How do Early Childhood Educators' Preprofessional Music Experiences Shape their Practices with
Young Children: An Interpretive Phenomenology Study
by

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the School of Child and Youth Care

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University of Victoria

We acknowledge and respect the ləkʷəŋən peoples on whose traditional territory the university
stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt, and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with
the land continue this day.

Supervisor Committee

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Abstract

Music activities and free musical play have significant developmental, social, and emotional benefits for young children. Early childhood educators can play an important role in integrating music-related activities into children's everyday lives. This study explored the music experiences of early childhood educators in British Columbia (BC) before they become educators. Using an interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA), this study sought to address the following research question: *How do early childhood educators' pre-professional music learning and pedagogical experiences influence their use of music in their practices with young children in formalized childcare settings?*

In this exploratory study, I conducted semi-structured and in-depth interviews with six early childhood educators who had studied early childhood education (ECE) in BC, worked in the Greater Victoria area, and had music-related experiences before and during their post-secondary studies. I identified the following three main themes in the data: (a) *Sense of Belonging*; (b) *Repeating and Performing*, and (c) *Growing by Doing*. These themes highlight further subthemes to present insights into the relationship between early childhood educator participants' music experiences (before becoming early childhood educators) and their views on and use of music with children in their ECE practice. The findings and their implications based on participants' shared stories can assist ECE post-secondary programs, BC educational policymakers, as well as future researchers in this area to address and support early childhood educators' music-related professional experiences.

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Acknowledgments

This work would not be possible without the contributions of six amazing people, my participants, who, in the middle of the pandemic, were willing to find the time and energy to share their stories. I am grateful for the openness and enthusiasm that they showed about children, family, community, and music.

I am also grateful to the University of Victoria's School of Child and Youth Care program, especially for Dr. Sibylle Artz undertaking this journey, and for giving me countless emotional and academic assistance to write the first three chapters of my paper. My gratitude is likewise extended to Dr. Enid Eliot for her motivation and gentle guidance on how to find true colors in the profession of Early Childhood Education. Finally, my appreciation must be expressed to my dear professor, Dr. Alison Gerlach for all her mindful questions, immediate feedback, inspiration, and belief in me, which bolstered my faith in myself throughout this journey. I also want to say many thanks to UVic's Centre for Academic Communication, particularly to Emily, Nancy, and Madeline for all their assistance to learn how to express my thoughts in Academic English.

Finally, I want to thank my family, my parents, who live in Hungary and gave me our beautiful culture, songs, and passion for music and dance. For my kids, Anna and Botond, thank you for your laughter, hugs, patience, and belief in me. Lastly, special thanks to all of my friends in Hungary, who praised and reminded me where I came from, and my friends in Canada, who encouraged me to dream big and go for it.

Chapter One: Introduction

Musical play provides opportunities for young children to explore, express, construct knowledge, and deepen their relationships with their surrounding environment. Alongside the positive cognitive and academic effects of music in the early years that research has tended to focus on in previous decades (Register, 2001), more current research highlights the benefits of spontaneous, culturally, and socially sensitive, multidimensional interactions in early childhood music education (Garvis, 2012; Hanna, 2014; Ilari, 2016; McArdle, 2012; Young, 2016). Music and movements make available different ways of learning through improvisations, dance, song writing imaginative stories, sounds, and other creative musical expressions in their cultural and relational contexts (Copper, 2011; Kokas, 1992; Lines et al., 2014). When children come into the world, they are wired to accept, and relish sounds and rhythms around them; music helps enhance those natural abilities (Custodero, 2002).

Over the past two decades, there has been a shift in scholarly literature from addressing the importance of music education in elementary school-aged children, to the first five years of childhood, commonly understood as the "early years" (Harris, 2009; Young, 2016). The basis for this expanded focus has been to highlight the diverse effects and opportunities of introducing music at an early age. In keeping with this research, the National Association for Music Education in the United States (NafME) (2021), one of the world's largest arts education organizations, stresses the following: "from before birth throughout early childhood (i.e., through 8 years old), all children are primed for diverse forms of music engagement and music learning" (NAfME, 2021, para 1). The NAfME (2021) draws attention to the fact that young children need to have access to a wide variety of structured or improvised musical play experiences that involve them in various types of learning opportunities. NAfME (2021) also confirms that early

learning and childcare settings are ideal places to build musical foundations for young children and emphasizes the importance of supporting early childhood practitioners with music-specific education.

Thus, given that childcare programs can be the first institutional setting for many children, early childhood educators can play an important role in integrating music-related ideas into children's everyday lives. However, as I discuss in my literature search, I found that very few studies on early childhood educators' music experiences have been conducted in Canada and none of them have been conducted in BC. The extant scholarship is quite limited and is performed mostly by Australian, American, and European researchers who focus on understanding early childhood educators' music experiences and their influences in practice. This literature highlights that early childhood educators generally have positive beliefs about music and the value of using music in practice (Abril & Gault, 2005; Barrett et al., 2018, 2019; Berke & Colwell, 2004; Hagen, 2002). However, educators' reports also reveal that they feel a lack of preparedness and have low confidence in their role as music teachers (Hallam et al, 2009; Hennessy, 2000; Lenzo, 2014; McCullough, 2006; Seldon & Biasutti, 2008; Stakelum, 2008; Stunnel, 2010).

As a music therapist, child and youth care (CYC) practitioner, and a mom of two young children, many questions arose for me about early childhood educators' understandings of music and about their preparation for incorporating music into their work in BC. My questioning included the following: How is music present in young children's lives in their childcare settings in BC? What kind of early music experiences do early childhood educators in BC have in general? What kind of music-related courses and training do early childhood educators have during their studies in BC? How do these studies form early childhood educators' values and

beliefs about music in their practice? What are early childhood educators' challenges as they implement music in children's lives? In designing this study and reflecting on the above questions, I formulated a central research question: *How do early childhood educators' pre-professional music learning and pedagogical experiences influence their use of music in their practices with young children in formalized childcare settings?*

To address this question, I used a qualitative research design, drawing on an interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA) which provides a theoretically open, exploratory approach to understanding the in-depth experiences of a small group of people. IPA not only implies a very close reading of the data line by line, but also searching behind the lines for important details in how participants share their experiences (Turner, 2017). I conducted semi-structured interviews with six early childhood educators who studied early childhood education (ECE) in BC, work in the Greater Victoria area, and had music-related experiences before and during their post-secondary studies. The findings present insightful understandings of the relationship between early childhood educator participants' music experiences (before becoming early childhood educators) and their views on and use of music with children in their ECE practice.

My Personal Relationship with Songs and Music

Music, folk songs, and dance are profound cultural expressions for Hungarians. Songs are our history, our way to connect to our ancestors, our land, and our community. My music experience started with my birth in Hungary. I learned my first songs from my mother's breast milk, and my mom learned from her mother, and so on. This unique emotional chain was continued when I became a mom and sang our songs to my children from the time of their conception.

My daughter Anna was born in 2006. She decided to be born six weeks earlier than she was supposed to arrive. She was a beautiful but very tiny baby, so she spent her first ten days in an incubator separated from everyone, even from me. I was not allowed to hold her, touch her, or take her out of the incubator. So, I sat next to her incubator and sang our songs to her, every day, for long hours, I sang the same songs my mom sang to comfort me. After her birth, when Anna heard my voice, she became excited and started to slowly move her tiny hands and feet in the incubator, sometimes even smiling under the tubes that stuck out of her everywhere. I knew she heard me. She knew that she was not alone: her mom was there with her.

Fourteen years later I separated from Anna's dad. His reaction was to speak negatively about me which alienated Anna from me. Anna's confusion and anger against me lead her to leave my home and kept my daughter isolated from me for sixteen long months. After sixteen months with no response to any of my emails or messages one day Anna responded with a short message and a few days later she said yes to an invitation to meet with me.

A couple of weeks later Anna stayed at my house overnight. Anna was lying in her bed, and I just watched her, admired her face, discovered all her features, and tried to believe that it was not a dream: she was here again with me. I gently lay down next to her, the same way that I did years and years before, and I started to sing. I sang our songs, the songs that my grandma sang to my mom and my mom sang to me, the songs I sang to Anna when she was in my womb, when she lay in her incubator, and when we played LEGO on the floor, walked home from school, or drove long hours on the highway to visit grandma and grandpa. That night, after 16 months I was lying next to my daughter again and there were no words to tell her how I felt. No words, but songs only. Songs to express, remember and reconnect.

My cultural and personal connection with songs and music led me to build and run my music kindergarten in Hungary for more than 15 years working with 200 children, ages 2-8 every week. Through those music experiences, my purpose was to introduce singing to young children's lives, let the children discover and play with songs and movements and connect to each other, their culture, and the world around them in this unique way: through their music-cultural heritage.

The music method I used with children was called the Kodaly method, which was adapted by Zoltan Kodaly, a Hungarian composer, music educator, and philosopher. Kodaly stated that music learning should begin "nine months before the birth of the mother" (Neumann, 2006, p. 2). The Kodaly method is used globally, as an approach to introducing singing to very young children. In this method, singing is understood as a great opportunity to use music naturally, similar to how people use their mother language to express, connect with, and live life. Kodaly also believed in the daily practice of music in the school systems, and once stated that, "Often a single musical experience in childhood is enough to awaken a lifelong appreciation. But the provision of such experience must not be left to chance - it is a matter for the school" (1974, p. 120).

Kodaly's philosophy highlights the "sound before sights" concept, which means that children need concrete experience of "doing" – that is, singing, dancing, playing music activities, and enjoying music directly in authentic music situations using their own folk songs if possible. Later in children's lives, the same songs and music games are used to "make music conscious" by naming the music elements in children's songs that they already know and can sing with comfort in a familiar context and environment. These experiences in an active learning environment continuously build music skills and confidence for children to sing songs and create

music in their kindergarten and school settings as well as enjoy music and singing later in their

lives (Neumann, 2006).

Music education within the BC Early Learning Framework (BC ELF)

In BC, the use of pedagogical narration in ECE practice is reinforced through the

provincial Early Learning Framework (BC ELF) (2019). The BC ELF (2019) mentions songs,

rhythms, or sounds in connection with other pathways to engage with children but does not

discuss *how* early childhood educators can use music and sounds in their practice. The BC ELF

(2019) states that it "does not prescribe specific 'how-to' of practice or suggest a 'right way' to

work with children and families. Rather, the framework is intended to inspire pedagogical

approaches that are relevant and respectful of local communities and the people who live in those

communities" (p.6). I, therefore, question how early childhood educators can learn about those

approaches on a deeper level where they may gain musical knowledge, skills, and confidence to

engage with children through music and to "encourage children to explore their sense of rhythm

and melody" as it suggested in the BC ELF (2019, p. 83). The absence of answers to these

questions raises the need for a more in-depth understanding of how the kinds of music

experiences early childhood educators have can influence them to use or not use music in their

practice and raises questions about how music is included (or not) both in the training of early

childhood educators and in the everyday routines of childcare settings the Greater Victoria area.

The next chapter provides a review of the literature on challenges related to early

childhood educators' music experiences and the influence of these experiences on their practice.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology of this study and outlines the interpretive

phenomenological approach that informed my research, the steps that I took regarding

participant recruitment, and the methods of data collection and analysis that I employed. Chapter

Four explores the findings of my research, and finally, Chapter Five discusses how the results of this study may inform of early childhood educators post-secondary music pedagogy.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

For my literature search, I used the following keywords and their combinations: early childhood educator, pre-service teacher, music, experience, motivation, childhood, school, training, post-secondary education, and employed the University of Victoria's physical and digital library and ERIC, Google Scholar, and JSTOR databases. In my initial search, I located articles, research studies, theses, and reports about early childhood educators' and pre-service teachers' music experiences, reflective practices, and challenges in using music in early childhood education. For this study, I selected articles that specifically referred to the following criteria: ECEs' music experiences before becoming educators, early childhood educators' beliefs and values about music, integration of music in ECE post-secondary courses, integration of music in childcare settings' curriculum, and music in early childhood educators' practice. After I selected materials as sources for my review I printed them, read them carefully, and coloured them with different colours of highlighters to find patterns in topics that emerged in the materials.

In this chapter, I first introduce a brief historical background of music philosophy in the 20th century that formed North American music education. Then, I provide a context for music in the early years in BC where this study took place by further examining the previously mentioned BC ELF and its practice called pedagogical narration offered for early childhood educators in BC. Then, I introduce and analyze the four main topic areas that I identified in the literature: 1) early childhood educators' beliefs and values about the use of music in early childhood settings; 2) early childhood educators' personal and professional music experiences; 3) early childhood educators' conflicted feelings and lack of confidence in their roles as a music teacher; 4) early childhood educators' post-secondary music-related training and field experiences. Finally, this

chapter describes what kinds of music courses, field experiences, or training early childhood educators had during and after their post-secondary studies.

Music Philosophy

In the second half of the 20th century changes in music education were influenced by two mainstream music philosophical directions: aesthetic education and praxial philosophy. In the 1950s, aesthetic education emerged from a need for a more academically acceptable and respectable role of music in education curricula. This introduction of aesthetics into music education formed a common understanding of music as one of the art forms to develop children's sensitivity of aesthetic qualities in their lives and recognize the beauty in things around them (McCarthy & Goble, 2002). The idea of aesthetic education helped to establish a conceptual framework of music education and empowered music educators to advocate for their profession, and its meanings and values in children's education and development (McCarthy & Goble, 2002).

Simultaneous with a mainstream aesthetic education, other alternative philosophies of music education started to arise, highlighting music more from a social and cultural aspect. These alternative approaches led to the emergence of praxial philosophy based on Aristotle's notion of praxis (Goble, 2003). Praxial philosophy contrasts with the focus in aesthetic in music education by highlighting the importance of active music practice and emphasizing the social and cultural influences of, and humanity in, music activities (McCarthy & Goble, 2002).

Music in the Early Years in the Context of BC

ECE BC Certification

Educators who work in BC childcare settings are required to be certified by the BC government's ECE Registry. All certified educators are required to complete a basic ECE

diploma program and meet the requirements and skills highlighted in the ECE Standards of Practice in BC. The ECE accredited training programs provide the knowledge and skills needed to work with newborns through to children eight years of age and integrate theoretical materials with practicum experience (Capilano University, 2018).

The BC Early Learning Framework (BC ELF)

As the Government of BC website for the revised BC ELF (2019) describes, the BC ELF is the result of a collaborative process that included early childhood educators, primary teachers, academics, Indigenous Elders, Indigenous organizations, government, and other professionals in BC, who worked together to develop the guidelines that this document contains. The BC ELF (2019) principles underline children's unique capabilities and potential to discover the world, build connections and grow in their own ways within a complex interdependence with their environment (https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/teach/early-learning-framework).

The framework emphasizes principles, visions, and practice in socially, politically, and culturally relevant contexts, and requires early childhood educators to critically reflect on assumptions embedded in dominant child developmental theories and universal ways of thinking about children. The framework aims to open new conversations about the complexity of childhood care, continuing growth of children's knowledge, the meaning of education, the importance of collaborative dialogues, reconciliation, cultural reflectivity, and the interconnections of these ideas in the materials and approaches which educators use in working with children (BC ELF, 2019). The framework also introduces a pedagogical practice called pedagogical narration, which is described as a respectful and relevant approach for local communities, children, educators, and families living in BC to learn about children through documenting their experiences and making children's learning visible (Atkinson, 2012).

Pedagogical narration

As described in the BC ELF (2019), pedagogical narration is a process that supports educators to notice and record children's naturalistic, ordinary, everyday moments as part of their daily engagement with the children. In recording these moments, educators are focused on intently listening to what children are saying, not only with words but with their facial expressions, body language, and gestures, and in doing this are paying attention to the strategies for learning and meaning-making employed by children in everyday life. Having captured such moments, early childhood educators share these experiences with colleagues, children, and families "to make children's learning processes and inquiries as well as educators' pedagogical choices visible and open to further interpretation and reflection" (BC ELF, 2019, p. 51). The underlying assumption that informs this practice is that through careful observation and critical reflection, educators will come to think of the children they work with as being capable, competent, complex explorers and interpreters of their words.

Atkinson (2012) explains that "if we observe children carefully and intentionally, we can begin to ask different kinds of questions about what we see" (p. 4). For example, when a child plays with a ball alone, educators may ask: What does the child intend to discover? How does this experience influence their present skills? Once the moment is recorded, further reflections, thoughts, or questions are born, such as: How does the ball as a medium form the child's thoughts or beliefs in them? What is the meaning of this experience for the child? How could the child or others who know the child think about this experience? What theories are they developing? After the educator's reflection, pedagogical narrations must be shared and discussed with others. This allows educators to recognize different interpretations, helps them to explore connections and social relationships, and leads to new ways of seeing to further reflect on

strategies and theories that children develop (Atkinson, 2012). In staying with their experience of observing the child who is playing ball alone, this educator may see the child as lonely. However, the mom might believe that this is a meaningful play opportunity for her child to feel comfortable with being alone and being focused. Or another educator may observe eye contact between the child and another one who is close to the ball and the situation and therefore could see the child as engaging in non-verbal communication with the other child to whom an invitation to play is being offered. These collaborations and conversations between those who share in the child's lifeworld enlarge single viewpoints, deepen understandings, and open up new questions and inspirations that can extend the construction of knowledge (Atkinson, 2012; Berger, 2015).

These pedagogical narration practices have been adapted from pedagogical tools such as pedagogical documentation, which originated in the Italian Reggio Emilia approach (Broderick & Hong, 2011; Rinaldi, 2006), and the Learning Stories approach embedded in early childhood settings in New Zealand (Carr, 2001). The Reggio Emilia approach highlights the fact that children have extraordinary creativity, strength, and inborn endowments to discover their world and communicate their experiences through speech and symbolic representations. The Learning Stories approach is based on the idea that children are the protagonists in their own learning journey. This approach also encourages the recording and interpreting of children's emerging narratives, because in doing this the learning processes become visible and more understandable for educators and others close to the children (Nyland & Acker, 2012). The educators' role in all this is to encourage, support, and to document the learning processes of the children (Malaguzzi, 1998; New, 2007).

These innovative pedagogical practices challenge the dominant and universalized Euro-Western theoretical models about childcare and child development that inform ECE and care. The dominant models include curricula with predetermined, universal developmental or educational outcomes that shape educators' approaches to structuring what and how children learn (BC ELF, 2019; Burman, 2017; Carr, 2001; Rinaldi, 2006). One example of a universal approach embedded in ECE in North America and many other countries is developmentally appropriate practice (DAP), which constitutes "definitions of quality, and theories of child development that assume universal laws and norms" (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2015, p. 145). DAP mainly follows Piaget's ages and stages of cognitive-developmental theory that is based on Eurocentric scientific and cultural norms and values that still have a stronghold in child development and care (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al, 2015). Although DAP has changed throughout the past decades and now focuses more on child-centeredness, researchers still believe that DAP is embedded in developmentalism and normalization of universal life stages that limit difference and diversity in ECE (Brown & Lan, 2015; Duhn & Henessy, 2019; Vintimilla & Pachini-Ketchabaw, 2020). As Duhn and Henessy (2019) state,

> When developmental theory is considered the most relevant body of knowledge in the field, complex and diverse perspectives of families and children are in danger of being marginalized or misunderstood. In this way, developmental theories regulate and govern children, families, teachers, and educational systems by establishing sets of normative scales that are assumed to be fixed scientific truths. These norms prescribe development and learning along a set linear evolutionary path. (p 3).

In contrast to developmentalism, critical and collaborative approaches such as pedagogical narration acknowledge the different social, cultural, and political contexts of children and families (Duhn & Henessy, 2019).

Pedagogical narration emphasizes diverse ways of being and knowing and accepting children as the experts in their own learning process. In using this approach, educators become focused on seeing what children already know and what they want to know (Atkinson, 2012). Thus, educators are not transmitters but co-constructors of new knowledge. In other words, pedagogical narration shifts the educator's role from knowledge dispenser to that of a collaborator and researcher who is continually listening, observing, and being open to children's unexpected discoveries, values, and meaning-making processes (Atkinson, 2012; BC ELF, 2019; Pacini-Ketchabaw et al, 2015). Within the BC ELF, pedagogical narration offers ways of thinking, doing, and learning using terms such as "living inquires" and "pathways" that shift away from thinking about learning areas or predictable outcomes and focus on the interconnectedness of educators, children, materials, and ideas. In the next section, the manifestation of music-related pathways and inquiries that are found in the BC ELF (2019) is described.

Music, Songs, and Sounds in the BC ELF

In the BC ELF (2019), musical expression and songs are mentioned as expressive language in relation to literacy and communication, culture, tradition, family, knowledge-making, vocabulary, symbols, sound, and wordplay. The BC ELF (2019) emphasizes the importance of the right of the child to "participate freely in cultural life and the arts" (p. 37). It also highlights that one of the goals of critical reflection in ECE practice is to have a "better understanding of the various cultural, social, material, and historical forces that shape our sense

of self" (p. 49). However, the idea of musical play is introduced only a few times in the BC ELF (2019). Songs, rhythms, or sounds are mentioned in relation to discovering and understanding different cultures, science, or mathematics as pedagogical areas to engage with children,

The framework does not offer concrete examples for educators about how they can use music in their work. Rather, it suggests pathways and asks reflective questions about music to inspire educators to "encourage children to explore different ways of expressing a single idea" (p. 83); for example, "What is a joyful sound?" (p. 83). Other music-related questions are suggested to "encourage children to explore their sense of rhythm and melody (e.g., through listening, singing, and dancing in a variety of musical styles)" (p. 83). What the framework does not offer is guidance regarding the kinds of approaches and skills ECE practitioners need to help engage, share, or expand children's musical play and exploration. Nor does it speak to how early childhood educators feel about recreating children's musical initiation as knowledge or to how early childhood educators can prepare to engage and form a deeper sense of music and art as a social practice.

The absence of music implementation and documentation in alternative practices such as the Reggio Emilia approach and the Learning Stories approach has been noted in multiple studies (Andress, 1998; Matthews, 2000; Nyland & Acker 2012; O'Hagin, 2007; Smith, 2011; Vuckovic & Nyland, 2010; Yanko 2015). These studies point out that even though music is mentioned in Reggio Emilia's approach as one of the hundred languages that children use to express themselves and connect with others, or as a means for augmenting curricular themes such as literacy or language improvement (Andang'o 2012; Bond 2015) it is difficult to find information within the Reggio approach that helps educators to use music models in their practice (Yanko, 2015). Westlake (2015) claims that Reggio Emilia-inspired educators have historically focused

on visual arts rather than music. As a result, Reggio-trained early childhood educators pay more attention to documenting children's visual learning and there is little emphasis on children's auditory learning. Bond (2015) also shows that although there are easy and affordable ways to document musical moments through transcriptions, audio, or video recordings of music created by children, storied approaches to early childhood educator are lacking in the documentation of music. As Bond (2015) notes,

> When I asked teachers to recall children's inquiries about music, they seemed to search mentally for documentation, trying to visualize wall panels of work or music products. Examples were difficult to uncover. Was this because they did not value their own music efforts enough to record them? (p. 475)

Bond (2015) points out that the absence of the documentation of musical moments in Reggio Emilia childcare programs and schools may result from educators' low confidence in musicality to recognize, describe, analyze, and expand children's spontaneous musical expressions, which is something that Nyland and Acker (2012) also mentioned. Bond also concludes that Reggio Emilia-inspired educators' low confidence may be rooted in their lack of musical understanding:

> Their view of the child as a capable being was clear; yet, how does one apply this belief to music without an understanding of what music capabilities children possess? Equipped with the knowledge of typical music development, teachers would be better prepared to identify music behaviors and facilitate children's construction of music knowledge. (p. 477)

Given these findings, the next part of this literature review further explores early childhood educators' beliefs about music in the early years, and their own capabilities as music educators in childcare settings. Following this, my literature review next explores early childhood educators'

personal music experiences and how these experiences influenced them in their role as music facilitators.

Early Childhood Educators' Beliefs and Values About the Use of Music in Early Childhood Settings

Beliefs are lenses or frameworks for interpretation and action based on individual experiences, but individual experiences emerge from and are dependent on the contexts in which the individuals who hold them live and work (Mills & Smith, 2003). According to the Merriam-Webster (n.d.) online dictionary, a belief is

> 1) a state or habit of mind in which trust, or confidence is placed in some person or thing
>
> 2) something that is accepted, considered to be true, or held as an opinion….and 3)
>
> conviction of the truth of some statement or the reality of some being or phenomenon,
>
> especially when based on examination of evidence belief in the validity of scientific
>
> statements. (n.d., Definition 1, 2, 3)

early childhood educators' personal beliefs are significantly related to their decision-making in their practices and daily interactions with children (Kim & Kemple, 2011; Pretti-Fonczak & Johnson, 2001).

Vartuli (2005), who investigated teacher beliefs and practice in early childhood education, stated that beliefs are "the heart of teaching" (p. 76) and showed that teachers' practice and actions are based on beliefs that are formed from their personal and educational experiences and values. An educator's belief system constitutes that person's individual understanding of the world, which can be very real for one person but can differ from another person's validation of what is true or valued (Pajares, 1992). For example, Kim and Kemple (2011) asked 65 pre-service teachers who were in a three-year-long ECE program in the United

States (US) about their music beliefs and found that even if some participants had positive background experiences related to music, they had different beliefs about the importance of music in young children's lives. Thus, among those interviewed by Kim and Kemple (2011), one early childhood educator with positive previous music experience had very strong beliefs about the importance of introducing music at an early age and the role of music as an educational tool, and another early childhood educator with the same positive personal music background reported that music is good as a background supplement for other activities, but never examined music as something of value that needed to be introduced to young children.

Some researchers suggest that post-secondary ECE students have beliefs about the roles and values of educators that are firmly entrenched in their previous personal or school experiences and as a result, tend to be resistant to change (Pajares, 1992). Other researchers have demonstrated that students can re-evaluate, change, or reform their belief systems through new experiences and exposure to different teaching practices and sociocultural contexts (Butler, 2001; Kelly-McHale, 2013). Mills and Smith (2003) stated that it is more important to pay attention to teachers' beliefs so that these can be shaped to help to strengthen ECE students in positive values and knowledge related to their work than it is to focus on teaching methodology and teaching strategies.

Overall, understanding educators' personal and professional beliefs matters. To build competent and confident educators through educator preparation and professional development programs, faculty members and leaders need to pay attention to be curious about and try to understand how personal beliefs are embedded in all aspects of early childhood educators' professional work. Understanding students' beliefs and offering a transformative journey for

ECE students early in ECE programs may optimize the impact of their studies and help form new ideas in educators' belief systems (Nelson & Guerra, 2014).

The extant research shows that early childhood educators have a variety of ideas about why music is an important tool when it comes to providing children with learning and developmental experiences. Much of that research shows that early childhood educators believe that music is a valuable tool that supports other subjects such as literacy and numeracy (Barrett et al., 2019, Nardo et al., 2006; Wiggins & Wiggins, 2008). However, research also shows that rather than using music as a means for augmenting academic skills, educators believe that music can be used to build social and emotional connections and develop self-esteem and confidence in young children (Bainger, 2010; Barrett et al., 2019; Hash, 2010; Kim & Kemple; 2011)

Bainger (2010) used a qualitative phenomenological approach to conduct a multiple case study with a small group of Australian research participants who were interviewed about their previous music experiences and current beliefs about the importance of using music with young children. Regarding music in childcare programs, participants in Bainger's study (2010) identified social development as the main benefit of music engagement and reported that they believed that musical play and the sharing and turn-taking involved in musical activities as the most beneficial approaches for building interdependent relationships and co-operation skills in the early years. These participants particularly noted a link between musical play and improving listening skills and building the ability for children to co-operate and comprehend each other.

In the previously mentioned study by Kim and Kemple (2011), 65 pre-service teachers in the US completed a Music Belief Questionnaire. The results showed that according to these teachers, where the benefits of music were concerned, social and emotional growth had the highest score followed by aesthetic and quality-of-life benefits. Kim and Kemple (2011) explain

that these results may beliefs about the importance of supporting social and emotional development rather than academic skill development in the early years in ECE programs. Similarly, in an Australian study, conducted by Barrett, Flynn, Brown, and Welch (2019), 88 Australian ECE participants completed the same Music Beliefs Questionnaire used by Kim and Kemple (2011). Barrett et al. (2019) found that their 88 participants also endorsed the connection between music engagement and social and emotional development noted in Kim and Kemple's (2011) study. For the participants in Barrett et al.'s (2019) study, music education appeared to be a unique medium for having fun and engaging in playfulness in childcare settings. These educators emphasized the importance of self-expression through fun and the importance of music in facilitating the social and creative inclusion of children and like those in the Kim and Kemple study (2011), these educators also focused on children's social-emotional dynamics and less on nurturing literacy and numeracy in the early years.

Early Childhood Educators' Personal and Professional Music Experiences

Anderson (2002) who investigated the role of music in Australian ECE programs showed that while early childhood educators validate music as a tool, their implementation of music activities in childcare settings depends on educators' previous school and life experiences with music and the effects of these experiences on early childhood educators' sense of preparedness as music facilitators. Hagen (2002) found the same positive correlation between joyful prior music experiences and greater comfort with using music in practice. Educators who experience a rich musical environment during their childhoods are more likely to provide children with opportunities to listen to music, see music being played, and engage in musical play (Wright, 2003).

Kim and Kemple (2011) identified four domains that formed early childhood educators' beliefs concerning music values and their use of music in practice: personal music experiences, teacher training coursework, field experience, and their sense of self-efficacy in incorporating and using music in their practice. This research also highlighted a positive correlation between educators' beliefs and their musical knowledge. Participants with negative, stressful music experiences in their childhood had the lowest scores when it came to valuing music or introducing it in their practice; others with positive backgrounds related to music more positively and were open to using music in their work.

Barrett et al. (2019), using questionnaires for data gathering, also asked their 88 ECE participants about their previous music experiences. Their research showed that 98% of the educators had no previous formal qualification in music, 48% had some music experiences such as singing in a choir or playing an instrument in their school years, and only 16% of participants had continued active musical engagement. This research also revealed that less musically experienced educators value music less than those with more musical experience, are less interested in using music in their practice and less likely to believe in the beneficial effects of music on children's development. At the same time, Barrett et al., (2019) highlight a significant positive correlation between educators' years of music practice and positive musical beliefs.

Music provision in elementary school has been decreasing for many decades in worldwide (Russell-Bowie, 2009; Temmerman, 2006). In primary schools, the most highly rated reason for not valuing music is a lack of priority given to music classes when compared with math or other academic lessons, which leads to a lack of personal musical experience in childhood. Further, in recent years music education is steadily declining in the realm of professional qualifications, for example in ECE training (Barrett et al., 2019). For music to be

valued again in education, teachers need to feel confident and competent about how to teach, learn or use music in their classrooms and inspire children to undertake this kind of creative play (Barrett et al., 2019).

In the literature I reviewed, findings show that childhood music experiences are mainly built on teacher-centred educational methods. These teachers lead music lessons are based on strict curriculum and focused on achievements rather than enjoyments; the goal is to create a musical product rather than enjoy the musical process itself (Bainger, 2010; Jones, 1986; Teicher, 1997; Wiggins & Wiggins, 2008). These performance-centred and competitive ideas of music education have created an 'elite music culture', where there is a sharp distinction between two categories of children: 'musical' or 'non-musical' (Lucky, 1990). In this worldview, there are people who "produce" or "perform" music and others who "consume" it (Cross, 2001). Being musical tends to generally be connected to the notion of having special talent and experiencing a specific long-term music education (Burnard, 2010; Hennessy, 2000; Trendwith, 2003). Thus, the first step toward a more informal and playful music education is to separate the idea of performance from music engagement and music practice (Wright, 2003). Wright (2003) suggests that early childhood educators need to be aware of the differences between the two forms of music experiences when they interact musically with children. Understanding the difference between the two types of musical engagement is crucial to breaking the myth that talent and performance are needed to enjoy music (Wright, 2003).

Reimer (2004) describes two forms of musical involvement: the experiential 'knowing within' and the conceptual 'knowing how' (p.13). The first experiential form refers to the spontaneous immediate response to and enjoyment of music. The second conceptual form requires a more direct music-making experience and understanding and is built on curiosity and

exploration but can be also developed by increasing musical exposure. The conceptual 'knowing how' form relates to the teacher-centered approach in musical playing that requires a more direct and guided interaction. In contrast, the experimental 'knowing within' form represents child-centeredness in music engagement which is spontaneous and validates the child's need to discover and simply enjoy music (Bainger, 2011).

Early childhood educators can feel uncomfortable about using music or even refuse to use music because they have no personal music experiences about how to make or simply enjoy musical play (Bodkin, 1999; de Vries, 2004; Ebbeck, Yim & Lee, 2008; Hash, 2010; Nardo et al., 2006; Russel-Bowie, 2002). Fowler (1996), in speaking to the situation where educators cannot offer meaningful experiences because they could not relate to music in their own childhoods, called this a paradoxical situation and a "self-generating cycle" (p. 171). He noted that educators "cannot give it because they did not get it" (Fowler,1996, p. 171). Andang'o (2009) also noted that children's music experiences in the early childhood settings depend on what kind of educational journey the educators have had in their childhood, as well as their relationship with music in their present lives. Early childhood educators who haven't had any long-term experience with music may struggle with how to inspire young children's music engagement (Bainger, 2010). As Bainger notes,

> Today's teachers are a product of their own arts-poor education system. Having not been recipients of good music experiences in their own education, teachers do not have background skills or understandings of their own about music to draw upon, as they do in other learning areas. This also reinforces their low levels of confidence. (p.18)

Early Childhood Educators' Conflicted Feelings and Lack of Confidence in their Roles as a Music Teacher

Even though ECE students generally hold quite strong beliefs about the importance of music, and recognize the quality-of-life, cultural and social-emotional benefits of music, in their later work with children, they can often feel ill-prepared to use music meaningfully or have conflicting feelings about teaching music (Copple & Bredekamp, 2010; Gordon & Brown 2013; Lenzo, 2014; Nardo et al. (2006). Educators often believe in music but have low levels of confidence in playing music with children as a result of their beliefs about their own musical abilities as well as their personal and professional music experiences (Abril & Gault, 2005; Berke & Colwell, 2004; Giles& Fergo, 2004; Hagen, 2002).

In childcare settings, children often spontaneously sing or create and repeat rhythms as they play (Bodkin-Allen, 2009; Nardo et al. 2006). Most early childhood educators witness these spontaneous natural musical expressions daily and are aware of the positive effects of music, but this exploration can sometimes build conflicted feelings in educators who lack confidence in their own musicality or singing ability (Bainger, 2010; Bodkin-Allen, 2009; Neokleous,2013; Swain & Bodkin-Allen, 2014). Singing is one of the most common musical activities that children spontaneously use, however, research shows that educators feel the least skilled when it comes to singing (Bainger, 2010; Nardo et al., 2006). As Nardo et al. (2006) note, "teachers are not comfortable with their own voices" (p. 286) and has led some educators to identify themselves as 'tone deaf' (Bodkin-Allen, 2009; Willberg, 2001) and avoiding singing in any context (Swain & Bodkin-Allen, 2017; Whidden, 2008; 2010).

Singing confidence, as with all the other areas of music teaching, is highly influenced by educators' previous experiences with singing. Issues with self-consciousness and confidence in

singing are not necessarily related to an actual lack of singing ability. Swain and Bodkin-Allen (2017) reveal a psychological connection between fear, avoidance, and singing. In their research, participants who described themselves as non-singers shared that they feel shy and unprepared to sing in any circumstance and reported that they often stopped singing after having a negative experience in their childhood or teenage years, such as being told that they have unclear voices, being humiliated in front of their peers or being told that they could not sing.

Further, there is a long research history that even if educators are enthusiastic about playing music with children, they have less understanding of what constitutes a quality music program (Scott-Kessner, 1999). Scott- Kessner (1999) exposes the spread of using pre-recorded music in childcare settings to replace singing or improvised music practice. Thus, educators use different child-focused CDs in order to provide children with music experiences that the educators feel unable to provide because of their lack of singing confidence, singing experience, or music knowledge.

Rajan (2017) also explored preschool teachers' music experiences and the types of music activities offered to children. Through an online questionnaire, Rajan (2017) asked 178 pre-service teachers in the US about how they use music and what type of music they use in their classrooms. Eighty-three percentage of the participants reported that although they have no previous instrumental or singing experiences or training, they use music every day. Ninety-seven percentage of the pre-service teachers used CDs and reported singing with CDs. These educators used preschool songs with fingerplays (59%), Disney movie songs (55%), instrumental songs (53%), classical songs (42%), and some of them mentioned listening to folksongs or rhymes and songs performed by popular children's musicians. Teachers reported that they used CDs daily during circle time (93%) or as background music (80%). Rajan (2017) suggests that educators'

self-assessment about their limited music activities leads them to use pre-recorded music with teacher-lead instructions about movements rather than offering vocalization or improvised creative music activities

Thus, early childhood educators who have had unsuccessful music experiences may have low self-efficacy about introducing music in their practice (Burak, 2019). Self-efficacy is defined as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Educators with low self-efficacy doubt that their ability and knowledge to teach music. People who have low self-efficacy in a particular domain tend to shy away from difficult tasks. They focus on their self-diagnostic and worry that they will fail. This can result in lower aspirations and weaker commitments or concentrating on how to participate and perform successfully instead of on the task at hand. Conversely, a strong sense of self-efficacy positively affects personal accomplishments. Efficacious people are not afraid to set themselves difficult tasks. They can face potential failure and challenges and sustain their efforts to reach and maintain their goals (Vanatta-Hall, 2010). Teachers who have strong self-efficacy evaluate their own teaching competence highly and are more likely to be innovative in their teaching practice (Burak, 2019; Moeller & Ishii-Jordan, 1996). They also have positive self-beliefs not only in themselves but also in their students' capability (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997). Only by improving current post-secondary practices and providing beneficial and engaging music experiences for students can a cycle of low self-beliefs about music teaching being broken. Positive professional experiences are one of the key aspects that influence and can positively form students' philosophy about music in their workplace (Garvis, 2012).

Lenzo (2014) offers clear points of agreement between age and developmentally appropriate practice and standards in early childhood music. Lenzo suggests two things that

could positively affect early childhood educators' motivation and self-efficacy in music teaching. The first is to clarify otherwise conflicting information about early childhood educators' roles as facilitators of music activities. The second is to offer concrete plans for how to integrate music into practice. These changes could positively affect early childhood educators' motivation and self-efficacy in music teaching and result in regular musical play being offered to children.

Early Childhood Educators' Post- Secondary Music-Related Training and Field Experiences

There is some evidence about missing, or out of date music courses in early childhood educator's post-secondary trainings (Kim & Kemple, 2011). Kim and Kemple (2011) highlight that there is a need to rethink post-secondary music curricula that focuses on traditional fundamental music skills such as music theory or composition because this kind of knowledge has no practical value in increasing ECE students' confidence as music facilitators. Although this issue with music curricula was recognized over 20 years ago, the present educational climate still tends to emphasize academic subjects in early childhood development (Kim & Kemple, 2011) and remains firmly focused on academic outcomes while the improvement of other developmental areas is neglected (Hill, 2003; Kim & Kemple, 2011; Raver & Zigler, 2004).

Another issue related to ECE teacher training worldwide is the lack of music-related courses. Australian ECE research participants frequently mentioned that they have limited opportunities to take music courses during their studies (Kim & Kemple, 2011). Educators who participated in Kim and Kemple's (2011) research explained that even if they feel confident about incorporating music into the classroom when the children are learning about other subjects, listening to songs from different cultures, or learning math by learning a song with numbers, these educators did not feel confident in teaching music, rhythm, improvisation, or their music-

related knowledge (Kim & Kemple, 2011). In the same vein, Rajan (2017) noted that in the US, having a music course for early childhood educators as optional and can send confusing messages about the importance of music in professional early learning frameworks, post-secondary courses, and in practice. An example of this unclear message can be found in Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) a professional guideline for educators working with children from birth to age 8 (Copple & Bredekamp, 2010). This guideline which is produced by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), a large non-profit association in the US whose goal is to improve the well-being of young children, advocates for the importance of integrating music into the early childhood curriculum (Copple & Bredekamp, 2010), but does this with limitations. Although the DAP is focused on individual child development and learning and on the importance of the social and cultural contexts in which children are learning through creative play (Lee & Lin, 2013), music has only a very limited section in DAP, and only as a part of the creative arts program. This again provides an insight into the conventional role of music in early childhood settings, where music as a playful and creative social and emotional activity is still neglected when compared with academic subjects such as math or science (Rajan, 2012, 2014, 2017). Also, that the examples of how to incorporate music into practice in DAP programs are often premised on an old, traditional, teacher-centered approach, or generic activities and music materials such as group songs and fingerplays (Rajan, 2017).

Holgersen (2008), who conducted research in Scandinavian countries, asserts that music as a subject matter is at risk of gradually disappearing. As he notes,

Whether or not musical activities are part of the teaching plan in practice depends on the individual competencies of the teachers or childminders. The question is whether a staff

member by chance has acquired skills to sing or play an instrument because music has almost no emphasis in preschool teacher education. (p.49)

Like Holgersen's findings, Australian researchers also report the lack of adequate education and training for early childhood educators during their post-secondary studies and note educators' confusion about what quality music tools mean and how to incorporate them into their practice (Barrett et al., 2010).

Barrett et al.'s (2010) Australian research suggests that (re)integrating music courses into early childhood educators' training may help building new skills for early childhood educators how to use music with children. Participation in music activities may also support and expand ECE students` abilities and confidence to use music later in their work (Kim & Kemple, 2011). Researchers agree that early and different variations in field experiences could be one of the keys to effective teacher education programs (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Sleeter, 2008; Zeichner, 2010). Through field experience, teacher candidates can observe, understand, and put theories into practice. Learning music through field experience can help ECE students to actively experiment with different conceptualizations of music-inspired activities (Joseph & Heading, 2010), rethink the role of music in young children's lives, and increase early childhood educators' music beliefs and confidence in implementing music later in their practice (Kim & Kemple, 2011).

During field experiences, participants can not only try music activities but are also able to rethink and expand their knowledge with new ideas (Shulman, 2005). For example, in Krieg's and Jovanovic's (2015) Australian research a local composer offered active music experiences for students to help educators became "more conscious of their own feelings about music and how they could unleash their own creativity" (p. 405). This field experience offered learning

opportunities to candidates that enriched their lives and their appreciation of music beyond the academic context. Early childhood educators also shared that through their active and reflective journey they reconstructed their thinking about their artistic practice and how to create time and space to make music and other arts accessible, inclusive, and expressive for children (Krieg & Jovanovic, 2015). Thus, we can surmise that art and music-based interactive field experiences like the ones described by Krieg and Jovanovic (2015) can reposition educators from passive learners and observers to confident, active participants and constructors of their music journey.

Summary

Early childhood educators generally have positive beliefs about music and the value of using music in practice (Abril & Gault, 2005; Barrett et al., 2018, 2019; Berke & Colwell, 2004; Hagen, 2002). However, they feel ill-prepared and struggle with low confidence in their role as music facilitators (Hallam et al, 2009; Hennessy, 2000; Lenzo, 2014; McCullough, 2006; Seldon & Biasutti, 2008; Stakelum, 2008; Stunnel, 2010). Educators' beliefs about the nature of musical play and how to create a nurturing and safe learning environment to discover music together with the children are key components and are shaped by educators' musical experience and knowledge (Kim & Kemple, 2011).

Educators can evaluate the importance of their own music experiences from their childhood education, previous music training, or life experiences (Garvis & Penergast, 2010). If educators have positive experiences, they tend to exhibit a continued interest in music and often feel confident in using music in their practice. Garvis (2012) suggests that adequate time, practical and joyful music education courses, and utilizable field experiences in ECE university programs are important ingredients for developing confidence and self-efficacy for educators. To

offer high-quality music education in childcare settings, early childhood educators need to be curious, active, and adaptive to learning new knowledge.

With all this in mind, this study focuses on a central research question: *How do early childhood educators' pre-professional music learning and pedagogical experiences influence their use of music in their practices with young children in formalized childcare settings?*

The next chapter outlines my methodology, describing the interpretive phenomenological theoretical framework that informed the study and the methods I employed.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In this study, I use a qualitative research method to explore early childhood educators' experiences with music before becoming educators. As Berg and Lune (2016) describe, qualitative research focuses on how individuals make sense of the surrounding environments with which they interact. A qualitative research approach suits my study, because I set out to engage with early childhood educators' music experiences by gathering data "on naturally occurring phenomena" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 23) and on listening and accepting reality as my participants experienced it. In the following section, I provide an overview of interpretive phenological approach and the rationale for its use to address my research question.

An Interpretive Phenomenological Approach (IPA)

I chose an interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA) to investigate my participating early childhood educators' music experiences. IPA is a qualitative research method where the focus is on examining participants' lived experiences in detail and on understanding how participants make sense of those experiences (Eatough & Smith, 2008). IPA has been influenced by three theoretical approaches: *phenomenology*, which looks for meanings of people's individual experiences, *hermeneutics,* the theory of interpretation that is used as a cyclical clarification between researcher and the object of research, and *idiography* which is concerned with carefully emphasizing each participant's unique experiences case by case, before making any generalizations (Smith et al., 2009).

Phenomenology

Originally, phenomenology was a philosophical approach that introduced humans' lived experiences as unique rather than general categories (Smith & Shinebourne, 2012). The founder of the approach of phenomenology, Edward Husserl (1859-1938), used phenomenology as a

countermovement against quantitative positivism (Reiners, 2012) to make sense of and give meaning to humans' lived experiences. Over time, phenomenology offered two different ways and philosophical positions to study individuals' experiences: descriptive and interpretive. Husserl's idea related to a descriptive orientation, highlighted that people can describe their own experiences (Smith & Shinebourne, 2012). He also believed that researchers could bracket their own assumptions to grasp the essence of a phenomenon as experienced by an individual. Bracketing comes from a mathematical root, where putting in brackets means to shut out or treat separately some parts from others. In Husserl's perspective, the bracket means to set the predetermined assumptions of the researcher aside from individuals' experiences and let the phenomenon emerge naturally (Clarke, 2009; Smith & Shinebourne, 2012). In contrast to Hussler's descriptive approach, his student Heidegger (1962) introduced the idea of the interpretation of human experiences. Heidegger believed in the fundamental importance of exploring people's lived experiences and meaning-making processes in a deeper level, by the interpretation of their spoken words and in the context of their world, including other people, relationships, things, and language.

Hermeneutics (Interpretation)

The hermeneutic circle describes the dynamic of the hermeneutic relationship between the part and the whole in many levels of analysis. In other words, to understand the whole it is needed necessary to perceive the parts and to understand the parts, it is necessary to see the whole (Smith et al., 2009). For example, when reading a sentence, each word that we read becomes clear in the context of the full sentence; however, to understand the full sentence we also need to know the meaning of each word. This back-and-forth interpretation is the heart of the hermeneutic circle that shows a dynamic and non-linear way of thinking.

Smith (2012) also highlights that by linking phenomenology with hermeneutics IPA focuses on understanding the interpretive and subjective experiences of individuals. To apply hermeneutic phenomenology to the researcher-participant relationship, researchers first focus on the subjective experience of the individual. However, after the meaningful interpretation of participants' unique experiences, IPA researchers do not need to bracket their values and beliefs; instead, they need to use their own knowledges and values to see behind participants' descriptions and offer a deeper understanding of the experience. Thus, both participant and researcher are an active part of the reflective and dynamic meaning-making process. In other words, the researcher tries to understand what it is like to be in the shoes of participants and focus on understanding both what was said and what was unsaid (Holland 2014).

Moreover, Smith (2012) also stated that there are two stages to interpret people's meaning-making processes: first, the participant tries to make sense of what is happening with them through sharing their unique experience and elaborating on its meaning to them. In this level of the study, the researcher focuses on offering a safe space, a trustworthy environment for the participants to share their stories and elaborate on their meanings. For this to happen, the researcher attends to consciously separating or at least acknowledging their own preconceptions and listen to the participant's narrative with a fresh and open mind and supports the conversation with flexible, open-ended questions that allow participants to choose to go in any direction during the conversation.

The second step of this hermeneutic process is for the researcher to make sense of the participant's sense-making process. At the same time, in this stage the researcher explores the experience through the access that the participant offers and tries to be involved in the process of interpretation more self-consciously, more fully, and more systematically by using their own

knowledge and experiences (Smith & Shinebourne, 2012). Smith et al. (2009) call this two –

steps process the *double hermeneutic,* where the researcher is deeply embedded and shares a

common humanity with the participant by "employing the same mental and personal skills and

capacities as the participant, with whom he/she shares a fundamental property – that of being a

human being" (p. 9). This holistic view of the interpretive method makes the hermeneutic

analysis an intuitive, comprehensive, and insightful process: the researcher, rather than

completing one step after the other, moves back and forth in the text and thinks about the data on

many different levels. Again, one part relates to another and offers different perspectives on the

relationship between the parts and the whole (Smith et al., 2009). Moreover, IPA scholars also

designed four existential themes of life-world in the context of participants' lived experiences:

time (lived time), spatial (lived place), corporeal (lived body), and relational (lived human

relation) (Smith et al., 2009; van Manen & Adams, 2010). *Lived time* represents the subjectivity

in time, opposed to clock time; *spatial* characterizes participants in their locations; *corporeal*

refers to the concept of embodiment; and *relational* refers to the communal experience and the

relationship we maintain with others in the space that we share (van Manen, 1990).

Idiography

Idiography is the third theoretical orientation of IPA. Idiography refers to the importance

of an in-depth analysis of every single research interview before creating any general statements.

Smith et al. (2009) explain that "the analytic process here begins with the detailed examination

of each case, but then cautiously moves to an examination of similarities and differences across

the cases, so producing fine-grained accounts of patterns of meaning for participants reflecting

upon a shared experience" (p. 38). In other words, by exercising sensitivity and giving special

attention to each participant's unique story, the researcher can gain a more complete and

subjective experiences of participants in context.

During the past 15-20 years, IPA has been used as a research method within the fields of psychology (Eatough & Smith, 2006; Eatough et al., 2008) and mental and physical health (Pringle et al., 2011) to study lived experiences within certain contexts- for example, understanding feelings of anger or aggression (Eatough & Smith, 2006; Eatough et al., 2008) or living with chronic illness (Pringle et al., 2011). More recently, researchers have started to use IPA in the educational field. For example, Hutchinson (2012) used IPA to understand the experiences of young bystanders who witnessed bullying by asking the question: "What are the experiences and understanding of younger secondary-age children who are bystanders to peer bullying incidents?" (p. 427). Another example of IPA in educational research is provided by Goff (2018) who studied the barriers and supports that elementary school teachers experienced when they created and improved outdoor classrooms for young students in the Pacific Northwest. An additional example of an IPA study from the field of education was published in 2018 by Bosco who focused on teachers' experiences when working with students with high behavioural needs and emotional challenges.

The Rationale for this Methodology

IPA particularly suited my research because this methodology provides a theoretically open, exploratory approach to understanding the in-depth experiences of a small group of people. IPA not only implies a very close reading of the data line by line, but also searching behind the lines for important details in how participants share their experiences (Turner, 2017). Similar to the above-mentioned studies, my research aimed to understand the phenomena of the music experiences of early childhood educators. I therefore analyzed first-person descriptions of participants' lived music experiences in certain educational situations. The interpretive phenomenological orientation of my research allowed me to analyze the unspoken or tacit parts

of education in participants' stories (Saevi, 2014). Thus, IPA was used with an emphasis on the lived experiences of music practices acknowledging participants' unique individual and cultural representation.

Given my interest in the lived music experiences of early childhood educators in BC and my quest to understand how those experiences influence their use or not of music in their practice, I believe that IPA is a particularly useful methodology for my study for several reasons. Early childhood educators' experiences and beliefs are complex and multi-layered as well as influenced by many personal and professional circumstances both in their childhood and later in their practice. This multi-layered complexity can be made more visible through the combined application of phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography. In this case, IPA stresses that personal experiences occur and need to be examined within their situated contexts for these to make sense. In my study, IPA supports participants (i.e., early childhood educators) to engage their world in context and relation to their environment (i.e., childcare settings) influenced by their past (i.e., previous experiences) present (i.e., daily challenges, responsibilities, and expectations) and future (i.e., possible changes in practices and beliefs) (Yardley, 2017). Further IPA fits my study as interpretivism also highlights that different people and different groups in different contexts have multiple viewpoints (William, 2007). With that in mind, I gathered data for my study from early childhood educator participants who came from different educational, social, and economic backgrounds in order to obtain diverse and multi-faceted narrations (Willis, 2007). The concern for and acceptance of multiple perspectives in IPA often leads to a more comprehensive understanding of a situation.

As an IPA researcher looking into participants` worlds, I acknowledged my continuously changing position between holding or offering my experiences in the meaning-making process

(Goldspink & Engward, 2019). The next section explains the role of reflexivity and its importance in IPA analysis.

Reflexivity

In describing IPA, Smith (2012) described the importance of researchers consciously separating or at least acknowledging their own preconceptions and focus on understanding the participant's narrative when first listening and analyzing participants' lived narratives. At the same time, Smith and Shinebourne (2012) emphasize that IPA is rooted in the hermeneutic characteristic of phenomenology which means that later in the analysis the researcher explores the experience not only through the access that participants offer but also through the researcher's knowledge and experience in the process of interpretation and meaning-making (Smith & Shinebourne, 2012).

In understanding this double-site of IPA, my goal as a researcher was to acknowledge that my study was not focused on assuring objectivity, but on gaining a deep understanding of participants' music experiences and the effects of these on their practice. At the same time, I tried to be continually mindful of any personal biases, that is my expectations, preferences, topic choices, and my personal beliefs, and to make my potential preconceptions and their effects explicit throughout the research process (Smith, 2004). For example, the consent form, which was the first document participants read before the interview process started, described my long history with music and music therapy and my experiences in early childhood music education. This meant my strong interest in music and the cultural differences concerning music experiences were addressed by learning about participants' familial, social, historical, and political backgrounds. Further, as a researcher, I took particular care and attention to offer a balanced, non-examining, non-threatening space where every experience was welcome and

highly appreciated. For this purpose, I engaged with participants and built rapport by active listening, respectful open-ended questions, and by showing my interest in understanding their stories.

The entry point of my research process was to listen to the unique voices of the participants and to provide a closer understanding of BC early childhood educators' music experiences. To gain a balanced and authentic interpretation of the data, the following strategies were used during the research process: asking flexible, open-ended, semi-structured interview questions; asking participants for feedback after each interview; focusing on self-awareness and writing notes during the interviews to have an initial outline of participants' stories, and using participants' quotes within the data, which support the authenticity of findings (Lincoln et al., 2011).

Methods

Participants

Clarke (2009) suggests that "with the idiographic emphasis of IPA, the aim of a study is not to generate large quantities of information but to gather quality information that will enable a deeper understanding of the participant's experiences to emerge" (p. 72). To achieve IPA's goal and find a cohesive understanding of the phenomena, Smith et al. (2009) suggest between four to ten purposefully selected participants who are uniquely related to the research questions. My study on understanding early childhood educators' music-related experiences and their influences in ECE practice was undertaken with six participants.

Although IPA researchers are not focused on generalizing, the sample groups they work with should be as homogeneous as possible to gather quality information and find a deep understanding of participants' specific experiences. When participants are similar both

experientially and demographically, this supports the capture of a rich, detailed, and unique perspective of their shared experience (Smith et al., 2009). In my study, all the participants were early childhood educators who completed their post-secondary ECE studies in BC, work in the Greater Victoria area and were able to recall and discuss the music experiences that they had before becoming educators.

All six participants identified themselves as early childhood educators who studied and worked in BC. All participants had experiences with music either during childhood or young adulthood, as well as during their education. Some of the participants, however, grew up in a different country than the research was done. Thus, cultural and language differences were expected during the interviews and in findings. Table 1.1 summarizes the characteristics of the participants with assigned names for purposes of anonymity.

Table 1.1

Pseudonym	Approximate number of years working as in ECE field	Musical experience	Country of origin
1. Jane	4 years	Formal	China
2. Lily	6 years	Informal	Canada
3. Amy	2 years	Formal	North Korea
4. Emma	26 years	Formal	Canada
5. Linda	29 years	Informal	Canada
6. Kate	18 years	Informal	Canada

Recruitment

My initial recruitment approach involved: (1) phoning the Child Care Resource and Referrals Center in Victoria BC and asking for a current list of childcare settings in the Greater Victoria area, and (2) selecting childcare settings from this list and emailing invites to early childhood educators who studied in BC and work in the Greater Victoria area to participate in a 1.5-hour online interview via Zoom to discuss their music-pedagogy experiences. The program coordinator of Child Care Resource and Referrals Center, sent my *Letter of Invitation* (see Appendix A) to nearly 600 early childhood educators in the Greater Victoria area through their monthly newsletter, asking early childhood educators who identify themselves with the criteria to contact me by email.

After my *Letter of Invitation* was emailed and offered to early childhood educators by the Child Care Resource and Referrals Center's newsletter, only one participant contacted me to say she would like to participate in my research. This was a very disappointing result, so during the months that followed this, I asked the Child Care Resource and Referrals Center to again send my *Letter of Invitation* to early childhood educators through their newsletter. Unfortunately, no other early childhood educators answered the invitation. It then became clear that my recruitment strategy needed to be changed. In discussing this with my committee, we decided to use a snowballing technique.

Snowball sampling is an often-used method in qualitative research, due to its flexibility and networking characteristics (Parker, Scott & Geddes, 2019). It typically starts with a very small number of participants from the researcher's social networks, also known as "initial seeds" (Parker et al., 2019, p.3), who are potentially willing to become participants, and who then recommend other potential participants; the process ends with a chain of relevant participants. Sampling finishes when the target number of individuals has been reached.

After amending my UVic research ethics to add the snowballing approach to my recruitment strategy, I conducted my first interview with my first participant and at the end of the interview, I asked her if she knew any other early childhood educators who meet the research criteria and would like to participate. The first participant mentioned that she knows two educators who may be interested in my research. Finally, she was able to connect me to two other participants and with the help of the two new participants, I found the other three participants through snowballing.

Data Collection

Interviewing is a standard way of data collection in qualitative social science research (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). The qualitative research interview is described as "a conversation with a purpose" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 57), and is the preferred way for phenomenological researchers to collect relevant, experimentally shared information (Brocki & Weardon, 2006). Reflective of the IPA research method, the data for my study was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews.

The semi-structured interview is a type of interview method that asks some predetermined open-ended questions of all interviewees, as this permits comparison across interviews and leaves room in the process for discussions that are spontaneously initiated by the participant (Berg & Lune, 2012). This freedom offered my participants the chance to gradually move from a descriptive, narrative answer to a more evaluative explanation and elaboration of personal interest and experience (Hutchinson, 2012).

Concerning my role as the researcher, I found it important at the beginning of the interview to establish a rapport with participants and provide a safe and trustworthy place and space where they can feel comfortable to share their stories. The semi-structured interview

helped me to create this space and rapport by offering flexibility and encouraging the emergence of new ideas that represent participants' personal stories (Smith &Osborn, 2009). Although semi-structured interviews offer a participant-driven conversation, Smith and Osborn (2003) suggest using an interview schedule with some predetermined, typical open-ended questions that relate to the main question of the research. Preparation of scheduled questions allows the researcher to "set a loose agenda (topics which she would like to discuss with the participant), to anticipate potential sensitive issues (and to inform the participant in advance), and to frame her questions in a suitably open form" (Smith et al., 2009, p.58).

My open-ended interview questions (see Appendix C) reflected three general areas: the previous music experiences of early childhood educators generally, educators' music experiences during their post-secondary education, and their current music beliefs and practices. By constructing an interview schedule, researchers think of the questions as a visual map during the interview, which can enable the researcher to be more prepared for any difficulties and to feel less anxious during the interview (Smith et al., 2009). My open-ended questions supported me to be more engaged and attentive to listen my participants and building rapport with them. As I conducted my interviews, my main intention was to minimize probes and prompts and be open to participants' unique experiences and narratives (Smith & Osborn, 2003) Also, I found it important to take into consideration Eatough and Smith's (2008) recommendation and first ask questions that may be more general and less emotional in order to give time and space for participants to feel comfortable to share and feel safe to truly immerse in their narratives.

Data Analysis

Following the interviews, I transcribed, anonymized, collated, and analyzed the data.. To analyze my research data, I chose an IPA analytical process introduced by Smith et al. (2009). The uniqueness of this research analysis is the precise description, and the step-by-step order of the analyzing process. IPA has not described a single method to analyze research data; however, the steps that Smith et al. prescribe helped me as a novice researcher to keep my analytic focus on both the descriptive and the deeper interpretive processes when I was making sense of participants' experiences. Smith et al. (2009) provide a six-step guideline of phenomenological reduction:

1. *Repeated listening and reading*, where I read and re-read each word of the transcripts to accurately find the emphasis and meaning of each participant's narrative.

2. *Initial noting,* when I identified phrases for further investigation and produced notes that consisted mostly of descriptive comments, observations, and reflections that are close to participants' core comments and explicit meanings.

3. *Developing emergent themes,* when I transformed my initial descriptive and interpretive notes into evolving themes that reflect the essential meaning of the participant's words.

4. *Clustering emergent themes* when I re-evaluated, selected, and organized my emergent themes and decided which themes fit together.

5. *Repeating the process* which means I made the same analysis for each case encompasses, reflects, and categorizes similar themes.

6. *Clustering the resulted themes* which stage I looked for connections and patterns across the analyzed individual transcripts focusing on the essence, the resonant passages between all transcripts' findings.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Committee. *Informed Consent* (see Appendix B) is an ethical process in which research participants were informed about the purpose of this study, the procedures, and potential risks and benefits of this research. *Informed Consent* also notified research participants about their rights, autonomy and respect for the personal experiences they shared during their interviews. Although my research was low-risk research, a statement in the *Informed Consent* form also contained my contact information for any further questions from participants and it was indicated on the form that interviewees could refuse participation at any point of the research without any consequences. Participants were invited to sign, scan and send back the *Informed Consent Form* via email before the interview begins. To ensure confidentiality, I changed participants names for anonymity since my participants worked in one geographic location. I transcribed and anonymized all of the interview data, which was stored in my personal computer being the only person to have access to any information on it.

Chapter Four: Findings

In this chapter, I discuss my analysis of the findings in order to address my central research question: *How do early childhood educators' pre-professional music learning and pedagogical experiences influence their use of music in their practices with young children in formalized childcare settings?* I have organized the findings into three inter-related and at time overlapping themes and subthemes which defined the phenomena of this study. Theme #1: *Sense of Belonging* contains four subthemes on family, community, and political influences*,* and how early music influences effected participants' relationship with music today. Theme #2. *Repeating and Performing* includes three subthemes on participants' common struggles with their formal music education in different stages in their lives as well as introduced participants' joyful informal music experiences and their effects on their own practice. Lastly, Theme #3. *Growing by Doing* also has three subthemes focused on participants' ECE post-secondary music experiences.

Theme #1 Sense of Belonging

In analyzing participants' collective music experiences, there was a recurring theme related to a 'sense of belonging'. In participants' stories, powerful music events often correlated to early childhood memories and appeared in joyful, spontaneous music experiences in relation to their families, or communities. Moreover, early childhood music activities also had an impact on participants' political awareness. These joyful early music experiences and sense of belonging formed a lifelong passion for and intimate relationship with music that still plays an important role in participants' lives. Consistent the concept of life-world in IPA (as introduced in the previous chapter), this theme highlights the *relational* aspect of participants' lived experiences (Smith et al., 2009; van Manen & Adams, 2010). The four subthemes in this theme provide an

historical context for participants' early childhood experiences that help to better understand their views on and connections to music later in their practice.

Family Influence: "My parents loved music, so I have also loved music"

Participants described a strong relationship between their early music experiences and their families. This subtheme offers personal insights about these early family-related music experiences, and how they formed participants' relationship with music. One participant, Amy[1], started her narration by recalling her first music experience, where the piano symbolized her strong relationship with music and with her parents:

> I play the piano. I was seven years old when I started to learn the piano. Yeah, back to Korea. I'm from Korea. My dad always listened to my music, and he influenced me. Like, he inspired me to play the piano. We like playing instruments. My dad can play guitar and harmonica. So, I learned the piano and played together.

Amy described how her father's interest in playing instruments and her mother's passion for singing Korean folksongs motivated her to practice the piano and play music together with her parents. Musical play became their common language, a way of expressing belonging to each other as a family. Similarly, Jane related her first music experiences to her families, where singing and learning instruments were part of their everyday lives. Music was used as a routine activity that strengthened Jane's affiliation with her parents:

> When I was a child, I grew up in a village in China. My parents, they were not educated, they didn't have any musical training, but they both loved music. They still love music. When I went to the rice field with my mom who worked there, she was always singing. I learned all the songs from her, and we just sang when we worked. And my father played

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[1] All participants names have been replaced by pseudonyms.

erhu. Erhu is a two-string fiddle. So, my father played erhu, my mom, she sings

beautifully. I saw my parents' loved music. So, I have also loved music.

These participants grew up in different countries (Canada, China, and Korea) and cultural variety

between families might play an important role in participants' musical sensitivity and diversity in

children's songs and tunes. However, the examples above show how family can support

children's early relationship with music regardless of time, place, or nationality.

Community Influence: "I was able to feel connected with others"

Participants' positive early music experiences also appeared in their stories in relation to their

social environments. For example, when participants played or listened to music with their peers,

enjoyed school band with friends, or sang together in a church or community choir, music

connected them to their community. In Jane's childhood music was used as a common language

and became a shared knowledge of cultural traditions between people living in the same

community:

When I was a little child, I already had the stage, (laugh) not the real stage, just on the

rice paddy, I just bare feet stood in the middle of the fields, the valley, just where people

working, so they just walk by all the time they request what songs they want to hear. So, I

was just standing in the middle of the field singing to all the villages (laugh).

Participants' narratives underscore that positive early music memories frequently related

to participants' informal music experiences, which tended to involve unstructured, spontaneous,

and often self-taught ways of learning and enjoying music (Vitale, 2011). Three participants

(names), with mostly informal music backgrounds, mentioned how much they enjoyed the

togetherness, the social aspects of music and reported a sense of togetherness as the most

valuable and positive aspect of their music experiences. These common music activities

seemingly helped participants to feel free, joyful, safe, resilient, and be included in their communities. In one particular case, Kate explains her high school band experience in the context of establishing a connection to her friends she played music with. Kate felt successful and motivated to learn music together with her friends. In a similar manner to Kate, Linda shared the same joyful experience of belonging to her community through her involvement in a school and church choir:

> I still feel that happiness I felt as a child. Those days brought fun, some happiness in life. I think being with my peers that I enjoyed being with, right, that connection with other peers and the encouragement from teachers brought me back and I was able to feel connected with others.

Lily also shared how she was looking for the same ties to people and music later in her life, and how she found her way to connect with others by singing in choirs:

> Having learned the impact of singing with people was always moving for me. The first song that we ever sang in performance I can't sing, because I'm almost crying. I just found it so powerful and moving to be with people and to be making the same sounds and making something that brings me to tears. So, knowing that that's something that I connect to in a really heartful way, when I move to a new city it's something I seek out in a community that I can sing with.

The findings also show that having those early joyful experiences of connection seemed to motivate participants to seek out music communities later in life. For example, Lily shared that, when she moved to Vancouver from Montreal, she looked for a community choir immediately to build connections in her city. Lily used her early experiences of music to re-establish a sense of belonging in her new community:

So, I started going to this choir and it was very different, was all, it's a low barrier choir, it's a free community choir in downtown, East side, and um, very spiritual. So, it was in a social housing on a top of Woodward's building so people lived less ideal conditions and were invited and very welcomed into the space. It was very a healing circle and that was kind of one of the points too. Sing and acknowledge the people passing by walking in the circle. And if someone in this community passed or someone was connected to someone who passed she would offer a song to sing. We used it um, like kind of a healing.

In keeping with the previous stories of collective musical performances, Lily's example shows the uniqueness of experiencing belonging through music. A group of people from similar life circumstances and challenges meet in music to find their natural voices, make songs accessible, create space for social connections, love and be loved, listen and be heard, reflect and settle down, cry and laugh, share and carry each others' burdens, as well as heal and build strengths together.

Political Influence: "They played specific songs for us"

In two participants' lives, their informal music experiences were used not only to connect to families or communities but also to introduce and express values related to the political contexts of their families and communities. Emma reflected on how her music experiences included family members who would play their "favourite songs" for everyone in the hope that others would like the music and the ideals represented by those songs:

I grew up in a family where we were listening to a lot of music. Mostly rock and pop music of the 1970's. I know that it doesn't really happen now, you know, that three-four people in the room listening. My parents were excited to be together and they played specific songs for us that represented their civil values through the lyrics. I always loved this, when I was small, and then as we got a little bit older you know, my brother and I

chose songs too to show. Um, so my parents liked to do that a lot, listening and then

dancing, and then I had a lot of songs in my head and to sing them, to recreate them in

choir was really satisfying.

Like the previous narratives in this chapter, Emma's story represents music as a common

emotional chain in their family tradition; however, songs were also used as a unique way for

parents to introduce new social and political values represented by their chosen rock and pop

songs and their lyrics.

Lily experienced the biggest musical influence in her early 20's when she was part of a

hippie community and was surrounded by musicians. Similarly with Emma, Lily felt a deep

connection to certain songs and music albums. Lily's songs related to the small hippie commune

on which she lived and played these songs regularly:

So, I lived in a small town in Yukon territory, in a community where it was full of

musicians, so a lot of gatherings, people playing guitar, playing drums, just singing and

dancing. That was my introduction to music.

In Lily's narrative a small community, friends with similar cultural and political values connect

and express themselves through musical play. Lily wanted to be part of these musical rituals and,

without having any previous music experience, was motivated to spontaneously start to play the

guitar: "I was just living with people who played the guitar, and expressed themselves through

the songs, so I just started to play and learn the songs around that time." Later in the interview

Lily reflected on her community as a group, where people strongly connected to each other and

built on certain emotional, spiritual, and political values. The songs and lyrics they sang at that

time were used to voice emotional and political values. When Lily listened to her music later in

her life, she was recalled her memories, her positive feelings, and emotional connection to her former society.

> It was more than just gathering; it was a lifestyle with people living in tents and playing and listening to music. Just listening to the songs was like strong connections to certain songs and albums and ideas of thinking and living and connecting to our world. If I put on one of those albums it's like teleportation, you know, very viscerally remembering how I was feeling. It's really associated with a feeling of being young and free and the world is just so open.

Emma and Lily shared their childhood memories, which stood for music and songs as mediums to introduce free and new shared beliefs and political understandings. Despite the differences between their two environments (one of which consisted of family and the other a wider community), these music rituals built and extended participants' values, identities, and links to the music later in their lives.

The theme of 'Sense of Belonging' and the above four subthemes provide insights into the deep historical, relational, and emotional aspects of participants' early childhood music experiences. These early experiences created high musical values in participants' lives. The next subtheme gives a further understanding for how early childhood music experiences formed participants' musical needs in their personal and professional lives.

"Music is my food"

Participants, especially those with long years of musical playing, developed a deep emotional connection and expressiveness through regular musical listening, practice, or performance. In relation to IPA, this subtheme aligns well with a *corporeal* aspect of lived experience and participants' own embodied position in the world (Smith et al., 2009; van Manen & Adams, 2010). Jane, who has many years of music learning and performing experience,

described her strong emotional connection to music as a unique ingredient in her life, through which she could release or express her feelings even better then by talking about it: "I felt that music is very powerful. When music comes, it's very emotional. Music is my food. I need it anytime, every day. You can use music when you don't want to speak with words anymore."

Amy also explained music as an important aspect and a basic need in her life: "So, music can keep me healthy. Emotionally, physically and spiritually. When I listen to music, I feel I'm in a good mood, relaxed, or at other times motivated to do something good." Emma highlighted that her motivation to learn how to play the piano, as well as her successful piano solo performances and the positive feedback from her teacher, increased her self-esteem and confidence as an individual: "I was a pretty quiet kid, but I did a lot of piano recitals, so I had to get brave, and you know, playing in front of others was a good experience to become confident."

For Linda, music was a way to escape from reality and strengthen herself through musical play. Linda shared that in her childhood, she often had difficult time at home and playing music at school helped her to turn away from her domestic issues and, through music, she felt positive and free:

> For me, music was bringing like happiness and joy, feeling good about how I felt about myself and, um, just expressing if there was anything to release out of me it was a way of letting any tension go and I still feel that way in these days having some fun with music, right, and bringing some happiness and life.

Later Linda shared her experience singing the same songs that she learned and sang as a child in childcare settings:

> When you were to watch me sing you would see my eyes closed and it is so deep inside my own spirit, my own soul that children know, children see it and they have such good

sense to feel it. They see you and you have made connection. For me, I think it is

important to allow that to happen in front of everybody and model that sensitivity,

because I believe children feel it too, I really do, and I think this is where there's a

connection. We look at these children that we are with day in and out and watching them

grow and we're doing it with music and it just kind of keeps going around and around and

I find it a beautiful kind of cycle. So, to me, it's really important.

Singing the same songs not only reminded her of the lightness and joy she felt as a child, but also

motivated her to offer the same pleasure and connection to the children with whom she spent

time with day to day.

Despite participants' positive music memories and life-long connection to music,

participants also shared their struggles with strict, curriculum-based, and goal-oriented formal

music lessons in which participants often felt exhausted or not talented enough to learn music.

These achievement-oriented formal music experiences in participants' stories are explored more

fully in the second main theme.

Theme 2# Repeating and Performing

The theme of 'repeating and performing' encapsulates how the difficulties some of the

participants encountered in their formal music experiences influenced their subsequent

relationship with music later on in their ECE studies and practice. In the literature, formal music

experience has been defined as structured music learning with a music teacher, in which students

are encouraged to achieve certain goals set up by curricula (Jenkins, 2011). Four of the

participants in this study had formal music experiences at some point in their lives, and all of

them shared some quite negative memories. Participants discussed their early music memories;

being nervous, or not good enough, or making mistakes which led them to feel lacking in

confidence later in their roles as music facilitators during their post-secondary studies. Participants also described how formal music lessons, which often ignored their unique abilities and needs when learning music, contributed towards feelings of ambivalence and struggles in how they related to and enjoyed their music practices.

In analyzing the findings on the tensions between formal music performance and spontaneous musical play in participants' music experiences, I identified two subthemes centred first on participants' descriptions of difficulties with formal music learning experiences during their childhood (*"Learning is not always fun"*), and similar challenges in their music learning that participants faced later on during their post-secondary studies (*"I was not prepared for that"*). In the theme of 'Repeating and Performing', I also identified positive changes participants made during their year-long working experience in the field of ECE (From *"what to teach"* to *"how to relate"*). This theme and its subthemes are representational of a *spatial* notion of lived experience as conceptualized in IPA (Smith et al., 2009; van Manen & Adams, 2010).

"Learning is not always fun"

Participants shared that, in formal music education, they often struggled with rigid, achievement-focused music lessons. Amy described that, although learning as a child from a professional music teacher was valued and called a privilege in their village, the fun and joy often disappeared from music classes or practices because of the high expectations of her teacher. Other participants also described their childhood music education as strict and involving hard work. For example, Jane shared her very intense music training, which entailed long rehearsals, ear training, singing practices, and score reading which she perceived as challenging and tiring: "We were doing rehearsals all the time. Sometimes I just fell asleep at the rehearsal, I was just too tired, it was very concentrated, very intensive. So, all your life was practice,

practice, practice…" Later, Jane reflected on how her childhood memories helped to change the way she offers music to children in her present practice:

> Yeah, also, each child is different. We need to go with their interest. So that's why now I'm more into more improvisation with individual children. And sometimes you do it with one child and that attracts more children to join. But it's all natural, coming from their curiosity, not because I want them to learn music.

> Echoing Jane's story, Amy shared her negative experiences with her piano teacher, who was very strict which caused Amy to experience feelings of stress and sadness when she practiced the piano at home or visited with her teacher: "I cried sometimes because I felt I made something wrong. My teacher was very very strict, I was stressed actually."

> Similarly, Emma and Kate described the same difficulty in their childhood music experiences by mentioning that the first three years of their piano lessons were stressful. Both of their teachers were very strict, and achievement focused. Emma shared her teacher's high expectations:

> I felt nervous about going to the piano lesson, I did feel uncomfortable playing or what I was supposed to play. She always asked me how many times I practised and always gave me the impression it wasn't enough. Later we found a new teacher who was willing to give me some choices.

Likewise, Kate mentioned how she was confused and very nervous before her lessons:

> I was always afraid because you had heard that the teachers will slap your wrists if you know if you bent them up or whatever, right? Like it was just like I was afraid going in that I was gonna get in trouble because I didn't know how to do it.

These negative formal music experiences built conflicted feelings in participants lives about learning or playing music. Kate, for example, refused to continue her piano lessons and it took long years to her turning back again to actively use and enjoy music in a more informal way.

"I was not prepared for that"

As discussed in the previous subtheme, participants' early discouraging formal music experiences were repeated during their post-secondary ECE studies when their personal needs in music learning were ignored. After their post-secondary music-related courses, participants collectively described feeling that they were ill-prepared or not good enough to teach or perform music with children. Participants' narratives also showed how their comfort levels in formal music experiences during their coursework were linked to their own previous music knowledge and confidence in performing music. One participant, Linda, explained how her post-secondary course instructor sang the songs, and ECE students had the lyrics in their books, which they tried to memorize so that they could sing alone later in their practicums:

> During the time there was, we had one program one course that was related to music. Some art course that music was part of it, and it was learning songs, experimenting with instruments so drums and bells and things that you would give to a child in the early childhood education. We had a book. That was kind of printed out for us, um, and then the teacher also taught us songs as well. Also, we made, we each had to make up a song by making new lyrics to an old song, and it was all compiled into a book so that every student got a copy so they became shared songs, okay, so that you could take it into your practicums and try them out.

Although other participants also mentioned books of song collections that they discovered during their courses, the songs were limited to Euro-western child song collections, and participants' capability to learn and use those songs appeared to depend on their previous music educational

knowledge. Three of the participants who had mostly informal music experiences, often mentioned that it was challenging to sing with the teacher or recall the songs out of the classroom without any music content knowledge or training on how to perform these songs in practice. Linda explained that her teacher was very supportive and repeated the songs so that the class could try to sing together with her but that she felt nervous and unprepared when she needed to use music in her practicum:

After the course work, there was a practicum where we had to sing. I felt intimidated and nervous. I remember, you know, having a group of 15 children in a co-op preschool and saying, you know, you are asking them do you want to sing, and I don't know how many of them said no, and they don't know the song anyway, and I didn't know how to teach it. I was not prepared for that, right.

Participants' stories show that teacher-led singing experiences based on teachers' ideas of song collections and ways of teaching often ignored students' different capabilities and needs in order to learn songs and also reflected participants' early childhood music experiences. These expectations and uncertainties made even confident students question their capabilities in singing or thinking about music as a fun, spontaneous, and creative playing opportunity with children. Moreover, Linda's experience also demonstrates that the knowledge she gained from her early childhood choir memories helped her to sing confidently with classmates during the course; however, Linda was not prepared enough to teach songs and play music with the children, or even keep her confidence to sing alone in front of others.

Another participant with mostly informal music experiences in her childhood, Kate, explained that her music coursework was more theoretical than practical, and that it focused on understanding the developmental and educational benefits of music learning in early childhood

but ignored ECE students' different capabilities for creating or performing music. Kate, who had described joyful childhood memories about playing music with peers, felt unprepared to sing in the classroom:

> Music was part of one course. So, they broke down our courses into two-, three- and four-week lengths for us and this two week was music only. We didn't learn about how to sing them, um we learned more about how it can impact children and how they can learn from it, um, so there was more emphasis on that and sort of the teachings of songs and words and counting, but not about how we can sing them.

When I asked Kate how her teacher introduced the songs during the course, she surprisingly recalled that there was no singing in the classroom:

> The teacher didn't sing ever actually, that's bizarre, but she didn't sing. Like we would, I think we watched um a movie of sorts, like it was like an educational show about music and how it was being taught to children kind of thing but it was a very old school movie with British songs, so it wasn't very current, um, but aside from that yeah no she didn't sing, like she would she would play some of the instruments and stuff that we made but not really any singing. I think there was definitely more singing out of the class with my classmates before our practicum started. She gave the book that these are the songs but you, you never heard the songs that in the book not all of them, um some of them we did and she let us look things up and so we were able to look things up and find songs on YouTube or wherever so we could hear what the songs were how they sounded on YouTube yeah like YouTube or yeah most of it was YouTube um just because it was easy enough.

Kate had no opportunity to listen to the songs or sing with the instructor. Rather, singing remained a theoretical understanding rather than a form of practical knowledge around which she could build confidence. Furthermore, the dominant narrative about the educational and developmental purpose of music learning may have created greater distance between theory and practice, or between music as a scientific tool and spontaneous form of enjoyment. The dominant focus on music theory in ECE was also highlighted in Lily's narrative:

> Okay so I'm like I really appreciated it at that time like I was in a course that focused on different developmental domains and when we can talk about developmental domains we're talking about something that's beyond babysitting like that idea I remember like how do we see ourselves as professionals and at that time the messaging was very much when we can talk about why are you singing these songs, like fine motor, gross motor, social development like those were the key language pieces and at that time I really was like: okay great.

Lily went on to share also her confusion about the previously mentioned Euro-western songs and universal ideas of learning offered in her studies:

> Yeah, I think uh looking back the ECE program that I was in, as I said there was a class called *Music and Movement,* but it was really like children's music teaching whatever Raffi songs or things that it's not really the kind of music that I enjoy with children like a lot of those songs like whatever like songs that have, like finger plays and counting songs and things like that. It's a very different style of music and it appeals to a very different image of the child, like they're kind of songs to teach things and that's not where I connect to music.

As discussed above, in Lily's earlier experiences in a hippie commune or community choirs, music represented the sound of freedom, human connection, and political expression, which contrasted with the universal idea of child development through songs and movements offered by her course. Moreover, the limited song collection in participants' studies may reflect instructors' cultural insensitivity to participants' course-related music experiences.

Participants' stories demonstrate that, despite the positive mostly informal childhood music experiences in which music and singing were sources of joy, compassion, healing, and social connectedness to their family and community, later in their studies they often felt embarrassed when they had to sing in front of their classrooms alone or perform during their ECE practicums. The duality in their narratives shows that singing or playing music in groups as children require different skills or levels of confidence than singing and performing music individually. Participants faced with expectations of performing but did not feel well prepared and confident enough to use their singing voice. For example, Kate shared that her issue was not about learning how to make a lesson plan, or how to build music during children's circle times; rather, her concern was the pressure she felt when singing alone, not finding the tune, or starting with a good rhythm. Participants' experiences highlight that their music-related courses were often based on values of formal music education. Universal ideas and theories frequently focused on the developmental and scholastic outcomes of music teaching. However, the curricula ignored their different needs for gaining practical knowledge of how to sing and perform and use music with children as early childhood educators.

From "what to teach" to "how to relate"

The findings on participants' narratives in the previous subtheme highlight that the teacher-led, achievement-focused, and generalized formal music experiences in ECE post-secondary courses may ignore students' diverse musical backgrounds as well as students' unique

needs to build confidence and have practical knowledge in their musical play. However, I could also recognize from participants' narratives, that despite their apparent confusion about performing music during their post-secondary studies, they could build their own confidence in singing later in their work with children based on their positive childhood memories and long years of working experiences using music in childcare settings.

In music practice with children, the findings highlight the social and relational aspects of music with participants wanting to offer the same joyful experiences that they enjoyed as a child in relation to family and community music that was mentioned in Theme #1 as informal music experience. In other words, participants' positive and joyful early childhood music experiences had the power to motivate participants to use music and singing creatively in their present practice. Kate who explained the lack of singing in her music course, shared that during her many years of experience working in childcare centers, she found that she became more and more confident dancing and singing freely with their children.

> As an adult you worry about the judgment, right? And it's like the messing up and making the mistakes and it's like, you know, what I make, I make fun of the mistakes. Like I have fun with it. I don't let myself get so caught up in it because it's supposed to be fun. Like I want it to be fun for the kids and singing those songs. And if I make a mistake, I'm like: "Oops, do we have to start again?" And if they like the song, they want me to start again. If they don't like this song, I know that that's where I cut it off, you know like it's sort of I can gauge it with them.

Rather than focus on her insecure beliefs about her own voice, Kate decided to be open and vulnerable in front of the children and offer the same feelings of freedom, energy, or calmness that she experienced as a child through musical play. Other participants also shared

that, throughout their work with children, they slowly changed their focus from "what to teach"

to "how to relate," as shared by Lily:

> We are always thinking about what to teach in a task-based way, but it is not having
>
> practice with the children, it's about having practice with bodies that we have to move
>
> and structure. And I think music offers opportunities to break up that structure and just go
>
> with what is happening; to play, and how to dance and sing and be playful and how to
>
> relate and just build a connection with the children.

Lily's experience highlights the importance of relating with children in a playful way, in which

music and singing are tools to remember how to play, not for developmental purposes, but for

"the sake of play," to play as humans for experiencing joy, openness, and connections with

others.

Theme 3# Growing by Doing

In the third and final theme of 'Growing by Doing', the findings provide insights into

what helped participants to positively connect to music in their post-secondary ECE courses, and

undertake the role of music facilitator in their ECE practice. This theme and its subthemes are

other interpretations of the *lived human relational* aspect in life-worlds described by Smith et al.

(2009) and van Manen & Adams (2010) in relation to an IPA.

The first subtheme (*Vulnerability- "Pushing ourselves out of the comfort zone"*), focuses

on the findings on the importance of course instructors role modelling how to build trust, and

offer practical music knowledge to their students. The second subtheme (*Observation-*

"Watching others helped me a lot"), focuses on how participants' positive experiences on field

trips undertaken during their practicum, motivated them to learn and celebrate musical play. The

third subtheme (*Collaborative learning- "Connecting to our humanness now"*) highlights recent

changes in ECE programs in BC. In the final subtheme (*"If ECE students could get those basic elements"*), the findings focus on participants' suggestions for further music developments that may help ECE students in BC to become involved in music.

Vulnerability- "Pushing ourselves out of the comfort zone"

Participants' narrations reveal that the post-secondary ECE course instructors' interpretation and performance of music in their classes significantly influenced students' understandings of music and their confidence to try out or avoid music activities. Kate, who could not build any relationship with her instructor during her music-related course, felt insecure singing in front of others:

> Oh, it was awkward, so awkward (laugh). I despised it but you must wait, um, unless everybody is singing together. I was just like "No, I will not, you guys know what it sounds". Like, "No I'm not singing it". We just wouldn't like it. We would just get the songs and then we'd take them home.

Later, Kate mentioned that she and her classmates felt more comfortable calling each other after school to ask questions or sing together rather than asking the teacher:

> And a lot of times we couldn't always find the songs because some of them just you know not necessarily there on YouTube. So, it was just if we were comfortable enough, we'd ask someone in class, but it wasn't always in class it would be like once everybody was home, and we were on the phone talking or something we'd be like "oh how does that sound? What does that sound?" like "How does that part sound?

When Kate's class did not feel encouraged by or connected to their teacher, the students started to educate themselves. Rather than communicate with their teacher, students asked for help from each other to avoid showing their uncertainties and vulnerabilities to their instructor:

We very rarely sang in class um unless we had the kids visiting us and then we would

sing a song, but it was always just one person with the kids. So, it was easier doing that

than it was doing it with classmates and kids.

Kate's experience shows the importance of the course teacher's behaviour and efforts to build a

safe environment for students, in which vulnerability and openness are nurtured to promote new

areas of musical play.

In contrast to Kate's instructor, Lily's course instructor introduced songs by freely

singing and dancing in front of the class which made Lily feel comfortable to do the same:

I think that that's my memories of the class are of people like the whole class kind of

being out of our desks jumping and like doing these "I'm in the mood for jumping" and

people jumping. And so as far as the way the class was set up at that time like we were all

sitting at desks. But that was a class where we would get out of our desks and play. So, I

think a lot of the intention would have been about having educators playing and being

vulnerable because we're expected to do that in our profession to play children to sing

with children and so in the class to push ourselves out of the comfort zone.

For Lily, her instructor demonstrated their vulnerability, by singing, dancing or jumping with the

rhythm to offer positive example for students to relate to music. In Lily's case, her course

instructor's openness encouraged others to step out of their comfort zones and sing or dance in

front of each other.

I just remember it being fun actually and fun yeah very fun and very funny like very

funny to watch my professor jumping and like that. It's a class that I really remember her.

She was a very playful professor so to watch her, like, I remember it being a lot of fun

and her saying like, like we must be comfortable. Being uncomfortable in a funny way, or

it's a cute funny way, joyful, and funny.

Encouraging ECE post-secondary students to step out of their comfort zones and feel vulnerable

at times in the classroom often starts with their instructors' willingness to be playful. In Lily's

case, observing her professor's playful activities (singing and jumping in front of the class)

motivated her to open-up and actively participate in the classroom. Her instructor's modelling of

vulnerability welcomed imperfection and active learning within the musical play which freed

students to make mistakes without feeling shame or regret. Moreover, I also found in the data

that being vulnerable in the classroom provided an opportunity for peers to build empathetic and

supportive emotional connections with each other as well as with the course subject.

Observation- "Watching others helped me a lot"

The stories above underscore the remarkable role of the ECE course instructors in

students' music learning processes. Furthermore, I also noticed in the data that participants who

had the opportunity to visit childcare centers and to observe skilled practitioners playing music

with children felt more prepared to use music themselves later in their practicums. For instance,

Emma shared the following about her practicum experience:

We did a lot of observations of what is in the program, um, so we had to take a lot of

notes and details on what's the schedule, what are the opportunities for each of the

children in each program that we went to. I think we probably went to at least 10 different

early childhood centers and so I will say the observations were general, it wasn't focused

on music, but that was one part of it and we did have to describe, you know, what's you

know what's in the program, what opportunities are there for the children and we did

have to observe like are there any musical instruments for them to play, is there

something for them to listen to, is there anything in the schedule where they sing? So just

having a model for how to go about it was really useful.

Emma's experiences confirm that observing other early childhood educators can help students to

make sense of how educators might use music in childcare settings, and visualize themselves in

the role of music facilitators. Engaging with other educators, participants were able to build self-

awareness about their own music skills, strengths, and weaknesses, and helped to motivate them

to find their own ways to connect with children through music later in their practicums.

Collaborative learning- "Connecting to our humanness now"

Participants' narratives indicate that there are recent changes within ECE courses in B.C.

that positively effected the view of music in present post-secondary studies. In ECE, the

previously mentioned individualistic and performance-focused teaching has slowly turned into

social practice and human relations in a music context. The descriptions of Lily, Jane and Amy

showed that, in their recent course experiences, the instructor often stepped back from the

position of educating students and offered a space for students to explore different ideas about

how to introduce songs for children, or how to build confidence around singing. For example, in

Jane's post-secondary course each student was asked to introduce a favourite song to the class

that represented their interests or cultures, which they could perform at the level of their comfort.

Then the class discovered and played the song together. Jane explained her positive experience

as follows:

The instructor did not make a list, it was the students. The instructor just organized us,

and we signed up, say I sign up for week one and each week we have a few students

teach us songs and movements. For ten weeks.

In this example, students became experts of their own knowledge, which encouraged them to feel

more motivated, comfortable, and capable and experience spontaneous forms of collaborative

learning. When I asked Jane about this way of learning, she explained how she felt good about singing together and also shared that her musically less experienced classmates seemed to enjoy this opportunity of relating to each other through songs:

> It was very nice. Also, I saw my classmates and they were very happy. Because they didn't really get to sing songs without expectation. They loved singing, especially when they were very stressed from doing all other coursework and practicum, they are tired and stressful. When they can just sit down like children enjoy some songs, it's about being themselves and being together. Sit together and sing together. They were very happy, emotionally, they were very happy.

In Lily's narrative the reason for using music turned from a child developmental and educational focus to collaboration and connection with each other:

> I could connect music to teach things but it's more about like what is the experience of being human, and I think sharing music with children, for me in my profession, it's always about how we are creating these spaces where we're connecting to our humanness now.

In these findings, music was used as a medium of connection, in which students had opportunities to grow and maintain supportive relationships together in the classroom through music and songs. When participants sang together in an improvised and more spontaneous way, they did not experience fear or stress about their singing. Rather in their stories, they shared feelings of joy, happiness, relaxation, or positive energy during singing: the same emotions that participants shared previously in relation to their informal, family and community related early childhood music experiences. Lily explained the impact of spontaneous and improvised approaches to singing for children:

If we're singing in all those courses, it's very clear that music isn't restricted to a time and place. It's not time, it's music. Another language that we use with children. Music should not be a course material we are supposed to learn or a particular thing for kids that happens on Wednesdays at 10:00 o'clock and then it's done at 10:30.

When musical play was embedded and spontaneously used in ECE courses on relationships, the environment, or developmental theories, students could experience singing as a natural way to "build relationships and learn from the world we share." As expressed by Amy:

So, once we met in the Beacon Hill Park together and we brought instruments like tambourine, drum, Indigenous instruments, and we sat in circle and sing there, and people who passed by, they started to listen to our music and yeah, that was great. And Indigenous classmates in the circle they started the song and we, so we followed them and learned about the story of the song. It was really good, yeah. Very emotional music and very powerful.

Amy's group built new connections through singing with Indigenous classmates by welcoming different worldviews experientially and relationally. This finding highlights a shift in current ECE settings, where rather than teaching dominant Euro-Western songs, teachers open up and celebrate diversity and different ways of knowing and learning within their courses. Jane, whose childhood music and educational studies were based on a structured curriculum and strictly guided formal music practice, re-evaluated her core belief during her post-secondary course work by enjoying the freedom and spontaneity in her music course experiences:

At [name of college] we learned to go with the children's interest. Before that, from what I learned in China, for my work in a childcare center are programmed with a curriculum with a schedule. But as a commodity, I'm learning to be just to observe the children. And

also, each child is different. We need to go with their interest. So that's why I'm more into more improvisation with individual children. And sometimes you do it with one child that attract more children to join. But it's all natural. Now we don't say okay, now we sing together, let's sing, let's dance... At [name of college] we are not taught this way, because we learned it's called emergent curriculum. So just go with the children's interests that go with the flow. Yeah, don't pre-program anything or don't make the children fit into my curriculum. I go with what I need to learn from the children to do it according to their interests. So that's my big change at [name of college].

Jane who previously accepted her struggles as a main factor to become professional in music was able to re-evaluate her core-beliefs after her post-secondary school experiences. Similar to Jane, Lily also explained connection as an essential characteristic in her ECE music journey:

It is important to think about what songs we sing with children why we sing those songs with children the connections between music and movement and the connections to like our heartbeat the ideas that when we sing with people, we breathe in rhythm with those people like kind of bringing those ideas forward.

These findings highlight the intimate and relational aspects of songs and rhythms that can instinctively bring people closer together. These sensitive and profound experiences may echo back again to participants' informal childhood memories through their family and social-relational experiences in which they explored the same intimacy and connection in musical play. Linda, who also shared her close relationship with music in her childhood, explained her singing as an intimate connection between herself and the children she meets in the day-to-day:

When I sing, I feel it in my soul. When you were to watch me sing you would see my eyes closed and it is so deep inside my own spirit, my own soul that children know,

children see it and they have such good sixth sense that they see you've made some kind

of connection, right? And for me, I think it's important to allow that to happen in front of

everybody and model that because I believe children feel it too, I really do, and I think

this is where I feel like there's a connection with your own spiritual self and with the kids

in music.

In these collaborative experiences, music was offered as a choice, one way from many ways to

learn how to communicate, express emotions, and build community through rhythms and

melodies. These intimate music experiences inspired ECE students to create a common music

practice in which both instructors and students welcomed imperfection and vulnerability in the

classroom. Participants who were mentioned in this subtheme, concurred that the same openness

and collective creativity that they experienced during their post-secondary studies motivated

them to plant the same musical seeds for children.

Participants' suggestions- "If ECE students could get those basic elements"

When participants were asked about their experiences using music today and their

opinions about strategies that would help to bring music closer to ECE students during their

education, their responses were divided into two main groups. On the one hand, all participants

reported that spontaneous and improvised music experiences would help students to feel engaged

in a natural, pleasurable way by eliminating the pressure of expectation. This in turn could

motivate students to offer the same spontaneous and meaningful informal music experience for

children, as Jane notes:

I was thinking maybe we could treat the classmates like young children like how we

really teach a preschool music mechanism. Same mechanism, make them the same tool,

to use the rhythm sticks or use other instruments spontaneously, to inspire them.

On the other hand, some participants expressed hesitancy towards offering only the informal spontaneous music experience without learning basic music knowledge or technical strategies – for example, how to sing or start and keep a steady rhythm. Participants, mostly with formal music experiences, agreed on the importance of teaching basic music skills (i.e., music elements such as rhythm, melody, pitch, dynamic, timbre, and tone) by offering active learning. Emma emphasized the importance of basic music strategies in the following:

> If ECE students could get those basic elements and then some really simple ideas like rhyme, where you don't really have to necessarily be a great singer um, or have a lot of experience with music, you can still use that no matter who you are. Even just learning ways, taking recording, for example, will internalize different elements of music, that's another way where you don't really have to play instrument, sing a song, you can still offer music experience.

Emma's explanation underlines that to build confidence and deepen relationships with music, students may "need to be comfortable with being uncomfortable" to actively try out forms of musical play in the classroom. Two participants agreed that students need to understand basic music elements and learn basic songs to feel comfortable to use music. After they have the knowledge of music elements and how to use them, they can feel confidence and initiate collaborative, responsive, and spontaneous musical play. Participants also agreed that they need to know at least some songs and build their own song collections so that they can offer them for improvisation when children are open to initiate or respond to musical play. For example, Amy explained her balancing between teaching and spontaneous play with children:

Children's play is so valued, but I value music too and really if you're going to do music,

it has to be a little bit of learning and a bit of teacher directed if we want to deeply

emerge in a song.

Amy and other participants found that music activity is sometimes a juggling act between

offering more scheduled ideas (such as welcome songs, songs for washing hands, cleaning, or

preparing to go outside, that help children to make transitions smoother), as well as recognizing,

listening and complimenting children's sounds and melodies that they create spontaneously as a

part of their self-directed and uninterrupted play, as Linda also explained:

Music is part of children's life circle, and we can watch them sing and grow every day.

Our connection through songs is connection to our souls with the intimacy that we allow

that to happen in front of everybody: connect to your own spiritual self and build

confidence with others.

Linda's example shows the importance of educators' awareness and respect of music while

offering structured elements and improvisational music activities. Those experiences can bring

children's desire to music and the sense of togetherness and community engagement in their

environments.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to understand early childhood educators' music

experiences in BC before and during their post-secondary studies, and its influence on their use

of music in their practices. In the theme *Sense of Belonging*, the findings highlight that almost all

of the participants of this study had positive informal early childhood music memories, which

were fostered by their families and broader social communities. Participants' positive music

experiences nurtured feelings of empowerment and a sense of belonging to music, to their

families, and to their wider communities. These spontaneous, informal singing and music performances offered grounding experiences for participants' beliefs about and use of music in their ECE practices today.

In contrast to participants' nourishing informal music experience, the theme *Repeating and Performing* shows how participants' controversial, curriculum-based, and teacher-led formal music experiences in their childhood as well as during their post-secondary ECE studies prompted participants to feel stressed about and to question their roles as music instructors in childcare settings. However, the subtheme '*From "what to teach" to "how to relate"*' confirms again the strong influence of participants' informal early childhood music experiences, where they highlighted once more the relational and emotional aspects of music and opportunities of playful connection during music activities. Finally, in the theme *Growing by Doing,* the findings show what kind of post-secondary ECE music experiences helped participants to build them self-belief and practical knowledge.

In summation of participants' music experiences during early childhood educators' post-secondary studies, the findings of this study reveal that participants' music experiences in their ECE courses often depended on their course instructors' professional preparedness in music and ability to offer authentic, vulnerable, and active music learning in the classrooms. Secondly, participants' stories revealed that observation of other educators' field experiences, and collaborative, informal music practice supported participants' efforts to build closer relationships with music during their post-secondary coursework. Furthermore, participants' experiences of spontaneous singing as a form of human connection were highlighted as significant aspects to developing participants' musical confidence in and motivation for offering joyful, spontaneous music experiences later in their childcare settings. Finally, two participants established that post-

secondary early childhood educators need to experience the spontaneous joy of musical play: however, they also need to learn basic elements of music to be able to recognize and encourage children's natural curiosity about and discovery of music.

The findings indicate that participants' beliefs around and understanding of music were formed continuously through their diverse music experiences before, during, and after their post-secondary ECE studies. Participants' experiences also highlight clear tensions between their informal and formal music practices, positive and negative music experiences in their childhood memories, and later in their ECE studies: joy and tedium, musical play and music knowledge, self-awareness and uncertainty, fear and confidence, relation to self and connection to others through music all played important roles and helped to shape participants' relationships to music and how to offer musical play for their children in their daily settings.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

As discussed in this thesis, my study was guided by the following question: *How do early childhood educators' pre-professional music learning and pedagogical experiences influence their use of music in their practices with young children in formalized childcare settings?* In this final chapter, I discuss the findings in relation to the extant literature and their implications for ECE programs in BC and music practice in emergent curricula. I also discuss study limitations and future directions for research in this area.

Believing, Rethinking, Singing

In reflecting on the implications of my thesis research, the three words Believing, Rethinking, and Singing resonate with the existing literature and the findings. "Believing" represents a correlation between early childhood educators' music experiences and their beliefs on the importance of using music with children. "Rethinking" signifies the need to re-evaluate dominant, formal music education in early childhood educators' practice. The third part, "Singing," takes into consideration the tendency of early childhood educators to lack singing confidence and skills in their practice.

Believing

As previously discussed in my literature review, educators' earlier experiences influence their values and daily decisions in their practices with young children (Kim & Kemple, 2011; Pretti-Fonczak & Johnson, 2001; Vartuli, 2005,). Concerning music beliefs, Anderson (2002) posits that early childhood educators' previous music experiences shape their beliefs about music and influence how they implement music activities in childcare settings. Educators with rich and joyful childhood music experiences were much more likely to introduce and use musical play

with children (Andag'o, 2009; Wright, 2003). In alignment with Andang'o (2009), Anderson (2002), and Wright (2003), the findings of my study highlight a similar positive association between early childhood educators' rich childhood music experiences and strong beliefs about and active use of music with young children. My findings indicate that early family and community experiences can become the foundation for early childhood educators' music beliefs and lifelong connections to music. These early music memories can also be the source of early childhood educators' motivation to offer the same joyful music experiences in their practices.

However, the findings also emphasize that regardless of previous music experience, ECE students' music beliefs can be shaped by new perspectives during their post-secondary studies. This finding resonates with the extant literature that emphasizes that new learning experiences and different socio-cultural contexts can change students' beliefs and prompt students to re-evaluate how they think, relate, and practice in their field (Butler, 2001; Kelly-McHale, 2013; Mills & Smith, 2003). Consequently, this study reaffirms previous evidence on validating music in post-secondary ECE programs, where students' music experiences can form their relationships and beliefs in music practice (Barrett et al., 2010; Holgerson, 2008).

The findings also suggest that new ideas and beliefs about how to use music in childcare settings can emerge through fieldwork observations and experimental learning experiences. Variations of field experiences, for example observing more experienced colleagues and trying out different music activities, can help ECE students to deliberate on new ideas, re-evaluate their music beliefs, and roles, and establish confidence as music facilitators in childcare settings (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Joseph & Heading, 2010; Sleeter, 2008; Zeichner, 2010).

Rethinking

Consistent with existing evidence, the findings indicate that achievement-focused individual instrumental practices, successful performances, and positive reinforcement can increase individuals' self-esteem and confidence in music (Bainger, 2010; Barrett et al., 2019; Hash, 2010; Kim & Kemple; 2011). However, the findings also point to how the same formal music experiences can cause unique challenges in adapting traditional, dominant, and achievement-focused curricula in ECE studies. The frequent focus of traditional music education methods on theoretical and developmental understandings of music with children may not offer practical knowledge about how to use music including how to create simple rhythms or songs with young children. Also, that universal approaches to music teaching tend to ignore ECE students' different music levels and unique needs regarding how to learn a song. This issue resonates with the work of Kim and Kemple (2011) who describe a connection between a lack of adequate music education and training during early childhood educators' post-secondary studies and low levels of singing confidence in later their practice. Resonating with the literature, my study suggests rethinking the dominant formal music practice in ECE students' coursework and offering a more comprehensive and holistic way to relate to music in the classroom.

Singing

Despite positive community singing experiences in participants' early childhood memories, and their strong connections to music, the findings show that early childhood educators often share feelings of embarrassment or not being good enough at singing. The reviewed literature also points to a contrast between educators' strong beliefs in music versus their low levels of confidence in their own musical ability to sing to children (Abril & Gault, 2005; Berke & Colwell, 2004; Giles & Fergo, 2004; Hagen, 2002). Although early childhood educators often witness children singing as a natural musical expression in childcare settings,

educators' lack of confidence in their own singing voice can prevent them from encouraging children to play with their own instinctive sounds and melodies (Bainger, 2010; Bodi-Allen, 2017; Nardo et al., 2006).

Early childhood educators' uncertainty about their singing ability may reflect the deeply embedded dominant ideas of music education, in which children are often categorized as 'musical' or 'non-musical' (Lucky, 1990). From this worldview, being musical and enjoying musical play still tends to be connected to the idea of having special talent or long years of music education (Burnard, 2010; Hennessy, 2000; Trendwith, 2003). Similarly, this research highlights that westernized, teacher-led, and performance-focused singing experiences in the classroom can further alienate ECE students from discovering their own voices, comfort levels, and being open to new adventures in music. These findings confirm that the first step toward a more informal and playful music education may be to separate the idea of 'musical talent' and 'performance' from music engagement and start ECE students' music discovery in an interactive and spontaneous way. This approach echoes back to the studies of Nardo et al. (2006), and Swain and Bodkin-Allen (2017) that highlight naturalness and playfulness in early childhood educators' music practice.

As the above discussion highlights, this study provides insights into the important role of post-secondary ECE institutions to offer positive music experiences and adequate music skills for ECE students. Those experiences and skills can plant the message for early childhood educators that music and musical play for children matters and can build confidence and competence for educators to use music in childcare settings. The following section suggests implications for post-secondary ECE programs in BC as well as for the BC ELF (2019) to enhance music pedagogy knowledge for early childhood educators.

Implications for ECE Programs and the ELF in BC (2019)

Fostering positive music experiences and adequate practice in facilitating music activities supports the mission of the BC ELF (2019) and pedagogical narration to recognize and document children's music initiations in order to "make [children's] learning visible" (Atkinson, 2012, p6.). According to the BC ELF (2019), early childhood educators need to "encourage children to explore their sense of rhythm and melody" or to introduce "a single idea" like "joyful sound" into children's lives (BC ELF, 2019, p. 83). However, the findings of this study raise questions about whether early childhood educators are ready to incorporate music into the emergent curriculum of pedagogical narration as called for in the BC ELF (2019). The reviewed literature as well as this study indicate that there is currently an absence of music implementation and documentation in pedagogical narration and other alternative methods that inspired pedagogical narration (such as the Reggio Emilia and Learning Stories approaches) Andress, 1998; Matthews, 2000; Nyland & Acker 2012; O'Hagin, 2007; Smith, 2011; Vuckovic & Nyland, 2010; Yanko 2015). These findings also resonate with Yanko's (2015) proposal that for many years, early childhood educators face difficulties and feel unsupported when they want to use music models in their practice. Given the alignment between my findings and the literature, the following section discusses potential implications for post-secondary ECE programs and the BC ELF (2019).

Welcoming Music Collaboration and Experimental Learning in the Classroom

This research indicates that early childhood educators are generally open to the idea of playing and experimenting with music and of rethinking educational music experiences in order to avoid perpetuating the invisibility and disappearance of music from childcare settings in BC.

The findings about ECE students' positive music experiences and spontaneous collaborative musical play during their coursework affirms the potential of post-secondary ECE programs to nurture a supportive and relational music environment for students. Thus, a clear implication of my findings is the need for spontaneous, communal, and experimental music activities to be a part of ECE-related coursework. For example, music could be used as an opportunity to mark a transition between learning activities, to offer a playful break, or to reconnect by singing a song during heavy coursework. Offering positive music experiences may motivate ECE students to further discover and identify new learning pathways that emerge from common vulnerability and musicality in the classroom. These discoveries in a safe learning environment could be an important first step in early childhood educators' professional studies to build strengths and confidence in music by accepting vulnerability and experiencing connection through expressive music actions. The arrival of improvised music as a new learning pathway in the classroom also brings ECE students closer to the appearance of an emergent curriculum; one of the core principles of the BC ELF (2019) and pedagogical narration. Thus, collaborative musical playing, and singing can help early childhood educators to build confidence in music and bring them closer to the idea of recognizing, supporting, and extending children's music initiations. Also, course instructors' willingness to be vulnerable, open-minded, and take initiative in the classroom concerning introducing and participating in musical play is crucial.

Deepening Emergent Pathways

The findings of this study suggest that deepening emergent pathways means finding a way to take ECE students' initial and spontaneous music experiences to a deeper level of practicing music through meaning-making and knowledge-forming processes. The findings suggest that, after positive and collaborative music experiences in the classroom, course instructors may offer theoretical music knowledge and practical tools for ECE students to deepen

their later use of music in their practice. Expanding on spontaneously emergent music experiences with music knowledge and skills may help to build early childhood educators' confidence about how to perceive, construe, and extend children's music initiations. This requires that course instructors create space for students to reflect on their common music experiences followed by introducing basic music knowledge (understanding rhythm, tune, and offering singing skills) and practical strategies. Although the time and space may be limited within ECE programs, the findings of this research show the need for more music related coursework in order to deepen ECE students' music knowledge and build their confidence to use music in their everyday practice with children.

Moreover, post-secondary instructors also need to be well-prepared and confident in their own musical ability and skills. In this way, instructors can offer students a safe space for reflecting, making meanings, and extending ECE students' interest in learning music. Course instructors who have adequate music teaching knowledge and experiences are also able to recognize ECE students' different levels of comfort, needs, and motivations in music and offer variable spaces for students' music discovery and learning in the classroom.

This study also highlights the importance of understanding students' different music experiences before their post-secondary education and their different needs in their music learning journey during their studies. In this case, skilled students could support less experienced students to discover music together with ease and confidence. These common experiences may extend and deepen ECE students' curiosity and motivation in music. Furthermore, encouraging music learning and offering music strategies can activate ECE students to enjoy music outside of the classroom and find their own ways to use music later in their practices.

Implications for Music Practice and Emergent Curricula

In this section, I offer three suggestions, informed and inspired by my findings, of how some basic music skills can be used in early childhood educators' practices and enact the principles of an emergent curriculum consistent with the BC ELF (2019) and pedagogical narration. My suggestions on *Sound-source stations, Transitional songs*, and *Dance and movement* may offer insights into how early childhood educators can start to slowly incorporate simple ideas into their daily practices and motivate children to initiate their own musical discoveries.

Sound-source stations

In building on the findings on the relational aspects of emerging music curricula, sound-source stations can help to make children's daily music discovery visible for early childhood educators. Sound-source stations are musically inspired indoor or outdoor areas in childcare settings, where the musical environment welcomes children and educators to discover sounds and rhythms, as well as to try out or build instruments as a part of free play. Children and educators can build sound-source stations from recycled or natural equipment (such as wooden sticks, spoons, plastic bottles, cups, etc.); fostering children's creativity by exploring how familiar items can be used as sources of rhythm and melody. In this way, music and sounds can represent a non-verbal language or communication tool between children, educators, and their environment. For example, open-ended musical questions, as well as instrumental or rhythmical dialogues can further expand and deepen children's learning and communication pathways. Sound-source stations resonate with the Reggio Emilia approach in which the environment is the third educator in children's lives (Biermeier, 2015). When children and educators build a space of collective music inquiry, both can discover and compose music together, and music also

becomes a collective practice that emphasizes the social, emotional, and creational aspects of common musicality.

Transition songs

In my research, participants' experiences of transition songs were highlighted as opportunities for spontaneous musical play. Transition songs can represent an improvisational and relational musical engagement when educators create songs for or with children by using simple melodies. These musical creations are a unique way to support children's daily transitions from one activity to another (i.e., arrival at childcare center, going outside to play, washing hands before eating) and may keep them more focused on their activities. Moreover, singing transition songs can include moments when singing might help a child to re-focus or lighten a situation. My findings also suggest that regular use of transition songs can encourage children to interact and improvise short tunes by responding to or initiating similar spontaneous musical play themselves. Educators who feel uncomfortable coming up with their own tunes, can use short melodies from a well-known children's song and improvise the lyrics depending on the task.

Dance and movement

My findings uncover dancing and movement improvisation as ways to approach exploratory musical play when children respond to their social environments. Dance improvisation can occur in any time and situation during the day initiated by children or early childhood educators while they are listening or creating some music during the day. In the beginning educators may motivate children with basic suggestions such as focusing on different body parts, quality of move (staccato, fluid, strong, light) or imagine a setting where they dance (underwater, on the Moon). This kind of impulsive play can foster children's sense of trust in their body movements, slowly build their own instincts and spontaneous body movements and feel a sense of belonging when dancing with others. One child's response to music can easily

turn into an action-response activity: a non-verbal communication between a child and their educator, or between two peers, or have a ripple effect on other children in the room. These examples demonstrate emergent pathways in which educators can create spaces for collective musical play and vulnerability.

Limitations of the research

My research had a small number of participants who were all middle-class females. They came from different cultures, some from China, others from Canada or Korea, who studied in four different ECE institutions in BC. Cultural diversity regarding participants' childhood music experiences and educations were not focused on this research. Given the variety of cultures participants would have different childhood songs familiar within their culture.

Another point to take into consideration is that some of the participants studied in a private ECE institution and some in publicly funded programs which may influence the instructors they hire and requirements to introduce music with ECE students. Consequently, generalizing the findings of the study is limited in terms of culture, gender, socioeconomic status, and teaching contexts.

Recommendations

Informed by the findings of the study I would like to make the following recommendations.

BC Post-Secondary ECE programs

The following recommendations suggest that BC post-secondary ECE faculty members, curriculum developers, and course instructors rethink or deepen their understanding about music education in order to offer meaningful music experiences for all ECE students.

1. Curriculum developers are recommended to:

   a. Rethink dominant formal music practice and introduce collaborative, spontaneous, and experimental music learning in the classroom,

   b. Offer fieldwork opportunities for ECE students where they can visit and observe their experienced colleagues using music, and can try out music activities and build confidence in music, and

   c. Understand ECE students' needs of practical music knowledge and offer more music related coursework and time to deepen ECE students' music experience and confidence.

2. Course instructors are recommended to:

   a. Understand the significance of their role in introducing and modeling vulnerability and willingness in order to build ECE students' curiosity and comfort levels in music,

   b. Deepen ECE students' learning experiences and meaning-making processes by offering music knowledge and practical strategies, and

   c. Be aware of students' different levels of music exploration based on their previous music experiences and music confidence and let more confident students to mentor the less confident students.

BC ELF (2019)

The following five recommendations based on my research participants' experiences invite BC ELF developers to incorporate mention of music in their document in order to:

a. Validate songs, and rhythms in the BC ELF framework and encourage early childhood educators to (re)evaluate their beliefs about and relationships with music in their practice,

b. Suggest creative ways for early childhood educators to build music skills and incorporate simple music ideas into their daily practices with children,

c. Introduce s*ound source stations* as musical environments in childcare settings to welcome children and educators to discover sounds, rhythms, and spontaneous musical play,

d. Introduce the idea of *transition songs* for building daily musical engagement while supporting children's transitions between or focus on activities, or using songs in difficult situations to change the tone of the situation, and create relationships in a more informal and spontaneous way, and

e. Introduce the idea of *dancing and movement* improvisation in childcare settings for children to discover their social environment, trust their body movements, and connect with others.

f. Provide practical examples for early childhood educators of how to use music in their practice by having music-oriented? case scenarios in the BC ELF.

Future Research

Recommendations for future research regarding early childhood educators' music experiences are as follows:

a. To gain greater insights into the music experiences of ECE students who have not had any specific music-related history prior to their post-secondary studies. One possible question is *What are the post-secondary music-related experiences of ECE students in BC who have not had any musical training before entering their studies?*

b. To investigate early childhood educators' perspectives on pedagogical narration and using music in their practice. A future research question could consider *How might pedagogical narration influence, form, and reform early childhood educators' music practices and to support children's musical growth in childcare settings?*

A better understanding of ECE students' positive music experiences in their post-secondary studies may help post-secondary ECE programs and curriculum developers to build effective music teaching strategies for ECE students. More research in these areas may also prompt the BC government to pay attention to the importance of music in early childhood settings and provide adequate funding for music training, workshops, and professional development for post-secondary programs, their instructors, as well as early childhood educators who already work in the field.

Summary

This Master's thesis study suggests that early childhood educators' pre-professional music experiences have a significant impact on educators' music beliefs and use of music in their practices with young children. Educators with positive and joyful childhood music experiences, who feel a sense of belonging and connection through music are much more likely to introduce and use musical play with children later in their practice. ECE coursework could support ECE students' positive music discovery by reproducing a safe and nurturing music environment during their studies. Thus, ECE course instructors play an important role in offering students meaningful course experiences to build and form musical values, skills, and self-confidence in discovering and facilitating music with young children.

Collaborative, spontaneous, and experimental music learning in the classroom is the first step that ECE post-secondary programs can offer to their students. Introducing the powerful social and emotional connection and common vulnerability in musical play can foster additional ways of music exploration that may motivate ECE students to further explore and deepen their music knowledge and confidence in their music practice.

A second suggestion raised by this study is deepening ECE students' learning experiences and meaning-making processes by offering different levels of music knowledge and practical strategies for ECE students to build their music skills and confidence. Instructors' sensitivity to students' different needs and openness to offer common vulnerability in the classroom, as well as instructors' professional preparedness in music education to differentiate and offer adequate music knowledge for their students are key ingredients for building long-term confidence and music skills for ECE students.

Sound-source stations, transitional songs, and *dance and movement* are offered as practical suggestions for early childhood educators to incorporate simple music ideas into daily practices with children. These spontaneous music activities support a key principle of the BC ELF (2019) concerning emergent curricula and the idea of "encouraging children to explore their sense of rhythm and melody" (BC ELF 2019, p. 83).

ECE students' post-secondary education can be a place to ground early childhood educators' musical abilities, even for educators who have never had music experiences before their ECE studies. Positive post-secondary course experiences as well as concrete evaluation and suggestion of music activities in the BC ELF (2019) may increase the likelihood that early childhood educators will feel more confident in giving similar pleasurable early childhood music experiences to young children in childcare settings. Thus, empowering ECE students in music helps them to recognize, understand and encourage children's spontaneous music moments and offers children the joyful social and emotional connection of musical play.

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Appendix A: Letter of Invitation

To Whom It May Concern,   September 22, 2020

My name is Veronika Varga, and I am a second-year master's student in the School of Child and Youth Care at The University of Victoria. I am writing to request your help with finding Early Childhood Educators to participate in my research study. My research is for my master's thesis and is conducted under the supervision of Dr. Sibylle Artz, a professor at the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria.

I am looking for Early Childhood Educators who have graduated from a post-secondary Early Childhood Education program, and who are currently working in an early childhood centre in the Greater Victoria area.

The research will investigate Early Childhood Educators' music experiences. I am interested in the kinds of music related experiences (childhood experiences, learning music themselves or during their studies) educators have had, and how these music experiences influence the way educators use or do not use music activities in their current practice. The research questions that will inform this study will focus on the central question: How do pre-professional music experiences of early childhood educators influence their use of music in their practice?

Educators will be invited for video interview that will take approximately one and a half hour to talk about their previous and current music experiences and about the ways that these experiences influence their use of music (or not) in their practice. Participation is voluntary, and all data will be kept confidential. All names and identifying details will be changed to protect participants' privacy.

Educators who are interested in participating in the study or who have any questions or concerns, please contact me by email at vvarga@uvic.ca or phone: 250 884 0143.

Any help will be greatly appreciated.

Kind regards,

Veronika Varga
vvarga@uvic.ca
250 884 0143

Appendix B: Informed Consent

Early Childhood Educators' Music Experiences Before Becoming Educators

You are invited to participate in the study "Early Childhood Educators' music experiences before becoming educators" which is being conducted by Dr. Sibylle Artz (Principal Investigator) and Veronika Varga (Principal Applicant). Veronika Varga is a graduate student in the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria, and she is conducting her research under the supervision of Dr. Artz.

Dr. Sibylle Artz is a full-time professor in the School of Child and Youth Care. She has decades of experience with collaborative, community-based research and is currently the graduate program advisor of Child and Youth Care.

Veronika is a professional concert violinist, choir conductor, and, for over fourteen years, was the director of an early childhood music school in Hungary, with over 200 students enrolled annually. She was a music therapist in Hungary, where she worked with students with a wide variety of special needs. She is in the second year of the Child and Youth Care Master Program and has completed her research courses in good standing.

As a graduate student, Veronika is required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in the Child and Youth Care Graduate program. You may contact Veronika if you have further questions by email at vvarga@uvic.ca or by phone at 250-884-0143.

The research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Sibylle Artz. You may contact the supervisor at sartz@uvic.ca or 250-721-6472.

Purpose and Objective

This study will investigate Early Childhood Educators' use of music in early childhood education and in that process will explore their experiences with music before becoming educators. The study will explore how these earlier music experiences influence the way educators use or do not use, music activities in their current practice. The research questions that will inform this study will focus on the central question: *How do early childhood educators' pre-professional music learning and pedagogical experiences influence their use of music in their practices with young children in formalized childcare settings?*

Importance of this study

The findings will provide a more in-depth understanding of what kind of music experiences early childhood educators have that influence them to use or not use music in their practice. The study will also explore how music is included (or not) both in the training of early childhood educators and in the everyday routines of childcare centers in the greater Victoria area.
While music is mentioned in the British Columbia Early Learning Framework (BC ELF) as a

way to support multiple domains of development (emotional, social, cognitive, and so on), little attention is paid to how early childhood educators might effectively use music in practice. The results of this study will begin to close the gap between the expectations in the BC ELF, current music-related learning opportunities, and the post-secondary training early childhood educators receive. This research can help those involved in the training and education of ECE practitioners the skills and confidence to incorporate music into their work with young children.

Participant Selection

You are invited to participate in this study because you are an early childhood educator who has graduated from an early childhood education post-secondary program in BC and who currently works in the Greater Victoria Area.

What is involved

If you decide to participate in this research voluntarily, your participation will include one, 1.5 hours long semi-structured interview using a video call.

Zoom Video Communication Applications will be used to conduct the interview and for data collection. The interviewer will also be taking notes during the interview. Zoom is an American communications technology company headquartered in San Jose, California. It provides video-telephony and online chat services through a cloud-based peer-to-peer software platform.

Please be advised that this research study may include data stored in the U.S.A. As such, there is a possibility that information about you that is gathered for this research study may be accessed without your knowledge or consent by the U.S. government, in compliance with the U.S. Freedom Act.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause inconvenience, including the time spent in the interview.

Risks

There is no known risk to your participation in this study.

Benefits

The potential benefits of your participation in this study include a more complete understanding of the work you are doing and an opportunity to speak about your experiences and ideas around how to build music activities into children's early education experiences.

Voluntary participation

Your participation is voluntary. If you decide at any point in the research not to do the interview or want to do withdraw from the study after the interview, your data will be not used for the

research.

Anonymity

To protect your anonymity within the data, all identifiable characteristics will be removed, that, is your name will be replaced by a number and any other personal markers of your identity will be replaced with generic terms.

Confidentiality

All digital files will be stored on the encrypted password-protected computer of the principal applicant. All interviews will be transcribed. These transcribed files will be similarly saved to the secured computer. All transcribed interview files will only use the participant's pseudonym.

Dissemination of Results

The results of this study will be shared with others during Veronika Varga's dissertation presentation at the University of Victoria and will also be shared in the dissertation database at the University of Victoria library.

Disposal of Data

The data will not be archived. When the analysis and writing have been completed, the data that is captured on paper will be shredded; the data that is captured on electronic video files and the electronic notes and files will be erased from the computers of the principal applicant.

Contact

If you have any further questions, please contact Veronika Varga (Principal Applicant) by email at vvarga@uvic.ca or by phone at 250-884-0143.

You may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250 472 4545) or ethics@uvic.ca.

Your signature below indicates that you understand the conditions of participation in this research, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the principal applicant, and you consent to participate in this research study.
A copy of this consent form will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   *Signature*   *Date*

Appendix C: Interview Questions for Participants

a. What are your experiences with music before you entered post-secondary education?

b. What kinds of music-related experiences did you have during your post-secondary studies?

c. While you were engaged in your post-secondary studies, did you take any courses where you learned about how to use singing or any form of musical activity when working with children in childcare centers?

d. How have your pre- and post-secondary experiences, lessons, and/or studies influenced the way you think about and use music in your work?

e. Do you use musical instruments, songs, and rhythms in your work?

f. How do describe your relationship with music?

g. What does this mean to you where your work with children is concerned?

These questions will be supplemented by follow up questions that will focus on each partici-pants' responses.