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A case study of music-making in a Ghanaian village: applications for elementary music teaching and learning

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A CASE STUDY OF MUSIC-MAKING IN A GHANAIAN VILLAGE:
APPLICATIONS FOR ELEMENTARY MUSIC TEACHING AND LEARNING

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Music

in

The School of Music

by
Sara Rachel McCall
B.M.E., Louisiana State University, 2003
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the teachers of the Dagbe Cultural Arts Institute in Kopeyia, Ghana, West Africa, for their tireless work to educate the people of Ghana and the world about the music, art, and customs of the *Ewe* people.

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To my parents: This research would not have been possible without the unflinching financial and emotional support you provided throughout the last two years of school. I am so thankful that you found a way to get me to Ghana, through Ghana, and back again. Thank you so much for going along with my crazy idea to go back to school.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores music teaching and learning in Ghana, West Africa from a music education standpoint. Fieldwork was conducted at the Dagbe Cultural Institute, in Kopeyia, Ghana, West Africa to investigate methods of teaching and learning, the function of music within the culture, and formulate implementation strategies for elementary classrooms in the United States.

Main themes on teaching and learning that emerged within the center focused on the use of strategies like drum syllables and analogy with Western students during classes. The use of learning in context through cultural outings also provided students with learning opportunities. The overall function of music as a daily activity for all villagers provided students at the center with many opportunities for learning. Implementation of learning processes taken from the center blend well with current teaching and learning practices in the United States, allowing many strategies to be unmodified and used in classrooms. Specific differences between the two teaching environments include large teacher to student ratio, teacher-oriented environment, teaching students as children within the culture learn, and modeling performance before learning. Each of these provided unique learning experiences for students at the center. Through these observations, connections to teaching and learning in the United States were made to provide teachers with resources for implementing Ghanaian drumming and dancing into elementary school music curriculums to provide students with a broader worldview of music and culture.

LITERATURE REVIEW

World Music Education

In the past several decades, world music has developed into an area of interest in music education in the United States. Since the founding of the Society for Ethnomusicology and its accompanying journal, *Ethnomusicology*, in the late 1950's, attention to those cultures deemed "exotic" have piqued educators' interest, and many educators have sought to include new musics into their classroom as best they can with the resources they can find. For some educators, a small taste of world music comes from undergraduate music education, theory, and history courses, and for others interest develops in the classroom in an effort to better identify with students. Finally, there are those educators who will travel to new places to gather music, games, and material culture to share with students.

With educators' expertise, and through scholarly efforts, a variety of musical cultures can be included within curricula (Campbell, 2003). When the Music Educators National Conference created the National Standards for Music Education in 1994, the ninth standard stated that "understanding music in relation to history and culture" would be a goal (MENC, <http://www.menc.org/resources/view/national-standards-for-music-education>). This particular standard was created because students need to "understand their own historical and cultural heritage and those of others within their communities and beyond" (ArtsEdge, http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards/standards_k4.cfm#02). Within this goal, specific achievement objectives designate that students should

be able to aurally identify varied genres and styles, as well as possess the ability to describe elements within music examples. In addition, student should be able to describe the use of music in daily life, and the function and role of musicians in varied cultures. These achievement standards run parallel to the goals of ethnomusicological research.

Some ethnomusicologists and music educators consider practical applications to music education a possible extension of ethnomusicological research and music education professionals have promoted the integration of diverse musical cultures into curricula (Campbell, 2003; Howard, 2005; Locke, 1998; Schippers, 2005). Campbell (2003) stated,

In classic fieldwork and the musical ethnographies that have resulted from them, the participant performance approach to research has naturally placed ethnomusicologists in the position of students learning repertoire and techniques from artist-teachers [...] This student perspective served to raise an awareness of the teaching-learning process, referred to ethnomusicologically as 'transmission and acquisition', which is in fact akin to the 'pedagogical practice' of music educators' ongoing attention.

With music educators leaving the classroom and conducting fieldwork, the emerging focus on teaching and learning within foreign cultures acquires a new advocate, as teachers bring a keen eye for teaching effectiveness and learning process. The merging of ideas from each group of scholars will support the need to continue observing teaching and learning throughout the world, and examine how different teaching and learning styles can be used in music education.

Educational organizations and the United States government took notice of the burgeoning plurality of society through the 1980's, handing down new mandates for education that led music educators to globalize their curriculum and further the multicultural movement (Campbell, 2002). As our world continues to become more connected, researchers and educators have begun to explore methods and pedagogies for world music education (Campbell, 2003; Howard, 2005; Schippers, 1996, 2005). Through a shared interest in bringing culturally diverse musics to classrooms and universities, ethnomusicologists and educators have found common ground. Ethnomusicologists have combined efforts with educators to develop materials that are presented with sensitivity and authenticity (Campbell, 2003; Wade, 2004). For music educators, the goal is to include culture-based information and diverse musical repertoire within the fabric of existing curricula.

The idea of adding new musical cultures to a curriculum with predominately Western orientation has raised interest in the study of teacher training and attitudes toward multicultural perspectives. A study by McDaniel, McDaniel, and McDaniel (1988) showed that when pre-service general education teachers had experiential training through methods classes in the inclusion of multicultural perspectives, the practice of including these perspectives transferred to the classroom after they graduated. A similar study by Teicher (1997) showed the same results and concluded that cultural competence was not needed as much as a "willing attitude" (p. 423). Students graduating today should have a strong multicultural background to better assist their students in understanding and appreciating different kinds of music and their function in

society. This willing attitude can be supported by involving pre-service music educators in workshops and methods classes that offer practical experiences they can use in the future to engage students in critical thinking about varied cultures.

Music in Ghana

Interest in world music from the educational community has been fueled by the work of ethnomusicologists including Nettl (1983) and Merriam (1964). When Ghana became the first African nation to gain its independence from European rule, opportunities for study of music and culture within the country became available to a wider audience. Through that availability, several ethnomusicologists have directed their scholarly efforts to the music of Ghana, aiming to inform and educate the Western musical community about aspects of Ghanaian music. Agawu (1984), concerned with the development of “classical” music in Ghana, wrote about the use of language models from Akan and *Ewe* people in the music of Dr. Ephraim Amu. He showed how the languages impacted Dr. Amu’s approach to Western classical music composition in Ghana and its appreciation there as an art form. Agawu (1990) also studied the basic musical structures in Northern *Ewe* music and how they are used to create variation in performance. Brothers (1994) studied the connection of southern *Ewe* music, specifically improvisation, in the musical syntax of jazz. He dissected jazz into the European and African aspects and showed how gains in knowledge of *Ewe* music have led to new perspectives of jazz.

In an effort to look at the transmission and teaching of Ghanaian music culture, Kwami (1994) outlined the development of music education in Ghana from colonial rule to the present, highlighting indigenous music presence in music education. Locke (1980, 1982, 1998) sought to make sense of *Ewe* dance drumming in the hopes of it being taught to Western students, publishing several articles and a book to aid in cross-cultural transfer.

More recently, ethnomusicologists are studying the function of the music as it occurs in African society from musical and cultural standpoints (Agawu, 2006; Avorgbedor, 2001; Dor, 2004). Daniel Avogbedor (2001) and George Dor (2004) studied the urban Anlo-Ewe and their use of song in performance to express conflict, competition, and creativity in song. Similarly, Agawu (2006) studied *Ewe* music elements for their varied uses in culture and their use in the composition of new music. Researchers are careful to state that as much as we study, it is impossible to quantify and understand the intricacies of *Ewe* music from our Western view of music (Kolinski, 1973). Through the efforts of ethnomusicologists, music educators gain better understanding of the native function and Western perception of Ghanaian music, and the possibilities for practical transfers to classrooms increase.

Cross-cultural Teaching and Learning

As challenging a task as it is, some musicians and educators have taken up the torch and used their interest in particular cultures to show that, with care, it is possible to teach Western-born students the music of unfamiliar cultures. Nguyen (1994) recounted an invaluable cultural lesson learned when a Swiss

family came to James Madison University to present and teach. His background as a violin player had prepared him well for the performance of Western European art music, however he was challenged when faced with the authentic Swiss folk dance and music lessons offered by the Schmid family. They taught the dance class for one week, giving Nguyen views of new traditions and different lives. His story shows that even if it is outside the comfort zone of the student, learning about a new culture through an authentic method of sharing offers a musical experience that can foster change in perception and give a deeper understanding of others.

Campbell (1992) outlined the steps for music teachers wishing to introduce music from a different culture, and offered sample lesson plans highlighting a variety of cultures. Some teachers would say that it is too difficult to incorporate world music into an already overloaded curriculum, but Campbell shows that the musical goals in the National Standards can be accomplished with diverse musics. Teachers wishing to incorporate new music can compare sonic and rhythmic elements within existing curriculum, and the popular teaching methods of Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze can supplement teaching, expanding the creative possibilities of new music. The *Music Educators Journal* has been influential in presenting solutions for educators to incorporate world music in the classroom since their special issue in 1972 in which Margaret Mead wrote the foreword. *The Orff Echo* and *Reverberations*, publications of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association, frequently highlight ways to integrate world music using the Orff process, reviewing new publications, featuring tested lesson plans from teachers, and profiling teachers using world music in the classroom. Others

have used Western training to describe and adapt concepts that are learned in oral traditions. For example, Temperley (2000) examines Ghanaian drumming through a Western theoretical lens and concludes that the essence of the music cannot be taught through systematic learning, but in most cases viewing it through our own training system helps perception of difficult rhythmic concepts.

The combined interest of ethnomusicologists and educators has given music education a new instructional outlet. Campbell (2002) points out that we have been building to this point for 100 years, citing ten defining moments in the last century that contributed to our current position. She cautions that “for now, the challenge of the profession remains: to develop in all young people the skills and knowledge of some of the musical expressions that resound in a cultural democracy like our own” (p. 32). Campbell outlines how supporting educational organizations like the National Association for Music Education (MENC) have given teachers additional support with magazine articles focusing on world music education, recordings produced for education, and more recently conference presentations and artists-in-residence, which highlight our musical diversity. Thanks to the efforts of those involved, “we are no longer limited to advice from our Western colleagues; we can also learn about music teaching and learning from an Indian guru, a salsero, or a community musician in Africa” (Schippers, 1998, p. 6).

Some teachers have begun to use their expertise in the field to share new cultures with their students. The transfer of concrete ideas from one musical culture to another can be difficult, but a teacher who understands the concepts from both sides can have great success sharing their knowledge. Howard (2005)

speaks of teaching his students SamulNori from the perspective of a teacher who is a cultural outsider. In teaching SamulNori, Korea's "most successful traditional music" (Howard, 2005, p. 133), he advocates giving his students a cultural experience without mastery as the ultimate goal. Howard shows the details of the art form including instrumentation, aesthetic, performance practice, aural interpretation, notation, and perception of the culture, but concludes that even with such detailed information, teaching his students the tradition will never be "like Koreans teaching Koreans" (Howard, 2005, p. 133). It is impossible for a person born outside a culture to see, interact, and understand a culture through study the way a native does. Avorgbedor (2001) advocates for the study of unfamiliar cultures by using the music to highlight the cultural intricacies, even if students do not understand them from an insider perspective. It is important for teachers to provide experiences that are authentically-minded, practical, and embedded within cultural context. This might take a shift in the goals the teacher has for students. The outcomes of general music education in Western cultures is often a concert or a polished performance, but in some other cultures, the outcome of study is the learning process and understanding how performers react to each other and the audience. In this sense, giving a program to signify the end of learning is not the ultimate goal (Campbell, 1992). Even in performance, there is opportunity for learning by all involved, not just the audience.

In her dissertation, Feay-Shaw (2002) showed that cultural perspective and musical understanding go hand in hand to shape our experiences. She conducted four separate case studies in her examination of culture and musical

understanding. For her examination, she followed a Ghanaian master drummer and a graduate student at her university versed in Ghanaian drumming culture. She also examined a public school teacher implementing drumming techniques in the classroom and two undergraduate students at the university enrolled in a music teaching course. Each had different goals for teaching or learning the style of Gahu drumming from Ghana. Feay-Shaw took classes with the master drummer and challenged herself to wholly experience the musical tradition of Ghanaian drumming without the concern for musical notation to which she was accustomed. Through her classes, her focus became hearing and feeling the patterns, experiencing the music as organically as possible, similar to the way children in the culture would. In addition to her own training, she noticed things about her teacher and other participants. Feay-Shaw's teacher, the master drummer, adapted his view of teaching and learning by adopting an assessment strategy of the dominant culture. Giving a written test was his way of modifying his method to help convey highly valued concepts to the students, while evaluating them in a way that was familiar to them. The graduate student noted that when experiencing a new culture, it is more important to be a participant than a scientist. Learning about a culture from within rather than examining from the outside will give new students better understanding of customs, techniques, and strategies that occur within the culture. Because every culture has its own ways of teaching and learning, trying to make one culture fit in another is not necessary, but the blending of cultures' learning processes leads to greater understanding and learning for teacher and student (Feay-Shaw, 2002). The public school teacher found implementation of Ghanaian drumming in her

classroom to be difficult because of time constraints and her own apprehensions, but succeeded in the end by setting aside her preconceived expectations of ability and resources, using processes and materials she already had available. The two undergraduate students teaching a practicum in Ghanaian music to elementary school students found that the focus of their lessons became behavior control and trying to portray the culture accurately, but both felt that having a direct line of communication with a culture bearer, the Ghanaian master drummer, gave them more confidence in their abilities. These four distinct perspectives on teaching and learning show that by understanding other cultures, consulting with culture bearers, and actively participating in learning, teachers and students can have a more meaningful experience.

The idea of global awareness has led music teachers to make provisions in their curricula. By offering a well-planned, approachable curriculum to students, there are great rewards for both student and teacher (Morin, 2003). Aiming activities at the interests and cultures of students will keep lessons and music-making relevant and engaging for students. However, the environment in which a cross-cultural lesson is presented will not lend itself to completely authentic presentation. Teachers can sensitively modify lessons to help students understand concepts, such as Feay-Shaw's teacher who gave a test in his drumming class as a way of conforming to Western university institutional requirements. While this was not a usual method for learning the style of Gahu drumming from Ghana, the test helped his students understand which concepts he valued most and helped him better adapt to his students' learning styles (Feay-Shaw, 2002).

Schippers (2010) designed the twelve-continuum transmission framework (TCTF) to give educators a basis for evaluating transmission and learning of world music cultures. This framework is intended to make accessible the study of varied musical cultures through understanding of the teaching and learning methods (See Figure 1).

Issues of Context		
static tradition	-----	constant flux
"reconstructed" authenticity	-----	"new identity" authenticity
original context	-----	recontextualization
Modes of Transmission		
atomistic/analytic	-----	holistic
notation-based	-----	aural
tangible	-----	intangible
Dimensions of interaction		
large power distance	-----	small power distance
individual central	-----	collective central
strongly gendered	-----	gender neutral
avoiding uncertainty	-----	tolerating uncertainty
long-term orientation	-----	short-term orientation
Approach to cultural diversity		
monocultural-----multicultural-----intercultural-----transcultural		

Figure 1.

The Twelve-Continuum Transmission Framework (TCTF), Adapted from, Schippers, H. (2010). *Facing the Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 124.

The framework has four continua, examining Issues of Context, Modes of Transmission, Dimensions of Interaction and Approach to Diversity within a given culture. It is designed to aid educators in adopting culturally sensitive ways of teaching a new culture to students.

The learning process of any culture is complex, as features of teaching and learning, performance, and beliefs of people themselves, react to each other. According to the TCTF, three continua concerning issues of context allow teachers to determine change within the culture, ideas for authenticity and context. A culture that is static is unchanged over time, and the traditions have remained constant regardless of outside influence. Conversely, a culture in constant flux is always changing, through time and outside influence. In addition, the level of authenticity may be examined, determining whether a culture seeks to reconstruct music authentically or give new identity to existing musics. A Ghanaian culture bearer may perform a dance typically performed before war to prepare soldiers, and the level of authenticity during a performance will affect perceptions of students and future performances. This leads to the last spectrum regarding recontextualization and original context. As cultures seek to preserve and share their musical styles and genres, the issue of original context comes into play. For Ghana in particular, music is used for specific purposes during funerals, festivals, and celebrations. Additionally, students who visit the Dagbe Cultural Center have the opportunity to experience these music-making events, as well as participate in their own recontextualized performance of some of the same music.

Understanding modes of transmission within a culture can show how a culture learns, by what means, and with what aspects. Analytical/atomistic means of learning involves planned, methodical ways of teaching to convey information, where the teacher is a guide for learning. Holistic learning, on the other hand, involves students learning by doing, where little is said to guide and discovery within learning is valued. Next, the use of notation, or aural transmission within the culture should be analyzed to determine how best to present a new culture to students. The absence of notation could be obvious, as in Ghanaian drumming, where there is a need to react to the ensemble and dancers, rather than a conductor. Lastly, the focus on rules and value systems within music learning will guide teachers to a better understanding of the tangible and intangible aspects of musical transmission. These aspects are sometimes seen, as in rules for improvisation, or could be learned only through study within the culture. Knowing where a culture falls on this spectrum will allow teachers and students to see the potential within the culture for personal expression versus following rules. The degree to which a culture values technique and repertoire compared to creativity and improvisation will be apparent on this scale. Understanding transmission as it occurs naturally will aid the teacher in determining what kind of learning experiences are most appropriate for their classrooms.

Interaction in cultures is dependent on values as well as convention. Learning can be valued regardless, but the focus of learning situations may change from culture to culture. Whether teaching and learning is teacher-focused or student-focused can change the course of how learning occurs and

cultures can be anywhere in between or at one of the extremes. The value of achievement within a culture is also important. Whether individual achievement is more highly valued, or group achievement is desired, a culture can fall anywhere in between. Some cultures have strongly held beliefs about the role of gender in music-making. These ideas can contribute to strongly gendered societies where for instance, only men are allowed to play in instrumental ensembles, to the opposite, where anyone is allowed to participate in music however they choose. The value of adaptation for learners is another aspect that plays a direct role in the success of students. If a culture does not allow for students who fall behind, need extra help, or otherwise cannot keep up, the likelihood of success diminishes. On the other hand, some cultures encourage students to question the method of teaching, to understand it better, and find success. In connection with success, understanding where the goal for learning in each culture lies is critical. Some cultures make a place for performances along the learning path, to highlight learning, while others have an ultimate goal and students must work for a long time before achieving mastery. These interactions are pivotal to understanding the nature of the teacher and the student in the learning process.

Lastly, a culture's approach to cultural diversity should be investigated to determine openness and awareness to other musical cultures. Monocultural approach would find the dominant culture as the only reference for learning, while further along the spectrum, the multicultural approach finds that there is an awareness of other cultures without presentation of other views. As the spectrum continues to open, an intercultural approach implies a relationship and sharing of

information between more than one culture in regards to teaching and learning. Lastly, a transcultural approach to teaching and learning within a culture offers sharing of cultures and a fusion of context, transmission, and interactions.

This model is not meant to assign value to a teaching approach, but is merely a tool for examining the teaching framework of a new culture. Teachers should recognize that many cultures exist and interact with each other constantly. Consideration of oral or aural ways to present based on the musical culture in question, as well as sensitivity to the learning styles of students, will facilitate musical learning. It is ultimately the teacher's attitude and skills that determine the success of the model. Teachers who are able to blend two traditions succeed in observing the needs and abilities of their students, while maintaining the musical integrity of the presented culture. The TCTF offers teachers the ability to present new cultures with an understanding of their natural teaching methods, and create a learning environment for students that accommodates unique learning styles and fosters knowledge growth. This is achieved by teachers analyzing cultures according to the TCTF to better understand the teaching and learning within them, and apply the teaching and learning of the culture to the current classroom situation whenever and to the extent possible.

World music education has developed into an abundant area of study that has interested ethnomusicologists and music educators alike. Recent interest in specific aspects of the music of Ghana, including composition and drumming tradition, have led music educators to explore the music teaching and learning practices within many cultures in Ghana, including the southern *Ewe* people (Locke, 1980, 1982; Wiggins, 1998). Educators have developed teaching

strategies to share the essence of cultures that interest them and offer an opportunity for Western students to experience different ways of learning (Campbell, 1992, 2002; Morin, 2003). Studies of the *Ewe* people show the function of their music in modern society and efforts to share their musical culture with the world (Agawu, 1990, 2006; Avorgbedor, 2001; Dor, 2004). Further investigations into teaching and learning processes of the *Ewe* culture might aid in a broader understanding of the function of music within the community and influence pedagogy of world music education in the elementary school setting.

Purpose and Guiding Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore music teaching and learning at the Dagbe Cultural Institute in Kopeyia, Ghana, West Africa using standard ethnographic procedures. Applications of formal and informal teaching and learning practices displayed within this culture were made to elementary school music education as a means of fostering and strengthening cross-cultural learning. The guiding questions for the study were:

- 1) What formal and informal processes comprise music teaching and learning at the Dagbe Cultural Center?
- 2) What are the challenges involved in cross-cultural teaching and learning at Dagbe from the perspective of native teachers and visiting students?
- 3) Are there similarities and differences between the teaching and learning paradigms of students' home culture and the Dagbe Cultural Center?

4) How can formal and informal learning strategies be integrated in elementary music classrooms to provide a more effective cross-cultural music education?

Each of these questions was addressed from the perspective of a participant. This yielded different results than if the researcher was an observer, but gave added insight from the perspective of the student. In addition, the perspectives of other participants, teachers, and villagers were also explored. The findings of this study provided an emic-etic view of music teaching and learning at the Dagbe Cultural Center and aimed to use these views to provide the music education profession with practical implementation practices to further multicultural music education.

METHOD

This case study of music teaching and learning in a village cultural center in Ghana, West Africa required the use of standard ethnographic methods as a means of uncovering the process of music teaching and learning (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Spradley 1979, 1980). Data were collected during a five-week period of fieldwork at the Dagbe Cultural Center in Kopeyia, Ghana, West Africa from December 13, 2009 to January 21, 2010. This study was designed within the parameters of the Louisiana State University Institutional Review Board, for the safety of participants. Permission to undertake this study was granted by the Louisiana State University Institutional Review Board (See Appendix A).

I engaged in participant observation (Spradley, 1980) as a student of traditional drumming and dance lessons, receiving four hours of instruction daily during the five-week fieldwork period. Participant observation involves the fieldworker documenting interactions of people and things, their feelings, actions, and reactions to a situation, and then trying to learn the same behavior (Spradley, 1980). All observations were documented in hand-written fieldnotes which created the written record of what was observed and learned through the study (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). Open and hidden jottings (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) were utilized depending on the situation, to provide a written account of activities I participated in and witnessed. During lessons, jottings were used to document the music learned. Hidden jottings were used to recall interactions during individual lessons. These jottings were used to create

expanded accounts using unique language, verbatim accounts, and concrete language as described by Spradley (1980). A fieldwork journal was also kept to record individual feelings that arose during fieldwork (Spradley, 1980). I also observed children's music making within the village and participated in village ceremonies and celebrations.

Semi-structured interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2008) were conducted in an effort to understand the individual and group perspective of music teaching and learning in the environment. Each interviewee was given a consent form to sign, acknowledging that their responses to questions from the researcher would be used in the study (See Appendix A). For the narrative of the study, names of the American students were changed, however names of teachers and villagers from Kopeyia were not changed to provide further cultural context to the reader. For the convenience of the reader, a complete list of study participants and their function at the center is included in Appendix D. Interview questions for each interviewee were decided based on social placement in the cultural center before arriving at the center. The three categories of interviewees were visiting students, native teachers, and adult and child villagers (See Appendix B). Interviews were video-recorded and transcribed in full after returning to the U.S. (Spradley, 1980) and expanded fieldnote accounts were developed (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). Additionally, material culture was collected to provide another "voice" from which to draw interpretation (Hodder, 2008). Material culture including drums, cloth, instruments, jewelry, woodworking, food, money, maps, postcards, and orientation papers were studied to give context and aid in understanding the full cultural meaning of interviews and observations (Spradley,

1980). All data, transcripts, and collected fieldnotes were analyzed and emerging themes identified and coded using open and focused coding (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). Finally, to ensure validity, triangulation was achieved through careful comparison of fieldnotes, interviews transcriptions, and analysis of material culture (Spradley, 1980). Following analysis and interpretation, applications for cross-cultural teaching and learning were explored and teaching and learning practices were analyzed according to the Schippers' TCTF (2010).

This is not a true ethnography (Spradley, 1979) as I was not part of the culture long enough to gain a full understanding of their “way of life from their point of view” (p. 3). Since this culture is not primarily a written culture, meanings were determined through observation, and inferences determined what was meant through language, felt through actions, and shown through artifacts present at the center (Spradley, 1979). The aim was to understand how teaching and learning occurs in the village and in the cultural center, and how other participants in the program view the differences in their native music and *Ewe* music. In addition, translation of the formal and informal music teaching and learning practices used at the Dagbe Cultural Center was used to inform heuristic learning practices that can be used in culturally-sensitive ways in American elementary music classrooms.

Ethnographic Setting: Dagbe Cultural Center

The Dagbe Cultural Center is in the village of Kopeyia in the Volta Region of Ghana, less than three miles from the Ghana-Togo border. The Volta Region of Ghana sits between Lake Volta and the border of Togo and stretches from the

top of Lake Volta to the Gulf of Guinea. The primary ethnic group in this agrarian village is *Ewe* and villagers speak *Ewe* and English, which is the official language of Ghana. Classes have been held year-round at the center since it opened in 1982 and run for four hours a day Monday through Friday. Along with daily classes, students at the center stay on the campus in a dorm and have daily interaction with villagers as well as the opportunity to experience traditional celebrations and ceremonies in the village.

The late Godwin Agbeli, founder of the center, taught his sons Rubben and Emmanuel how to play the traditional dances of the *Ewe* and other Ghanaian culture groups from a very young age, along with instilling an obligation to spread the culture at every possible teaching moment. That philosophy has grown as new teachers join the center staff and as the children in the village assume leadership roles in the community. The Dagbe Cultural Center was founded to offer a place to celebrate *Ewe* culture and carry on the traditions of those who came before. Each teacher has a specialty to bring to the classes both within and outside the field of music including drumming, dance, traditional song lessons, basket weaving, batik and tie-dye, and kente cloth weaving. For a list of foreign terms, their meaning, and their function, refer to Appendix C. Each of the current teachers are protégés or family of Godwin, including his three sons, Emmanuel, Rubben, and Nani, who lives in the United States, but visits on occasion. The teaching philosophies, techniques, and teacher characteristics, were created and inspired by the founder. Odartey, the head dance instructor, spoke of learning to play and dance Gahu, the main social dance of the Volta region, as a child at Kopeyia Bloomfield School. The school is directly across the

street from the center and children come to learn from as far away as Togo. Godwin Agbeli founded both the center and the school. He is commemorated with a statue in his memory on the school grounds.

For this case study of music teaching and learning, the Dagbe Cultural Center in Kopeyia, Ghana was selected because (a) it provides an environment of active music-making, (b) it is used primarily as a teaching and social situation, and (c) it provides a variety of perspectives on music, teaching, cultural interaction, and daily life from teachers, students, and villagers. It is my hope that this study will provide the music education community with inspiration to explore new methods of transmission and incorporate those methods in their own classrooms for use with their increasingly diverse populations.

FINDINGS

Introduction

I have been up for about an hour, and have already had a breakfast of peanut butter on bread, bananas and milk. I grab my camera and notebook and head out to the summer hut, a gazebo with a concrete floor and eight burnt red painted concrete poles around the edge, with one in the center. The roof is made of palm thatch and protects completely from the sun. This open-air pavilion will be the site of all my lessons for the next five weeks. A little after nine the teachers start showing up and I am told to leave my things so we can go on a walk. Before anyone is allowed to touch and play the drums at the center, a libation ceremony has to be performed by the teachers at the center, asking the ancestors if those visiting may learn music. It will be my chance to tell the ancestors where I am from, what I am at the center for, and ask permission to learn. Our walk takes us to a bar so we can purchase libations, and I have to buy ginger milk (liquor popular in the Volta Region), and a bottle of Fanta. My teachers (Rubben, George, Paul, and Kofi) and I are at the only “bar” that is open at nine in the morning and it costs me five Ghanaian cedi (\$3.50) for the liquor and Fanta. I pay with 10 cedi, and I am told the other five will be an offering during the ceremony.

Back at the center we stop at the art gallery. I haven’t looked around up here but there is a pot tipped on its side, a small area that looks like it could be a flowerbed with a small bowl, and two candleholders, one on each side of the flowerbed. Rubben and Paul put a traditional blue and purple print cloth around

their waists and remove their shirts. Rubben tells me to take my five cedi and place it in the bowl with my right hand, because doing anything with the left hand is considered offensive. After giving my offering, I get to watch Rubben and Paul conduct the ceremony. They pour the Fanta and the ginger milk into two cups and move to the large area in front of where I am seated. With their backs to me, they begin speaking with the ancestors in *Ewe* and periodically pour a little of the Fanta or the ginger milk from the bowl onto the ground. Occasionally, someone sitting with me calls out an answer to a question that Rubben has asked. About ten minutes into the ceremony, Rubben turns to me and stares and I have no idea what he wants. “Your name,” he says. “Sara,” I reply and he turns back around and says “Sara” and continues speaking. After the last of the libations have been poured, everyone has a bit of ginger milk. One person pours ginger milk while a glass is passed around to everyone who is present. As the pourer fills your glass, the only polite way to stop him is to push your glass up, stopping the flow from the bottle. You then drink what you took, pour the last few drops out on the ground and use your right hand to pass the cup to the next person. Now that the ceremony is over, I can touch and play any of the drums in the center.

The Center’s Philosophy

This is how each student’s journey at Dagbe Cultural Center begins. The leaders and teachers take pride in immersing new students in the culture through participation in this ritual. The structure of teaching at the center is unique because it combines traditional teaching techniques used within the village with

Western adaptations for visiting students. For the students at Dagbe Cultural Center, the learning process and teaching method offers both success and frustration as cultures of learning converge and blend. The center was created to provide Western students the opportunity to learn *Ewe* culture in a native environment, with the understanding that changes would be made to accommodate the difference in teaching and learning styles. As students visit and learn, adaptations are made to account for these differences, and the philosophy of teaching at the center adjusts for future students. Changes are made over time regarding dance teaching, drumming technique, and social interactions with students to provide concrete examples of encultured learning. I was interested to analyze and compare these methods and adaptations to American teaching and learning, to see how the center incorporates them while maintaining their cultural identity. In addition to studying the methods and their effects on class dynamics, the music teaching and learning processes throughout the village, including the school and church, provided alternate views of teaching and learning than those gathered through interactions at the center.

Approach: “Press the students hard, to learn what they need.”

Before the Dagbe Cultural Center opened in 1982, there were Western visitors to the village who came to learn West African drumming and dance from Godwin through reputation. These visitors were receptive to the natural teaching methods of immersion and repetition, learning traditions and customs, and then taking them back to their homes to share with others. Through working with these students, Godwin used current strategies and developed new strategies for

teaching Westerners in particular, and when the center was opened, these were incorporated into the framework of teaching. There are many naturally-occurring teaching strategies that have been developed for use at the center by Godwin Agbeli and the other teachers, and many of these traditional techniques can be seen in the village. Before beginning lessons with new visitors, a survey of students' backgrounds and abilities is taken by the teachers, mainly to find out the knowledge level in African music and dance a student may already possess. All teachers spoke of asking the same questions before beginning, including, "have you done African music in your town before?" after which the students are shown how music and dance work together in Kopeyia. As students learn, the teachers modify their teaching techniques so that each student receives the teaching they desire and even a little more. During our interview, Odartey said,

That is the forcing we give to the students, so they can do the right moves [and] if somebody saw them somewhere they can say, "Oh Sara, where did you learn this piece from? Well it looks great. Can you give me the address so I can reach Dagbe?" So that is why we force students, press the students hard, to learn what they need.

Students at the center learn in the same environment natives of the village would learn. The center conducts classes outside, under an open-air hut called the Summer House. All drumming and dancing lessons are conducted in the Summer House because it was the coolest place to learn, as a breeze blows through continuously.

The process of immersion is one aspect of the teaching that occurs at the center, and the libation ceremony is seen as the first real learning experience for

students. Learning through immersion is a typical routine in *Ewe* culture. Children are carried on the mother's back everywhere and experience all the wonders of their surroundings in comfort and security until they are old enough to walk alone. They continue to be immersed in the musical framework of the culture as they grow, and are included in festivals and celebrations, funerals, and other rites.

Once enrolled in school, children learn from each other during play, from festivals and village gatherings and by mimicking the movements of adults. In addition to these informal settings, I inferred from Mr. Agbadormeti, a creative arts teacher at Kopeyia Bloomfield School, that students learn a combination of indigenous and Western musical styles and genres in formal music classes. This learning process is evident when you speak to the current teachers at the center as I received very similar answers from each as to how they were taught. Odartey, my dance teacher, shared that Godwin was "the one that started that with us (other teachers at the center) in school when I was in Kopeyia School Bloomfield... And that is the time I start my drumming and dancing." Odartey indicated that his learning experiences with Godwin involved a great deal of immersion at the outset of learning and very little explicit break down of the musical elements occurred.

I feel the music good and you know sometimes I used to be afraid with the drums and how I handled it, but with the *tingo* [bell] all my focus is on that. So I used to start it from bell, down to rattle, and then the rest of the instruments.

Repetition is used to increase focus on the music and when a student is successful on a particular part, it is assumed that their focus is good, will remain that way, and they can be presented with a new instrument part. Using repetition in center lessons is common and its effectiveness varies between students. Since the process of teaching bell, then adding other instruments with repetition has worked for so long, it is still used with students today.

Another teacher at the center, Chango, has been playing for six months after moving to Kopeyia from neighboring Togo. The language barrier holds him back from verbal teaching techniques, but I learned things from him through demonstration. He does not see himself as a teacher in the traditional sense at the center with a leadership role, but depending on the learning style of the student, anyone can learn from anyone at the center. During group lessons and through private instruction teachers encourage students to seek alternative ideas to foster their learning.

Another recurring theme during interviews with the teachers was use of peer learning. Odartey, my main dance instructor, and George, another teacher, both spoke of learning difficult dances from Nani, Godwin's son. Likewise, both Emmanuel and Rubben consult each other about teaching methods at the center, to carry on what their father began. For most teachers at the center, Godwin was not only a teacher, but a relative and a peer. He shared his knowledge of textile art, drumming, dancing, and culture with everyone and passed it on in a way that could be copied and passed on again. Not only did Godwin spread his musical talent through teaching and performing, he taught kente weaving to Felix, who now teaches it. He also found teachers like Kobbi, a

woodworker and artist, who could share other cultural arts talents with students at the center. Essentially everyone in the village and at the center is still learning from Godwin because of his preparation and teaching.

Leadership was clearly delineated within the class, with the warm-up instructor controlling the first part of class, and the main teacher taking over beyond that. At every drumming and dancing lesson there were at least four other teachers of the center present. These would accompany on other drums and offer side instruction to struggling students. There was also one main teacher, during my stay this was Odartey, who led the musicians and the teachers, and determined the pace of the lesson. When it came time to practice dances and drumming with the teacher ensemble, the master drummer would assume leadership, but still followed Odartey or the main teacher if they asked to stop in the middle of practice and fix something. The master drummer is the drummer who plays the main part of the dance or drumming piece on the lead drum, usually the *boba*. From there, the more accomplished drummers play the larger drum parts, while new center teachers play the *axatse* (shaker) and *gatingo* (bell) parts. Though they are playing the “easier” parts, they are the heart of the ensemble, and it cannot function without the steady bell pattern. Members of the teacher ensemble offer help to students based on their seniority, so there were some teachers who never verbally instructed students. A combination of the language barrier and the unspoken teacher status contributed to this, although during lessons, every player and teacher I interviewed called themselves “a teacher.” During observations at the funeral, people in attendance participated as they chose, listening, dancing, or playing in the ensembles.

Seeing the true function of music village-wide showed me that the function of the ensemble during classes offers a view of society within the village, as well as offering an authentic environment for student learning.

Preservation and dissemination: “You can go back home and perform this.”

I’m dragging my camera and tripod around the village on my last Sunday afternoon, searching for willing interviewees, and I know I want to find Rubben’s children. I enter his compound and see the oldest boy, Enoch, over by the store. Paul comes up and asks what I am doing. After telling him I’m interviewing villagers, he wants to help me. I ask Enoch if he can gather his brothers and sisters to do a little interview. “It won’t take long,” I say and he goes to find the others. Paul, my warm-up instructor and guide, and I gather seats for everyone and Rubben’s kids arrive and sit on the white bench against the store wall. Four kids join me: Enoch, his oldest son, Elike, Rubben’s brother, Fafali, Rubben’s sister, and Atsu, who is family of George. Each of the children is soft-spoken and polite as I ask my questions. At the end of the interview I offer an explanation for my curiosity and Enoch begins to question me. “What are you learning now?” he says. I answer, “I learned [the dances] *Gahu* and *Tokoe*, and *Atsiagbekor* a little bit, and... *Bambaya*.” “Can you call one of the drums names so we know that you are learning too?” he asks, and I oblige and tell him a few that I can remember on the spot. “So you will keep it to heart,” he says, and it is apparent that he is carrying on his father’s desire to see that students take the classes seriously so they can be ambassadors for the center.

Leaders at the center enjoy sharing their talents and culture with outsiders, as well as natives of Ghana, to curb what they feel is a decline in the popularity and importance of the traditions of drumming and dance that make their country unique. Rubben told me that one of the challenges of teaching foreign-born students was teaching them to take the cultural learning seriously. However, his reasoning was not to teach the students themselves, but to show the people in the village and surrounding villages the importance of keeping traditions alive. He said:

We make them learn that they have to learn seriously to challenge those who are in Ghana here, so that those who are in Ghana here can buck up and be serious, because some of them take it like “Oh, this is not nothing, oh this is just joking.”

The perceived complacency among locals that has developed toward traditional dance and drumming within the culture drives the directors and teachers at the center to teach with more fervor. Each individual that learns at the center performs at the end of their stay to challenge native Ghanaians to take what the center is doing seriously. By challenging foreigners and natives to be serious during learning, interest in the center grows as more students from within and outside the country visit and learn about *Ewe* traditions.

The teachers and their families convey the distinct sense that the music and culture being taught at the center is not just for fun, but will inspire and encourage others to visit and spread the music and art. Rubben would often say in class, “you can go back home and perform this,” which was his endorsement

that he thought our performing of what had been taught was good enough to represent the center.

Music in the Culture

I'm enjoying my dance lessons so far, and am amused that some of the village children like to sit and watch me during my lessons. They are small, none over the age of three I would guess, and they giggle as I try to make my hips and arms work together. My teacher, Odartey decides I'm ready to perform with the drums and has me get ready. As the drums begin and I start moving around the center pole of the summer hut, I notice that the kids have gotten up, excited, and are dancing along with me. I'm amazed that they seem to be better at "feeling" the music and movement than I am. After practicing with the drummers for a while, I'm allowed to stop for a rest and the kids stop with me and they sit, chatting under the trees. As soon as I rise, they rise as well, ready to continue their lesson. I cannot resist the opportunity to watch them instead of practicing, so I turn my camera to them as I begin again. They continue as they had before, doing all the movements, and enjoying the opportunity to dance with the festival drums.

Musical life in the village: At work, at play, and at worship.

Music exists in the village in many forms, from the revival music at Christmas, to the radio playing Backstreet Boys at the village bar. Residents in the village and people visiting the village take in and learn music through immersion and community time, be it in lessons at the center, or in Rubben's Summer House in the evening. Music in *Ewe* culture is used to celebrate, relax,

work, and mourn. Background music is not heard frequently because music is considered to be a gift for socializing and remembrance. Many of the situations where music is present involve the entire village or group coming together. Listeners don't close themselves off into a music bubble and enjoy their music alone, they join together to make music themselves, or share music during work and church, and this preserves their desire to make music together with foreign students.

Music while working.

The only place music seems to occur during work is in the center, during class time. At times you can hear music being played somewhere in the village, but usually during the day there is little traditional music. It seemed that Western music and the television were used as suitable background noise during work hours, but not seen as entertainment. The store that Emmanuel owns beneath his house had music blaring from the second floor one day when it was open, while simultaneously playing a TV inside the store for guests, but this was not a daily occurrence. Emmanuel's wife runs the store, as well as employing two seamstresses and herself to make clothes for persons in the village. They are surrounded by sound, but do not consider constant music a necessity in their lives. On the other side of the village, Odartey, my dance teacher, and Mensah, my song teacher, sell phone credits and clothing by the roadside, however music is not present here either.

A noticeable difference to musical life during work in the village occurred during a trip to the beach. Mensah, my favorite teacher at the center, and I arrived alone and walked down the beach to look for seashells, see the fishing

boats, and see the fishermen pulling in the fishing nets. Mensah pointed out the bell music, a steady rhythm that the fishermen work with. The bell players were never seen and it was unclear whether they were there all the time. He told me the music gives them energy to continue pulling in the nets. This use of music during work time makes this kind of work easier, as the steady pace of the bell keeps the work from slowing down, and those working can sing along, taking their mind off the tough task of pulling in the nets because the weight of the water and the fish is more than just a few men can handle alone.

Music education in the school.

Most children in the village learn music at school during Creative Arts class, which is taught each Friday. Mr. Agbadormeti, a teacher at Kopeyia Bloomfield School teaches music and dance during Creative Arts. He indicated that he could play any instrument that he needed to teach to the children, as well as being able to sing in any voice. Interestingly, Mr. Agbadormeti was the only individual outside of the Dagbe teaching staff who showed this kind of confidence in his musical ability. Enoch, Fafali, Elike, and Atsu, Rubben's children and siblings, confirmed that music is taught at the school each week. This tradition of arts education was started by Godwin and has continued through the work of the teachers at the center and the school.

Through the schools, students occasionally have the opportunity to attend festivals, which also contribute to the music life of the village. Wisdom, Godwin's grandson, attends a Catholic senior high school near the village. When he attended his junior high school, he was part of a drumming group there. He said, "I was the lead drummer of the school and we would go to visit cultural festivals

and competitions. I also went to a competition at Kadjebi in the Volta North, which was an ensemble.” Competitions provide the younger generation with an outlet for cultural music making bringing attention and popularity back to traditional music.

Music during play.

Children in the village enjoy making music on their own whether in the center or out in the village. On days when school was in session, around three in the afternoon I would hear someone in the hut practicing drum kit. The practice sounded like recreation, rather than serious rehearsal, and would always end after about thirty minutes. I asked Enoch, Rubben’s son, about it during our interview and he said that he enjoys playing drum kit because it is different from the other drums. The children in the village are curious and enjoy recreating Western drumming they have heard or seen on television. Children frequently came to the summer hut in the hopes of jamming with the students and this openness to learn music from the American students at the center provided a teaching opportunity for the Americans. Steve, a visiting student at the center, said,

I went for a walk up the road and these little kids came up to me and they asked me, cause I had drumsticks in my hand... to come teach them music. So I got to teach these little kids some music other than the music that they know here. And then they taught me some rhythms that they knew.

Along with teaching at the center, during our trip to the beach our group saw children dancing to popular music on the radio, showing off their moves to each

other and challenging their friends to dance. Their dancing copied movements seen in rap videos and surprised the students in our group prompting some to join the children and dance with them, showing the kids some new moves.

Festivals.

It's the day after Christmas and I walk through Rubben's courtyard to meet everyone for the festivities of Boxing Day. About fifty people are gathered around a group of girl singers wearing matching dresses with a teardrop print in blue, red, yellow, black, and green. The group is singing with two *gatingos*, an *axatse*, and a song caller, to whom they respond. They are a *Borborbor* troupe that has come to entertain the village. Emmanuel told me last week that Borborbor "is a Christmas tradition." For about twenty minutes they sing softly and barely move, taking steps forward and back. They start singing louder and moving more and by the time they make their way around the front of the village to a clear area between all the vendors it has been twenty minutes. There are about one-hundred vendors, many of whom have been setting up since early morning, selling posters, pictures, drinks, candy, food, and even fireworks. Wall-size pictures that look like they were made in Photoshop, depicting Mickey and friends on the beach and tropical scenes, are hanging behind the vendors. Everyone from the village has come to watch the *Borborbor* troupe, dressed in new clothes, pretty flowing dresses, Polo shirts, lots of jeans, new shoes, and ladies have their hair done for the special occasion. This is the day to show off your Christmas presents, and I wish that I could show off something, but I'm completely out of money and waiting for more to arrive from the United States.

I can hear the drums playing with the girls, but I can't find them. Following the sound I find them on the southeast corner of the performance area, with their own crowd of admirers. Four guys with drums a little different than *Gahu* drums are playing with their hands and holding the drums between their knees to be able to raise and lower them off the ground during playing. One of the drummers is wearing a winter cap, which is odd because it is about 95 degrees, even in the shade. When the *axatse* plays at the end of a verse someone in the crowd grabs a low-hanging tree branch, shakes it and hollers. After being told last week about the scorpions that sit in these trees, I am just waiting for one to fall. I wander between the performance and Rubben's summer hut and bar because it is really hot to just stand there and listen. I get a Fanta, my new favorite treat, and head back to watch a bit more before returning to the center for dinner.

The beauty of celebrations in *Ewe* culture can be seen around Boxing Day, as villagers come together for a day-long celebration featuring *Borborbor* performing groups, vendors, and villagers showing off their new clothes and their playing skills to others. Boxing Day is the day after Christmas, and *Borborbor*, created in Ho as a response to the popularity of high-life music, is center-stage for the day. Emmanuel explained that *Borborbor* creators "take church songs and give them new words" that give encouragement and empowerment to those performing and listening, similar to high-life music. In addition to this performance, another *Borborbor* troupe performed for the American group during a trip to Ho the week before. While *Borborbor* is performed most often during the Christmas season, its popularity is gaining ground with the younger generation of

Ghanaians who enjoy the recognizable tunes and the positive messages of the songs.

Music during church.

During my five-week winter stay, many religious musical opportunities were available, including several churches that met weekly, and a traveling revival that set up on the school grounds for the week before Christmas. The revival lasted for five days, rising with the sun and pouring revivalist music into the village, and continuing through the day and into the night. This revival brought the entire village out, as well as the surrounding villages to celebrate the Christmas season as one. The music was typical of church music and revivals in the United States, but I felt there was much more passion in their voices as they sang along.

Attending church with Mensah, my confidant and song teacher, for a few weeks highlighted the unique musical culture of churches in the village. Mensah belongs to the Protestant church in the village. Meetings are held in an open-back building made of dried palm fronds and cinder blocks. There is one light, though it is not really needed, and rows of benches and chairs for churchgoers. At the front of the church a row of percussion instruments and players provide accompaniment for the singing. The music was similar to Western church music, sounding hymn-like, lead by song leaders, and was always accompanied by traditional drums, a conga, and a bass drum. Everyone sang with the song leaders, loudly and with great energy, dancing and clapping along. The song leaders had microphones and they were probably heard all over the village. Each week the children sang a song that they had learned in Sunday School that

morning, and guests were called to the front to share a song with the church. During my first visit, I shared “This Is The Day” and was happy to know that most of the churchgoers knew the song and sang with me. The environment of music at the church was very welcoming, and as expected, everyone was involved throughout the service.

Influence of music on daily life: “It is not my habit.”

The value of music in the lives of teachers and villagers can be seen through the level of involvement and devotion to music learning as well as in activities throughout life. While villagers have grown up in a culture that values music and musical development through teaching, learning, and performing, there is a distinction between who should perform and entertain, and who should concentrate on contributing to society in other ways. Ruby, a seamstress, only participates in music at church. She says, “in the church sometimes we play drums and people sing from there and I learned how to sing.” She copies what she hears, but finds sewing to be a more useful activity for her life. “Sometimes when I feel happy I sing, but it is not my habit,” she says. The idea of spectator music does not appear in *Ewe* culture, because everyone is involved in music in some way throughout their lives, whether from festivals, holidays, or church participation.

Identity.

The role of music in the village is obvious when witnessing performances at funerals and widespread involvement in music at church, however interestingly many individuals do not consider themselves to be musicians, instead assuming their talents lie elsewhere because of the level of musicianship they see around

them. Only the best musicians are considered true musicians, and enjoying music recreationally or playing drums in church is just not enough to merit the name in their own eyes. Music is just viewed on a different level, and since everyone participates during funerals and festivals, the behavior of being musical is more a matter of habit than talent. Everyone possesses the musical knowledge and skill to participate in musical activities, having been exposed from birth. Perhaps in the coming years more people in the village will see their talent like Frances, one of the teenagers in the village, who considers himself a musician, though he does not play an instrument. He “sings at the festivals” and likes “highlife and gospel” music because “if I’m [hearing] the highlife, I feel cool.” When he listens to gospel, it is “to remember what is going on.” The identity that traditional music and mainstream Ghanaian music provides to the younger generation could change the way music is viewed in the village in the coming years.

Duality of music in the village: “We have inside and outside music.”

An interesting finding of the teacher interviews was learning about what kind of music they preferred. Initially, the question centered on their favorite part of the village music. In a conversation with teachers Pee, Paul, and Kobbi, I became aware of a distinction between the music performed and taught at the center and music played in the village. Paul explained, “we have inside and outside music,” and the difference centers on the “teachability” of particular pieces of music. Inside music has been made accessible to others, through teaching strategies such as breaking down large rhythmic patterns and dance

steps. Outside music is learned through immersion, and the respective parts are not taught separately, as they would be in the center. Kobbi commented, “This is the institute so we do this in a way that you can teach it. But the other side, they can’t teach, but they can play, but it’s not arranged like in here.” Paul continued, “they don’t know the techniques to teach. They just have it in nature.” Kobbi continued, “And sometimes both sides are important. And sometimes you use two. Everyone says I like that, and I like this also. Because we do both.” Paul also said, “Some of the community music is composed,” and those in the center will perform it as written. It was enlightening to see that while they enjoy the tradition, they are open to new music and the possibilities performance can offer.

It seemed everyone in the village was capable of participating in musical events as they pleased, with the teachers from the center commanding the recreation and performances thanks to their training. The teachers find value in their training to teach through the center, and the villagers pay respect to the teachers’ abilities by letting them lead. It is the value of making *Ewe* music available to others that I believe they spoke of when saying they enjoy inside music more. As Kobbi said, both inside and outside music are important and needed in the culture, each playing different roles. Even in Ghana there is institutional context for the music. This allows visiting students and educators to differentiate between what music is best for demonstration and performance context, and what music is set up for teaching and learning.

Formal Methods

Today is my first day of class with the American group that arrived on Saturday and I'm excited to see how others work with the teaching style and compare my coordination to theirs. For each of my first three classes last week, I arrived early because I was told not to be late for anything. Now that the other American group is here, everyone comes to the summer hut in their own time. As the class comes together, the teachers are jamming on the drums we use for Gahu, the main social dance of the *Ewe* people. I take an open seat on the white bench behind an *axatse*. Alden, one of the other American students, is sitting by me as well. I can tell Rubben, our teacher, wants to get going. Some of the other students have found seats and picked up their instruments. I know not to pick mine up, and as soon as I get settled, the others are told to put their instruments down. As we wait for all the instruments to be brought out so that there are enough for everyone, the teachers are chatting in *Ewe*. I think Rubben is telling Wisdom to get more of each instrument and where to put them for our class. Without warning, Rubben starts playing his drum in an open and mute pattern with his sticks and then I see that there are two students walking up. Rubben stops and says, "You are late." He seems to be kidding and they make an excuse that the clocks are not lined up, but quickly find their seats.

Even after everyone arrives, class is slow to start as more benches are brought to the summer hut. Rubben starts abruptly, saying, "You are welcome. I am very glad you are here. This is drumming class. And before we start the class, we have to know the name of the drums." He encourages asking

questions throughout the class. As he shows each instrument, he says the name and pauses, giving the impression that he wants us to say the name back. He tells a story of each instrument and how the name was developed. He is slow and methodical explaining each instrument. He shows that some instruments have names in English as well as *Ewe*, like the *gatingo*, or bell. The name of the bell is interchangeable as we find out through class, though there is no real explanation for the substitution.

Everyone starts from *axatse*. I have already had two days of drumming class, so I feel pretty confident with my two partners playing. We play the pattern two times through after Rubben shows us how to play using “pati papa” as mnemonic syllables for a hit on the leg (pa) and a hit under the hand (ti). He stops us, exclaiming, “Wow! I am very happy because you are not giving me headache.” Ah, compliments. I was taught the drum language with the *axatse* part, but today we are learning the pattern by sight first. The beat is played on the side of a drum while we keep the pattern going again. Rubben switches to the *gatingo* (bell) players and tells us to remember our part, and the name of our instrument while we wait for the bell players to learn their part. Rubben tries to get the bell players going by saying the pattern with syllables, but it doesn’t work and he has to grab his own bell and have the players copy his movements. He lets them play, the drum tap joins in, and the groove sounds cool. After they play alone for a moment he stops them and says, “Ok, I don’t want this,” and slouches in his chair. “Or this,” and crosses his legs. He finally demonstrates the posture for the bell. Both feet on the floor, sitting tall, the bell in the writing hand and held above the knee because “the bell is strong for 24 hours.” The bell players

chuckle at the thought. Finally we are playing the bell and *axatse* together and can really hear how the patterns work with each other.

Teaching drumming: “So they can feel the timing of the single thing.”

Group teaching at the center requires many teachers and adaptation to the skill level of each student. During the first group lesson, there were twelve teachers and players there to assist the master teacher, Rubben. After presenting each of the instruments, explaining the way each is built to create sound, and how to play them, Rubben tells the story of *Gahu*. *Gahu* began in Nigeria as *Kokosawa*, and as people migrated the dance moved through Benin, into Togo and finally reached Ghana. When *Gahu* reached the people of Ghana, they thought it was boring and slow, adapting a fast version from the slow version, *Kokosawa*. *Gahu* literally means “money drum,” and is named so because when dancing *Gahu*, it was a chance to show off your riches and jewelry to your friends. Today, *Gahu* refers to the fast version, and performances feature both versions, beginning with the performance group entering and presenting *Kokosawa*, and abruptly changing to *Gahu* at the call of the master drummer.

The lesson began with *axatse* group. Because there are more students than instruments, students are split between the bell and *axatse*, however, during individual lessons, the *axatse* is always taught first. After the *axatse* players have solidly demonstrated playing their part, the *gatingo* part is taught and the *axatse* part is merged as the players on each part learn to work together and

become solid. Without this grounding from the *gatingo*, the rest of the parts will not be able to sustain the rhythms.

While teaching to different levels of learners, it was difficult to understand the culture and the role drumming and dancing played, as the goal of lessons is eventual performance. Important cultural details that were not directly applicable to the performance, such as how the drum ensemble works together during a performance, were replaced with style details to show something concrete to those watching. Performances at the center are more of a show, with little audience participation, so the need to connect with those watching, as well as others in the ensemble was not as important as knowing parts, entrances, and cues. While this did not take away from the experience as a whole, it did leave questions that were only answered through observation at funerals and celebrations. There is never enough time to cover everything, and this way of teaching shared the basics, offered a performance opportunity, and for some, gave enough information and strategy to implement the method for others to experience.

Syllables.

Teaching drumming has greatly depended on the advent of syllables to mimic the sounds of the drums. These drum syllables identify which drum to play, what kind of stroke to hit it with, and the length and pitch of the sound. Syllables were taken from the *Ewe* language and while some are actual words, others are nonsense syllables. When teaching drumming, gestures and the context of drumming patterns syllables are equally important to tell what word is being used and fully understand what is being taught. Syllables contain intricate

details unique to a particular drum, as Odartey explained, and telling the difference can be a challenge. Particular syllables are merely used to mimic the sound of certain drum strikes, while others are a combination of syllables that are meant to teach a rhythm as well. Other syllables are specific to a drum and could vary slightly depending on the use of just a stick, two sticks, two hands, or a stick and a hand. The *boba* can say *dun* (a right hand hit with a stick while the left hand mutes the head of the drum) or *kede* (a right then left hand hit with the sticks). In addition to the many different syllables, hearing long groups of syllables and drum strikes together sometimes lead to confusion about which syllables are stand alone, and which are part of a rhythm group.

One of the hardest drums to aurally translate to syllables was the *atsimevu*, because it was not used in class as often as the other drums. To Western ears, some syllables do not sound as close to the drum sound as one might think so their use during dance class can create challenges for students. During a particular dance variation in *Tokoe* where syllables were used as a cue for movement, the group had trouble hearing the cue when the syllables were replaced with the *atsimevu*. The syllabic cue was *ze-ge-de CHO za*, but the drum does not have a z sound. For some syllabic combinations, the rhyming quality of the syllables may have been more important than the actual syllables matching the drum sounds. Overall, most drum patterns were short and repetitive, and only the *sogo*, *boba*, and *atsimevu* required focused practice with those sounds alone. In the end, their use is extremely helpful in the learning process, providing a familiar crutch for students to use.

Teaching and learning adaptations for drumming.

Learning drumming in a large group requires teachers at the center to make changes in their teaching, as students require help. During our group lessons, it was necessary for teachers to take extra time and work individually with some students to help them “feel” the music and find the beat. Lessons are slowed to accommodate students who are struggling and drumming patterns are broken down into smaller steps to facilitate faster learning. Odartey explained this was also “so [students] can feel the timing of the single thing which we want them to do.” The surprising use of Western musical terminology is another adaptation to the musical lessons at Dagbe. During my first few lesson I noticed the use of the words beat, tempo, unison, and phrase during teaching. Rubben usually was the teacher who would use these Western terms. He has traveled extensively throughout Europe teaching African drumming and I believe his use of the terms has become second nature from increased exposure to students who use them and understand music in that way.

The use of recording devices during lessons was encouraged by teachers to help students learn on their own. Recordings of lessons assist in breaking down harder rhythms and take the pressure out of the learning situation, where time is highly valued. The teachers find it easier to teach by sight, having students mimic drumming patterns, rather than giving verbal instructions to correct sticking and sounds. When students return to their videos and sound recordings later, they can continue to learn the same way, mimicking and copying sounds and movements. The idea of patience with students’ abilities came up in interviews with teachers Wisdom, Paul, Pee, and Kobbi. Pee said, “if

he or she is messing up or they seem tired, you break for some time for the brain to calm down. To relax. Then after a few minutes you take it back again and keep working until he knows it.” As Kobbi described, “when they are learning, sometimes they don’t have their whole heart, so you have to study it and you have to go at it how he would like it or how she would like it.” While in drumming class with Godwin’s son Nani, I became frustrated with my inability to play a pattern correctly. He stopped me, saying, “getting angry is good because it shows that you care about what you are learning and want to correct your mistakes.” Suddenly, the possibility of being frustrated did not seem disrespectful, and because emotions could be shown, learning became easier. Even when teachers were not adapting, the emotions of learning and playing new music were enough motivation to continue. A student who is very even-keeled would worry the teachers because it would appear they did not care one way or another that they learn correctly. As the teachers see that students have mastered their part to the standard they expect, students are moved to new parts. All students must demonstrate they know the *gatingo* and *axatse* parts before they are allowed to move to any of the drums.

Individual teaching.

Individual teaching and private lessons offer the chance for teachers to push the student and work toward perfection and it offers the student more flexibility to learn unique dances and songs. This creates a dynamic environment because the student can choose what they would like to learn, but until a dance is perfect in the teacher’s eyes, they are wary of students teaching their dances to others. There were two individual lesson environments, consisting of lessons

paid for by the student, and regular lessons at the center with only one student. Both had advantages, as private lessons provided a quieter and more welcoming atmosphere with one teacher, and the student was more in control, while regular lessons with one student afforded multiple teachers attention and instruction for one student. Private lessons are arranged by the student and are available in drumming, dance, singing, and other extra-musical activities from any of the teachers. There is competition among the teachers for the private lessons since they are a source of extra income from the center, and for students it is a way to give something back to a teacher they like. To grow future lead teachers out of the assisting teachers at the center, anyone may take private lessons with any teacher and pay them for the extra time.

During my time at the center American students Karen, Tony, and I enjoyed taking lessons from Mensah. His teaching style was very comforting, he was patient, and really tried to understand his students in order to help them learn faster. Mensah is the only staff member at the center whose outside job is teaching. He teaches Kindergarten to 80 four-five-and six-year-olds at Kopeyia Bloomfield School. As he gives Karen a lesson on *axatse*, he tells her to “wait to come in until you feel the timing.” When one of the American students, Karen had trouble keeping up with the pace of group drumming class, she chose to have a private lesson with Mensah because she said “it takes me longer to learn things.” For Karen, private lessons provided an opportunity to *feel* the connection between the instruments that she never got while trying to play clarinet in middle school band. She said, “the music that I was trying to learn back home was just notes that didn’t mean anything to me, but here it’s feelings

and emotions that are going into it, and I think that makes a difference.” The physical and emotional connection to the music in Ghana gave her the musical understanding she was missing. After having private lessons with Mensah, she “figured out that [the *axatse*] goes with the bell.” She enjoyed having the ability to consult different teachers and hear different perspectives about the music to help her understand what was being taught. Tony said, “one-on-one’s were very helpful and that’s why I did a lot of individual lessons, because learning one-on-one definitely helps.” He also found that the aural method of teaching in Ghana made learning easier for him than reading sheet music in the United States.

Teaching dancing: “You dance like dry wood.”

Dance instruction at Dagbe was a more enjoyable experience for some students because it was easier to keep up with the teaching, it was a more social learning environment, and you could conceal errors in movement, unlike in drumming class where your instrument gave you away. It was easy to find another student that understood what you were thinking about the dancing and how you felt. The students at the center had different levels of knowledge about *Gahu* and *Tokoe*. The American group had learned *Gahu* dance and drumming in a class before arriving, as I had, and were familiar with the steps enough to pick them up very quickly in the new teaching style. Even though I had already taken three lessons at the center, they danced as well as I did after their first lesson. All students upon their first visit to the center learn *Gahu* or *Tokoe*, two of the basic dances in the culture, because they have elements that transfer between the dances and give a foundation to further learning. *Gahu* and *Tokoe* dances have similar basic steps and variations that reference each other, making

them a good pair of dances to learn. Wisdom remarked that teaching dances with similar steps “make your memory sharper and make you used to the music or come with the spirit of the music.”

Practice is easier with a large group because students may watch each other repeat movements after the teachers have demonstrated them and the visual cues from each other supplemented the one demonstration. This makes the class go by faster, more is taught, and teachers are more satisfied with progress, granting break times more cheerfully. The master drummer controls the tempo of the dance and also gives aural cues to indicate which dance steps are to be performed. The number of repetitions of a given dance pattern can vary considerably according to the whim of the master drummer, and elaborate rhythmic improvisations often make it difficult for dancers to perceive the dance cues. Teachers at the center value tireless practice during and outside of class, maintaining that most Africans learn society and cultural dances and music by immersion. Since total immersion is not likely possible for the average visitor to the center, repetition and demonstration of larger and broken-down patterns are used by the teachers in class almost exclusively to the point of excess. While students may use other methods to help retain and learn information, teachers simply repeat the information until it is understood. With drumming lessons, teachers try to offer other explanations and connect sight to sound, but with dancing lessons, only sight guided students. When the movement was incorrectly reproduced it was just shown again and students could ask questions about the difference in their movement before trying to copy once more.

When teachers were correcting students, some situations arose where words were not meant negatively, but the language barrier created situations in which teachers gave critiques that could seem hurtful and frustrating. During practice for *Tokoe*, Odartey told Ava, “Don’t be joking. That is confusing you.” Ava looked shocked, as what she heard him say was that she was not taking the class seriously. However, the reason for her error was that she was dancing with an invisible partner and it was easier to get confused that way. For me, the hardest part of learning dancing became dealing with the corrections from the teacher. As classes progressed, it appeared that certain students were being picked on more frequently, while other students were making the same mistakes and being ignored. The dance background of the student, the perceived ability level by the teacher, and the likelihood of the student teaching others contributed to how specific and often a student would receive corrections for their dancing.

Analogy.

Part of the success of the dance teachers is their ability to use analogy to teach a dance concept that might otherwise escape the eyes of a foreign student. Intricate details that make up Ghanaian dance are subtle, and even look stylized, giving a false sense of their meaning and function within the dances. Odartey is the head dance teacher at the center and he takes the details of the dance very seriously. He has learned through contact with Western learners that analogies are a great way to bridge the communication gap. During my first lesson, we began by learning the foot and leg movements for *Gahu* and Odartey was not satisfied with my performance. After watching him repeatedly, I could not figure out what was different about what each of us were doing until he said, “it is like

riding a bike. Push down on the pedal and lean into it without slanting your shoulders.” My dance immediately got better. He used the same analogy when the other American group arrived and started learning *Gahu* as well. One detail of the first variation of *Gahu* involves stepping out and looking at your hand. Most of the group was not connecting with the hand and merely throwing it up quickly before reversing the movement. It was not until we were told to pretend our hand was a mirror and gaze at ourselves in it each time that the group appeared cohesive.

Along with working for a cohesive group, some analogies were used as verbal feedback and intended for correction. Odartey told me, “you dance like dry wood,” during my second dance lesson after the American group had left the center. I was not being flexible enough in my dancing. However, I did not feel that my dancing was any different without the large group, so it was frustrating that these issues were coming up after our performance. I felt that they should have been brought to my attention earlier. I explained my feelings about the corrections and we moved on to new dances because I felt my dancing was at an appropriate level at the time and I was concerned with learning new material. Some movements were easier to see, but harder to decipher and my own analogies to things I recognized from home helped me to solidify the dance in my head. The fifth variation of *Gahu* has separate movements for girls and boys and moves very quickly between movements. I was having trouble remembering to raise my arms when passing between partners until I reminded myself that I needed “roller coaster arms.” The movement involves the girls jumping from boy to boy around the outside of the circle with their arms above their heads, moving

in a wavy motion. I described movements in *Bambaya*, a dance from the North, as “speed skating” when I needed to bend at the waist and swing my leg out and back, switching feet rapidly, and “belly dance,” where I was twisting at the waist while twisting shoulders in the opposite direction at the same time. Odartey described movements in a variation of *Atisagbekor*, a war dance of the *Ewe*, as “shooting and dodging” because of the sounds of the drum and the movements. The *adejo* (a spirit stick made with horsehair and a leather handle), is held like a rifle, while the dancer uses it to mimic shooting at an enemy ahead and then ducking down to avoid the returning shots. Orff training provided me with a reference point for movements I had seen and used before including a schottische kick, which is a kick across the opposite leg as the dancer hops, in the basic dance of *Atsiagbekor*. I also used analogy to describe dances that were presented, but not taught. My teachers, George, Mensah, and Kofi showed the large group a little of a dance that had karate movements, play fighting, and what appeared to be workout stretches. It looked like a power dance. All the movements showed the dancer’s power and strength, even though they were doing it for fun. Analogy plays a large part in a foreign student’s understanding of the dance details and provides the teacher with an outlet to connect with the student on their level.

Teaching and learning adaptations for dancing.

Many strategies including modeling and informal performances of dancing, have been developed since the center opened, and teachers still rely on them to help students make it through their stay healthy and happy. It appeared as if accommodation was merely being patient and re-teaching concepts rather than

trying to figure out the problem from the learner's perspective. A few lessons were taught at a slower pace, allowing those struggling to catch up, and for those who were successful it offered time to practice. During dance classes, the tempo of the dance would be slowed significantly for practice and learning, but as soon as it was taught as a whole, the master drummer would accelerate the tempo, sometimes to the point that it was almost impossible to perform. Usually Rubben was functioning as the master drummer at those moments, and he enjoyed challenging the students. During the last two weeks, Odartey informed me that "the master can punish you." Since the master drummer was always in control, it was their job to judge the students' abilities and change the pace of the lesson when they thought students were ready to move ahead. The teachers accommodate, but they like to bring the students back to authentic performance within tradition as quickly as possible. There is really no way to offer students in the same dance class different dances, so this was the best way to teach all students.

To help students see the similarities between *Gahu* and *Tokoe*, the dances are broken down to feel movements in the upper and lower body separately, show timings, and like movements. Mensah explained that this is so students have "slight brain knowledge" as a reference for learning, while Odartey says this is how Godwin taught, and "we break things for the students so they understand it." While the two dances do not have matching movements, there are times when references of one dance can be seen in another. While connecting the two, teachers are also preparing to challenge students by adding

details and forcing students to be better about moving so when they perform later, spectators are intrigued and want to come to Dagbe as well.

Individual teaching.

I am in my last week at Dagbe, and now I find myself enjoying dance class. This dance is hard, but fun at the same time. I get the feeling that my drummers and teacher like this dance more than the others too, maybe because they don't get to dance it as often. I was told when I asked to learn it, that students complained about it, so it was taken out of the teaching rotation at Dagbe. It is also a dance from Tamale (ta-MA-lay), in North central Ghana, so it is not used in the culture, but only for special performances. I've been working on it for a few days, and I'm really starting to get it.

Bambaya is a belly dance. I became painfully aware of why students complained about it after 20 minutes of hip twisting. The variations got harder and harder, and on top of everything, Odartey was teaching me both the boys and girls parts, though I did not know that. By this time, the other group had left and I was alone again. About the third practice, I was dressed in part of the costume for the dance. It's a sash tied around the waist and adorned with a scalloped string of beads and tiny shells. Hanging from the strings are two-inch pompom balls of red, yellow, and green cotton. It sure makes you aware of whether your hips are moving. I named the moves for myself so I could remember what was coming next. I learned the "waving fan" (fanning myself with a palm fan while moving forward right, left, right, with my feet), the "hopping tap dance freeze" (a line of boys and girls hop to the opposite line, trading places and landing on the outside foot with the inside foot resting on its heel), then

“speed skating” (the footwork mimicked a speed skater moving around the tracks with a wide push movement in the feet), and finally “hackysack” (the right foot turned up and in as if bouncing a hackysack, while the left foot stepped forward). Finally I made it to the “lacing hop,” where the footwork looks like a snaking trail and each move in the trail is separated by a hop and a 180 degree turn. As I try to complete this move, my coordination with the music stops and I have to stop and look to Odartey for help. He comes over and tries to show me again how this movement goes, and how it fits with the drumming, and I try again.

Halfway into learning and really understanding the lacing hop, Odartey tells me I’m learning the boys’ moves, and shows me the girls’ moves. While I’m figuring out how the moves go with the music, the teachers start to argue about how the drumming pattern really goes. I guess it’s been a while since they’ve done this dance. I can tell George is bored. He’d rather be dancing. He gets up and starts dancing with the bass drum. I have to really figure out that when the music changes, my move isn’t really changing. While Odartey moves on in the dance with me, George keeps dancing around and playing the drum.

Normally, learning dancing with others was more enjoyable for me than learning dancing alone because there were others to take the attention away from me for a moment and it was easier to see the bigger picture of the dance with a partner, but with *Bambaya*, I enjoyed the individual time. As a student in an individual class, relying on aural cues from the drums was most helpful. During demonstration, seeing and hearing become equally important as movements and the sound of the drums interconnect to form a full picture of what must be repeated. To complete the picture, writing dance directions and

drumming patterns down after learning them solidified movement and sound. Each dance variation's directions were written in fieldnotes more than once, as they were taught and reviewed in class, to allow for comparison and connections to be made. Describing what was being learned in layman's terms provided the final link.

Teaching singing: “So in our music we have call and response.”

While I watched everyone else take a private lesson with Mensah, I have only had time to be social and do batik with him. I wanted to learn a song so I asked him if I could have a lesson tonight. I am meeting him by the summer hut and walk out to find that he has set up a chalkboard against one of the pillars of the summer hut and has written the words of two songs out for me. He explains the songs he has written down in poetic and melodic terms and then asks me to echo the words as he points. I echo for quite some time and it begins to become tedious, but we move on. He frequently says, “Very good” after he decides I have sufficiently repeated the words of each line. When we make it through repeating the words of the first song, Mensah explains that the meaning of the song “*Magbe toade me*” for *Gahu* means “Any society that invited *Gahu*, *Gahu* will surely be there.” Finally we get to sing together and I echo the tune of each line as I did for the words alone.

Singing lessons were a personal experience and imitation played a large part in the learning process. Mensah's teaching manner is conducive to the vulnerable position some musicians feel put in when singing alone. Through his ability to judge execution of each element he taught, he was able to modify his

teaching plan with different strategies to help students. Through his attentiveness to students, he made echo singing work well with his teaching style.

Feedback: “That’s a big step. It is too much.”

Feedback was given to students verbally and nonverbally from teachers and students, as well as individually through self-evaluation. The function of collective achievement within the culture contributes to teachers’ views of feedback. Teachers at the center consider the response from drummers and the crowd as feedback, so it does not occur to them to give feedback during classes in response to learning. Most feedback occurred during group lessons and was general and correcting, with very few compliments given during lessons. Generally, the group was addressed as a whole, and if one person didn’t “have it,” everyone practiced again, to form the cohesive group. Students appreciated specific feedback with corrective guidance, because if they asked questions about teaching method, teachers were typically offended, feeling as if the student was challenging them. In addition, it seemed like group lessons were treated as their own kind of feedback because students could use self-correction through observation and comparison and adjust their performance according to other dancers. Students did not typically correct other students, except when one student was holding back the pace of the lesson and everyone else was ready to move on. The dynamic of feedback shaped lessons each day and affected how students were treated outside of class time, as well as the way teachers viewed each other.

Verbal feedback.

In the beginning, many of the instructors and players were trying to help the students become acclimated to the aural teaching method offering feedback throughout drum and dance lessons. Verbal feedback could be compliments or corrections that provide a student with information regarding their work. During the first dance lessons, many teachers were interjecting directions to the students about their dancing and how to improve. As the lessons went on, only the master teacher would correct students, but there were many instances where the teacher would talk with the support staff in *Ewe*. It was never known what they were talking about, but the expressions and tone seemed to be correction of the students because of where it fell in the lesson. Phrases like “try it again” or “so watch here” were used often. This feedback did not involve specific corrective suggestions, but merely raised the student’s awareness that something was incorrect. Sometimes teachers used visual cues to demonstrate, diagnose, and correct errors, as in the case of George teaching proper stick hold. He would say, “don’t hold stick like this.” His demonstration showed that he wanted the stick to be an extension of the arm. George was better than most teachers at combining corrective feedback with a demonstration or description of how to correct the error that would correct the student more quickly. Odartey was better at pointing out what was not correct, such as, “it’s too slow, you are slow. It is faster.” When he felt it was correct, he brought it to your attention with an affirmation, like, “it’s right.” During other feedback it was clear that he knew why I was messing up, but did not have the language to correct me. When gauging movement he would tell me, “that’s a big step, it is too much,” so I knew where to

correct but not how much. I later learned the step was a very small step forward, but only through repeated practice. In addition, Odartey would correct the group as a whole, instead of correcting one person, as in, “try to get the tempo. The tempo is slow. Some of you are rushing.” This kind of comment helped overall, but as tempo is hard for some to hear, without singling out the person who needed help, no one knew who he was actually talking to. Some verbal feedback was stuck between the language translation and was misinterpreted by students, causing issues during class. The situation with Ava and her missing partner as well as my confrontation with Odartey regarding learning new dances rather than practicing old ones, were the two situations that created a fracture in the learning for that class. Overall, they didn’t affect relationships between teachers and students, but merely required adaptation from both sides to return the dynamic to normal.

Another interesting aspect of verbal feedback was the teachers’ use of compliments as the performance approached, when there really was nothing better about the students’ performance. By this point, teachers became concerned with students feeling as if they have done a good job and having a great send-off from the center. They try to build confidence with statements such as “good work,” when I thought there was not much difference in the quality of the work. This contrast seemed false to me after noting very little use of positive feedback over the course of the time in class. There was one class during my stay with clear, consistent affirmation. During Nani’s visit, the drum class he led was productive for all students, as every comment he gave me had a compliment and showed that he was paying attention to our performance. He told me, “it was

better, it was way better. I can see it, I can feel it,” when he saw that I was finally gelling with the ensemble. He also frequently checked on others in the class who were practicing quietly, saying, “How are we doing back there?” He understands the dynamic of American teaching because of his time living and teaching in the United States, and his corrective feedback has a positive spin throughout class. The consistency of his comments was a confidence boost for the students.

Students did sometimes correct other students, pointing out changes that should be made and how to make them. Donna offered help to Ava during an early lesson in an attempt to correct her footwork, saying, “when you turn, just turn your waist. Because you are turning with your feet and moving way over there.” Students offered clearer directions to each other, and could give a different perspective of how they figured out rhythms and dance moves.

Correcting and assisting other students usually happened quietly and outside of class time. Students would agree to meet before or after class to work on a particular challenging part, with the advantage of explaining it in their own words and bouncing ideas for success off one another. If there were still learning issues, sometimes a child from the village who was hanging out in the center would be consulted, as asking them would be less threatening than consulting with a main teacher. Jackson, Rubben’s 18-year-old cousin, who was usually around the center, assisted the American students from time to time with drumming questions. With so many alternative means for making sense of learning in class, success was attainable with a combination of these methods and students were not just at the mercy of the center’s teachers.

Nonverbal feedback.

Nonverbal feedback required more interpretation on the part of the student, but along with body language, facial expressions, and teacher actions, there was feedback provided by the drumming ensemble during dance and drumming classes. Nonverbal feedback was just as helpful as verbal feedback because of the language barrier, but also sometimes gave the wrong impression to students about their performance. A new dance is always demonstrated by a group of the teachers. After the demonstration, the teachers broke down the dance into manageable pieces, and students would try to replicate what they had seen. If the teachers deemed the students unsuccessful, a main source of feedback was the teachers demonstrating and repeating their movements before asking students to try again.

Another source of nonverbal feedback was taking cues from the drums during dance class. Cues for dances were not presented as cues, merely as part of the musical fabric of the dance, and it was the student's job to recognize the cues as movements happen and store them. If students could not recognize the cues, the drum syllables would be used to reinforce the cue in the moments directly before it, transfer back to the drums themselves and hope that the connection was made. For students with less musical experience, learning to hear and notice cues with drums and drum syllables alone can be challenging. Odartey provided nonverbal feedback during dance lessons alone and in groups. While the group of students would watch each other, I would watch Odartey to study his face and whether he looked pleased or bothered. When we were not correct, his expression was almost one of exasperation as he felt he had to re-

teach everything to make us understand. His choice to reteach rather than isolate a specific section is a result of the view of the dance as a whole experience rather than small chunks. They break it down at the center only for teaching how the movements work together. These moments were easy to deal with compared to the moments of verbal feedback that were misinterpreted because of the language barrier.

Self-evaluation.

As learners, most of us analyzed our progress as we were learning and adapted to our learning environment to get the most out of the experience. Self-evaluation and personal reflection was needed when the teachers would not give any and offered students the opportunity to have some control over their teaching through verbalization of achievements and challenges. Through self-reflection, a student might identify individual needs within the process of the class and through repertoire that has been chosen by the center. With the language barrier and different teaching styles, the use of self-evaluation at Dagbe made the experience more enjoyable and more educational as students could tell teachers what they liked about learning at the center, as well as how they felt they had improved in their musical ability. For me, self-evaluation was the best way to work on difficult dance steps or drum patterns as I could compare my work to others, and verbally expressing evaluations of my performance encouraged the teachers to give compliments throughout class. When I would announce that I felt I was “getting better,” I would get an affirmative response back from a teacher. Without that spur, there would have been no response from either side. It was important for students to find ways to make connections to correct

execution of elements alone, whether they practiced during break times, took private lessons, recorded and reviewed group lessons, or wrote down the music with Western notation as they heard it. With these extra tools, self-evaluation created learning moments for students and teachers.

Informal Methods

As she feels the spirit move, a woman performs *Brekete*, a social dance, to the sound of the talking drum. She is possessed to dance, and the drummers encourage her dancing by playing louder and longer. She rises from the crowd, and begins to dance *Akbadza* (the society dance with upper body movements that resemble the movements of chicken wings), and play with the audience, her eyes ablaze with passion. She rolls on the ground and the audience laughs at her behavior, but she continues on as if she cannot hear anything but the drum. Almost as soon as she began, she comes back to reality and stops, strutting to her seat in the crowd as the divination ceremony to mark the new year continues.

Learning takes on many forms in the village, and many opportunities to learn about musical life in the village presented themselves in the form of celebrations and funerals. There were opportunities for students to learn drumming from villagers in informal situations such as *Borborbor* performances for Christmas, to listen and watch drumming and dancing in the village through divination ceremonies like the example above, and to learn dancing with villagers at society meetings. Each of these opportunities offers visiting students an immersion not only into the music they are learning, but also in the style of

teaching that village children and non-natives like Chango, a teacher, learn through.

Teaching drumming and dance.

During the Christmas season, more learning opportunities exist in village life than during other times of year simply because of traditional holiday celebrations and music. Learning away from the center was a welcome contact with the villagers that did not require knowledge of *Ewe* language beyond drumming and dancing terms. The trip to Ho to listen to a *Borborbor* troupe, jam sessions with teachers after dinner, as well as meetings of the *Kinka* society, a social group in the village, provided additional teaching moments for teachers and students.

Jam sessions.

During break time from class, as well as in the evenings, recreational drumming provided a learning opportunity for students within the village. Before class, teachers would show up and jam as others arrived, while warm-up time served as another opportunity to jam with a larger group. Late night jam sessions were so spontaneous that only a few were lucky enough to see them, following the sound after everyone else had gone to bed. Some of the teachers gather at Rubben's compound to play around as they socialize and students who witnessed this said, "it felt like they were having a conversation with the music." The intensity of these situations struck the students and Alden, a visiting American student, commented, "It was just so powerful what they were playing. ... You could just feel the intensity that they were playing with."

The situation made Alden feel envious of those who “grow up in it” as Western musical culture has moved away from group experiences to individual musical experiences. *Ewe* music is still a community experience, even with the addition of electricity to the village, unlike music in the United States, which has turned into a personal experience for most. Musical culture in the United States has moved from a community setting like this, where families gather around the radio in the 1940’s, or television in the 1950’s, to today, where multiple televisions, radios, and iPods fill the home. There is no need to come together to listen or perform music because you can listen to what you want as you want, and it is all a passive experience. Through listening, learning is limited because there is no performing along with the music. The intensity that should accompany musical experiences is missing because the human connection is missing. Luckily, there will always be kids messing around in their garage making music together, and video games such as Guitar Hero, provide a community musical experience of sorts. Preserving the past in *Ewe* music preserves the future in a way, as children experience music in the same way their parents did, regardless of new technology that might become available. As the function of music in *Ewe* life is beyond entertainment, community music experiences like jam sessions and funerals will remain through tradition.

Borborbor.

Alden, an American student, told a story about the second night the group was at the center and his experience with *Borborbor* in the village,

Steve, myself, and Jan grabbed a couple of drums and a bell and went down not really sure what was going to happen, and the entire village

seemed to show up and kind of congregate there for maybe an hour. It was very spur of the moment, spontaneous, purely emotive based musical hoedown. First people were playing *Borborbor* really simply, kind of chatting instead of “This is what we do here. You’re new.” And then a bunch of women sort of showed up and started dancing and singing. Younger girls showed up and started dancing. A bunch of older people came and started sitting around and the music, you could feel [it in the group].”

In addition to participating in the village, the group arranged a trip and concert in Ho, a city one hour north of Kopeyia, with a *Borborbor* troupe. They performed and became teachers for the group, encouraging students to try dancing and drumming in this new style during their performance. They sang, danced, and played instruments, teaching the students the dance steps and drumming patterns while they performed, an immersion experience that gave the American students a better view of *Borborbor*. This performance was different from the Boxing Day performance in instrumentation and dancing, as a trumpet was part of the drumming ensemble. Trumpet is a natural part of *Borborbor*, but is not always used because it is hard to find a trumpet player in southeast Ghana. The dancing revolved around the ensemble in a circle, and while the dancers were holding and spinning the same knotted kerchief seen at the Boxing Day performance, their dancing was less choreographed. These two varying performance styles yielded separate learning opportunities. The Boxing Day performance was only to watch, and a great passive learning experience, however the performance in Ho was an active learning experience, where

students could engage and assist in the music and dancing with the group, and learn an *Ewe* music tradition that was not taught at the center.

Funerals and society meetings.

I recognize these villagers as I walk to the performance area that others have called The Shrine, but I've never seen a shrine there. It is a shaded area in the village past Rubben's compound. Society meetings always happen here, and we missed the usual meeting last week because we were in Ho, so they agreed to come back and perform again. I remember their pink flowered silk shirts from the funeral. This is the *Kinka* society that I stayed around during the funeral, who played and danced *Akbadza*, while others enjoyed *Gahu*. Rows of chairs are set up away from the circle of benches under the tree so we can watch them. Very soon after they start, people start to come pluck us out of our chairs to join the party. Each of us got up at least once and danced *Akbadza* with the *Kinka* society and even after two weeks of exposure and practice, my arms and shoulders just don't move like theirs. One of the American girls, Karen, is taken away "for something special" and the party continues until she returns, in a double veil of blue and white fabric, being paraded to the circle by ladies carrying purple and green umbrellas and blowing whistles. This is how an initiate is welcomed into the *Kinka* society, and afterward, the party continues.

Funerals, festivals, and celebrations provide another place that those in the village learn music. Each funeral is an opportunity for the social groups in the village and surrounding villages to give back to the family of the deceased. Each social group brings a musical group to the funeral and celebrates with drumming and dancing. At any funeral there could be six or more different social groups

making music in the same area, and villagers and visitors are encouraged to greet friends, and mingle between the groups. Regardless of how many groups are playing music, when you are visiting one group you can only hear that music. Chango, a player in the drum ensemble for lessons, has been at the center for six months. He learned all he knows from society performances in the village, by “joining in and playing at the funerals and festivals.” At the funeral, music is used as a celebration and a gift to the family through presence, however in the middle of the celebrating a different sight became the focus of the crowd, though the music and dancing in each group remains unchanged. The family of the deceased begins a mournful parade through the groups that have gathered, entering as a parade into each group and then exiting the same way. There is no singing, and very little expression from the girls in the parade, who silently walk to each society circle to announce the passing. As they moved, the music in the groups continued as if nothing was happening.

The *Kinka* society meets regularly in the village, coming together every two weeks to drum, dance and socialize. This is a time for the members to have a party, teach, learn, and grow together. Shrine music is composed for each society and is meant for entertainment and socializing. *Kinka* society musicians use their training to enhance music used for meetings. Some of the music is established like *Akbadza*, and everyone is encouraged by each other to participate, while newer music is enjoyed like a concert, as drummers show off skills and creativity. For those who do not actively participate in music making, society meetings offer the chance to be part of the music without knowing how to play any instruments. Rose, the cook for the center and Odartey’s mother, only

participates in music during funerals, *Kinka* society meetings, and celebrations. “I dance local dances, like *Akbadza*,” she said, and learned to dance them by watching. The importance of everyone being a part of the music-making enhances society gatherings.

By involving everyone, there is a precedence of learning that makes it easy for foreign visitors to join the experience. These instances are similar to how students can be involved in *Ewe* music without training. As teaching by rote and through mimicking is commonplace in elementary classrooms, teaching dance and short drumming patterns from Ghana could be taught by immersion as well. The overarching goal of these events is to connect musicians to each other through music. Jam sessions can be duplicated with similar patterns and available instruments as students work together to make music. Recreating the atmosphere of many groups making music together, such as the funeral may be achieved with songs, games, and instrumental pieces that are known. The beauty of the atmosphere was how much music occurred at once and the focus on providing that music in memory of someone. Society meetings could be reproduced including things that are special and important to each class. Each class is its own society and should be treated as such, with unique talents and gifts to use. These situations show that *Ewe* musical life as most villagers know it can be conveyed and understood by students who do not normally experience music as a large group. These experiences will expand the idea of what music is and how it is used in students’ lives to give better understanding to the power it holds in our lives.

Challenges of Teaching and Learning

The culture of learning within the village has changed through the years since the center opened, and as students enter and exit, the challenges presented from both teachers and students shape some of the ways future teaching is conducted and which dances are taught. Learning to work with different personalities and the differences in teaching cultures is important for both teachers and students. The reactions to situations during teaching on both sides control the level of learning achieved. In addition, the ability levels of students control how teaching is conducted. The expectations of both students and teachers can have an effect on ability level, sometimes pushing students in good ways but also creating tension between teacher and student. The dynamic of these three converging challenges added interest to learning drumming and dance.

Personalities: “It’s just different than how they teach at home.”

Personality affects how students will accept information and respond to the teaching style of instructors. The students who visit the center have their own perceptions of teacher personalities and during interviews, two students with very different personalities spoke of learning in the same class. Karen compared her experience at home learning clarinet in band with her experience of drumming in Ghana saying she thought in the U.S. “it’s more that [my band teachers] would go through [the music] and expect you to pick it up right away, but here they’ll go through it as many times as you need to until you get it.” On the other hand, Ava felt that “in the US, they teach you slowly and they make

sure you understand and I feel like they care more.” Donna echoed the same sentiment as Ava, but said, “it doesn’t bother me, but it’s just different than how they teach at home.” For students to have such contrasting views of teaching when they were in the same class with the same teachers each day is surprising. Ava preferred to spend her downtime socializing with the teachers on a more personal level, saying,

I feel like I got to know personally a couple of the teachers and I feel like when they’re not teaching, they’re really happy and really nice and they’re your friends. But when they’re teaching and they’re so strict I think, “You guys are two different people.”

Student personalities factored into class satisfaction as much as teaching method.

Conversely, teachers have come to expect certain personalities in students who visit the center and have adjusted their teaching strategies accordingly to help these students. Odartey has a strong personality and his expectations are high. He finds teaching difficult when students do not understand and they get angry and give up. His solution is to “advise them to say that this is how African music is. So we tell them to relax their mind and body.” While relaxing is a good strategy, the energy and mood of the teacher can affect the students as well, and generate new situations that require a different solution to keep students focused on the goals.

Watching the teachers’ personalities when dealing with each other was delightful because of the playful nature of the culture. During drumming class one day Mensah decided to pick on Rubben a bit, challenging him while he

demonstrated a dance. As the dance progressed, Mensah, on the master drum, increased the tempo until Rubben just could not keep up. Mensah stopped, looked at Rubben, and ran away laughing with Rubben close behind. The friendly competition made classes more enjoyable for teachers and students. Teacher personalities helped students understand the culture better, witnessing the leisurely, yet exuberant nature with which Ghanaians approach life, while each new student to the center shows a different learning style to teachers, helping them improve teaching practice.

Ability levels: “Teachers have to buck up for the fast pickers.”

In addition to personality, the musical ability level a new student arrives to the center with has an impact on their personal teaching as well as the teaching of all students at the center during their stay. The center is not just for students who have musical backgrounds and Odartey, the main dance teacher, says, “the hardest part is when the student is a newcomer, doesn’t know anything about dancing and drumming.” Paul, my solo warm-up instructor, talked about the challenges of teaching foreign students, saying, “Teachers have to buck up early for the fast pickers (learners). And the slow pickers have to go over it, [and take] the technique and go through things frequently for him or her to know it.”

Odartey said during drumming class he finds some students have difficulty learning “so that way we teach one by one.”

A great help to the main teacher were the extra teachers and drummers who would help students they noticed were performing incorrectly, analyze their work, and suggest a plan to help. Karen, an American student, liked having

other teachers there to help her because she felt she did not have a lot of musical ability coming into the center. The best advice the teachers gave Karen was “don’t worry about what they’re doing. Worry about what you’re doing.” Karen felt the teachers had faith that they could teach her and she could learn from them. That was what kept her going and led to her success with drumming and dancing where she felt she was limited before. “I had to work a lot harder than it seems like most people do, but that’s life,” she said. The teachers saw her need, encouraged her, and helped her achieve what she and the teachers hoped she would.

It appears that while teachers originally believed that students were capable of anything, their interaction with previous students of the center have changed their perceptions. The teachers were reluctant to teach me *Bambaya* because they said it was too hard. I learned later that “hard” meant that students complained about learning the dance, so it was removed from the teaching rotation. *Bambaya* is a lot harder than it looks, requiring the dancer to punish their body with twisting, jumping, and throwing arms. It is also harder on the mind because there is little crossover between *Gahu* and *Tokoe*, and *Bambaya*. While ability level plays a large part in the selection of repertoire for students, teachers can gauge a student’s willingness for harder material, and let students choose their learning path without fear of wasted time. Teachers at the center may find that a dance is not as hard for everyone and include it within the curriculum again. Learning harder dances may come easier to students with dance background, or may show a student they are not ready at the time, but both experiences would yield learning for students and teachers.

Expectations: “They really want you to get it.”

Some students visit the center with a background in the musical style of *Borborbor*, society gatherings like *Kinka*, or *Ewe* culture and have expectations for what they want to see and learn. Personally, the chance to go into the culture with very little background contributed to learning because every experience was held no expectations on my part. The only expectation teachers seem to have of students is that they be open to the teaching method, receptive to information, and return home with the goal of sharing it with others. Both students and teachers come to each lesson with expectations, and these unavoidably have an effect on the teaching and learning that goes on during classes.

Student expectations.

Students at the center are expected to adapt to the process of teaching used by the teachers. Since Godwin developed the process, it has been used in the same way, and the teachers have automatic responses for questions and concerns ready. Most students come and are open to anything and understand that there will be differences in teaching. Many thought that teachers would modify their lessons based on ability and were surprised when that did not always happen. However, when that did happen it was usually a common obstacle with students, and not a reaction to a specific student in that moment. American students said they thought there would be more accommodation to their needs and teaching would be more like what they experienced in the U.S. Students who came to the center feeling less musical made more comments regarding their struggles with particular features of the teaching: lessons were too fast-paced, the teachers used a harsh tone during class, or they felt like they

needed extra lessons to keep up. Ava, who had the broadest dance background, said she felt that at the center “it’s more about instructors [than the students] but they really want you to get it.” The desire of the teachers to see the student succeed sometimes came at the price of the student feeling frustrated with the teaching method. Over the course of our stay, student leaders emerged and it was expected by other students that those student leaders would be in their places for the dance. They served as a visual cue for others, because they seemed to know the dances better and that may have resulted from their being a leader while learning. Students had expectations of teachers and peers, as well as for the learning experience overall, all of which had a significant impact on the learning environment.

Teacher expectations.

Teachers face expectations of excellence by virtue of their affiliation with the center, as well as more particular expectations of the individual students whom they strive to teach and accommodate. Wisdom said teachers are expected “to be serious and make the student comfortable,” and the students “must feel free to ask questions and you must be able to answer them and then keep moving.” This was seen as good teaching because of the teacher’s ability to adapt. While teachers are sensitive to learning needs, they do like to push students just a little bit in an effort to achieve just a little past the student’s own desires.

In addition to these, teachers have expectations of their students including future dissemination of the musical and cultural knowledge gained from study at the center. Teachers assume that students are learning in order to share their

skills with others at home. Teachers do not regard the collection of songs and dances without the intent to teach them as highly because it is the future use of the learning and sharing of that learning that brings others to the center. After we had performed for the community and the American group had left, I wanted to learn two more dances to add to my repertoire. Odartey, my dance teacher, opposed my desire because he assumed that I would immediately forget the old dances, or get them mixed up in my head. He also did not want to teach me the dance unless he could teach it in its entirety, because he sees the point of teaching as passing on knowledge that will then be passed on again. For the teaching to end with me seemed like wasted energy and time to him. He would have been happy to continue making me refine *Gahu* and *Tokoe* for another two weeks, despite my assertion that I was secure in my ability to perform and teach these two dances. In the end, Odartey relented and I was able to learn parts of *Atsiagbekor* and *Bambaya*.

While I was regarded as a teacher who would be passing on my knowledge to others firsthand for their performance, the American students in the other group were treated differently, more as cultural ambassadors. Their job was not to teach others to perform, but to carry the message and the performance to somewhere new and share it with others. These differences in the function of learning for various students resulted in different expectations, even though all students would disseminate the learning from the center.

Clearly, there were challenges that arose from cultural conflicts relating to the teaching and learning of music at the center. Personalities are always a factor in any learning environment, and at Dagbe many of the same personality

challenges as in the United States presented themselves between teachers and students. Expectations for learning are a wonderful thing for teachers and students to form, as they guide the learning that will take place. Through communication of these expectations, both parties can reach their goal. Past musical experiences reasonably affect the ability level of students who visit the center, however with the attention of special teachers, students perceptions of their own ability can be forever changed for the better and music can be felt in a new way. Through these cross-cultural challenges, we all learned more about music, ourselves, and the unspoken connection that music can provide between cultures, while having a great time playing and learning together.

Comparisons of Music Teaching and Learning

Comparing the music teaching and learning of the Dagbe Cultural Center and American public school and private music lessons showed objective differences, as well as differing opinions among students. Differences do exist between the two, particularly with regards to the role and power of the teachers and the way they provide feedback to students. When students in this study were presented with the opportunity to learn at Dagbe, they expected that learning would not be like learning at home with their professor. Most music students are already aware that the transmission of music in *Ewe* culture has differences from the typical transmission of music at American universities. Understanding students' views on the similarities and differences is critical for those wishing to employ culturally appropriate teaching strategies in teaching Ghanaian music within the context of American school music classrooms.

Armed with such knowledge, teachers in the United States can anticipate moments where extra teaching will be necessary.

The overarching goal of Dagbe Cultural Center is to create students who will carry the message and learning to others around the world in the hopes that they, too, will visit. The structure of teaching at the center is unique because it combines traditional teaching techniques that would be used with village children with Western adaptation for visiting students. There are four major differences between the two teaching systems that contribute to the challenges and the comparisons that visiting students and center teachers spoke of. One major difference is that classes are largely teacher-oriented, with teachers choosing the pace, style, and focus of the lesson, regardless of the students desires or needs. This difference is not bad, but simply how teaching at the center has developed through the guidance of plans made by Godwin. Another is that everyone at the center learns as a beginner, the same way children learn in the village. This offers the chance to learn from the beginning and understand how teachers at the center learned to drum and dance from Godwin. However, students who arrive with knowledge or background of drumming and dance must accommodate other students as class is taught as a collective.

Two differences that benefitted students were the teacher-student ratio, and the practice of modeling dances and drumming before beginning to teach. At the Dagbe Cultural Center, there were often six or seven teachers working with one student, and even fifteen working with the large group from America. The high number of teachers allowed for demonstration of dances as they would be seen at a funeral or festival, and could show the details that students would

need to know before attempting. These could not be duplicated in the United States, as hardly any classroom would have more than one teacher. In addition, the culture of music instruction in the United States is individually-oriented rather than group oriented. The idea of elementary classrooms working as a cohesive unit to achieve a common performance goal does not come into play often, as individual ability and a musical leadership outlook is more highly valued. This leads to the other difference of modeling before learning. A single teacher in a classroom would not have the resources to model a dance or drumming piece for students, as they cannot demonstrate a dance meant for a large group alone and without accompaniment, nor can they play all the drumming parts for a dance at the same time. The fact that this can be accomplished daily at the center is extremely valuable for learning. Minor changes can be made to the structure of the lessons at workshops and classrooms in the United States that will sustain the integrity of the teaching, while making it more accessible to a larger Western audience.

Student perspectives: “It was pretty easy to learn from them.”

The American students at the center during my visit were well-versed in Ghanaian culture and *Ewe* musical pieces because of a class they were enrolled in at home. Their trip was the culmination of their learning, and their professor had previously studied at the center on multiple occasions. Students had their own musical experience, from class and before, to draw from, and those experiences created the context for comparison. Steve, who is a music student at an American university, talked about the difficulty of learning by call and

response while in African drumming class at home. By learning from his professor's use of the center's method before arriving, Steve adjusted well. Interestingly, he taught himself the drums by imitating popular drummers in videos, so his difficulty in adjusting to his professor's method is surprising. After learning with the new method for a while, Steve says, "that became so much easier to do than reading music." Donna's reaction to classes at the center was different because she reacted to the pace of lessons, and not the teaching method, telling me that the urgency to perform correctly was not part of class in the U.S., nor were the drum syllables. Tony, whose musical background is limited to playing a little electric bass in high school, said the method of rote teaching didn't present any challenges, "because I think they're better teachers than in the States and it was pretty easy to learn from them." For Karen, the situation was ideal because as a child in piano lessons she said, "I never got really good at reading music and I ended up not really keeping up with it." She also felt that the teachers "knew [the music] so well that it's a part of them" made a big difference for her learning in their system. Overall, these students had little issue with the teaching system, as their professor had formed her own teaching method similar to the center's, removing only parts of teaching she thought would complicate learning for her students. These students enjoyed learning at the center because it offered instant rewards for their own study of people and music.

Role and Power: "Sarafina, are you ready?"

Teachers at the center function under an invisible hierarchy that is set according to skill level and while each lesson involves four or more teachers, only

one teacher coaches the student, while the others watch and accompany on drum. The situation could almost be seen as one of apprenticeship. In addition to skill level, familial lineage and relationships with students contributed to the hierarchy.

Mensah was my favorite teacher because he was always there when I needed to go to town, wanted to go to church, or had a question about music. He took me through parts of daily life, checking on me when we were not in class, and going above and beyond during lessons he did teach. Regardless of his status with me, he is not one of the main teachers at the center, possibly because his other jobs require more of his time. His skill as a musician, artist, guide for students is disproportionate to his leadership role at the center.

Odartey is the main information source during dance class and he is quickly climbing the ladder at the center. His demeanor during teaching showed how serious he is about maintaining his position as head dance instructor. He sees his work as significant and important to the future of the center. While Odartey is in control, George has the skill and experience to assume more leadership, if not for a foot injury from a motorbike accident that has kept him from seriously dancing for three years. He very much enjoys performing, and relishes the opportunity to play lead or co-lead drum during practice and performance. His manner is very happy and helpful, and he enjoys interacting with the students one on one.

Other teachers assume command when no one else is available, including Paul, who taught me master drum one day before Wisdom showed up and took over, as well as leading warm up for my individual lessons. When the American

group was at the center, Pee was the warm up leader, and the difference in their warm-up styles could have been the reason for the change in teachers. Pee led warm-up in a high-intensity style with many locomotor group movements involving hopping, jogging, and aerobic exercises, while Paul's warm-up style was much calmer, involving many stretching, yoga-type movements. I later learned Paul had back pain issues that most likely contribute to his less intense warm-up style. Both teachers, regardless of differences in teaching style, participate with others in cultural performances as showcased dancers.

Interestingly, the day before our final performance, Nani, Godwin's son, arrived and the power hierarchy that had been established suddenly dissolved. Nani is highly respected in the village, so when he arrived, the current teachers stepped aside so he could lead the class. Nani lives in the United States, the only one of the brothers to have left the village, and he frequently does clinics and presentations for Western students. His position as a cultural ambassador gives him power even when he is not present in the village.

The role each person plays at the center is well-established. It is clear who is in charge, who is seen as a leader, and who is seen as a friend to the students at the center. Teachers can embody more than one of these roles through their interactions and activities with students. Professional and social interactions with students constantly alter opinions the teachers have of each other. While building relationships with students is important, it is the teacher's use of their time with students that determines their future roles at the center, as professional association is seen as productive, but social interaction seems to pit teachers against each other.

Implementation Strategies

For teachers wishing to make applications of these findings to the classroom, it may be useful to analyze the teaching and learning paradigms in use at the Dagbe Cultural Center according to Schippers' Twelve-Continuum Transmission Framework (TCTF). It is a wonderful resource for maintaining the natural process and context of Ghanaian music to those unfamiliar with it. When *Ewe* musical culture at the center is analyzed according to Schippers' framework, the learning experience at the center was largely holistic, aural and tangible (See Figure 2.) Students were taught as teachers from the village learned when they were children, orally and through immersion, with the help of structured classes. The goals of the class remain tangible, with a clear aim that students perform what they are taught and with a focus on technique.

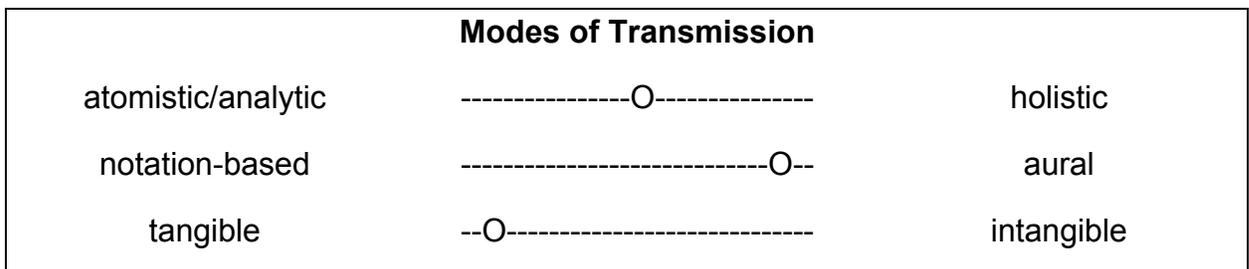


Figure 2.

Analysis of Modes of Transmission for Dagbe Cultural Center. Adapted from Schippers, H. (2010). *Facing the Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 124.

The context of learning at the center is not completely authentic and original, but that cannot be achieved with students deciding on a time frame for learning . Teachers strive to give each student the same level of learning experiences regardless of the duration of their stay. In addition, the center has remained fairly static regarding traditional dancing and drumming, despite outside influence.

The authenticity of the teaching is high, yet reconstructed, with students learning from one generation away from Godwin, however the performance situations receive 'new identity' authenticity. A possible reason for this is because the idea of performance as a culmination of learning has been borrowed from Western thought and adopted by the center. Because of the outside influence, the recontextualization happens automatically, as situations for performance are created for students (See Figure 3).

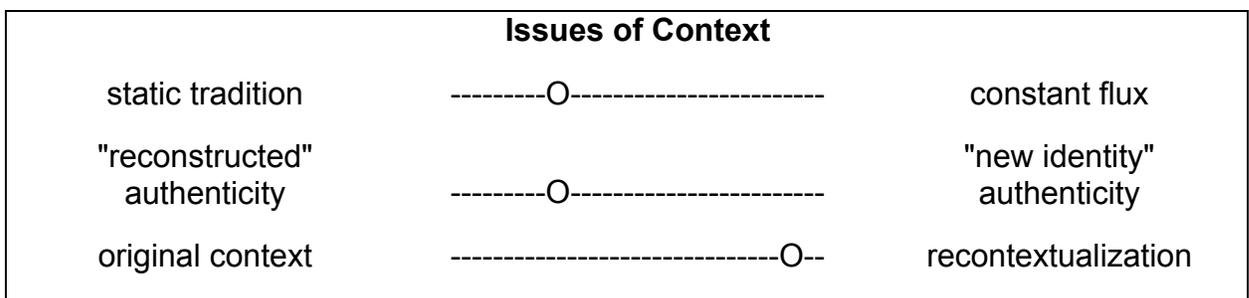


Figure 3.

Analysis of Issues of Context for Dagbe Cultural Center. Adapted from Schippers, H. (2010). *Facing the Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 124.

Interaction during classes at the center mirrored the customary ideals of *Ewe* culture with classes being largely teacher- centered and community achievement oriented (See Figure 4). While the gender roles in *Ewe* society have remained the same, in the center some barriers are disregarded, as one of the best drummers in the center is Odartey's wife, Mary. She was brought to the center 28 years ago, to learn from Godwin, her godfather. He noticed her talent early in her life, took her in, and she has lived in Kopeyia ever since. Two other interactions of adaptation and goals created contradictions during class as teachers did not like to plan for student struggles. Since most students stay for a

couple of weeks, rather than a year or more, goals were short-term. This created a conflict of learner ability and time frame that never truly resolves, but seemed to work itself out during a student's stay at the center.

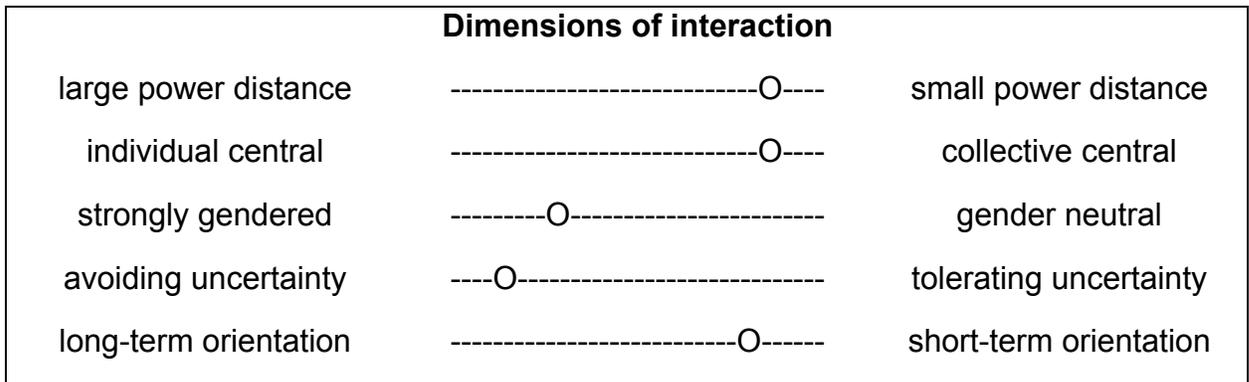


Figure 4.

Analysis of Dimensions of Interaction for Dagbe Cultural Center. Adapted from Schippers, H. (2010). *Facing the Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 124.

When the cultural diversity of the center is observed, it is not surprising that the center becomes more diverse with each new student, however this has not had much effect on the teaching process (See Figure 5). The center operates with an awareness of the other cultures that come in contact with it, and students are encouraged to use their own musical framework to structure learning for themselves. Despite this, the center has stayed true to the teaching process Godwin developed, which allows and uses alternate learning styles including Western musical ideas, but ultimately leaves *Ewe* culture in a dominant position.

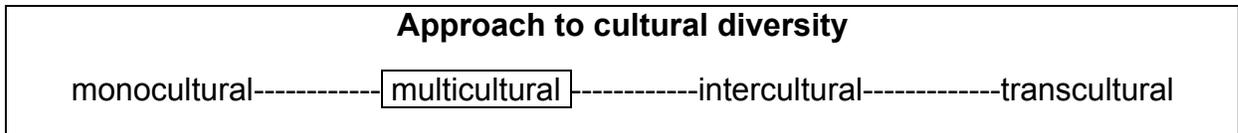


Figure 5.

Analysis of Approach to Cultural Diversity for Dagbe Cultural Center. Adapted from Schippers, H. (2010). *Facing the Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 124.

Teaching drumming.

There are several strategies employed at the Dagbe Cultural Center that could be easily transferred to American school music classrooms. Techniques such as lesson pacing and the function of a collective learning experience can be maintained in music classrooms with little modification. In addition, the use of drum syllables and visual demonstration of sticking and hand hits can be duplicated as well, regardless of having the proper instrumentation. As drumming is learned, previously used syllables will assist students in knowing what sticking and drum strike is sought. Drumming patterns also easily transfer to the classroom, as many students would understand the main call of the *boba* in *Gahu*, “dun dun kede kede” as rhythm words. As most patterns are not difficult rhythmically, this could help some students. It is the layering, and the fact that nearly every pattern’s downbeat is not on the first beat of the traditional measure, that makes them harder and creates the polyrhythmic interest. The technique for learning rhythm through sight, sound, and kinesthetic means are similar to Western cultures, but because of the musical content, the center uses a combination of traditional and Western teaching techniques to communicate the full picture.

Teaching dancing.

The elemental process of starting small and adding movements during center dance classes transfer to American music classrooms as students are continuously exposed to and immersed in the music. A single dance is composed of not just footwork, but also arms, head movements, shoulder movements and communication between dancers that allows for a whole body experience. While musical cues and dancing footwork were taught simultaneously at the center, new students would benefit from the separation of elements, learning each alone, then being taught how they fit together and practicing them. This conclusion is drawn from observations of students who understood dances better when they heard the musical cues in drumming class, and associated them back to movements during dance class. The unconscious fusion of the dance elements and their accompanying musical cues were made clear through the separation. By creating words to guide movements for students, dancing will be easier to memorize without the musical cues to guide. In addition, the use of analogy in teaching will help reach students on their level, providing a known reference for teaching and correcting movements. Evaluating the type of analogy that best suits a movement will also help teachers gauge what grade level each dance is most appropriate for, as well as providing a catalyst for simplifying the dance for younger grades. These strategies will give teachers a chance to make *Ewe* dancing accessible for all students, regardless of age or ability.

Material culture.

On an extramusical level, teachers who have the opportunity to visit a new destination can provide a first-hand account, impressions, stories, and gather artifacts that bring a new dimension and life to the lesson. Artifacts can include money from the culture, postcards, maps, cloth and clothing, dolls, instruments, tools and other things that serve a purpose in the culture. Incorporating more valuable items such as these requires care and planning in the lesson, but gives more depth to the exploration of the culture. These items can be used with songs, dancing, games, and even on an exploration table for students to touch and explore, that bring new life to the lesson. Providing these artifacts gives a concrete identity to cultures featured in classrooms and will help students become more globally conscious and open to outside ideas and views that will benefit them as they grow.

Visual media for cultural context.

Portraying a foreign culture authentically requires the teacher to have multiple avenues through which to tell the story. Pictures, videos and sound bites that are readily available provide a voice and a view of the culture in context so learners are transported to a new environment without requiring the teachers using them to make a trip themselves. Using visual media to portray the cultural context of different musical cultures can give students insight into the function of music within the culture and the types of instruments and their material construction. Many of these things can be found through research on the Internet, gathering information from books, and consulting colleagues with a

background in the culture. Simply adding pictures, videos, and narrative descriptions of a foreign culture to a lesson with song and dance will give more significance to an otherwise ordinary lesson. Students will be able to make connections beyond the music to cultural features that show the similarities to their own culture.

There are many great cultural moments from my own trip that are preserved on video, including the dance demonstrations from class and festivals, authentic dance and drumming performances, as well as the interviews with teachers and villagers in *Kopeyia*. Part of our culminating performance at the Dagbe Cultural Center involved the teachers dancing and their performance did not disappoint as they performed *Atsiagbekor*, a favorite war dance. The intricate movements that comprise these battle dances tell stories of preparation, battle, and homecoming and the dancers' exuberance makes them even more exciting. Their powerful performance fueled my desire to learn the same dance in later classes. Using interviews to build cultural context with students makes satellite experiences concrete for participants. Using visual media can create emotional context for students, conveying feelings that pictures and second-hand descriptions cannot. Their use in portraying necessary stylistic elements, as well as setting the scene for new learning, will enhance the cultural experience for students.

DISCUSSION

Interest in the music of Ghana and the *Ewe* people in particular has received attention because of teachers and ethnomusicologists who have gone before us (Locke, 1980; Schippers, 2010; Howard, 2005), returning with stories that pique our curiosity and lead the next generation to do their own exploring. Through the adoption of the National Standards, teaching culturally diverse music has become necessary, however many teacher training programs do not offer in-depth experience with multicultural music, requiring teachers to seek alternative trainings and workshops to supplement their curriculum. A significant goal of Dagbe is to outfit visitors with the tools to share their knowledge with others and encourage them to visit as well. With the need for alternative trainings and the desire of teachers at Dagbe to have students share their learning, a teacher training in Ghanaian drumming and dancing is born. By taking material learned at the center and offering training to preservice and certified teachers, I can unite the center's goals with the National Standards, helping to foster teachers who regard multicultural music education's necessity regardless of their background or school population.

Applications

A well-rounded curriculum for elementary music classrooms in the United States could easily include drumming and dancing. The formal and informal methods taken from the Dagbe Cultural Center may be used in these classrooms to teach Ghanaian drumming and dance with the same cultural learning context. Teaching songs with both drumming and dancing components will extend

lessons from conceptual to kinesthetic, while similar footwork will help students use prior knowledge. Implementing analogy between drumming and dance lessons will add another connection for students. The use of syllables in drumming lessons will connect verbal patterns to instruments and ease the transition from voice to sound. After students have had lessons with clear objectives, teachers can create jam sessions where students can play using known patterns. Also, teaching about the culture of village music making, using videos and sound recordings from funerals, *Borborbor*, and *Kinka* meetings, will educate students on the depth of musical life in the Volta Region.

Formal and informal music learning situations are beginning to blend in today's music education classrooms through the use of time-honored practices, as well as new strategies taken from informal learning situations, like garage bands and playground interactions. Each of these avenues for learning offers differing perspectives for music education and gives teachers the ability to craft each learning situation to students' wants and needs. The formal learning methods used at Dagbe Cultural Center include structuring classes to build upon previous learning, using syllables to express drumming patterns for transfer to instruments, and teaching dancing as a cohesive unit with drumming as a path to understanding their integrity together. These mirror the learning methods of the United States, possibly because the center's teaching method was designed with Western learners in mind. The need to create informal learning situations in music classrooms is as great, allowing for students to explore the culture while investigating musical aspects through music used for celebrations, festivals, funerals, and other events. Recreating the funeral atmosphere where many

musical groups play at once or forming traditions within each classroom similar to the Kinka society traditions will bring these situations to life. Infusing both methods into the music classroom will create greater context for the culture in the eyes of students and lead to greater understanding.

Folkestad (2006) suggests exploring formal and informal learning situations through four criteria: the situation, learning style, ownership, and intentionality. By using each of these criteria, West African drumming from the *Ewe* can be analyzed and suitable applications to the classroom can be made without marginalizing the culture. By better understanding the original culture and the function of music within, teachers can provide better instruction to students. Jaffurs (2006) refers to the same definition of formal and informal learning environments, identifies the convergence of the two, and the ways to duplicate these blended learning situations in the classroom. In addition, she cites the need for teacher training that broadens the focus of music teachers to musics outside of Western European Art Music. The differences between formal and informal learning environments obscure the similar goals that exist between them including skill development, transmission, and preparing students for life. It is important to use formal and informal teaching and learning examples from Dagbe Cultural Center to foster these goals, as they support both formal and informal teaching and learning.

Whether formal or informal means are a more effective teaching process is a matter of opinion and comparing the teaching and learning environments of each will uncover differences in the perceived effectiveness of each method. The idea that world musics should be taught as authentically as possible has

become passé since the only authentic way to learn is to be immersed in the environment. By providing cultural context for students with videos, culture bearers, pictures, and other material culture, while using known teaching methods, teachers can blend two traditions, approximating the culture. The need to communicate the cultural context during lessons is even greater because of the loss of context in environment.

Teaching to the student's perspective, while maintaining the environment students are comfortable with requires comparison of the culture's learning processes to the student's learning processes. Process, context, and approach are each important when teaching and effect successful learning. Teachers at Dagbe have a learning process that aims for similar goals of Western music, but goes about teaching them in different ways. The focus at Dagbe is with strict technique and center repertoire, providing students with a solid foundation for future transmission of *Ewe* dances and drumming pieces, as opposed to encouraging creativity and expression with students. Teachers at the center express creativity and expression daily during warm-ups, and before classes, but do not encourage creativity by students in classes, instead preferring students remain focused on the structured teaching. Observations showed that before class is time for the teachers to try drumming tricks and jam with each other, while break time in class is time to show off skills to others. In Ghanaian music, as in elementary school music classes, children learn through oral processes, relying on rote teaching and imitation to learn, as well as analytically, learning in parts to add together for a larger picture later. Through learning at the Dagbe Center as well as observing music-making in the village, it is clear there are

unspoken rules for music-making, and students are expected to understand them over time. Since the culture relies on aural transmission, understanding these rules becomes more difficult except through repeated, intensive study. This leaves a dichotomy in the learning process at the center, which cannot be mended in one visit. Making adaptations to this process of teaching for students in American classrooms is necessary for Western students to find success within the cultural framework of learning.

Music learning in the elementary classroom is a long process built on the foundations of understanding time, beats, rhythm, pitch, harmony, and the complex sounds of instruments working alone and together. This closely mirrors the teaching methods at Dagbe, requiring little modification to be made to the process to teach a new group. Cultural context is important as well, and sharing cultural information along with musical information will strengthen the lessons presented.

In teaching West African drumming to Western students, it would first be important to define and use the drum syllables for each of the drum parts as separate entities, using body percussion to mimic sticking and low or high sounds. Descriptions and pictures of the drums in a typical West African drumming ensemble will give students context for the low and high syllables and their use in working with other drums and percussion instruments. Transfer of the syllables and body percussion to only the intended drum is not necessary or practical, and therefore investigation of the sounds of drums, and substitution using available instrumentation, will suffice for students. Once students have

achieved a level of competence, the use of informal performance that is student led, or a formal performance will round out the teaching.

As dancing usually accompanies drumming in the culture, having student drummers who can accompany dancers will enhance the dancing experience of students. In American elementary schools, most dances are broken down into footwork and upper body movements, and as skills are refined, the upper and lower body movements are combined into one solid movement. This is not unlike the teaching at Dagbe and can also be incorporated with little modification. As these dances are participatory in the culture, teachers should participate with students moving, teaching, and learning along with them. Creating cultural context for the movements, providing background information on the dance's purpose and movement meanings should be included to allow students the chance to feel the music and understand its larger meaning to people in *Ewe* culture, rather than executing parts to a whole without regard to meaning and origin.

Creating a group performance atmosphere and understanding meaning in foreign songs and dances are not unfamiliar to students, as they have most likely already experienced them in music class under a different cultural framework. With that knowledge, it could easily be conceived that teaching and learning the same information above could occur in more informal, student-led settings. Because of the foreign nature of the music, preparatory formal teaching would most likely occur, but the use of student-run presentations and performances will enhance student learning and require them to take further steps to portray the culture to an audience.

Finally, consultation of resources with specific cultural and musical information will provide teachers with the ability to understand the music on a deeper level and encourage inclusion of West African music in their curriculums. Morin (2003) suggests creation of a planning web that explores all aspects of music a teacher would wish to cover, to guide research of those topics to facilitate a broader view of the potential of West African drumming and dancing's application to American music classrooms. Through this research, inclusion of cultural elements such as listening, moving, singing, playing, style, and recreation can be used in combination with each other to provide students with varied learning experiences. Gathering information and forming questions related to these aspects can supply a wealth of information for including all features of *Ewe* culture within an elementary classroom.

Traditional music education has struggled in recent years with budget cuts and music teachers have found it necessary to defend their programs, citing their value for students' creativity, exploration, and learning. The use of collected teaching strategies can offer a struggling program greater depth and a teacher new spirit. The rhythms and layering in Ghanaian music can be incorporated into existing and new music to add flavor, while footwork from dances can be used in choreography and dancing. The unfamiliar is sometimes the one thing that opens the eyes and ears of a child who seems unreachable, transforming them, and the effects can be seen by other teachers and principals who value teacher-student relationships. While adding limited elements to existing framework is a good step, presenting cultures as authentically as possible is the ultimate goal. Students need varied cultural examples to make educated decisions about the

world and their life. In addition, inclusion of these new cultures will aid in students understanding of similarities and differences between world cultures, not just perceived similarities and differences. These goals for music education will inspire students, teachers, and scholars to continue on the path of global understanding and mutual learning.

Directions for Future Research

It has been my goal to communicate teaching and learning at Dagbe Cultural Center and through my learning, I have come to realize that each experience is unique. Even among the other students who attended the center with me, perceptions of learning, friendship, and comparisons of center teaching to Western teaching were very different. Background and personality is crucial to the experience and lessons gleaned from it. Future research at the center involving case studies of different students could offer insight into how teaching at the center has changed as more Western students visit. Also, addressing how teachers at the center cope with large groups versus individuals who visit, as well as how teaching style and expectations are modified based on the population and ability level could be studied within the center.

One area that has received little attention by outside scholars is music education in the schools of Ghana. The mandatory inclusion of music as a self-contained class is not required for most Ghanaian schools, instead a blending of art, culture, and music is taught (Kwami, 1994). He also cites that these classes take away the social function of the indigenous music, therefore rendering it meaningless for teaching in the schools. A current survey of what music

education looks like in the Kopeyia Bloomfield School would build upon the understanding of musical life and customs at the center and in the village. In addition, these findings could be compared to the music learning that occurs outside of school, to find ways to incorporate informal music learning into the formal structure of music classes in Ghana.

Perception of sound is a difficult matter as there are many ways to analyze human response including brain scans and human opinion. During drumming class, there were times when I could no longer hear myself, or any of the other drums. It was as if my ears turned off. This phenomenon intrigued me, and while it did not occur in every class, it lead me to wonder if this happens to natives in the culture, when they are performing or listening, and how they cope with it. It was difficult to explain to them, and I compensated by performing the motion of drumming as I knew it, without hearing. It would be interesting to study if this type of drumming could be taught to students with hearing difficulties. As each drum hit is unique to create different sounds, investigating the translation of sound to feeling is intriguing. The kind of success this would provide for hearing-impaired students would interest the music education world. These ideas are as individual as the experiences of visiting the center and future research into each would yield thought-provoking results that could be applied to music education.

Postlude

My last days here have been anticlimactic because everything has slowed down and life seems to be returning to normal for the residents. No one is coming around the center, and I have been venturing out into the village to see

people. I'm the only one left living in the dorms, but Jackson, Rubben's cousin, comes to see me every evening at dinner to play with my phone and eat my leftovers. We have been playing checkers, cards, making up games, and listening to my music player. Now that my lessons are over, I am just furiously trying to process everything and think of questions that haven't been answered before I leave for good. I do not want to go back to spend three days in Accra. My homestay is off the main roads and during my first visit it was too quiet. I won't hear music being played, and life won't be as simple. I am ready to go home though, and watch my videos, play with the music, and start working on how to introduce it to a younger crowd. Have I gathered enough to accurately portray life and music in this lovely place and will my students see the wonder and value of this experience through what I have gathered? I hope so.

I head off to finish my interviews of villagers and teachers. I must look strange walking around with my camera and tripod in one hand, and a stack of papers in the other. Some villagers are curious about what I'm doing. I can tell by just looking that some have no desire to be a part of it. Mensah and I wander the village, asking people if they would like to talk and trying not to interrupt chores and cooking for dinner. This last day was the most helpful to see how people here view music because it's hard for musical people to imagine life without music. The responses I received told me that most everyone enjoys some kind of music, and their reasons are varied. The teenager says it makes him feel cool, the seamstress likes music, but considers her job to be a better use of her time, the teacher at the school enjoys sharing his musical ability with his students, and all of these personalities are part of my studies here. Creating

a program with what I have learned will not be difficult, if I remember who I am teaching and can figure out why they like music. I didn't cry when I left, but I was very sad to leave Mensah at the center because I know what a great teacher he is and I want to take him with me so he can continue to teach me and also my future students. I decide to take his tricks and tips, his strategies and love for teaching, and his spirit with me so the legacy of Dagbe can travel to a new place and be enjoyed by a new generation.

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APPENDIX A: IRB PERMISSIONS

Application for Exemption from Institutional Oversight

Unless qualified as meeting the specific criteria for exemption from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight, ALL LSU research/projects using living humans as subjects, or samples or data obtained from humans, directly or indirectly, with or without their consent, must be approved or exempted in advance by the LSU IRB. This Form helps the PI determine if a project may be exempted, and is used to request an exemption.



Institutional Review Board
 Dr. Robert Mathews, Chair
 203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
 Baton Rouge, LA 70803
 P: 225.578.8692
 F: 225.578.6792
 irb@lsu.edu | lsu.edu/irb

- Applicant, Please fill out the application in its entirety and include the completed application as well as parts A-E, listed below, when submitting to the IRB. Once the application is completed, please submit two copies of the completed application to the IRB Office or to a member of the Human Subjects Screening Committee. Members of this committee can be found at <http://www.lsu.edu/irb/screeningmembers.shtml>
- A Complete Application Includes All of the Following:
 - (A) Two copies of this completed form and two copies of parts B thru E.
 - (B) A brief project description (adequate to evaluate risks to subjects and to explain your responses to Parts 1 & 2)
 - (C) Copies of all instruments to be used.
 - If this proposal is part of a grant proposal, include a copy of the proposal and all recruitment material.
 - (D) The consent form that you will use in the study (see part 3 for more information.)
 - (E) Certificate of Completion of Human Subjects Protection Training for all personnel involved in the project, including students who are involved with testing or handling data, unless already on file with the IRB.
 Training link: (<http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php>)

1) Principal Investigator: Sara Rachel McCall Rank: Graduate Student

Dept.: Music Education Ph: 817-271-9464 E-mail: smccal4@lsu.edu

2) Co Investigator(s): please include department, rank, phone and e-mail for each

* If student, please identify and name supervising professor in this space

Dr. Jane Cassidy, Professor and Chair of Music Education and Associate Dean of the CMDA; 225-578-3258; jcassid@lsu.edu and Ms. Sarah Bartolome, Assistant Professor of Music Education; 225-578-2481; sbartolome@lsu.edu

3) Project Title: A Case Study of music making in a Ghanaian village: Applications for elementary music teaching and learning

4) LSU Proposal?(yes or no) N If Yes, LSU Proposal Number _____

- Also, if YES, either This application completely matches the scope of work in the grant OR More IRB Applications will be filed later

5) Subject pool (e.g. Psychology Students) Teachers/Students/Residents, Kopeyia

• Circle any "vulnerable populations" to be used: (children <18; the mentally impaired, pregnant women, the aged, other). Projects with incarcerated persons cannot be exempted.

6) PI Signature Sara McCall ** Date 11-30-09 (no per signatures)

**I certify my responses are accurate and complete. If the project scope or design is later changed I will resubmit for review. I will obtain written approval from the Authorized Representative of all non-LSU institutions in which the study is conducted. I also understand that it is my responsibility to maintain copies of all consent forms at LSU for three years after completion of the study. If I leave LSU before that time the consent forms should be preserved in the Departmental Office.

Student? Y/N Y
 Institutional Review Board
 Louisiana State University
 203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
 Baton Rouge, LA 70803
 225-578-8692 | www.lsu.edu/irb
 Exemption Expires: 11-30-09
 Study Exempted By:
 Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman

IRB# E4872 LSU Proposal# _____
 Complete Application
 Human Subjects Training

Screening Committee Action: Exempted Not Exempted _____ Category/Paragraph _____

Reviewer S. Kim MacGregor Signature S. Kim MacGregor Date 12/1/09

Part D – Consent and Assent Forms

Figure 4.

Consent Form

1. **Study Title:** A case study of music making in a Ghanaian village: Applications for elementary music teaching and learning.
2. **Performance Site:** Dagbe Cultural Institute, Kopeyia, Ghana, West Africa
3. **Investigators:** Sara McCall 817-271-9464
4. **Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this case study is to perform an ethnographic case study at the Dagbe Cultural Institute in Kopeyia, Ghana, West Africa. Applications to formal and informal teaching and learning practices displayed within this culture will be made to elementary school music education as a means of fostering and strengthening cross-cultural learning.
5. **Subject Inclusion:** Individuals between the ages of 18 and 65 who do not report psychological or neurological conditions. Children under the age of 18 will be interviewed with consent.
6. **Number of subjects:** Unknown
7. **Study Procedures:** Participant observation and interviews of participants and villagers. Gathering of material culture will be conducted.
8. **Benefits:** There are no benefits to participants in this study, however, understanding of the musical culture of the Dagbe Cultural Center in Kopeyia, Ghana, West Africa will provide the music education community with greater insight into teaching and learning in world music.
9. **Risks:** There are no known risks to participants of this study.
10. **Right to Refuse:** Participants have the right to refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or forfeit of benefits.
11. **Privacy:** Results of the study may be published, but no names of identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law.
12. **Signatures:** The study has been discussed with me and all my

Part D – Consent and Assent Forms

questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Robert C. Mathews, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Signature of Subject

Date

Study Exempted By:
Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman
Institutional Review Board
Louisiana State University
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
225-578-8692 | www.lsu.edu/irb
Exemption Expires: 11-30-2012

Part D – Consent and Assent Forms

Figure 5.

Verbal Assent Form

I hereby attest that I have agreed to be interviewed and that my comments and views will be used to describe music making in the village of Kopeyia, Ghana, West Africa and at the Dagbe Cultural Institute.

Signature of Subject

Date

Study Exempted By:
Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman
Institutional Review Board
Louisiana State University
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
225-578-8692 | www.lsu.edu/irb
Exemption Expires: 11-30-2012

Part D – Consent and Assent Forms

Figure 6.

Parental Consent Form for Residents under 18

I give permission for my minor child to participate in interviews and that their comments and views will be used to describe music making in the village of Kopeyia, Ghana, West Africa and at the Dagbe Cultural Institute.

Parent Signature

Date

Child's Name

Date

Study Exempted By:
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APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for Teachers

1. What do you play?
2. How long have you played?
3. Who taught you?
4. How do you learn to play?
5. Who is allowed to take lessons on your instrument?
6. What is your favorite part of music in the village?
7. What is your job?
8. How do you teach someone music?
9. What are the challenges of teaching foreign-born students?

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for Students

1. Do you play an instrument in your home country?
2. How long have you played?
3. Who taught you?
4. Were there any challenges adapting to the teaching system here?
5. Describe the similarities and differences in the teaching system here and in your home country.
6. What other music experiences have you had in the village?

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for Villagers

1. Are you a musician?
2. Do you know how to play an instrument?
3. Who taught you?
4. How did you learn to play?
5. Do you sing, dance, or participate in music in other ways?
6. When do you do music?

APPENDIX C: LIST OF FOREIGN TERMS

Name	Pronunciation	Description
Accra	ah-CRAH	The capitol city of the country of Ghana, three hours to the west from the village of Kopeyia.
Adejo	ah-DEH-jo	A stick of wood and horsehair used in dances. It is said that they are a way to communicate with ancestors.
Adzida	ah-GEE-dah	Thin sticks of wood, whittled smooth, used to play some of the drums.
Akbadza	ak-bah-jha	A social dance of the Ewe, with distinct arm and shoulder movements, resembling chickens flapping wings and walking.
Atimevu	ah-TEEMEH-whoa	A drum with an open bottom and a six-inch drum head. This drum is skinny and five feet tall and is played with the same stand as the Boba.
Atsiagbekor	ah-chag-BEH-ko	A war dance that was created to tell the story of warriors preparing and going into battle. Today it is used to inspire soldiers going into battle, and for performances.
Axatse	ah-HA-chay	A gourd shaker instrument with small shells strung around the outside.
Bambaya	bahm-BYE-yah	A partner dance from Northern Ghana that resembles a belly dance.
Batik	ba-TEEK	A method of designing cloth by using wax to imprint designs, then dyeing the cloth to show the designs.
Betchie	BE-chee	Thick sticks of wood, whittled smooth, used to play some of the drums.
Boba	bo-BAH	The 'master drum'. It has an open bottom, is played on a stand that leans it at a 45 degree angle, and has a 15 inch drum head.
Borborbor	bo-BO-bo	A type of music, invented in Ho, that takes church songs and gives them new words to encourage and strengthen the hearts of those listening.

Brekete	BREH-ke-tay	A social dance of the Ewe, seen during a divination ceremony, where the dancer comes under the spirit of the talking drum.
Ewe	EH-way	A tribal group with roots in the Volta Region and east into Togo and Benin.
Gahu	GAH-hoo	A social dance, also called the "money dance."
Gatingo	gah-TEEN-go	A double bell made of iron. Alternate names: bell, gatbavi (the mother carries the baby.)
Ho	HOH	The capital city of the Volta Region, one hour north of Kopeyia.
Kagoun	kah-GAH-ng	A drum with an open bottom and a six-inch drum head that is played with two adzida.
Kente	KEN-tay	A weaving of thread to create intricate designs. The strips of weaving are then sewn together into cloth.
Kidi	KEE-dee	A drum with a closed bottom and a ten-inch drum head that is played with betchie.
Kinka	KEEN-kah	A society in Kopeyia that comes together every two weeks for meetings, singing, drumming, and dancing. They are also present at funerals and festivals around the village. Members are invited to join and inducted into the society through a ceremony.
Kokosawa	ko-ko-SAW-wah	The slow form of Gahu, that travelled from Nigeria, to Benin, into Togo, and finally to Ghana.
Kopeyia	ko-peh-EE-yah	A village of 1,000 inhabitants, less than three miles from the ocean and the Togo border.
Sogo	SO-go	A drum with a closed bottom and a twelve-inch drum head that is played with betchie.
Talking drum		A two-headed drum with strings stretching the body from one head to the other. It is held under the arm to allow the player to squeeze the strings, changing the drumhead pitch, and played with an adzida. Used during divination ceremony for Brekete.

Togo Atsia	Toe-go ah-CHA	A social dance with one or more dancers who use Adejo in the dance.
Tokoe	TOE-kway	A social dance of the Ewe, with similarities to Gahu.
Wuptosi	vo-HO-chi	Thick sticks of wood, whittled smooth, used to play the Boba.

**APPENDIX D: LIST OF NAMES WITH FUNCTION AT THE
CENTER AND IN THE VILLAGE**
The Founder and his Family

Name	Relation	Job at Dagbe	Job outside Dagbe
Emmanuel Agbeli	Son of Godwin. Younger brother of Rubben, older brother of Nani, Felix, Fafali, and Elike. Cousin of Mensah.	Director of the center.	Farming.
Felix Agbeli	Son of Godwin. Father of Wisdom and Atsu A.	Kente weaving main instructor. Ensemble player for lessons and performances.	Kente weaver and farmer.
Godwin Agbeli	Father of Rubben, Emmanuel, Nani, Felix, Fafali, and Elike. Godfather of Mary.	Founder of the center.	Godwin passed away in March of 1998.
Nani Agbeli	Son of Godwin. Younger brother of Rubben, Emmanuel, and Felix. Older brother of Fafali and Elike. Cousin of Mensah.	None. Teaches when he is visiting from the U.S.	Cultural ambassador.
Rubben Agbeli	Son of Godwin. Older brother of Emmanuel, Nani, Felix, Fafali, and Elike. Father of Enoch. Cousin of Mensah.	Supervisor of lessons and students.	House electrician, and general electronics repair.
Wisdom Agbeli	Felix's son.	Assists with drumming and dancing lessons. Gives private lessons in drumming.	Student at Senior High School.

Teachers and Ensemble Players

Name	Relation	Job at Dagbe	Job outside Dagbe
Apopo	Unknown.	Teacher of small groups on more difficult music lessons.	Unknown.
Chango	Moved to the village from Togo in 2009.	Ensemble player for lessons and performances.	Painter.
George	Lived in the village his whole life.	Assistant dance instructor. Also teaches drumming.	Farming. Maize, cassava, groundnut, and peanuts.
Kobbi	No relation in the village, recruited by Godwin from Accra.	Woodworking instructor. Jewelry designer.	Woodworker and sells crafts, jewelry, puppets, drums, and other instruments.
Kofi	Unknown.	Ensemble player for lessons and performances.	Unknown.
Mary	Godwin's goddaughter. Odartey's wife.	Ensemble player for lessons and performances.	Was a hairdresser. Now a homemaker.
Mensah	Rubben's cousin.	Batik and tie and dye teacher. Song instructor. Ensemble player for lessons and performances. Gives private lessons in drumming.	Kindergarten teacher at Kopeyia Bloomfield School. Sells cell phone credits.
Odartey	Rose's son. Mary's husband.	Head dance instructor. Also teaches drumming.	House painter. Clothing seller.
Paul	Lived in the village his whole life.	Small group warm-up instructor and ensemble player.	Handyman, construction and carpentry.
Pee	Unknown.	Large group warm-up instructor and dancer for performances.	Carpenter, makes furniture, and fixes locks in doors.

Villagers of Kopeyia

Name	Relation	Job at Dagbe	Job outside Dagbe
Atsu G.	Family to George.	None.	Student.
Elike	Brother of Rubben. Currently in his care.	None.	Student.
Enoch	Son of Rubben.	None.	Student.
Fafali	Sister of Rubben. Currently in his care.	None.	Student.
Frances	Unknown.	None.	Student.
Jackson	Afi's son. Rubben's cousin.	None.	Student.
Mr. Agbadormeti	Unknown.	None.	Teacher at Kopeyia Bloomfield School.
Rose	Odartey's mother.	Cook for the students at the center.	Unknown.
Ruby	Unknown.	None.	Seamstress. Works with Emmanuel's wife.

Visiting American Students

Name	Relation	Job at Dagbe	Job outside Dagbe
Alden	None.	Student from U.S.	College student.
Ava	None.	Student from U.S.	College student.
Donna	None.	Student from U.S.	College student.
Karen	None.	Student from U.S.	College student.
Steve	None.	Student from U.S.	College student.
Tony	None.	Student from U.S.	College student.

VITA

Sara Rachel McCall was born in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1980. After spending most of her childhood and adolescence involved in music activities at school and church, she attended Louisiana State University, where she received her Bachelor of Music Education degree in 2003. She returned to the Dallas, Texas, area and taught kindergarten through sixth grade music for five years before returning to Louisiana State University to pursue a Master of Music degree. While studying at LSU in 2009, she decided to visit Africa and conduct fieldwork on music teaching and learning. Her trip to Kopeyia, Ghana, West Africa, in the winter of 2009 is the basis of this thesis.