching it? Uh gosh, I don't know. 24 years maybe? 25 years—I'm kind of guessing. I started teaching maybe when I was...well when I was doing my master's, but if I don't count those years and I count actual teaching as I am the only professor or the only person, probably 20 or 20 years plus—something like that. And the undergraduate theory I've done more than any of the other classes, but I've done all the others quite a bit too. Um, right now I teach Theory One through Four. I also do Ear training two through Four, but when I got my job down here—when I first got my job down here—I taught everything. That was all the theories, all the ear trainings, all the form/analysis, orchestration, I mean I was everything. So now it's a little better.

Researcher: Right. Yeah. Kind of the best of both worlds. You know—the fun of having done the upper level and, um, but then being able to streamline...that's kind of nice.

Participant 3: It is kind of nice, and I think I like my schedule. I mean...I still teach more than a lot of professors would in my position, but basically I teach one or two classes in the morning, and then I have some lessons in the afternoon and that works out pretty well. You know, teach some Theory, teach a couple lessons for composition. And so that's been pretty decent for me—even though my course load looks a little crazy compared to some.

Researcher: Sure. Yeah, that's nice. Good, uh let's see—so when teaching music theory do you reference a textbook?

Participant 3: Well, okay, no not really. Um, I make students buy a textbook but not because I use it and not because I make them bring it to class or anything like that. I make them buy a textbook because they need to have a reference tool for their profession.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: And they need to have something when I'm no longer teaching them. They need to have something to consult and so my curriculum is based off the text, but I'm not actually using the textbook in the class. I don't have it with me, usually. I don't have the students bring it. I mean, I know what's in the book, so I teach what's there, but I still make them get a book, and I try to do a low-cost option. The book we have is a hundred dollars, and they use that for all four semesters, so that puts it about 25 bucks a semester, which I think is pretty good. I just got some training on doing some OEM, and...or some... Did I say...open educational...OER—open educational resources—and I'm thinking about, if my colleagues are okay with it, I'm thinking about maybe moving us to some open educational books. There are some good ones out now.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: And then the students don't have to pay anything. And uh, so I'm looking at maybe doing that, but yeah, I do use a book, but I don't actively use it, and I don't make them bring it, but I make people get it because they need to have a reference book.

Researcher: Sure. Good, yeah, we've I think lately done more OER too or, you know, seen some more pressure to do so, and of course our students, you know, often socioeconomically it's good for them if we can save them a dollar.

Participant 3: Yeah, yeah. I agree; I agree completely, and now that there's some OER materials that are actually quite good, um, I think it's a viable option, and so I'm looking at maybe going that way as well. And I think it's probably the way a lot of things are going to go.

Researcher: Sure, yeah. Sure, um let's see. How well do you feel your current theory text or curriculum prepares students to compose or teach composition?

Participant 3: Um, not really much at all. Um, I don't...I don't think it really does, but I'm not really looking for books that do. Um, so I mean all books have usually have some activities or something that could maybe be, um, reimagined as an activity, but um, I don't think it really uses too much, and I don't emphasize that much in my classes either. So, it's not a...it's, uh, not a big deal for me.

Researcher: Sure. Cool. Um, let's see. Do you believe music Majors should have a basic knowledge of how to compose when they graduate?

Participant 3: Well, okay, I'm not really sure that I do completely agree with that. Um, I think it's okay to have an introduction maybe. Um, but I don't know that average music majors necessarily need to know how to compose—much the same way the average clarinet player doesn't need to know how to play the trumpet.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: And so, uh, for me composition is as another step where you use the theory tools. Um, or maybe don't use the theory tools—know whether you are using the theory tools or not—and creating, but does the average music major need to have composition skills? I'm not so sure they do, except maybe in an introduction way to maybe get them used to being creative in some sort of way. I think the creative aspect and I don't know that that has to be done necessarily through composing. It can be done through improvisation. It can be done through all kinds of different means. So classical composition training, as I understand it, I don't know how necessary it is for everybody.

Researcher: Sure. Yeah, great. Um, what was your music theory experience like as a college student?

Participant: Well, I went to a small school, and we had a lot of theory. We had to take five theories, and then we had Form and Analysis and Orchestration and Counterpoint. So, we had way more than the curriculum I teach now. Um, but I think at the time you could have degrees that were bigger than 120 hours or 124 hours, and so I think maybe in, um, maybe in earlier times some of the music degrees had more stuff. And also, I came from a smaller school where I think it might have been easier to do some of that stuff. So, my experience is I had way more theory than what the current students do now here at this school where I teach now. Um, I would love for the students to have that experience, but it's not possible with these degree plans needing to get people out in four years or maybe four and a half years. It's just not possible.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: And so, I think we do the best of what we can with what we can do. But yeah, I think a lot of people my age and older probably had more theory than the students do today.

Researcher: Sure. Yeah, that makes sense or seems relatable. Um, and it has been kind of a common theme from others I've talked to with theory also. I mean, there's so much nuts and bolts to actually get them through—just to get them functioning in theory that time is definitely a factor, even within that time we have with them. Um, yeah that makes sense a lot. Um, let's see: how well do you feel the theory sequence prepared you to teach composition or composing idioms that are most relevant to your context?

Participant 3: Well, that's a good question. Um, I'm not sure because my composition teachers were my theory teachers. So, in the morning, I saw them for theory, but I also saw them for my lessons, and so for me, it was the same person. And, I had in my undergrad/graduate years I had two different people, but they were...they were still my theory professors, and so for me: yes it did prepare me to teach that because it was the same guy teaching me all the stuff, and the classes were small because I went to a really small school, and so sometimes the theory classes were even more like a lesson because there might only be four or five of us in some of those. And so, yes, I think, yeah, I was prepared to do that, but not because the curriculum was necessarily purposely built that way, but just because it was the nature of the environment I was in, so...

Researcher: Yeah, that makes sense too. Yeah, and the composition students probably get a different take on it because they get to kind of integrate theory and composition simultaneously all through the theory sequence.

Participant 3: Yeah, I think that's right, and so um, some of the professors I had would ask us to write little exercises and do little things for theory class. It always seemed to me that those of us who were in lessons always had better results than the people who weren't, and I think that's maybe one of the reasons I don't do it too much in my classes is because the people who don't have any training in it oftentimes find themselves really lost trying to do it.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: Yeah.

Researcher: Makes sense too. Great, um, and the last question—of course it feels kind of silly—are you comfortable with composing music?

Participant 3: You know, I mean, yeah, because I mean that's what I am. I'm actually a composer who happens to teach theory.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: I have some colleagues who are theorists who teach theory, and that's what they do. They're theorists, and the funny thing is they actually do composition in their classes. They do little exercises and have them write little projects and stuff.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: And I'm the guy that is the composer with all the training, and I don't really...I don't really do it. I will have students compose a little bit at the end of Theory Four, um, when they're using 12-tone rows because it forces them to use a system in place, and it relies on them not having to be creative from the beginning because there's already a system in place. And...but, even doing that I feel like I have to take a week of a unit just to explain how you begin...how you start, how to use the tools of notation, um, programs and things like that. So even then, it's like using doing a lot of things just to do the one little project.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 3: Sometimes, I'll have students do improvisational things. A lot of times I'll do this in ear training—so, for example, like a parallel period or a contrasting period. And, I have one student sing the first phrase, end on a half cadence...have the second student make up a phrase to go with the first phrase. So, they're trying to, um, improvisation with each other, but then it comes out sounding like a parallel period or a contrasting period or something like that. So, I might have students do things like that, and then also you know of course there's always activities where it, I guess, it might be called composing.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: Like you give them a figured bass line, and you say, 'you need to put all the parts in.'

Researcher: Right.

Participant 3: Well, some would say well that's composing, but I don't think it's composing. I think it's just following contrapuntal rules and harmonic rules to come up with an idiom that is standard from a long time ago.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: Um, so I don't think of that as composing really so to speak. So, but with that being said, I do do a little bit at the end of Theory Four. This is after they've already covered all their curriculum, and I feel like there's more of a chance of them having a tool set to work with. Um, I found that when even when I train composers, if I get them before they've had any theory, it's really tough.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: It is tough because they don't have a tool set. It's like they open up the toolbox and they're looking in there and they see a pair of pliers and a screwdriver and that's all they got. They don't have a ratchet set yet. They don't have a hammer yet. They don't have any of these stuff yet. And it's really, sometimes, really challenging, and so for me it's been—as odd as it is—I'm the one that's the composer teaching...happened to be teaching theory that I don't actually use those tools. I think it gives me a different perspective teaching theory though. I think I teach theory differently than a lot of my colleagues do because I'm coming at it from a composition perspective, and when I look at harmonic idioms and I look at different things I'm like this is what the composers tend to do, and this is how they tend to do it, and this is why they

tend to do it. Um, so I think that training has given me a different insight into how to teach theory, but I don't know the benefit of using composition in theory classes to try to teach concepts, which is why I was telling you about Dr. Mann because she does feel completely different than me. She's like, yes, if I am going to teach binary form, I'm going to have students write a binary. That's how, you know, that's how she does it, and so and I think it's valid. I don't...I don't think that's, uh, I think it's a perfectly valid way. Right? If you're gonna teach fugue, try to have 'em make a fugue.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: ...but, I just found that over my years of teaching, the tools that people need to actually be creative even within the confines of trying to write a binary is beyond the training they've received in theory class.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: And like we were talking earlier, there are so many things I gotta get to just to make them nuts and bolts proficient.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: Just to get them so that they can get to the next step. I just, like, I don't have time to train the next step in being creative.

Researcher: Yeah, that makes sense.

Participant 3: Yeah, so I'm not against using composition in theory. A lot of people do and do it very successfully. Um, some of my teachers did it. Um, I just personally think it's a separate thing, just like I wouldn't teach clarinet lessons in theory class.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: No, I wouldn't teach, you know, snare drum in theory class. I don't tend to teach composition. I just use that knowledge I have to help teach theory.

Researcher: Sure, yeah great. Yeah, no that's very helpful. Um, yeah, and I mean all that seems relatable to me, and you know first semester students too, like they're limited too by their performing. You know, that they can't...they also don't have the tools to play much for brainstorming, and yeah it just takes a while to get them to that point. For sure.

Participant 3: It's really hard with a freshman. Let's say she plays the flute, right?

Researcher: Right.

Participant 3: But maybe she's not very good at it yet. She's a freshman and we're asking her to potentially compose, and she doesn't have the skill set on an instrument yet.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: And this makes it really challenging. Now some students as you know, come to us really well formed, and they've got...they've got the skills. They have...they have it.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 3: And yeah, and some students are ready to begin that process right away.

Researcher: Right, yeah. I've seen that too, or it'll just it can be all over the place even with a first semester student, like, you just don't know what experience they come in with. Yeah.

Participant 3: And you can sometimes have students that'll come in and they're really good on a DAW. They can do some sequencing, and then she makes cinematic music, and they can do some pretty cool stuff, but that doesn't translate too well into common practice harmonic idioms that we're asking them to build a foundation from.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 3: And so, yeah, it's a real challenge I think so...

Researcher: Yeah, yeah, or they'll...they won't know if...they won't have answers to why they're doing what they're doing, you know, on the harmonic end, but they're better with the technology. Sometimes it glosses over some of their weaknesses as a musician, you know. For sure.

Participant 3: Yeah, it's...some of them make some amazing things and don't even know what they're doing, you know, and...

Researcher: That's true too.

Participant 3: We want to foster that type of creativity, but we want it to be at least informed, and I think sometimes it's hard to be informed about it until you've had several classes of theory first.

Researcher: Sure. Right, that makes sense. Um, let's see...so creating and performing are both National Core Arts Standards for music. Do you feel that the K-12 curriculum teaches both equally well and why or why not?

Participant 3: No, I don't, I don't think so.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 3: I think, um, I know there's standards, but I think a lot of students don't really know how to read music by the time they come to college, and I don't mean read music as in look at a piece of music and say is that a B flat. They can do that. What I'm saying is open up a score and say that's a chord. What chord is that? Or um, I don't think most...I don't think the K-12 curriculum actually teaches music. I think it teaches button pushing to rhythms, and I think that's why it's so challenging to do what we do at the college level is because we're dealing with a mixed bag of people who maybe can play an instrument really well, but they don't know anything about music.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 3: You know, yeah, so I don't think the K-12 curriculum does. Now some schools have theory curriculum and that includes a composition component in high school. I mean I had high school theory, and we did composition in high school theory, and I had a wonderful experience before I even got to college. And so, some students have that experience, and I think in that regard in the school systems that are...that are able to, um, provide that service they probably are preparing them pretty close to what they need.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: The students that come out of high school with an AP score of say, a four—they probably are where they should be to start off.

Researcher: Sure, right.

Participant 3: Yeah. The average...the average student who hasn't had any theory in high school? I don't think they're prepared. I don't think they're ready.

Researcher: Sure. Yeah that makes sense to me, and you know, I...my high school was so small that we didn't have some of those options, but I played piano lessons since second grade, so I think without some supplemental thing...I think if it had all been up to fifth grade trumpet through high school for me, you know, or other folks to be in, you'd be in the same boat. Yeah that makes sense.

Participant 3: Yeah, I think you're right. The students who had piano like yourself or maybe started on the violin early, something like that...

Researcher: Yeah, sure.

Participant 3: They're probably fine. Um, the reality is depending on where you went to school, you may or may not even have had private lessons on your instrument. When I was in school it was very, very common that everyone started applied private lessons when you were in middle school, and you just...you had a lesson. You, your mom and dad found a teacher, and you had to go take a lesson. That's just how everyone was doing it, but a lot of students, you know, they don't have applied lessons on their instruments. So, they're a little behind. They only get what they learn in band class, and then they don't have any theory training or, like you, if they didn't start on the piano, then they don't have any understanding of harmonic concepts if they play a single line instrument. So, yeah. I don't know that there's a way to fix it really. I mean, I've thought about it. I like...I don't know. It's not the public-school teacher's fault. I mean they're doing the best they can do with what they have. It's just a systemic thing. I don't know how it could have changed. I'm not sure.

Researcher: Sure, yeah. Yeah, I'll joke, you know, with my students for...that I wish I could time travel, you know, with them or for them. Like for...for finding accompanists, I know that there's just...they can learn to perform really well, and they...but if they've missed these sort of nine or ten years of, I don't know, music literacy you want to say, then they just...they struggle as accompanists because the time investment is too...you know they invest too much time, and they kind of don't have the ability to just kind of—you hate to say hack their way through it—

and you know be successful with minimal practice, but I definitely see, I see that a lot for sure.

Participant 3: Yeah, I agree. Yeah.

Researcher: Yeah. Um, let's see...and so maybe we kind of got this already, um, what about the college curriculum and why, uh, with regard to you know teaching performance and composition equally well?

Participant 3: Yeah, I think...well okay, so we're just starting a composition degree, so I've tried to beef up the theory offerings in that degree because I'm looking at my experience, and I'm like, yeah...you gotta have if you're gonna be a composer, you just simply have to have more classes and those things. And so does the average music major get enough theory and/or composition stuff? The answer is no. I don't think so, and does a composition major get enough? Well, the answer is probably yes or more so than anybody else. You know, um, the average composition major probably has a few more classes such as counterpoint, orchestration, some contemporary techniques...things that are very common to the composers. Are they more prepared in the end in that regard from a theory sense? Yes, probably so.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: Um, the average music major though, say like the trombone major, or the singer? No; I don't think four semesters of lower level and then a form and analysis class is enough.

Researcher: Right. Sure.

Participant 3: I just don't think that's sufficient, but once again there's no way to fix it because there's mandates that say you have to get degree plans under a certain number of hours. So, you know, I think the degrees have been watered down over the last several decades, in order to get them smaller, so that students can get through in the four years, and, and so yeah, I don't think...I don't think students in K through 12 are prepared well enough, and I don't think students at the undergraduate level are prepared well enough for theory and/or composition.

Researcher: Sure. Yeah, that makes sense. Yeah, kind of a shame so...too. I remember graduating, it seemed like a ton of hours at the undergrad level by the time I got out, and I was glad for, you know, for them. You know, it's like...sure, I'll take the maximum of whatever I can just to, um, so for sure.

Participant 3: Yeah.

Researcher: Um, let's see—do you think...do you believe most K-12 music educators are comfortable teaching creativity, and why or why not?

Participant 3: Oh, what...I don't know. I think that's a mixed bag. I think some of them are. I think some of them do an excellent job teaching theory and putting little composition exercises in there. Because my high school theory teacher was the choir director...

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: And yeah, she had us writing little pieces and doing stuff, and some people just, yeah, they just can do it. You know. So, I'm not sure. I think that's...it's kind of one of those case-by-case basis and maybe how excited the teacher is about doing it.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: How much experience...if they ever did any themselves might be helpful. You know, we were talking about how I don't really have them do much. I could see that being a problem when they go to be a teacher themselves, and if they have to do some theory, they maybe have seen theory taught a lot, but they haven't really seen much composition. So...

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: Yeah, yeah. So, I don't know, I think, yeah, that's a mixed bag.

Researcher: Sure. I know with our students, I'll feel, not just composing, but sometimes there'll be a disconnect. Like, they'll learn something, and they'll struggle to carry it into something else, you know, and use it the right way. Um, like in performance or ensemble, um, I don't know. Yeah, that's definitely a challenge, I think. For sure.

Participant 3: Well, I think, yeah, just, uh, just carrying over theory concepts that you and I teach them, right? And you're like, well, I mean it's because for so many of them, they think these are just classes I got to get through, and they don't realize that's supposed to help you play your instrument better.

Researcher: Right. Yeah, right. Yeah, as simple as playing a scale on the marimba, and...but put it...connecting it with the B major scale in theory, and yeah articulating the letters the right way, and, yeah, just sometimes their spheres are not well synced, I think, and that takes a while. Um...

Participant 3: I agree.

Researcher: Let's see...how do you think a lesson template could be constructed to meaningfully integrate composition into a theory lesson?

Participant 3: Well, okay, so I think...I think the...probably the best way to do it is really small exercises. Especially at the beginning, and I think it would need to be exercises that are really tightly constructed so that the creative aspect of it is not an open free-for-all. Um, you would need to have specific, um, prompts to get the student to do what you want—as in you need to use this chord, this chord, and this chord. It needs to be this many measures long, and it needs to contain this, this, and this for example. So, I think it's not so much...I don't know that I'd even call that as much a composing, as much as, following through a system of guidelines almost. Um, but I guess it is actually composing, right? But, I think for it to work in a theory class—especially at the earlier levels—it has to really be bulletproof, uh, bulleted items I mean. Like, you need to do this, make sure you do this, have this in place, and make sure you do this, and I think that's the only way you're going to find success. Because if you just say, 'hey, make it...make an eight-measure thing that is about what we've talked about,' most students don't even know how to start.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: They have no idea, and before you can even do that, you almost...you almost have to have a lesson on just how do you take a melody and put rhythm to it? How do you diversify your rhythms?

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: How do you tie across the bar line? How do you...there's so many things that we teach composers that in order to teach that in a theory class, you have to have a lot of time to add that in. So, yeah, it has to be really kind of narrow focused, I think.

Researcher: Yeah. No, that makes a lot of sense. I think, um, yeah, for beginning composition students, the rhythm component, you know, especially if they're left to their own devices or to use their ear for a rhythm they like, and, uh, they...it can be a disaster, for sure. You know, or they just they can't visualize what they're...what they're thinking.

Participant 3: Um, yeah. That's like, I was doing the 12-tone composition with the students in Theory Four that we just ended, and I spent, uh, I don't know...I think I spent a week or maybe a little over a week, um, talking about how to do it. So like, what I did is I took...I took a 12 tone row, and I showed them many different ways to rewrite that row and make it into an instrumental line. And then, I had them practice that. Here's a row: now put rhythm to it first, and then change the registers, and then do this and do that. Like, we were just talking—even then, even after four semesters of theory, I still was, like, one step at a time do this, now do this step, now try this step. Because the ones that are not...that don't typically create like that, are not kind of bent to being creative in that way, some of them find this very scary.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: You know, it's...they maybe have played their, you know, trombone since fifth grade, but all of a sudden, this idea of just making something up is spooky to some folks. And so, and then other people take to it like water. They're like, 'this is the greatest thing, you know, ever. Why haven't we done this before?' You know.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 3: Um, so yeah.

Researcher: Yeah. No, that totally makes sense. Uh, very good. Uh, let's see...if you taught theory curriculum with more purposeful composition integration what are some obstacles you envision?

Participant 3: Yeah, that's kind of...I think, I think, kind of the same thing I was saying. I envision, not just envision, because I know for a fact you'll have people turning in things that just are not really creative, because they...there's too many things that have to be worked out when you're composing. And so, yes, I think you gotta have it stepwise: do this step, then this step, then this step. I think you really have to work on rhythmizing rhythms...I...or melodies, I mean. I think if there's one thing that beginning people have terrible time with, like you were saying, it's the rhythm. So, you could even take like a cantus firmus, and say, okay, let's take this cantus firmus and let's, uh, put rhythm to it so it sounds like a melody that could be played on

the oboe, or you know, something like that. I think that's probably the biggest hurdle is the rhythm challenge.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: And if you're trying to have students write music that's idiomatically correct—like in the Classical style, or in the Baroque style, or you know whatever—then it's even more important that you do that to emphasize the rhythm tendencies of say what Mozart might do.

Researcher: Sure, yeah that makes sense too. Great. What are some benefits you envision?

Participant 3: Well, okay. So, I think whenever people are being creative, you know, that is a benefit. It opens their mind to processes that maybe they don't normally use. I mean, we like to think they use them, right? We like to think that when they practice their instrument, and they're playing somebody's music, they are being creative in their concept of line. They're being creative in their concept of phrasing. We like to think, yeah, this is...you know, they're being creative, but this is the next step in that creative process to opening the mind to this idea of: what do you actually hear, and can you create that on the page. So, yeah. I think...I think one of the biggest benefits you get is ear training. Right? You...it helps your ear to try to write down things you think you're hearing. Um, it helps your ability to be spontaneous because ideally, you're probably at a piano or at an instrument trying to come up with ideas, and so it helps your ability to think quickly, be spontaneous, and hear better. And so, these are the core things that I think some...just even moderate composition training can help a person do.

Researcher: Sure, yeah. That's great, and you know, after having drafted these, it occurred to me, you know, so many of our students are music education majors. Um, that maybe I...if I broaden the questions to include arranging, I wonder if that modifies the answers at all—just kind of by virtue of the fact that there's less creativity, but more...maybe more purposeful to their construct.

Participant 3: Yeah. You know what—you just made me think, maybe one of the ways to incorporate into theory is to start by arranging, not by composing.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: Maybe, maybe that should be the first step. Um, here's a little, whatever, arrange it for trio of some sort. Um, maybe that. And, then there we're just dealing with moving registers potentially. You know, um, they still have to do a harmonic analysis, and they still have to think through things that way. Maybe that's the first step is trying to arrange, and then make the leap into creating in the style of. I'm not sure, but there might be a way to do it.

Researcher: Sure. Great. Uh, let's see, and then I guess finally: is there anything you'd like to add about the topic of including composition in music theory curriculum?

Participant 3: Well, I don't know. I mean, I think it's a subject we could talk about for a really, really long time. Um, some people put it in their curriculum and use it a lot. It's actually a feature of their curriculum. Um, some people don't, and almost all my theory teachers were composers, and most of them did not put composition in the theory training.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: One specific guy did—that I was talking about earlier. He had us compose little pieces, but most of my teachers were composers that were the theorists, and they...I didn't really have very many Theory PhDs teach me. I think I've had one.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: Maybe. Maybe...one for sure at the PA...at the doctoral level. Maybe two? All...almost everyone I took theory from was a composer.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: And out of all those, very few of them put composition into the theory curriculum, and I almost wonder—this is kind of in hindsight—just kind of came upon me now that we've had this conversation, I almost wonder if that's why I am the way I am. Because I saw the composers that I took lessons with teaching theory, but not really incorporating what we did in our lessons into the theory curriculum. Except, the one teacher who did, and then the high school teacher. She did, but she wasn't a composer.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: Um, I don't know. I'm not sure. I don't know. I think it can be very valuable. I mean I...obviously it's valuable to learn composition. I mean, I'm pro-composer; I'm pro-composition, right? I guess I'm just not pro-teaching composition in theory class.

Researcher: Sure, it totally makes sense. And you know, I think we tend to teach as we were taught, and I had a pretty similar experience as I think of it. Of, uh, almost all my theory teachers were composers, and...but there would have been fairly little that would have felt composing in the sense that I would have thought so too. You know, I mean, some of it—like you said—like part-writing, or you know even arranging, you know, I think if you're a composer, you take some of these things, and you're like well that's, you know, it's so structured, um, to be fail-safe that really we didn't do much that felt like composing to me either as a student, but then I would go to my lesson, and we'd, you know, we'd work it out, um, or practice something specific. So that's very, very relatable. Um, and it...you know, and it's a pretty Herculean task just to get them through the tools in their tool belts, you know, anyway. So, having the time to help them then connect those tools to use it in a way that they might need if they're a future K-12, you know, is tough to find that time, I think.

Participant 3: Yeah, and you know, uh, a kind of my own personal experience the last several years: I would have composers come to their lesson with me, and they say, 'oh do you want to see the thing I did for form and analysis class? She's making us compose a blah-blah-blah.' Or whatever.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 3: They'd show it to me, and usually pretty good actually—the projects were. But it was really too easy for them almost. It was almost like because they'd already had several semesters, or even years, of composition lessons, it almost seemed like a task that wasn't even really needed for them, and then other students who had never done it found it extremely hard.

Researcher: Sure; right.

Participant 3: Really, really difficult, and then, some of them found it really easy too. You know. And so, I don't know. I'm...I just I think there's value in it. I just I don't do it myself, and I don't know. Maybe I, maybe I should try. I mean, I do the 12-tone piece, but it's like, at the end of the curriculum, and they're already done, and we're just trying to get done with the semester, and it's like a fun thing. It's like...it's like watching a movie at the end of the semester or something.

Researcher: Right, yeah. Yeah.

Participant 3: So, I'm not even thinking of it as a real composition project. Um, yeah, I don't know.

Researcher: Yeah. I don't know either, and I don't know that there's a right answer. Then, but uh...

Participant 3: Yeah, I mean I know I'm sounding kind of wishy-washy. I'm kind of...because I kind of think both ways. I'm like, well yeah, of course it's important to compose. But the other part of me is like, yeah, but I just need you to recognize that that's a German-Sixth.

Researcher: Right. No, yeah, no I...totally that makes sense, and that they're all over the board, you know, and I think the composition majors have this natural curiosity that then kind of propels, you know, where they might be in the first semester, and they already want to understand how sonata-allegro form works and how it's put, you know, and so they...or I mean, I remember being a student. It's like, I'll make myself write in different forms just for fun.

Participant 3: Yeah.

Researcher: You know, for the heck of it as an exercise, and then—like you said—probably them writing a binary form, or something, feels basic at some point, or whatever. If they've already have that curiosity, and then a flute major that really doesn't want to compose very badly—or you know, or whatever major—um, might really struggle with it. So, yeah, it could be hard to have all that in one classroom too, I think.

Participant 3: Yeah. Well, maybe if you get to talk to Dr Mann, maybe she can put it in perspective from her view because it's always been part of her curriculum, and one thing that she's mentioned to me is when she was at Illinois, um, all the theory is taught by composers there at Illinois.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: But she was teaching theory there, and I think—I don't want to speak for her—but I think she said that, yeah, most those guys don't use composition in their theory classes either, and she's the only doing it right.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: So, I mean, I don't know. It's really weird. Maybe this is something that the composers shy away from because we know more about it.

Researcher: Sure, and kind of what it takes, maybe, or the time investment. Yeah.

Participant 3: I'm not sure. Maybe that's a different...maybe that's a different research project, but I would be curious to know is it common for the composers who teach theory to not really teach composition in their theory classes? Is it common for the theory PhDs to actually do composition in their theory classes.

Researcher: Right. Yeah, I'd be curious to know, yeah, if it's kind of flip-flop.

Participant 3: Yeah, maybe it has flip-flopped. Maybe, yeah. That's...because I'm not even sure, like, when you read accounts of like Schoenberg and stuff. When he had theory classes, he wasn't making them compose, I don't think.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 3: They were studying scores. So, I don't...I don't even know.

Researcher: Right. Yeah. I've enjoyed, you know, reading about it, thinking about it, and then, the irony is have been so busy writing and researching that I really haven't integrated much new yet from this into my own classroom, and it's like, well, if I reached I think a point of generating some curriculum that tries to do this, then maybe I'll be finally be forced to, you know...let's tweak this and that about my own class. But, I mean, I think I run into the same problems, but you know, it may be something that's more fun to think about in theory, and in actual practice is a struggle to really, uh, implement. But...

Participant 3: It is, and you know, um, one other problem I have is I don't know how to grade that type of work.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 3: I mean, you could...you could of course grade it, and say well, 'did he include this chord like I asked? Did she include this like I asked her to? Did they do this like I asked them to?'

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: But I still have to put a judgment on it. So, and I don't want to have to do that with them, and then my other problem is oftentimes my work is graded by graduate assistants. What am I going to do? Am I going to have them grade a little composition homework when they don't have composition degrees themselves?

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: Uh, I just...I don't know. That makes me a little uncomfortable.

Researcher: That makes sense. Yeah. Stuff I've...have done ends up feeling more like a participation grade—like composing eight measure melody with an octatonic scale, and if they use the right notes, you know, then here's full credit, check. And it becomes more of, I guess, following directions and less of the creativity, you know, of you started on tonic and you act...it actually feels like the scale instead of avoiding all the notes that kind of make it colorful, where

it comes out sounding like the wrong scale. Um, but yeah, really at best a lot of that stuff ends up just being a checkmark and not the bigger component of their grade too I think. Um...

Participant 3: Yeah. I am, I'm with you on that, and then I don't know like what the benefit is then. Does the student now know how to do octatonicism better?

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 3: Or could we have just covered that by looking at scores of masters who used octatonicism?

Researcher: Right. That's true too.

Participant 3: Yeah, I don't know. You know, these are questions I don't have answers to, but you know, I don't know.

Researcher: Sure. Yeah. Yeah, it's been fun thinking about it and talking about it with you though.

Participant 3: Yeah. Yeah, well this is why you're doing the research so you can figure it all...

Researcher: (laughs) I know; right? End up with more questions than answers, but that'd be okay. As long as...we...as long as we whatever. I'll keep spitting out words and one way or the other I'll get to the finish line.

Participant 3: Who knows...you might get all kinds of research out of this project. Later on, you know, you could get maybe some articles or journal entries or something, and you know it might benefit you in ways later on in your career.

Researcher: Yeah. Through the sequence I was definitely fascinated by like Comprehensive Musicianship that Dello Joio did, but even then it was...it seemed like a few folks were interested, but the whole synthesizing theory and composition across into applied, and you know, and making everything feel somehow, uh, interconnected was probably...it's always kind of a possible challenge too—crossing teachers and crossing, you know, different dispositions for professors too and then time constraints, and I don't know, in the end does it work? I'm not sure, but it's been...it's been fun to kind of think about.

Participant 3: Yeah. Yeah, it's interesting to talk about too, and I don't know if we solved any problems, but uh. (laughs)

Researcher: Right, right.

Participant 3: We expose more problems than we solve problems.

Researcher: Yeah, for sure.

Participant 3: Yeah, cool.

Researcher: Well, I guess let me bump off the recording here, uh, I can't find it...where is, oh there it is.

Interview Transcript: Participant 4

Researcher: Right. There we go. So, well, um, I guess we'll hop into it if that's okay?

Participant 4: Ok, yeah.

Researcher: And thanks a lot again for doing this. Um, so first question: what is your educational background in music, and what do you consider your greatest areas of teaching expertise?

Participant 4: Um, my educational background is I have an undergraduate, uh, degree in all-level music education from Texas Tech University. My original intention was to be a band director, and I went ahead and did the whole degree, even though by my junior year, I decided that maybe it wasn't the path I wanted to take. Um, I did my masters at Texas Tech University in music theory, and then I did my doctoral degree in music theory at the University of Texas in Austin. I would say that obviously my area of expertise at this point is going to be music theory, but because I did do my undergraduate degree in music ed, and music education is something that's extremely important to me—music theory pedagogy in particular is an important, uh, element of things I like to study and things I like to research.

Researcher: Awesome. Great. Yeah, that's neat. Um, my wife's sister went to Tech actually and really liked it I think out there.

Participant 4: Nice, nice.

Researcher: Um, great. So, let's see, uh, number two: describe your background in teaching, uh, music theory in terms of levels taught, years of experience, and areas of strength.

Participant 4: Let's see...I started teaching music theory in 1999. Oh my gosh, so long ago. Uh, I was a teaching assistant while I was working my master's at Texas Tech, so I taught mostly undergraduate, uh, lower division theory, um, like fundamentals, and I never taught Theory One or Two, uh, but I did teach fundamentals, and then I taught lots of ear training classes, uh, as a master's student. And then, I did that for three years, and then I did three or four years at UT Austin, where I also did, um, ear training in particular, all the levels, and I also did, um, I taught Theory Three and Four. Um, and so, then from there I traveled to the University of Illinois, and I was a visiting assistant professor, in a one-year appointment for five years. Uh, and there I taught everything in the undergraduate sequence, except for Theory Four, because they're a big composer school, and they don't really, uh, believe in music theorists, and so I was the only music theorist they had on faculty who'd stayed more than a year. And so, I taught Theory One through Three, Ear Training One through Three, and, uh, did not teach Theory 4 because that was reserved for the composers to teach. But, I did get to teach a lot of graduate classes, um, when I was at Illinois. So, I taught Schenkerian Analysis; I taught 20th Century Analysis; I taught Music Theory Pedagogy, lots of 18th Century Analysis, 19th Century Analysis, and you know, courses like that...of that sort of ilk. And also, the graduate, um, remedial graduate theory course. I did that a few times, and then following my five years at Illinois, I then taught as a lecturer for two years at the University of North Texas, and when I was at UNT I taught theory, um, what did I teach? Oh! I can't remember anymore it was a long time ago. (laughs) Um, I did teach graduate, uh, Music Theory Pedagogy, um, and in addition to that I taught, uh, Advanced

Aural Skills, and I taught the musical Form and Analysis classes, which were interesting because they were upper division, but they were also dual enrollment courses for graduate students who didn't have a Form and Analysis course on their degree plan. So how do you make something that works for upper division and graduate students at the same time? And then, I also taught an interesting course, uh, two interesting courses. They had a series of students who were like honors music students, and so they took like theory one and two combined in one semester and then three and four combined in one semester. So, I took...I taught like the very fast sort of class to kids who probably had AP music theory or studied lots of theory as part of their, like, growing up, as part of learning their degree. Then from there, I traveled to, um, the University of Albany in upstate New York, where I was a visiting professor, um, at that institution, and it was very small. Like after being at UNT, which had 1200 to 1400 students in just the College of Music, uh, we had like 30 something majors when I was at UAlbany. And so, there I taught Theory One through Four, Ear Training One through Four, and fundamentals to non-majors and things like that. Um, once I left there, I got to the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, which is where I am now, and I've taught everything in the undergraduate sequence from Theory One through Four, Ear Training One through Four, um, Form and Analysis. I've never taught fundamentals, but I've prepared a lot of materials for music fundamentals, and I've taught like a fundamental summer's course that I created, um, using my Harmonia software that I've developed. And then I also have taught a number of graduate classes pertaining to Music Theory Pedagogy and Schenkerian Analysis and 20th Century Analysis and now this Counterpoint class. So, a variety of things.

Researcher: Cool. Awesome, yeah that's really neat. Yeah, that's, um, it's fun to just kind of also hear people's stories, and I don't know, all the cool things they've done. So, um yeah, I'm from Illinois originally. So but...and my sisters both went to U of I at one point or another for...one for grad and one for undergrad. So...

Participant 4: I loved Illinois. I would have stayed there, actually, but you know, they were never going to turn my position into a tenure-track position so...

Researcher: Right. Um, let's see, very cool. So, when teaching music theory do you reference a textbook?

Participant 4: Um, let's see...at the university I'm currently teaching at, and basically every university I've ever taught at, we always required a textbook, but I don't necessarily use the textbook while I'm teaching. I expect my students to have it as a resource, and if I'm going to be using the textbook at any given time, I generally tell them to bring it because it's not something that I refer to very often, so after a while they just quit bringing it to class. Um, right now we're using *The Complete Musician* by Steven Laitz, um, which I've used here at UTRGV. I've also used it at Illinois, and we also used it at, um, North Texas, but I've also used the Clendinning and Marvin *Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis* when I was at UAlbany, and I've seen it used other places, and as an undergrad I started with the Koska/Payne *Tonal Harmony* text and used those all through my time at Tech and while at UT Austin. And obviously I know a lot of the texts because I teach music theory pedagogy, but generally speaking when I teach, I teach primarily from scores. So...

Researcher: Sure. Great. Um, how well do you feel your current theory text or curriculum prepare students to compose or teach composition?

Participant 4: I don't think that the theory textbook we use right now does that at all. I teach that, but my textbook that we have used that we use at this university doesn't teach that at all. Um, I will say that it does have an introduction to, uh, four-part writing by using counterpoint, and so I mean, it does teach the rules and guidelines for first and second species counterpoint. So, I guess you could learn to compose, um, at a very limited sort of ability, uh, just using those rules and guidelines, but outside of that, it doesn't really teach how to compose anything. So...

Researcher: Cool. Um, do you believe music majors should have a basic knowledge of how to compose when they graduate?

Participant 4: I absolutely think that they need to know how to do that. I mean, I have memories of my old high school band director where, you know you have your three pieces because this is Texas, and there's always a beginning, a middle piece that's slow, and then a fast piece at the end, and sometimes we would have our show, and our band director was like, 'I just don't like the way it ends; it's not quite done,' and so he would often, like, compose something at the end—like a series of chords or a progression or something to, like, sort of create a closer for us. And I mean that was fairly commonplace, and there were plenty of other, uh, band directors that I met over time who would write like sort of segues in between the three pieces that were required for contest and that was fairly standard. So, I think knowing how to do that even as a band director is something you need to know, and I'm sure that's the case for choral directors and other directors as well. And if you're doing jazz, I mean, knowing how to, you know, play and improv and do all that requires composition skills, and so it's something that I'm passionate about. Um, I also—once upon a time—was married to a composer. So, I've had lots of discussions about this, and teaching at Illinois, which is a big composer school, everyone I talked to was a composer. So, I know that those things are important, but I also think it gives students an outlet to be creative, and I think that they often come across music theory thinking that it's just a whole bunch of rules and guidelines and if they memorize these rules and guidelines that's all they need to know, but really they're the sort of rules and guidelines for teaching like a foundation of which you can do all kinds of things. You can do analysis; you can do composition; you can, you know, work all sorts of ways within a particular framework. And all the rules and guidelines do say 'this is the style; this is the framework; you can do whatever you want with that.' So...

Researcher: Very cool. Yeah. I agree and when as I thought of the wording of the question I was talking to Dr. Writer, I was kind of like, 'oh, I should have included, like um, arranging too,' you know, just in terms of practical skills that, um, you know students probably don't even know the extent to which they would wish to...I know within our students we see them know how to do it, and then not know how to connect the dots to how to actually apply it to something.

Participant 4: Oh, right. Well, I mean there's so many times that I'll be playing a chord progression, and I'll go, 'oh, that reminds me of,' and then I just start playing something. And they're like, 'how did you do that?' And I'm like, 'it's not hard,' but it takes a while to get there.

You know, and you just have to practice doing stuff like this regularly. Or I'm teaching them how to write a period structure, and it's like, it has to have a little melody and it's got to end on a, you know, half cadence or something, and so I just play some little ditty...just a one-line melody with one hand and they're just like 'how'd you do that?' I'm like you... 'you're learning how to do this too,' you just haven't realized it yet. You know. I...don't ask me to repeat it because I didn't write it down.

Researcher: Yeah, well that's forever true or popular music too. It's like well this is what the next chord is going to be, you know, because I already know what it...what it should be. I don't know.

Participant 4: Yes.

Researcher: Definitely. Uh, let's see; let's see...how was your music theory experience like as a college student or...sorry, what was your music theory student experience like as a college student?

Participant 4: I think that it was probably typical to a lot of students, at least in Texas. Um, I come from a state that as you know is known, you know, around the country as being a very good school for music...I mean a very good state for music education. And we have this UIL system for better or for worse. I mean it does some really cool things and offers students a lot of opportunities, but at the same time, you know, it's a system with its own rules and guidelines and you know that...it can be difficult. But one of the things I think that for me, um, coming out of a sort of rural band kid world because I grew up between San Antonio and Laredo in a very small town, um, my parents put me in piano lessons when I was six, and I took piano lessons all through elementary school, junior high, and high school. I wasn't ever a great pianist, and I didn't have a great piano teacher, but you know, for better for worse, I played, and I could do that, and I went to college, and the only reason I didn't have to be in fundamentals was because I took the exam and barely passed it. But the reason I passed the exam is I went to band camp every summer and the summer before I started college, I was like oh they have this, you know, elective class you could take because you had to take two electives. So, I took, you know, horn choir, and then I decided to take this music theory class. So, in one week I learned how to, you know, spell some chords, and you know, like learn the difference between major and minor chords and, you know, triads and seventh chords, and this and that. And I already knew how to spell scales because we did those all the time in school. Um, and so I think that's what saved me, but otherwise I probably would have been in music fundamentals. But, uh, like a lot of students, I did Theory One through Four, Ear Training One through Four. I had perfect pitch, so ear training was super easy for me, and it wasn't until I had to start teaching ear training that I was like, 'how do you just not hear that, that's an A and a C? Write it down; this is not hard,' you know. And so, like, teaching students how to hear actually improved my ear dramatically, and I still think that my ear is extremely weak because I rely on something that's like a crutch, and I tell my students this a lot that it was like if you have perfect pitch still pay attention in your ear training classes and pay a lot of attention because this is super important, and it'll come back and bite you.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 4: It did to me to a big degree.

Researcher: Very cool. Yeah, that's, uh, that's all so relatable. I...you know, my high school, I think maybe 70 people in my graduating class, and got to college in theory, and they were...and the other people would complain, like, 'oh I didn't have this in AP Theory something in high school,' and I was like, 'wait, there's theory...there's theory in high school?'

Participant 4: Exactly. I know. I just spent like two weeks grading about 18,500 of those things. (laughs) So, yeah, yeah, and I was like this would have been amazing to have done when I was in high school. It would have been so cool, but...

Researcher: Yeah. Right, I know.

Participant 4: Alas, no, not for me. I did not get to.

Researcher: That makes all the sense. Yeah, I had piano lessons, and I'm thankful. If it weren't for that, you know, same way I'm sure it would have been like, you know, what is this scary stuff.

Participant 4: You know, and it's shocking to me because I love my theory...I love my piano teacher dearly, and I still keep in touch with her, and she's a very nice lady, but like I didn't learn any theory. Like, I mean, I played things. I obviously played chords, and I played melodies but had no idea what that was that I was playing—major, minor...no, no discussion about that ever. And so, I mean like, I knew there was a thing called major and minor.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 4: Like getting to college going, oh, they're of course...

Researcher: I definitely had some disconnect, you know, it was like this old lady in this back of a guitar shop or something, and she would have us improvise, and we would, you know, she'd give us something where we tore out the left hand and redid, you know, arpeggios and chords.

Participant 4: Yeah.

Researcher: But not necessarily knowing the functionality of why the chords work together. Um, but then I would try to kind of cheat...my parents were like 'well you should either stop now or we'll change teachers and you'll...' So the piano professor I switched to like last two years of high school and he gave me like this—I don't know what it was called—it was like a music theory, like, but you just used a little slider and like tried to fill it in. He's like...

Participant 4: Oh, yeah.

Researcher: He was like 'here go teach yourself some music theory.' So, which I was like 'okay, sure. I'll try whatever it was'...I don't know, but.

Participant 4: It's, it's like coming across those learning music theory on YouTube videos by like hack guitarists, and it's like, 'yes you're arriving at the right place but in some very extremely convoluted way,' and if you're teaching people this, I'm very disappointed.

Researcher: (laughs) I'm not sure that's the best way. Let's see, um, so I guess follow up to the original question of how well, uh, in terms of Music Theory experience, uh, as a college student: how well did it prepare you to teach composition or to compose in idioms that are most relevant to your context?

Participant 4: I think that when I was in undergrad, I had different theory teachers for my various classes because I was at a bigger school. And because it was a bigger school, I had lots of different theory teachers, but I think one of the things that I always thought was cool was when we would have a composition project at the end of the semester—and not every professor did it. And so, when we did have them, I was like this is actually really interesting, and it was kind of a way to take all the things that I had learned over the course of the semester and like, turned it into something that actually sounded like real music because I mean we talked about real music in class, but then we would do four-part, you know, go right this chorale thing. And I mean, you were supposed to sit down and play it, and I mean I get that I tell my students play your part-writing, play your part-writing, play your...you know, and they're all doing it in their apartment or in their dorm room, and they're nowhere near a piano. So, the reality is they're not ever playing it, and you can tell because it sounds terrible. But um, when I actually had to compose my own piece then it was like 'oh I have to listen to this and they're gonna play it in front of my peers, and I don't want to be embarrassed, and you know. And sometimes you would go talk to your peers, and say like 'can you do this; is it possible?' And it's forcing you out of your comfort zone and also making opportunities for you to talk to people about 'hey, what's the instrumentation' because like in Theory Three or Four like I haven't taken instrumentation, or you know, orchestration yet because that was a junior-level course or a senior-level course. So, I could go and ask my friends 'hey is this note possible on your instrument?' It forces you to start thinking beyond your own little, like, I play French horn, and I play piano, and I don't know anything outside of that, you know. So, I could go ask a string player 'can you do this, is this possible? Or a clarinet player like...is this an okay range for you because I have no idea,' you know. And so, those things I think were interesting because it gets you out of your comfort zone and has you working with other people, but also forces you to take the things you've learned and do something creative with it. And I think there are lots of different types of people, and we all learn in different ways, and not a lot of people are super creative, but if you're thinking about the music field in general, we all tend to have a little bit more of that creativity streak than say people who go into math or people who go into like economics or something like that, you know. And that's maybe very cliché to say, but I think we're very creative people, and so creating exercises and things that sort of tap into that creativity—even if they don't know they have it—is always interesting. And so, one of the things that I do here is my students compose every single semester, um, if they're undergrads. So, my Theory One students compose four measure phrases, and I set them up to where they're actually writing period structures, but they don't know that yet because they don't learn that 'til Theory Two, but they end up writing them, and they sound like period structures if they do it right. And then they write period and sentence

structures in Theory Two, and then in Theory Three, they write binary and ternary forms, and then in Theory Four, they sort of break away from that for a bit, and they write like a 12 tone, you know, piano trio or string quartet piece. And then they come back when they do Form and Analysis, and I give them the option of writing either a theme and variation form with like five variations and, uh, you know, original theme. Or they have to write, uh, a Sonata form or a Rondo or a Sonata Rondo or something like that, you know. So, they've got...they start small, and they just build every semester, and it grows so that when they finally get to Form and Analysis, they're like 'I can't believe that I'm not a composer and I just composed a, you know, 200 measure, you know, Sonata form,' and it's like 'yes, you did.' You know because it's all just building blocks on something you've learned previously. So...

Researcher: Very cool. Yeah, no that's great. Um, and then the last question, you know, feels kind of silly, you know, whenever I...whenever I ask someone that's theory or composition directly. But are you comfortable with composing music?

Participant 4: I'd say that I'm comfortable doing things on the fly and creating sample things for my students. I would say that I am not a composer, and I don't like to compose, and it's not something that I seek out to do on my own like in my free time because I know lots of people who do composition on the side. Um, but for the purposes of teaching students how to do it—yeah, I feel perfectly comfortable and fine showing them examples. And I always tell my students that my pieces are cheesy because I'm not a composer, and I'm not spending a lot of time thinking about, you know, really cool interesting new things to do. That I always compose in the style of and composing in the style of something that's already happened. It's much easier than trying to create a new path and create a name for yourself where people who listen to your music go 'oh, that's by this person,' you know, and I said that takes a lot of time and talent of which I'm not spending my time dedicating to...so, you know, to doing things like that. So, but I've composed pieces for my students in the past to, you know, do model composition, and show them how it works, and I've been spending a lot of time talking about that in my counterpoint class too. It's like you're going to be composing tons of things, but they're all going to be little model compositions, and these models are here to show you how you could go another step further and start making it, you know, real composition. But models and real composition are two different things. So...

Researcher: Cool. Very good. Um, let's see...creating and performing are both National Core Arts Standards for music. Do you feel that K-12 curriculum teaches both equally well, uh, and elaborate on why you think so or why not?

Participant 4: I think that in the state of Texas, uh, there's an emphasis on performance and not necessarily on the creative side. Um, we are always a...well our system is set up for performance and for contest. And so, teachers don't have the luxury of time to move away from the things they're working on for performance and for contests to work on other skills, which is also one of the reasons I think why students come to college unprepared in terms of like what they know in theory and aural skills and things like that. Because those are things that could very easily be taught in conjunction with the performance aspect of what we do, but there are...enough...there aren't enough hours in the day to do all of those things, and I think that a lot of teachers end up

just spending all their time like working to get through to the next contest and working to do, you know, all of those things, and it's one of the things I emphasize to my own students a lot. It was like, the whole reason you're learning this theory is so that you're learning paradigms, and you're understanding like conceptually what's going on in the background of the piece so that you don't just open up an Etude book and go note-note-note-note-note-note-note-note-note-note. You're like, oh, arpeggio in the key of F, or you're doing this or here's a scale, you know, like you can break it down into things that you're familiar with because you understand the language and the syntax, which is all theory is. You know, like those things, and then it starts to make more sense, and I was like had I known that as a high school student, it probably would have made me a much more efficient practicer/performer/player—all of those things. But a lot of times, I think teachers don't feel like they have that luxury to spend time working on that stuff. So, I think in terms of, you know, Texas performance is key. I think for kids maybe who do jazz band, um, they're probably getting a little bit more like composition skill because they're learning how to improv and do some things like that, you know, but outside of that one niche little area, I don't think really anyone else is studying composition or working on the creativity side nearly as much.

Researcher: Sure. Um, and what about the college level...college curriculum and why?

Participant 4: I think the college curriculum is starting to change a little bit. Um, I think that we still emphasize this sort of conservatory education of: you must do Theory One, Two, Three, Four; you must do Ear Training One, Two, Three, Four; you must do Form and Analysis; you must learn these things. And I think that there's a big push...first examine what we teach and why we teach and how we teach it. And I think that trying to add more pieces by women and marginalized composers and some of those things and looking at the different styles of music and composition and, you know, what's seen as good music, you know, because that's changing. I mean because when we were in school I mean, I'm assuming it's the same for you as it was for me, but when I was in school, you studied the classic Bach to Brahms composers, and you only looked at, you know, Western-white-male-dead composers from that small time period, and anything else was seen as exotic or peripheral to what we're doing. And I think that just by bringing in like Latin American music and bringing in, you know, mariachi music and bringing in music from other places and playing it for my students and going 'have you heard this; what do you think of it; what do you know, like, could you write something like this; is that worth doing?' You know, and having those discussions I think is good, and it's happening at the college level, but it's happening slowly. And part of it is because there's a lot of people who are already in colleges and universities who are full professors and have been doing this for a very long time and change is hard and change is difficult. And there's a lot of new people coming in who've just been in, you know, big doctoral programs that are starting to explore these issues and are talking about these things, and they're coming in going like 'let's change, let's change,' but the old people who've been there teaching five...five loads per year are like 'I'm tired; I don't want to do this anymore.'

Researcher: Right. I don't want to redo my curriculum if nothing else.

Participant 4: Right. I mean like I come in, and I e...even with Justin Writer, whom I assume you know very well, you know, it's the same type of thing. I'm like, let's do this and he's like yeah let's not, you know. And I...I'm sort of in the middle because I'm...I've got a curriculum, and it's beautiful, and it's easy, and it runs itself, and I don't have to work very hard, you know, but at the same time I don't want to become complacent and just go like, you know, be one of those teachers where I never change anything, and I become like old and stodgy. But you know, I also know that like changing stuff is hard. You know, and so I try to bring in a piece here and there like every week or so, you know. I'd love to say that every class features something by a black composer and a Latin American composer and a woman and you know Brahms or Haydn, but you know the reality is that's not always possible, and I think my students are still okay because I'm making an effort, and I'm trying to change, you know, and I'm making them compose more too because it's like 'your voice matters and what you're doing matters.' And if I want you to be able to go out and feel like your voice can be heard and deserves to be heard because it's trained, and you're a specialist, you know, then you have to practice doing that here. So, I think it's good to incorporate it more. So...

Researcher: Sometimes the effort alone, I think, builds the bridge or for or I'll, you know, I'll play something that they know or, you know, and they connect...we connect with that of like here's the theory of blah-blah and...

Participant 4: Oh yeah.

Researcher: ...and they become more receptive I think to you know to other things too.

Participant 4: For me, given that I'm from South Texas, whenever I teach like I and V—I tell this story to lots of people because I think it's kind of funny—but when I teach I and V, I always bring in like folk tunes, and I was like 'okay so we're gonna learn how to harmonize these folk tunes with I and V.' And so, I bring in all these like folk tunes, but they don't know half of them. You know, all the folk songs I learned when I was in elementary school we really shouldn't sing anymore because a lot of them are terrible, you know. We've kind of decided not to do those, and so then I bring them in more obscure ones that I know, but they don't know the obscure ones. So, I'm like, okay fine, so I bring in these mariachi tunes because most of our mariachi tunes are, you know, you can harmonize them with I and V.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 4: So we're working on them, and we're doing "Cielito Lindo," and we're doing, um, you know, "De Colores." And we learned how to put 'I's and 'V's under all of it. And they're like, at the end, they're like 'can we sing,' and I'm like 'yes, we can sing,' and they're like 'do we have to do it in solfege?' 'No, you don't have to do it in solfege.' So, then it turns into this giant fight about who knows Spanish and who doesn't because of course you know South Texas, obviously most of our students know Spanish, but then there's a large percentage of our students who don't speak Spanish.

Researcher: Sure. Right.

Participant 4: And it becomes this like 'I can't believe you don't know,' you know.

Researcher: Yeah.

Participant 4: And then you look at me, and they're like 'how does she know the words,' you know, and I've told them that I'm from here too. You know, I mean I'm not from the Four County area of the valley, but I'm not that much further north. You know, I still grew up south of San Antonio, but it's like they don't really think that I'm of that culture, and it's like I brought these pieces in because these pieces are good. They're good folk tunes, right?

Researcher: Right.

Participant 4: This is my culture, your culture, this is all of like...this is where we're from. And I know these pieces as well as you do, and of course I only brought in the pieces that I know the words for.

Researcher: Right. Right.

Participant 4: Because they're like 'she can speak Spanish.' Barely. No but so, then it gives them a sense of like, they know who I am.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 4: They know more about me in that one lecture than they knew before. Even though I could just open my mouth and tell them. They don't...it doesn't really connect with them until they see like the music that I listen to is the music she listens to, and it's okay and worthy of study in a collegiate classroom. And we can talk about the, you know, like there's a whole bunch to unpack there, and I think it's just interesting how it all sort of plays out.

Researcher: Yeah, that's a cool moment for sure. Very neat. Um, do you believe most K-12 music educators are comfortable teaching creativity, and why or why not?

Participant 4: I think they're comfortable teaching it for the most part. Um, I think they just don't get a lot of time and opportunity to do so. So, I think more so the elementary level. Um, when I did my student teaching, which I guess now was a million years ago, but when I did my student teaching, I was at a junior high/high school, but then I was also at an elementary school. And when I was at the elementary school level, I remember like we did a lot of composition with our students. It was like let's learn these intervals. So, we're like 'so-mi-so-so-mi-so-so-mi-la-so-mi, so-fa-mi-re-do.' You know, we do all the little hand signs, and we do our little, you know, different melodic snippets and things. And then it was like 'now you try writing a song with just these little notes.' You know, and they would have to like...we had like a staff written on the floor like in masking tape. You know, it was on carpet, and they had little squares that they would sit or circles, and they would sit on their circles, but the circles were the same size as a note head that could fit on this, you know, staff, and they'd have to go like up to the staff and stand in a place. And we would write songs, and then we'd sing their songs that we've made. You know, like a lot of song and dance routines, but I think it's an easy way for a teacher to bring creativity in and have the students be creative. Like, they don't even have to be the people writing the songs. It's like have the students like figure out how they're going to do this, and then have them sing it and talk about whether it was easy to sing or not. How could we make it easier

to sing, and then when they figure it out that it was stepwise was easier to sing. And then just, you know, singing do, mi, and sol was easier to sing than do to, you know, la and stuff like that. And so, they start to figure that out on their own, and then they start to see that all these melodies kind of work the same, and they're only second graders. You know, it's like how did we get them to figure that out? I'm just trying to get my college students to figure that out, but you know. But they're standing there, and they can sing, and they can make it work. So, I think teachers have ample ways to be creative and are really good at being creative; it's just having the time and the ability to make that work, and I think it also depends on how large your group is. Like in an elementary school classroom, you're going to have probably 30 students or less, maybe 35, but it's not going to be a huge class. But if you're dealing with like a 200 piece band or 100 student orchestra, you know, like or a choir with like tons and tons of voices, you have to make sure that you're maintaining order and all of those things too. So how can you A) find the time to do it and B) keep things from becoming completely unruly based on the number of students you have.

Researcher: Yeah, yeah. No that makes sense too. Um, yeah, great thoughts. Let's see...how do you think a lesson template could be constructed to meaningfully integrate composition into a theory lesson? And I know you kind of touched on this already but...

Participant 4: I say like at the collegiate level, um, anytime we're talking about musical forms or cadences or phrases or things like that: like step one is always let's talk about what this is. Let's analyze some that are good models from you know the literature—whether that literature be you know Bach to Brahms, whether it's something written last week. We can find plenty of examples for them to examine, listen to, and analyze, and then from there it's like try part-writing some of these things, you know, in like a very specific model with very specific guidelines and rules and this and that. You know, and then it's like okay so, you've shown that you can do that. Now the next step is compose a piece that actually does this or compose a phrase that actually does this that sounds musical more so than the, you know, four-part harmonic thing you've just created over here. You know and have them figure out like what are the elements that are required to make that work and how that would sound. And again, even for me like, I don't have tons of time to do this for every single lesson or for every single topic that we do, which is why I usually reserve them for the end of the semester. But even when I do these things at the end of the semester, it's like taking the form they've learned that semester, but it's also incorporating other elements as well. So, you know, like to give an example of what I do with my Theory Two students: we get as far as talking about secondary dominants or applied chords. So, it's like you're going to write your sentence, and you're going to write a period and somewhere over the course of these two pieces that you're composing one must be major; one must be minor; one must be in simple meter; one must be in compound meter; one has to have a credential six-four in it; one has to have a passing or pedal six-four; one of them has to have a, you know, modulation; one of them has to have, you know, a six. You know, there's all these different like little elements that they're required to have, and so we talk about that, and they've been adding these things in their little four-part things that they've done all semester long, but now it's like—can you put this in an actual real piece of music? And so, sometimes they do it successfully and sometimes they don't. Um, as an aside, one of the things I've done that's helped this is I make

them do a template for their composition projects now where they have like basically...they're creating a key for me. So, I go here's your composition, but on page one, you have to tell me where your credential six-four is, and you have to tell me where your, you know, applied chord is, and you have to tell me where it is, you know, so that I can find it. But also, what typically happens is my students will compose these pieces; we listen to them in class. They sound beautiful. I'm like 'oh that's really fantastic; it sounds great.' And then, I go to grade it, and they get a D or a C because they didn't actually put in any of the things that were required. But it sounded nice, and I'm like...

Researcher: Right.

Participant 4: I'm happy you composed something, and I'm really excited for you, but you still have to do the things that are required for the grade. So, now because they've made this cover page where they have to mark where everything is, they at least know that 'I've chosen to put in a credential six-four or not, and if I did put it in, I said, it's in measure four, and you can find it there.' You know...

Researcher: Yeah, yeah. That's relatable. Sometimes we'll/they'll write simple melodies on like weird scales in Theory Four of like whatever—here's a Bartok scale or an octatonic scale or something, and they'll avoid all the notes that...they'll conveniently leave out some of the notes that make it actually sound like the scale itself. I'm like, 'yes, oh this is it; sounds alright, but somehow you've turned it into'...I don't know.

Participant 4: It's like, 'I wrote this piece; it's Dorian,' but there's no sixths in it, so you can't really tell that it's Dorian or if it's minor.

Researcher: Right. Yeah, that's cool though. I don't know. Good ideas for sure.

Participant 4: It's helped. I've done it this past year; it's nice. It helps dramatically, so that's been good. And it also makes it easier for me to grade because I don't have to go hunting and pecking through their entire composition.

Researcher: Yes. Very good. Um, let's see. If you taught, um, if you taught theory curriculum with more purposeful composition integration, what are some obstacles you envision or some benefits you envision?

Participant 4: I would say obstacles is there's never enough time to spend actually telling them how to compose. I mean I talk about compositions all day/every day in class, and we look at pieces, and we're analyzing them, and we're doing all sorts of things. And they're doing these little model compositions when they do their, you know, part-writing, but when I actually sit down and talk with them about how they're going to do their composition project, I think there is a big gulf between this is this thing...(dogs bark) Excuse me, sorry.

Researcher: No worries.

Participant 4: Hang on. All right. There's someone outside and they're barking at them. Uh, I think there's a big gulf between like here's your composition project and here's all the things we've been doing up to this point. You know, and then like showing them: this is how you can

make a melody, or this is how you can do some of these other things, and I think that that part is hard. And I'm always surprised that my students do as well as they do because I feel like I haven't really taught them how to get from this point to this point. And I think that can be a very large chasm, you know.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 4: And so, they figure out how to do it, but I feel like I could spend a lot more time teaching them how to, sort of, turn something like a four-part chorale setting into something that sounds like a musical composition. And I see that, like, there are some students who turn in their final project, and it sounds very much like four-part chorale writing. And it doesn't really have like a melody with homophonic accompaniment and that whole bit—which is kind of what I'm looking for, but I haven't really taught them how to do that. So, you know, that part's tough so... and if I had more time, I think we could sit down and talk about how to do that except there's no time.

Researcher: Right. Yeah. Yeah, that seems to be the common theme to just across theory teachers and theory teachers of different backgrounds, you know, in terms of their areas of specialty. But time is everybody's enemy of...

Participant 4: Yeah.

Researcher: It's always amazing, you know, you have four semesters or however much, and I tell them like we reached the end, and I'm still like, gosh, I hope we, you know, I hope there are not... your areas of weakness are not, whatever, so great, you know. There's just always more to do, I guess.

Participant 4: Oh yeah. I mean I always tell my students. I was like 'you take Theory one through Four, and then you do form analysis. And when you finally have a little toolbox of stuff, and you can actually start doing theory, then y'all go away because this isn't really theory.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 4: You haven't been doing theory at all. Like we've just been learning the nuts and bolts, and now we could actually do something cool, but the...everyone...the state of Texas has decided y'all are done with theory, so we're done.

Researcher: (Laughs) Right. Sure.

Participant 4: But it kind of depends, but you know.

Researcher: Yeah, that's true. Yeah, yeah. On our end, uh you know, the two-year school, it's like we...just when they start to get some things going, and it's like well, off you go.

Participant 4: Yes, and then they get me in Form and Analysis, or they get Dr. Rausch or Dr. Writer. So...

Researcher: Right.

Participant 4: Which, I do have to say this since I'm chatting with you. They are so much better now than they were when I first got here because when I first got here, I was like 'oh look it's all the kids from STC; they're all going to fail,' and I feel terrible, but they always did. And now, they're like my students who are getting A's, and they're doing better than our own students, and I'm like 'see, see.'

Researcher: That's good. It's good that it's getting better. You know, it's like everything—always kind of a battle. Or you know, talking to Justin, cause a while back there was pressure like oh, you know, just make sure we're all, you know, that we're as aligned as best we can, and was encouraged to at least hear him say that, you know, your C...your C students come in as C students, but your A students...whatever, do well. You know.

Participant 4: Oh yeah.

Researcher: And there's always a few that we drag along, and whatever, we send them through with their D and kind of like, well a D won't really transfer or C, you know. Like...but and kind of they head off and I know that whatever. They...(laughs)...you know, but...

Participant 4: Oh yeah. Well, I told my students all the time too, I was like nothing I'm teaching in this class is hard. There's nothing that you cannot do. What kills all of you is the fact that you just don't do your homework, and if I had a dollar for every time I say, 'please for the love of all things holy, just do your homework,' I'd be a millionaire, and I wouldn't have to teach. But you know, and it was...it was a problem at other universities too where I taught, but here it's just like...

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 4: I just go, you know... And it's funny because I've written this music theory software that actually grades my four-part analysis and part-writing and all that stuff, right? So, I don't actually even have to grade it. I mean I go through; I look at it; I see what they've missed, and I have to mark it in and then put it in Blackboard for them to do, all that mess. But because I don't have to spend any time grading, it I let them turn it in all the way to the very end of the semester, and so I will have students—they're like 'oh my God Dr. Mann, it's so hard. It's like there's so much work to get caught up, like, it's just so much to do.' I was like 'you mean an entire semester's worth of work that you've chosen to do in the last week of the school,' and then half of his friends started go 'touché.' You know, like or they just don't do it at all and I'm just like, 'you have literally until the midnight of dead day to get this done.' You know and they're like 'oh can I have an extra?' No, you cannot have an extra day. This is college; you're an adult. There are consequences, you know.

Researcher: Yeah. And to me it's a kindness to do...I mean it's more work for us, but I'm very mindful your homework shows me you have work ethic, or you don't and that's going to serve you well in life. Uh, versus like one big pass/fail test which would be less work for all of us, but they don't kinda...they don't see the steps hopefully on feedback and all that. But yeah, they still find a way to leave it all and whatever—skip the homework.

Participant 4: Well yeah, I mean I told them. I was like you're building fluency, and if you're building fluency in a language, you have to practice regularly. So, the reason I'm giving you homework is not because I'm a jerk because if you think it's a lot of homework like multiply it by the number of you in this class, and you'll see how much work it is for me, and I'm the person who's telling you to do it. So, it's really for you to just practice and engage with doing this, and if you find that it's taking you more than an hour or two hours to do your homework, then you're having a problem, and when you're having a problem, that's when you know to come see me.

Researcher: Right, yeah.

Participant 4: For the office hours that I host that no one knows what the inside of my office looks like.

Researcher: Oh yeah, right.

Participant 4: Did you know that I have a window in my office? No, you have no clue.

Researcher: You would know if you came. (laughs)

Participant 4: There's a challenge. But you know, I also know that at the end of the day, I was good at college, you know, and all of us who have doctoral degrees, or you know, master's degrees like are generally good at college. So, I just have to take a step back and go, I had plenty of friends who managed to graduate and are getting...they got out and are very happy and successful elementary school teachers or band directors or choir directors, and they're doing very well for themselves, but they were happy being perfectly C students because they're like 'hey you can't spell music without a C.' So, yeah.

Researcher: Right, right. Yeah, I get it too. I think there's always, uh, I don't know...it seems like a common thread that for a lot of us, you know, we escape our...whatever...studies and start teaching and like 'wait there's bad...there's students that don't study?' My piano professor would always be like 'Dan, it's okay, you know, like just why don't you let yourself get a B in your gen ed classes?' And I was like 'well I haven't yet.' So, I don't know. It was 'I might as well be, I don't know, OCD about it.' But...

Participant 4: Yeah, but I also told my students I was like your homework is due, and you can get full credit if you turn it in when it's due, and if you turn it in after it's due but up to the next exam period—so like up to the midterm—you can get a 70. And if you decide to turn it in after that period, all the way up until midnight of dead day, you can get up to a 50. So, you've got like three different grades; you can get full credit, and actually because I don't have to grade their homework, um, I set it up so that like every single little thing they do like they have to do like a part-writing exercise with Roman Numerals and one with like figured-bass, and they have to do like a couple of analyses. So, say there's like four things to do for a homework assignment—I grade each one of those separately. So, if they get 85 or higher on any one of those, I will average it in as a hundred if they do it on time because I'm like, I don't really care about your grades. I care that you know how to do it. If you're doing solid B or better work, I know that you

know how to do it, so I'm going to reward you for that. But the only way you get that is if you're turning it in on time, you know.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 4: So, it's like, you have this opportunity to basically get 100 on every single thing you're doing in your homework.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 4: But they're still like 'oh I choose to do it later,' but I'm like 'you're an adult,' and you know, I know some of you work; some of you have family obligations; some of you have all these other things. So, if you want to commit to making sure that your grade is great and do it all in time and have this opportunity to earn more points than you actually got, cool. And if you're like 'I'm busy and I'm tired and I don't have time to work on it this week' then it's still available for you to do next week, where you can still get a 70, which is still better than a zero.

Researcher: Yeah.

Participant 4: But when the end of the semester is nigh, just remember that a row of 50s does not a 70 to pass this class make.

Researcher: Right, right. Yeah, the ones that, uh, don't do their homework might also lack the math to I don't know...

Participant 4: There is that too. Yeah, they do struggle with that too. (laughs) We start doing Theory Four, and I'm like 'we're gonna talk about like integer notation,' and they're like 'what?'

Researcher: Oh yes, right.

Participant 4: Like, you only have to count to 12. You're dividing by multiples of 12. I mean it's not like this is difficult.

Researcher: You can read the face of a clock, we assume, so...

Participant 4: I assume that you can tell time.

Researcher: That's right. Mod 12 math is gonna be okay.

Participant 4: Yes, you know, and you say mod 12 and that freaks them out. I'm like, 'okay well we're gonna go around the room, and everyone's gonna count off by five.' So, they all count off by five. It was like, all the threes raise your hand; all the fives raise your hand; that's Mod Five.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 4: This is not complex guys. They struggle.

Researcher: Right and yeah that's the way. But I guess that actually brings us kind of to the last one, which is just is there anything else that you'd like to add about the topic of including composition in music theory curriculum?

Participant 4: I think just, in general, more people should do it more often. And I think one of the ways that it can start is by starting with at least one big project per semester, and it can always be like a final exam, or it can be like in lieu of an exam or in addition to an exam or something like that. But you know, give students the opportunity to start composing, and if you're part of a department where you're going through and making sure that the curriculum is graduated, and you move from like certain topics in Theory One to then Theory Two, Theory Three, Theory Four—why not set it up in such a way that the projects themselves grow, as well? You know, and so since I'm the only person on the Brownsville campus, and every kid who rolls through Brownsville is going to have me for all four semesters. You know, that's one of the things that I've done is set up my composition projects so each one builds. You know, and so that by the time they do get to Form and Analysis, they're like 'I can't believe I've composed this big huge thing.' And it's like, well I mean, it's not that much of a stretch when you think you already know how to create a phrase; you know how to create a sentence or period; you've turned that into a periods...you know, you've turned that into a, you know, binary or ternary form project—which can be large as well. You know and so you just keep expanding, you know.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 4: And I think that trying to find more ways to incorporate composition is a good thing for our students, and I think it makes music real for them, and I think it makes what we're doing in our class a little more real. Because I think they just come to our class...my class is always at eight or nine a.m. You know, and they're like it's this thing I have to do like eating broccoli. I don't like; it...it's just this thing, you know, but it's like if I can turn it into real music or make it seem relevant to what they're doing, then it becomes that much more interesting.

Researcher: Yeah. It definitely makes it more fun too I think. Yeah, for them.

Participant 4: Oh yeah. Well, I mean, it's also when you meet the students that you learn can play for students on the fly. You know, like I always told my students like they write it in Muscore because I was like you can do it in Finale or Sibelius or any of these things, but you have to send it to me as an XML file so I can open it up in whatever software. But it's like, I also said we'll listen to it in XML or on MIDI, you know, but if you don't like the way that sounds, you can also perform it yourself, or you can find a peer to do it for you, and there's always like two or three students in the class who like play everyone's pieces on piano. They just like sit in a practice room and play them all, and I was like you know now everyone from Theory One on knows that there's this one kid in their class who can just sightread everyone's piano stuff. You know, and they also listen to their critiques too because when that piano student sits down and says, 'bro, this piece...you can't play that.' You know, they have to go back and fix it. You know because he tells them why, and they're like oh, well, if I want so-and-so to play it for me, then I have to be good and fix it, you know.

Researcher: Right; they already encounter kind of real world. Yeah.

Participant 4: Yeah, you know, rather than like sitting at a concert...like I went to a concert with my ex-husband once at UT-Austin, and this guy was playing, uh, harpsichord. And he's playing along, and it's for, uh, like it's...it was a composer concert. So, the guy's playing, and then all of

a sudden, he's just like hitting over here, like where the keyboard doesn't exist, and it's like, oh, somebody wrote notes that don't exist on a harpsichord. And this guy clearly didn't practice it in advance and couldn't tell the person. So, he's just like...like this and like motioning at the guy, like what are you doing? Well, that's bad.

Researcher: That's hilarious.

Participant 4: You know, real world applications are always good.

Researcher: That's right. Right, yeah. Yeah, I like that. I love the idea, though, of incremental projects that kind of build. That's very cool, um...

Participant 4: Yeah, and I would like to do a lot more, but again you know, with all those free extra hours we have.

Researcher: Right, yeah, no doubt. Yes.

Participant 4: But I mean, the other thing too that I will say is that now that we've been doing these projects, and they do them every semester, I have a lot of students who didn't know they were composers say, 'I want to study composition.' And now that we actually have a composition degree here, so many more students have joined or decided to take composition lessons where they would have never done so otherwise because they'd never had the opportunity to compose. You know, so even if they're not doing a fantastic piece, or even if they feel like they have these major limitations because I only want them to write X, Y, or Z. You know because that's what the point of the project is. It's like you can take this, and you can build it, and you can do something else with it. And some of them end up going on and taking composition lessons, and then you know, have gone off and done their master's in composition. It's like, did I play a little part in that? I don't know, but, you know, it's kind of cool, so...

Researcher: That's cool. Yeah, they discover something they're passionate about, and the ones that probably aren't—the ones that are probably more, whatever, other side of brain, still kind of become functional, which is kind of exciting too. I don't know. I've seen, you know, I probably...we all...I remember like sight-readers that like could play the hardest thing in the world, but were terrified of improvising, you know, and even with advanced degrees, when I was a student. And the thought of kind of at least equipping people with a functional level of, you know, maybe it's not so creative, but maybe it's all rules and boxes, but having the ability to kind of do some of that is kind of neat too, I think.

Participant 4: Well, and I think the other thing too especially for us who teach at, you know, community colleges and small regional state schools is that most of our kids who come in as music majors or music minors are like I want to be a band director, I want to be a choir director, or I want to be an orchestra director because it's literally all they know professional musicians can be. They don't go to the symphony, or they see people who are in the symphony, but they only do that like once a month, so you can't really make a living doing that, right? So, it's like what does a professional musician do, if they're not in a band, you know a rock band, which you know some of them don't equate people in rock bands as people who go to college, which is a whole other issue, but those are the only things they know. And so, I mean even for me, like I

was like gonna go be a band director because I was like I liked my experience in band growing up, and that's what I wanted to do. And it wasn't until my junior year or so, when I'm out like observing bands in the field going like the thought of sitting around telling a clarinet player how to play F sharp above the break is just...like, no. You know like I like working with little horn players and making them better, but I don't want to listen to terrible band music; I don't want to listen to like...I don't want to do marching band, and when I'm 60, you know, like in South Texas...it's like 112 degrees outside.

Researcher: I know, right. Yeah.

Participant 4: I'm like this is not for me, and so even for me not going into composition, but just deciding I think I'm gonna do theory, or I want to do musicology or...and that as a field exists as a job. You know like I didn't even know that in...

Researcher: Right.

Participant 4: I didn't even make that connection until I was easily a junior or senior too because I had these people who taught me when I was in undergrad, but I didn't really think about them. It's like, oh that's a career choice for me, you know.

Researcher: Yeah.

Participant 4: It wasn't until later that I was like wait there's other things out here, and I could do that, you know. So, I think composition opens the door for that; I think musicology and ethnomusicology opened the door for that. I think there's a lot of things that we teach our undergrads that they can recognize as 'I could get a job in this, and I could do this and be happy.' You know.

Researcher: Right. Sure, yeah, for sure. Definitely kind of an awakening for some students. It was that way for me of kind of like, I don't know, I was like oh, I don't want to do music ed, I want to do music performance, and I did piano and comp for bachelors. And...but just thinking well, I'm like this is a little scary because it feels like sort of not a safety net, but I want to go for it because I don't wanna, I don't know, teach sixth grade band and just the hours that...that it is and you know.

Participant 4: Yeah.

Researcher: Which, I mean thank goodness for great band teachers too that inspire students, but they're always hustling in a way, I mean in a different way.

Participant 4: Oh yeah, easily. You know, and then there's also the...I looked into doing performance for a while, and I also recognized some things about myself. I mean, I am a very...I'm introverted, but I'm also very social. Like, I like to be with lots of people, but I'm not necessarily like look at me. Um, but in order to be the best performer and the person who makes a living being a performer, like you have to spend a lot of hours by yourself in a practice room, and that's not me. You know, and the one thing I'll also say that I miss about me being a music theorist is I don't play nearly as much as I used to because, well yes, I play piano and yes, I play theory piano with the best of them, my primary instrument is horn, and I hardly ever play

anymore. You know, and I have this running joke that I only play for drunk people these days because it's like I play Oktoberfest in the fall and sometimes Volksfest in the spring.

Researcher: Right.

Participant 4: You know, and occasionally I may play, like if, uh, they're doing like a choral piece and they need like an accompanying choir and there's like two horn parts, I'll play horn two, which is essentially like timpani two. You know, like I'm just playing I and V over there in the back, but like I don't have the lip muscles anymore. Like, I pick up my horn if the valves actually work, and I get it working, then it's like, oh I'm awesome for two minutes, and then my mouth melts off my face, and I can't play anymore, and it's like I miss that.

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 4: So, I've joined the like little festival chorus at, you know, here in Brownsville, and so I sing, you know, Handel's *Messiah* and whatever they're doing in the spring because it's like, oh, I can be around people, which is nice. You know and then my students see that I'm performing. But the other thing I did is I joined Virginia Davis's Modern Band Ensemble, so I'm the faculty rock band.

Researcher: Right; nice.

Participant 4: Which I will also say has done a lot of stuff for my teaching too. Because like one of the things we laugh about is we spend a lot of time looking at chord charts that have been made by people who are not...

Researcher: Oh, sure yeah.

Participant 4: ...musicians, and so they're like we're doing this, and it's in this key, but it's in third capo, but we're moving it down to this key and so like, 'what are we doing?!'

Researcher: Just tell me that.

Participant 4: And we're sitting there struggling, and then I'm like, you know, we could just listen to it. Like, I don't know like shocking like...but we're relying on all these crutches that are so bad, you know, and it's like, oh, this isn't working. But you know, being able to teach my students like chord progressions, like 'oh yeah so this band does this.' You know you can play like some crazy rock band tune, and say it's like this, you know.

Researcher: Right. Yeah.

Participant 4: Here's an example by Handel, but here's also an example by blah-blah-blah or here's this example, you know.

Researcher: Right, right.

Participant 4: So, that helps with my theory teaching a lot too. You know, and then just composition-wise like noodling around over on the bass—like if I'm practicing bass my, uh, colleague Andres is like, 'I don't know how you sound so great on the bass.' I'm like I have no

idea what I'm doing over here, but I'm just noodling around. Which of course is improv—which of course is composition, but you know. We'll make it work.

Researcher: Yeah.

Participant 4: But it's something fun, so...

Researcher: Yeah. Well, I love the inexhaustible nature of music. I think I've always sort of done...been best at being a jack-of-all-trades which is, you know, can be good and bad of like just always love too many things. And, done a little bit of jazz and a little bit of...sometimes I'll break out my trumpet, and but the same way, I'll tell my students like I can play whatever I want for 30 minutes and then forget it, you know. And then it's all...

Participant 4: It's gone. (laughs)

Researcher: Right? And then it's all gone, but that's cool. We started doing, uh, Jaime's been doing modern band and like finally...it was on the books a semester or two and maybe just students not knowing, but kind of not catching on, and yeah last semester they did a couple sections of it, which was cool. So, I don't know. Hopefully it'll keep going, and...

Participant 4: Yeah, we had a lot of students interested in it, and then no one took anything, and then they're back to taking it again. So, it just sort of depends, but I think the big problem that we run into is that it doesn't fit in any one degree plan, so the...you know, students don't take things here as an elective because they'd have to pay, so.

Researcher: Sure, right. Yeah.

Participant 4: Unless we make it a minor, then they won't take things. Which is what we've done a lot with like composition. We've turned it into a composition minor, just so people can get financial aid in order to take composition lessons and stuff like that. It's like how do you take the system that we're given within the state of Texas and make it work for our student population, but...

Researcher: Yeah, yeah. It's cool that y'all are back to the Bachelor's in Composition again I think, or yeah off the ground; that's neat.

Participant 4: I think it'll be good; I think it'll be good. And we have a lot of students that have been asking for that, also asking for like music technology and stuff like that so. All those things have been good. Yeah, definitely positive stuff so...

Researcher: Well thanks again. I guess I'll turn off the recording here...let's see if I...

Interview Transcript: Participant 5

Researcher: All right. Well, thanks again for agreeing to do this. Um, so I guess we'll go ahead and get started. What is your educational background in music, and what do you consider your greatest areas of teaching expertise?

Participant 5: Um, so regarding music, I was fortunate to start piano lessons, um, from a young age, and that continued on and...until a point where I became kind of more serious about music. I started studying from a local university professor, and then I earned my bachelor's degree in piano, um, and also in music composition and completed a master's degree, also in music composition. Um, greatest areas of teaching expertise? Really, um, I've taught all the levels of freshman and sophomore music theory. Um, and have been doing that for something like 15 years now. Um, so that's definitely an area of strength and something that I most enjoy, but I've taught a wide host of other courses as well, um, including applied lessons and piano and composition and, um, also the class piano sequence here of Class Pianos One, Two, and Three.

Researcher: Great. Um, so describe your background teaching music theory in terms of levels taught, years of experience, and areas of strength—and I know you touched on that somewhat already.

Participant 5: Sure. Uh, so regarding music theory I've been, like I said, I've been teaching music theory and sight-singing and ear training, um, both One, Two, Three, and Four and have done that now for the past 15-16 years or so. Uh, prior to that I've also done some teaching assistant work and some music theory tutoring for those that were struggling with music theory. Um, so it's definitely an area of strength and the coursework that I had through my bachelor's and master's in composition gave me a lot of work in the theory area. Um, so that's definitely something I enjoy and an area of strength. Most recently, I've settled into just doing music theories three and four, um, so the upper level is...is even greater area of experience and probably my greatest passion. I enjoy taking theory students through chromatic chords chromaticism, and also that in Theory Four...three and four, they really have more tools in their tool belt to do, uh, some forms...some work with simple forms like binary and ternary and, um, and phrases and periods and that level also. Um, so yes, I enjoy that very much.

Researcher: Wonderful. Um, when teaching music theory do you reference a textbook?

Participant 5: Uh, lately I don't. I have...our courses have increasingly been open educational resources, but even so, I will direct them to the textbook that I had as a student, which is the Koska and Payne book. Um, I encourage them to buy it or at least consider buying it. So, it's not required, but it's recommended. Um, but then also knowing that our...socioeconomically our students, um you know, come from all walks of life and cannot always afford to. Um, so I don't require it, but I do recommend they have it and explain to them, you know, if you're a serious musician and this is your life pursuit, then really you need a good reference book that you can go to once you're out of this class that you can keep coming back to again and again to get clarification on things. Um, so that's how we do it currently.

Researcher: Great. How well do you feel your current theory text or curriculum prepares students to compose or teach composition?

Participant 5: Really not a lot. Um, and I wish it did. It's something I'd like to expand in. Um you know, the main factors that keep me from doing it, I would say, are time. Um, there's such...there's so much content that we have to cover that feels kind of dictated toward us. Um, we need to be in alignment with our local universities when students do transfer, and so I know what they need to get through to feel like they've...there won't be any surprises for them when they transfer, and so, time is a real factor with that. Um, so, currently it feels already pretty smashed in to get them covering everything adequately that I know they'll need when they transfer but having said that I certainly see the value in it, um, and the little bits of it that we do I would like to incorporate more, um, of it in the future.

Researcher: Great. Um, let's see...do you believe music majors should have a basic knowledge of how to compose when they graduate?

Participant 5: Absolutely. Yes. I think it's really critical, um, and especially if we include the word arranging in that, um, then I think even the majors that are not composition that don't imagine themselves as composers or needing to compose, really look back—from what I've heard also from other professionals—find themselves looking back and wishing to feel more equipped in that area. Um, from anyone directing almost any type of ensemble, uh, guitar ensemble, choir ensemble, string ensemble: they often—from what I've heard—find themselves needing to make their own arrangements. Uh, especially at the community college level, it's not a given that you'll have, uh, equal representation of instruments for your instrumentation. So, you might be directing a woodwind ensemble where all of a sudden you have, you know, one saxophone and two bassoons and oboe—you know, some non-standard grouping—and it's not uncommon to hear from colleagues that because there doesn't exist, you know, decent arrangements for this kind of odd group that they have...they find themselves needing to do the arranging themselves. Um, so, even the majors that aren't really aware of it, they need it more than they know. I think, yeah, I think it's absolutely critical.

Researcher: Great. Uh, what was your music theory experience like as a college student, and how well did it prepare you to teach composition or to compose in idioms that are most relevant to your context?

Participant 5: Yeah, I had a really great composition, uh, I'm sorry, music theory experience as a college student, I would say. Uh, so, I had four semesters of music theory; I had a, uh, Form and an...like an 18th century Form and Analysis class and a 20th century, uh, techniques type of class...Form and Analysis class that I enjoyed both of those very much, and those were very helpful. I had an Orchestration class. I had a 17th century Counterpoint and a semester of an 18th century Counterpoint class. So, two semesters of Counterpoint, two semesters of Form and Analysis, uh, Orchestration: all of this was at the undergraduate level. I took an honor's graduate-level Form and Analysis class my senior year of undergrad. Um, and then into grad school I had yet a different, um, Analytical Techniques, I think it was called, and in which, we also did, you know, different, uh, analyze structures and different compositions still and had to

write about it. Um, and then I took...in grad school I had Theory Pedagogy. Um, so it was extensive...what I had to do. Um, but I think that's unique to Theory and Composition Majors, uh, for better or worse. So, um, you know from what I've heard from other from students or seen on degree plans more recently: not all students are getting that type of experience. Um, so, mine...my experience did prepare me to compose and to teach composition, uh, in my context and to try to integrate it better into my classes. The frustrating part with that is I feel like I know what I would do differently and have just not had the time to implement it and recreate my curriculum in a way that, uh, reflects what I would desire to do differently.

Researcher: Great. Um, and are you comfortable with composing music?

Participant 5: Yeah. Absolutely, uh, absolutely comfortable with that. Um, I do arranging for different ensembles: for our Jazz Ensemble and for other student ensembles, um, and also just for myself when I have time as a creative endeavor. It's something I enjoy very much.

Researcher: Wonderful. Um, okay creating and performing are both National Core Arts Standards for music. Do you feel that K-12 curriculum teaches both equally well? Please elaborate on why you think so.

Participant 5: Um, yeah, so, my perspective would be limited to what I know and have heard, um, from others because I have not actually taught K-12 directly. Um, but I don't think so—especially here in Texas from what I know, you know, with the pressure toward UIL a lot of these students are being, uh, and band directors are being pressured to get the students to a high level on a very small, streamlined number of pieces so that students reflect really well at contest on what they can do. Um, so, there's heavy pressure to perform well certainly. So, I think performance is stressed. Not only that, I think performance is stressed to an extent where sight-reading is not even stressed as much as college teachers would wish. Instead, students are kind of taught really well on a very few pieces, uh, at the exclusion sometimes of sight reading well. And that's not the case in all programs. Some programs do really well at actually training students in the rudiments of music. I know there are music theory program...or programs in the area that have AP-level music theory and that's to the benefit of their students certainly, but as a whole, no. I think there's very much a pressure especially at like the middle school/high school level to have students sound good. Um, and they I think they would say the same thing with time pressures that they're not really given time and opportunity to make creativity an important endeavor at the, you know, eighth grade through, uh, 12th grade level especially.

Researcher: Great. Um, what about the college curriculum and why?

Participant 5: Yeah. So, for this I think it would be, um, it would very much depend on what a student is majoring in, and furthermore, I think it's worse than it used to be where now the state dictates or mandates, um, how many credit hours can be in a music degree. So, um, so there's pressure on that end too. But I know for our students helping them transfer, you know, and articulation agreements we've had with other universities, I will see their degree plans for the junior and senior level, and I'll see that especially for music education majors or music performance majors—that are not composition—that it's very few courses at the junior/senior level that are helping students take the theory that they've learned to the next level and actually

implement it effectively. Um, so for example, our neighbor partnering institution: they take one semester of Form and Analysis, and that's about it. Uh, you know that a voice major, you know, might would have Vocal Pedagogy, and you know, uh, a diction in different languages and Opera Workshop, and they'd have performance-based things, but the...they'd be pretty light on, um, theory. Same for really most other instruments and especially for students that then are going to have the education track component and student teaching and the education classes. There's not a lot of room in the degree to give them additional theory, and so they don't. Um, so they're pretty limited to just what they get in Theories One through Four and Form and Analysis. And because I know from other professors that it's pretty similar—that they also run into time—so they're not teaching composition in their theory classes. So, students aren't learning how to connect the dots on how to take the theory they understand and actually apply it to a more creative and open endeavor like composition. So, no I don't think so.

Researcher: Great. And I...so, I guess a follow-up question to that would be: do you believe most K-12 music educators are comfortable teaching creativity and please elaborate?

Participant 5: Well again, I wouldn't know completely because I'm not a K-12 teacher, but I would also guess no—especially at the 8th through 12th level. Um, the local band directors here all came out of programs that are also pretty local. You know, for the most part, not exclusively. But we're kind of an area that's, you know, a little bit farther away from some of the big metropolitan hubs here in Texas, and so, you know, our students are trained locally at the neighboring university. And I know what type of training they're getting, um, and then, like I had just referenced, they're not getting a lot of composition in their work. So, these teachers are coming into the classroom and taking that experience—or lack thereof—into their own students. And also, like I said, the pressure to, um, be great, you know, sound good performance-wise and for marching season and for UIL and for concerts. Um, so I don't think they're emphasizing creativity. Are they comfortable with? It probably widely varies based on their interests and their background, but as a whole I would think that it's less than would be desirable.

Researcher: Great. Um, how do you think a lesson template could be constructed to meaningfully integrate composition into a theory lesson?

Participant 5: Yeah, I absolutely think it could work. I think it would work best if it was done in small increments, um, where it could build up slowly over time. You know, where they do a little exercise in Theory One and a little bit in Theory Two, in Theory four...three and four, and then that kind of gradually, uh, crescendos in terms of difficulty of the types of compositional exercises they're doing. Um, yeah. I know in my class, in Theory Four at least, they do some composition. I have them do some non-traditional scale exercises where they write simple melodies that put to use, um, like a Bartok scale or like a hexatonic scale or an octatonic scale, um, or one of the modes of the pentatonic scale. So, they'll do some work of having to think in these different scales that they're introduced to, or a whole tone scale. They'll do an exercise like that. They'll do a 12-tone row composition, um, but even then, I have to take time to kind of break it down and prepare them for it. So, it definitely does take some out of their class time to do it. Uh, feedback I get though is that students tend to enjoy it, and I think it helps them more concretely cement, uh, in their mind what some of these processes really mean. Um, so I think it

takes...helps them take what they're learning in theory a step further, when we do make time to...to do this. So, I absolutely think it could work really well, and I've known some other professors that are trying to do so, uh, but it's pretty hit or miss. A lot of professors I know in the area run into the same struggles of time constraints with what they're trying to do.

Researcher: Great. If you taught, uh, if you taught theory curriculum with more purposeful integration of composition, what are some obstacles you envision, and what are some benefits you envision?

Participant 5: Um, so obstacles, you know, I've already kind of referenced I think time is a major obstacle. Student, um, the level of students as they come in is...can be an obstacle if they're remedial. You know, then they're already struggling to just understand how to read music, and so, trying to get them to the next level of how to put notes on a page is a whole other challenge. So, definitely those are things that make it less accessible to students, but I think the benefits could be huge. Um, that if we, you know, if a common, uh, student majoring in almost anything—music education or performance and in different instruments—you know, if the performers and the educators also had the tools and the craft to be creative and to teach composition or creativity and were equally strong. You know, where composition was not just, uh, this you know ivory tower thing that's only accessible to those that spend their entire lives, you know, studying, um, theory or composition but is kind of brought down to a level where others can use it and understand it and be effective with arranging and composing. I think it would be hugely beneficial. And they would take that into their future context also, or their future classrooms, and help students, you know, help their students thrive and be creative. Um, you know, there's a lot that is beneficial that we know in terms of, uh, neural pathways and different ways of thinking...critical thinking, problem solving with composing, and you know, also just... there's a lot of stress and anxiety that current K-12 students feel on the back...on the back side of the pandemic. Um, you know, the mental health issues are greater than ever I think for...for kids and for young people and for students. And so, creative outlets also we know are hugely beneficial to that as well. You know, to have a creative outlet for students would be wonderful I think for their mental health and for the pride that they can have then, you know, in themselves of creating something that is theirs. I think would be really nice, um, and couldn't be understated.

Researcher: Wonderful. Is there anything else you'd like to add about the topic of including composition in music theory curriculum?

Participant 5: Well, I guess just to reinforce, you know, um, that I'd like to do more of it. You know, the times that I do include it is helpful, but I'd like to hopefully in future years...you know, this has really given me food for thought or made me pause and think that I wouldn't mind overhauling, um, a good part of my Theory Three and Four curriculum to better integrate composition, um, and get students to collaborate. I think it would make them more engaged in my course and, um, maybe even help retention...make them feel like they had a voice in the process of what they're learning. And yeah, I would enjoy that very much. So, it's definitely...this has made me pause and think of how I would better integrate composition into

my theory curriculum because I really do think it would have great benefit to our students...of just making the time to do that.

Researcher: Great. Well, thanks again for being part of this. I appreciate very much your time. I'm going to go ahead and bump off the recording here and thanks again.

Interview Transcript: Participant 6

Researcher: What is your educational background in music and what do you consider your greatest areas of teaching expertise?

Participant 6: My Educational Background is in Music Performance-Percussion. I have degrees from UT – Arlington and UL – Lafayette. I work with Applied Percussion Students to find gaps in their fundamentals and strengthen those. A big part of this is teaching students "How to Practice". As music professors in the Applied Area, we have created well-thought-out curriculums and use them organically as they are adjusted to those individual students' needs and career paths. The challenge is working with those students on developing purposeful practice habits. So, my area of greatest expertise is the "How to Practice", "Purposeful Practice", and building "Mental Tenacity".

Researcher: Describe your background teaching music theory in terms of levels taught, years of experience, and areas of strength.

Participant 6: For the past 13 years at South Texas College, I have taught the Fundamentals of Music on rotation with a couple of other music professors. My contribution to Fundamentals is using modern music to explore musical concepts and ideas. My strength is in the rhythm and reading portion of this course. This seems cliché or stereotypical for a Music-Percussion Professor, but most students in the class have trouble reading music and understanding the basic elements of rhythm. Once we garner some traction here, the students in the course start to thrive!

Researcher: When teaching music theory, do you reference a textbook? How well do you feel your current theory text or curriculum prepares students to compose or teach composition? Do you believe music majors should have a basic knowledge of how to compose when they graduate?

Participant 6: At STC, I teach the Fundamentals of Music. For that class, I have used Tonal Harmony - By Stefan Kostka, Dorothy Payne, and Byron Almén for part of the course. I also create custom Rhythm Studies, Melody Studies & Harmony Studies from modern-day music within the last few years. Students seem to enjoy a blended classical and modern approach to music fundamentals. All the basics for getting started down the road to composing are in most theory textbooks. The masterwork comes in after completing Theory & ET (1,2,3,4), Orchestration and Form & Analysis. Including some basic elemental composing in music theory is essential for the modern-day musician!

Researcher: What was your music theory experience like as a college student? How well did it prepare you to teach composition or to compose in idioms that are most relevant to your context? Are you comfortable with composing music?

Participant 6: I was fortunate to have an amazing music theory experience at the University of Texas at Arlington. I took Music Theory from Dr. George Chave (music composer), and he was outstanding! I felt prepared to start composing music after Theory, Ear Training, Orchestration, and Form & Analysis. Today, I arrange music for Marching Bands, Indoor Drumlines and compose chamber percussion works. The kicker for me was that my main percussion teacher at

UT-Arlington - Dr. Michael Varner, was also a composer. Arranging and Composing were part of Applied Percussion Lessons. When you add that to a composer at UTA that taught Theory, Ear Training, Orchestration, and Form & Analysis, this was like hitting the 'Music Lottery'!

Researcher: Creating and performing are both National Core Arts Standards for music. Do you feel that K-12 curriculum teaches both equally well? Please elaborate on why you think so. What about college curriculum and why?

Participant 6: I taught middle school & high school music before I moved to the collegiate level, and from my numerous years there, I saw the performing side emphasized much more than the creative side. The performing side of music was connected to competitions, and while this can serve as a great vehicle for a musical experience, it can sometimes serve only one side of the spectrum. At the college level, students are studying music as professionals in training, so training in creativity and performing are much more balanced and blended.

Researcher: Do you believe most K-12 music educators are comfortable teaching creativity? Please elaborate.

Participant 6: This is a split decision. It is hard to put math to this; only my experience at a few different schools and participating in team teaching at varied levels might illuminate this. From what I saw and experienced with other teachers, teaching creativity was quite challenging for a few people. Some of this was student related, but there needed to be more training and understanding of the general approach to teaching creativity in music. The remedy for this was musical exploration with improv on the instrument regardless of the genre, style, or idiom.

Researcher: How do you think a lesson template could be constructed to meaningfully integrate composition into a theory lesson?

Participant 6: Taking a modern-day song and breaking that down: Rhythm, Melody, Harmony, Form and Flow, might connect well for a compositional template. Focus on one musical idea at a time to build the song. There are no wrong answers for composing. You can start with melody or harmony first. Some of us write the form or a basic rhythm as the starting point. Essentially, we are deconstructing a written song to lead us into composing an original song.

Researcher: If you taught theory curriculum with more purposeful composition integration, what are some obstacles you envision? What are some benefits you envision?

Participant 6: The obstacles to compositional integration in Music Theory are that you would make early theory courses too difficult or move too quickly. Finding a blend and balance is the key. The benefits are vast! Students will start to look at music as more language-based, similar to expressive communication. The cool thing is that this will also help to produce professional musicians that are much more comfortable in musical conversation and storytelling!

Researcher: Is there anything that you would like to add about the topic of including composition in music theory curriculum?

Participant 6: Composition in music theory is an important topic of discussion in music literacy. That being said, for this to work and be practical, the applied music program needs to be a

parallel conversation so that this will stand the test of time and work at all levels: College and University.