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A Case Study Analysis of the Experiences and Perceived Learning Outcomes of Former Non-Music Majors in Applied Horn Lessons

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A Case Study Analysis of the Experiences and Perceived Learning Outcomes of Former Non-
Music Majors in Applied Horn Lessons

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Research Project submitted
to the College of Creative Arts
at West Virginia University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts in
Horn Performance

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Abstract

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Non-major music students are an integral part of university music departments, as they both bolster the department's enrollment numbers and bring diverse perspectives to the ensembles, lessons, and classes in which they participate. Although most non-majors focus their time on ensembles, a few choose to include lessons as part of their experience. Whether motivated by external factors like scholarship money or internal factors like a desire to improve on an instrument, these non-majors are a unique part of any applied studio. However, the phenomenon of non-majors in applied lessons is understudied. Literature tends to focus on non-major enrollment in ensembles or major enrollment in lessons, and non-majors in applied lessons sit at an often-overlooked intersection of these research focuses. This project jumpstarts the conversation on how to cater applied lessons to non-majors by examining the experiences and perceived learning outcomes of four former non-music majors who took applied horn lessons as undergraduates but earned a degree in a field outside of music. Across three interviews and one written response, I analyzed how their experiences were influenced by the fact that they were non-majors. To build my analyses, I annotated responses by assigning categories to them, then drawing connections between those categories. I then compared category connections from each interview to determine connections between all responses. Through this process, I determined that a relaxed learning environment, prioritization of ensembles, and concern over time and mental expenditure tended to characterize respondents' experiences. Based on these and other conclusions, I offer suggestions of ways professors could work with their non-major students to ensure a fruitful learning environment.

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Introduction

A student's participation in a collegiate music program can take a variety of forms. Some decide to build a career as a musician and choose to complete a major in music education, performance, theory, history, industry, or a closely related field. Others enjoy music as a supplement to their education and choose to complete a minor in music while majoring in a different field. There are also those students who enjoy making music and being involved in the social atmosphere of a college music program but do not envision themselves making a career in music, and so choose not to pursue a music degree. Non-major students may be lightly involved in the department, only participating in a single ensemble like marching band or choir, or they may be more heavily involved, participating in multiple ensembles, taking private lessons, and choosing music courses as electives.

The non-major makeup of a university music department can vary widely. For example, a small liberal arts college may have a single large instrumental or choral ensemble which consists primarily of non-majors and community members. In contrast, a large conservatory may exclusively instruct music majors, with special opportunities for non-majors in the form of community music programs. Typically, non-majors make up either a majority or a significant minority of all music students. A report by Higher Education Arts Data Services for the 2020-2021 school year (the most recent year for which data are available) found that, on average, the percentage of semester hours generated by non-major students in institutions with semester hour systems was 46% (HEADS, 2021)¹. In general, universities with fewer music majors reported a

¹ The HEADS survey does not reference music minors. It is to be assumed that minors are counted in with the non-major percentages.

higher rate of semester hour generation from non-majors, and public universities had a higher rate of non-major participation than private universities. The lowest percentage of semester hour generation was reported by private institutions with 201 or more music majors, which averaged a 22% rate of non-major hour generation. That this lowest percentage is still one-fifth of all semester hour generation underscores how non-majors are significant contributors to most music departments.

In terms of applied music-making, large ensembles tend to be the greatest draw for non-music majors. For wind instrumentalists, this usually translates to marching and concert bands. The emphasis on ensemble participation will be explored in the literature review and is demonstrated by the sheer quantity of research on non-major ensemble participation as compared to research on non-major participation in private lessons or academic music courses.

When non-major students choose to pursue private lessons, they may do so for any number of reasons: desire to improve on an instrument, the social atmosphere of a private studio, seeking an extra outlet for musical activity, etc. Because private lessons are time and resource intensive, larger music departments with a high enrollment of majors may find that accommodating non-majors places a strain on the department's resources (Murray, 2008). Some institutions do not offer lessons to non-majors, others choose to make non-major instruction the role of a graduate assistant or adjunct faculty, and still others choose to offer reduced lesson times or will not offer lessons for academic credit. Although offering private instruction to non-majors may be resource intensive, it is a valuable way to keep the important non-major demographic strong, to encourage educated consumerism, and to promote lifelong music making for all students.

When any student, major or non-major, comes into an applied lesson setting, there is often an established structure to which the lesson will conform. The traditional lesson structure emphasizes a teacher-directed approach, with the student coming into each lesson ready to demonstrate work done on an assigned technical study or piece of music. The teacher then provides feedback on the student's performance, which may or may not include a demonstration of the "correct" way to play something. This systematic approach continues until the student has been deemed to have completed work on the assigned exercise or piece of music, at which point another exercise or piece of music will be assigned (Riggs, 2006). A teacher assigning new repertoire may account for student preference, though the degree to which this occurs varies from teacher to teacher. In the world of instrumentalists, this teacher-centric approach tends to result in students studying a steady diet of the same repertoire that their teachers studied as students, especially those pieces which have been deemed "classics" of the repertoire. Additionally, many teachers emphasize study in four primary areas of an instrument's repertoire: drills, etudes, excerpts, and solo pieces. This established structure for applied lessons can result in a lesson experience that emphasizes the result of a final product, rather than the joy of the student's artistic journey (Riggs, 2006). A student-centered lesson experience that emphasizes flexible reactions to a student's identity, experience, and interests is a valuable foundation on which an optimal lesson experience can be built.

For music majors, the process of crafting a student-centered lesson experience might involve giving students more control over the repertoire they study, using applied lesson time to reinforce skills learned in ensembles, or developing teaching skills for students who are interested in being educators. One could argue that the same directions of study should also be applied in non-major lessons, again depending on the student's interest. This raises two

questions. First, are professors meeting non-major students' interests? Second, do professors understand why some non-majors pursue applied lessons, and are they able to construct a lesson experience on which the student can reflect and feel that they gained everything they wanted from the experience?

Statement of Personal Experience

I had never intended to pursue music professionally. As a high schooler, I enjoyed the experience of playing my instrument because I enjoyed playing fun music with some of my closest friends. However, I was surrounded by some students who played at a higher level and who took their musical pursuits more seriously – I only practiced if I had state honor band auditions coming up. Therefore, I was not actively encouraged to pursue music in college, and I chose not to major in music. Although I was not majoring in music, I did become involved in my university's marching band, concert band, and a brass quintet, because by then band had become my primary outlet for making friends and for relieving the stress of academic study.

I also chose to pursue private lessons. My undergraduate university only had one instrumental faculty member, a trumpet player, and so I studied with him. In retrospect, I believe that I chose to take private lessons because I believed it would be a natural extension of my high school experience, in which I had also studied privately. Ultimately, I stuck with private lessons for three of my four years as an undergraduate because my professor had a knack for making me feel like my musical contributions were worthy of his time. I cannot say that my technical skill grew considerably during those years of study, but my confidence in my playing and my joy in the art of music making increased dramatically.

Although I completed my undergraduate studies outside of music, I was influenced by my time in my school's music department. When I look back on my applied lesson experience, I think about how much those lessons invigorated what had come dangerously close to being stale. Even though I did not make major technical strides and I studied almost none of the traditional repertoire associated with my instrument, I loved those lessons because they represented some of the purest music making I have done in my career. Those lessons taught me how to have confidence in myself, how to take ownership of my learning experience, and how to view music as a vehicle for self-expression. In the end, the confidence I gained from that lesson experience factored into my decision to change my career path and pursue masters and doctoral degrees in instrumental performance.

Research Objectives

The aim of this research is to gather experiences and discern perceived learning outcomes for students who took applied instrumental lessons as undergraduates but did not major in music and did not go on to work in a music-related field. This demographic provides valuable insight into the role of the applied lesson in developing skillsets that are not directly career-serving. It is also possible that discussions with this demographic will elucidate the extent to which students value the acquisition of "soft skills" (critical thinking, time management, etc.) through taking applied lessons. Finally, talking with these former students may offer applied professors some insight into ways they can tailor the lesson experience to maximize engagement for non-major students.

It is worth noting that this research focuses on retrospective analysis from former students, rather than in-the-moment analysis from current students. The decision to work with former students stems from a desire to understand both the experience of taking applied lessons

as a non-major and the takeaway lessons learned during applied lessons that have affected the former students in their years since graduating.

This research uses a case study format. The decision to write from the perspective of individual cases is a result of both interest in sharing personal stories and a lack of prior research on non-majors in applied lessons. Case study research is intended to be particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic (Merriam, 2009). This means that a case study analysis should be written to focus on a particular phenomenon, typically one involving practical, everyday problems; the phenomenon should be able to be described in rich detail through the shared experiences from the individual cases; and the problem should not be one for which there is necessarily a perfect solution, but for which an approximate solution can be reached by developing an understanding of the problem's background.

The phenomenon of the non-major in an applied lesson setting is ideal for a case study analysis. It is a specific, practical phenomenon about which most participants can give a detailed history, and the individualistic nature of the applied lesson means there can be no single solution to improve all applied lessons for all non-major students, though generalizations derived from the sharing of experiences could be a starting point from which to craft an individualized lesson experience. Because non-music majors are an understudied population, it is difficult to determine what structure and content would maximize informative responses for a larger, quantitative study like a survey. The experiences shared in these case studies provide a groundwork of knowledge on the subject from which other studies can be built.

Literature Review

Introduction

The study of non-music majors in the applied lesson setting is a lacuna in the literature. It lies at the intersection between two related areas of research which have received slightly more attention: non-majors in university ensembles, and majors in applied lessons. For the past fifty years, researchers have been attempting to understand the role of factors like high school experience, parental influence, and overall enjoyment of music-making in the decision to participate in collegiate music programs. For examples of early work in this area, see Clothier, 1967; McClarty, 1968; Milton, 1982; Mountford, 1977; and Delano and Royse, 1987.

Non-Majors and Ensemble Participation

A 1989 dissertation by David Royse represents an early attempt to connect the study of ensemble participation to the phenomenon of non-music majors. In a survey submitted to non-music major instrumental ensemble participants at four universities, Royse ascertained factors that could predict whether a non-major would be a continued participant in college concert bands. He found that continued participation was enhanced by ensemble directors and other music faculty promoting the value of non-majors in the ensemble setting, that parental influence did not significantly affect students' decisions to continue or discontinue participation, and that the importance of the social climate for non-majors means ensemble directors should be aware of conflicts arising between ensemble members (Royse, 1989).

Since the 1990s, research on the non-music major experience has continued to emphasize ensemble participation. Two studies, one by Patricia Poulter in 1997 and one by Scott Robert Buchanan in 1998, examined non-music majors participating in choral ensembles. Both studies found that a general love of music making was the most significant predictor of a student's

likelihood to be involved in a collegiate choir, that the high school music experience influenced some students but was not a strong indicator overall of continued participation, and that outside influences like ensemble directors, parents, and friends had a similarly individualized effect (Poulter, 1997; Buchanan, 1998). Poulter suggests that choral educators should maintain awareness of their role in a student's decision to continue participating. This can occur through explicit encouragement of non-majors and through intentionality in crafting a musical experience that melds technique, expressiveness, and social opportunity. Buchanan notes the importance of advertising ensemble opportunities to non-majors and creating ensemble experiences tailored toward non-majors. He also addresses the cost-benefit analysis of ensemble participation (time commitment, cost per credit hour, etc.), and he notes that students from smaller high schools tended to have a lower opinion of their high school ensemble experience than students from larger schools.

The importance of advertising ensemble opportunities to non-majors is also a conclusion drawn by Barbara Rhyneer (2002). Rhyneer notes that some university orchestras have struggled to fill out the string section of their orchestras. To combat this, she suggests that a strong internet presence will help advertise the school's orchestra offerings, and that non-majors should be targeted with scholarships that specify participation in the orchestra. Furthermore, she recommends that non-major involvement in string studios and the orchestra be actively monitored and reported to university administration as an incentive to procure greater financial support from the university.

Over the past decade, research has continued to expand upon the conclusions made since the 1960s. A 2010 dissertation by Ardis Faber considered the experiences of first-year non-music majors at select liberal arts colleges in Iowa. Faber remarks that, as with prior studies, no one

factor stands out as the most significant influence on the decision to continue ensemble participation (Faber, 2010). In general, students who perceived a positive high school experience were more likely to continue participation in college, though Faber suggests that the overall “positive high school experience” encompasses several sub-factors. Students also needed to believe that they were an asset to their university’s ensembles and that ensembles would fill both musical and social needs. Additionally, Faber found that a student who self-perceived a higher skill level was more likely to continue participation.

In 2011, Dan Isbell and Ann Marie Stanley added to the narrative by analyzing the role of competition in shaping the non-music major experience. Most respondents emphasized their interest in a non-competitive, stress-free ensemble atmosphere. However, many of these same respondents also listed competitive experiences as being among their most memorable, whether in a high school or college setting (Isbell and Stanley, 2011). The authors emphasize that “most memorable” does not necessarily imply a positive connotation, and they remind readers that a competitive academic environment can lead to restricted opportunities for students like non-majors (see Radocy, 2001). It follows that lifelong love of music can be fostered at the high-school level if ensemble directors deemphasize competition, thereby catering to the majority – students who will not go on to study music professionally.

In 2013, Jennifer Moder released what is to date the most comprehensive study of non-music majors in college ensembles, with a total of 2,933 survey respondents from universities in thirty-seven states. Based on survey results, Moder discusses the relative value of several factors in a student’s decision to continue ensemble participation. She first notes the lack of racial

diversity among respondents, as 85% self-identified as Caucasian.² Lack of diversity could be attributed to the type of music performed and style of performance (see Sneiderman, 2000), reduction of band programs in predominately black-serving schools, and a general tendency to stereotype when considering ethnicity and music performance (Moder, 2013). Another demographic consideration is academic major. Moder found that 56% of respondents were majoring in STEM fields, which suggests that ensemble directors looking to recruit non-majors should look first to STEM majors, a process that could include building relationships with STEM faculty.³ Of all the factors influencing continued participation, general love/enjoyment of music making was the strongest indicator, supporting the conclusions drawn by Mountford (1977), Royse (1989), Faber (2010), and Isbell and Stanley (2011), and of Buchanan (1998), who drew a similar conclusion for choral ensembles. A high school experience that emphasized musical and personal growth also tended to be a strong indicator for collegiate participation, as did promotion of ensemble pride (through ensemble t-shirts, CD recordings, etc.), and the social climate of the ensemble, which was especially significant for athletic band participants. Less influential factors included parents, friends, and middle school band directors, the ability to receive academic credit, and the reputation of the college ensemble directors. To promote lifelong music-making, Moder recommends that all colleges create ample ensemble opportunities for non-majors, that the social aspects of those ensembles are emphasized, and that the university should offer at least one non-audition ensemble for non-majors who feel that their skills or time restraints preclude a

² According to the NASM HEADS survey for the 2012 – 2013 academic year (reflecting the year in which Moder's study was published), 68.5% of all baccalaureate music majors at NASM institutions self-identified as Caucasian (HEADS, 2013). NASM does not record racial data for non-majors. Future research could examine whether there are significant gaps in racial diversity between majors and non-majors. Note that both Moder's statistic for non-majors and the HEADS statistic for majors are higher than the 58.2% of all college students who identified as Caucasian in 2013 (United States Census Bureau, 2013).

³ For reference, a study on the 2015 – 2016 academic year found that 18% of all conferred bachelor's degrees were in STEM fields (National Center for Education and Statistics, 2019).

more intensive ensemble experience. Because the decision to continue participation is most often made while still in high school, college ensemble directors should maximize exposure to their ensembles, whether through side-by-side performances or bringing student groups into high schools.

In 2021, Hyesoo Yoo released a paper which pioneered a new approach toward the study of non-major ensemble participation with the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The Theory of Planned Behavior posits a link between beliefs and behavior in which a person's beliefs are defined by the core components of attitude (overall perception of the behavior), subjective norms (outside influence, including that of other important people), and perceived behavioral control (an individual's perception of the relative ease of completing a task) (Ajzen, 1991). For this study, Yoo proposed adding a fourth variable, the value of music, as research has consistently demonstrated the strength of overall valuation of music as a predictor of ensemble participation (Yoo, 2021). Yoo surveyed two hundred non-music majors from four public universities in the southeastern United States with questions assigned to address one of the four variables. As with prior studies, a favorable attitude toward music participation and overall value of music were strong indicators of a student's decision to continue ensemble participation. Similarly, both internal and external factors of behavioral control can influence a student's decision either positively or negatively. For example, a student with a strong self-perception of ability will be more likely to continue participation, and a student who perceives time constraints will be less likely to continue. Subjective norms were found to be the weakest predictor of continued participation, though students having recently transitioned from high school were more likely to value the opinions of others (parents, high school directors, etc.) than were students who had been in college for several years.

A summary of the aforementioned research is provided by Lynne Snyder (2021). In general, factors promoting participation by non-majors include enjoyment of music-making, valuation of skill growth in music, self-perception of musical competence, ensemble social climate, positive influence from parents and high-school directors, and the perception of college participation as a natural continuation of high school activity. Factors that limit participation include time constraints and other academic or extracurricular conflicts, perception of insufficient musical competence, general declining interest, and lack of a student's preferred ensemble at the university. These conclusions should lead college ensemble directors to consider whether they are facilitating a music and social environment that non-majors value. For example, ensemble directors could consider creating more social opportunities within their ensemble or selecting music with more immediate cultural relevance to complement the standard repertoire common to the band/orchestra/choir model of most college music programs.

Note that the research cited here reflects that studies of non-major ensemble participation have emphasized ensembles that are commonly associated with the Western art music tradition: wind band, orchestra, and choir. Research has largely neglected non-major participation in other ensemble types like jazz bands or world music ensembles. Although discourse on participation in different ensemble types is outside the scope of this study, future research should expand the study of non-majors in ensembles to include a more diverse range of ensembles.

Recruitment and Retention in Applied Lessons

The collegiate applied lesson sector is an understudied aspect of the college music experience. In part, this may be due to the performance-heavy professional engagements demanded of most applied faculty members, leaving little time for publishing on the subject with which they are most familiar (Manning et al., 2019). What little work has been done on the

subject can be divided into two categories of study: recruitment and retention practices, and the student learning experience.

The state of recruiting and retention for collegiate studios is well-described by Manning et al. (2019) in the published transcript of a panel discussion on the subject. In the panel discussion, six applied lessons professors at medium to large universities discussed their experiences with recruitment and retention and drew conclusions on prominent themes among all experiences. They defined eight primary components of the recruitment process: personal contact, co-curricular activities (e.g. taking student groups into high schools for performances), professional outreach, on-campus visits, financial aid offers, sense of community, performance opportunities, and institutional impact (university prestige, location, etc.) (Manning et al., 2019). Of these, personal contact tended to be the most significant contributor to successful recruiting – panelists spoke of early and consistent networking with high school students, ensemble directors, and private lesson teachers. Financial aid also proved significant for many students, although professors typically have little control over the quantity of aid they can distribute. The professors agreed that retention and recruitment are interrelated. Being seen in the building frequently and maintaining a collegial studio environment demonstrates the level of care that students expect from their applied professors and contributes to positive retention rates. Additionally, co-curricular activities positively influence retention rates; by taking students to perform at local high schools or to attend conferences, students feel like they are getting more than the basic studio experience. The professors concluded that modern recruitment practices are nearly the same as have been in place for the last half-century. They called for an exploration into radical reimagination of the recruitment process given modern students' changing interests. It is worth noting that the professors in this panel discussion emphasized the recruitment and retention of

music major students; only one professor mentioned teaching non-majors. It is worth considering whether the same recruiting approach is successful for both major and non-major students-.

Only one published article has dealt specifically with bringing non-majors into the applied music studio. In her 2008 article “Accommodating Non-Music Majors in the Applied Lesson Studio,” Kathleen Murray discusses non-majors from the standpoint of university enrollment issues. She writes that non-majors can place a strain on resources unless a music department has underenrollment issues. Therefore, different music departments have different approaches to non-majors: larger universities with no underenrollment issues will simply not offer lessons to non-majors, while others will offer lessons for non-academic credit, staffed by graduate assistants or instructors in a community music program. Some schools combat the resource-intensiveness of lessons by offering group lessons, though this strategy is mostly associated with piano instruction. Murray reminds universities to be clear about their policies when recruiting students who do not intend to major in music.

Learning Outcomes in Applied Lessons

An early attempt to quantify the student learning experience was made by H.F. Abeles. His research, published in 1975, attempted to create a survey instrument by which students could evaluate their applied professors. Categories for evaluation included rapport with students, instructional systemization, instructional skill, musical knowledge, and general instructional competence (Abeles, 1975). This survey, given in conjunction with a survey given to applied professors, led Abeles to conclude that students and professors differ on the criteria for good applied lesson instruction. Even so, he suggests that the scale developed for this research is effective in demonstrating student-perceived efficacy of applied instruction.

It is worthwhile to note that Abeles's work studied the perceptions of active students. William E. Frederickson extended the conversation to analyze learning outcomes as perceived by music majors who had already graduated. His survey of 436 former undergraduate and graduate students also emphasized differences in opinion between music education majors and music performance majors. In their responses, both graduate and undergraduate students valued private lesson teaching as a fundamental part of their own budding careers. Most respondents preferred not to work with beginners, young students, or students who consistently struggled to advance (Frederickson, 2007).⁴ Undergraduate and graduate students rarely differed in responses. Educators and performers differed in that educators tended to be more willing to take on less advanced students and were more likely to prioritize note accuracy over musical expression. When education students were presented with the hypothetical possibility of switching to a performing-centric career, they generally indicated that they would be uninterested in doing so. Frederickson recommends that universities explore ways to open more pedagogy classes to performance students, and he suggests that all students could benefit from more instruction in applied lesson pedagogy. Owing to the paucity of teaching opportunities at the university level, he also recommends that professors emphasize the value of teaching beginner students.

Although Abeles and Frederickson differ in the student status of their participants, both restricted their studies to music majors and music professionals. To date, only one publication has examined learning outcomes for non-majors in applied lessons. In 2015, Jennifer Brown published research on student perceptions of learning outcomes in applied trumpet lessons, which included gathering opinions from majors and non-majors. Students were surveyed on the

⁴ For undergraduate respondents, this meant that they preferred working with advanced or high-achieving high school students. Graduate respondents preferred working with advanced or high-achieving undergraduate students.

perceived importance of acquiring trumpet playing skills (tonguing, tone, flexibility, etc.) and skills not specific to the trumpet (audition preparation, practice techniques, scheduling, etc.). Of all trumpet skills, students perceived the three most important to be articulation, tone, and range. Notably, non-majors valued these skills equally to majors; only improvisation and transposition were significantly less valued by non-majors. For skills not specific to the trumpet, practice techniques, performing skills, and self-reflection skills were the most highly valued, again with non-majors exhibiting similar valuation to majors; only audition and pedagogy skills were significantly less valued by non-majors. Students also rated their own competency on the trumpet. Self-reported skill level was highest in performance majors, and not significantly different between music education and non-music majors. Brown suggests that applied trumpet professors should emphasize the value of skills like transposition, improvisation, research, and audition preparation with students who may not appreciate how these skills aid their development as musicians and in their lives outside of music.

Conclusions

The narratives on the experience of the non-major participating in undergraduate musical training emphasize the inherent valuation of music, the role of the high school music experience, the importance of a welcoming social environment, self-perception of skill, and flexible scheduling. Furthermore, desired learning outcomes are tied to select retention factors. For example, a student with an inherent interest in music-making will tend to want to improve in technique and artistry on their chosen instrument, even if they are a non-music major. Most of the present literature has focused on retention of non-majors in ensemble settings, which is understandable given that ensembles tend to attract more non-majors than applied lessons, likely owing to time constraints and the financial burden of lesson fees. Still, to accommodate those

non-major students who do pursue applied lessons, it is important to understand their reasoning for taking lessons, their desired outcomes, and the role the professor can play in crafting a lesson structure that works toward those outcomes.

Methodology

Introduction and Research Question

The purpose of this study is to understand how former non-music major students who took applied horn lessons perceive their experience. The perception of experience is multifaceted and includes the effect of the lesson experience on the overall student experience (e.g. social atmosphere, scholarship funding) and the learning outcomes associated with taking horn lessons. In this section, I discuss the research design, selection criteria for participants, instrumentation, and my role as the researcher. I also explain my approach to analyzing participant responses.

Research Design

I decided to approach this study with a qualitative design in mind, meaning research that emphasizes interviews and written responses rather than survey instrumentation or data collection. The qualitative design allows for a deeper dive into the individual experience and offers a framework on which a larger survey study could be based.

The personalized nature of the lesson experience warrants the kind of in-depth sharing afforded by the interview process. Participants may share similar reasons for taking lessons and have similar retrospective analyses of learning outcomes, but within those similarities will exist subtle differences that can only be parsed out by having the participants use their own words to describe their experience. The phenomenon of non-majors taking applied lessons lends itself to a phenomenological inquiry. Phenomenology is difficult to define because it has grown to represent a massive variety of contexts, such that it has become a style of thought rather than a specific doctrine (Farina, 2014). However, at a fundamental level phenomenology describes the

process of understanding experience by studying the individual, because individuals reflect their experiences. To discuss the lesson experience with a former non-major is to get at the essential nature of the lesson experience for that population.

The case study process also establishes a framework for further study in an understudied population. Until now, no research has focused on the experience of non-majors in an applied lesson setting. Therefore, it is difficult to know what questions would be most informative for a larger-scale study like a survey. I consider the present study to be a baseline from which information could be extracted to create more comprehensive studies on this population.

Participant Criteria

In defining the target population, I decided to add two qualifiers. First, participants would be former students, rather than current students; second, participants would have taken applied lessons in a horn studio. The decision to study former students stems from an interest in retrospective analysis of the lesson experience. I wanted to talk with participants who have had time away from their lesson experience to reflect on what it meant to them while they were students, and to understand how learning outcomes from applied lessons might help build their skillset for a career or in personal endeavors, even though they are not full-time musicians. The decision to restrict the population of study to horn students comes as both a matter of convenience and as a restriction on a variable that is beyond the scope of this study. As a doctoral candidate in horn performance and an active member of the professional horn community, former horn players are the easiest population for me to recruit. My contacts in the horn community extend to both amateur players with whom I can communicate directly and professionals who can connect me with former students. By focusing on horn players, I am restricting the potential variable that students of different instruments might have different

experiences and perceived learning outcomes. While certainly a valuable area of study, comparison of experiences across instruments is outside the scope of this study. Therefore, rather than leave the variable undiscussed, I decided to restrict it by focusing on only one instrument.

All participants in the study met three criteria:

- 1) Took applied horn lessons for at least one academic year while enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student.
- 2) Obtained a bachelor's degree in a non-music area and did not simultaneously obtain a music major (a minor in music was permissible).
- 3) Currently identify their primary employment as being in a non-music field. A respondent could participate in the study if they are occasionally compensated for music-related engagements (teaching, performing, etc.), as long as they do not identify music as their primary source of income.

These criteria represent a balance of restrictions and permissions that reflect the variability of the non-major experience. I allowed for participants who took only one year of applied lessons because I anticipated that the non-major experience could involve starting out in applied lessons, then giving them up as the courseload in the chosen major became more involved. Although I wanted to focus on non-professional musicians, I also anticipated that a student who chose to take applied lessons would possibly continue to seek out performance opportunities after graduation, which could include the occasional paid performance with a local orchestra, a church group, etc. Therefore, to include representation for this experience, I added the allowance for participants who make occasional income from their instrument.

Initially, I had not planned to include music minors in this study because I wanted to focus on participants who had taken applied lessons without being required to do so by an academic program. However, following conversations with friends and colleagues, I discovered that the pool of potential recruits would increase by including music minors. Additionally, similar conversations elucidated that non-minors often joined applied lessons to fulfill general education or scholarship requirements; therefore, like minors, they sought applied lessons to fulfill some external requirement. With these considerations in mind, I decided to allow music minors into the study.

Participant Recruitment

Recruiting participants took the form of purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling, also known as purposive sampling, is a non-random sampling method in which the researcher has control over who will participate in the study (for more information on purposeful sampling, see Merriam, 2009). The recruitment process also included elements of convenience and intensity sampling. Convenience sampling describes the selection of participants who are easy for the researcher to access; intensity sampling describes the intentionality in selecting a small group of participants who strongly represent the trait(s) that are being studied and can offer in-depth insight into the phenomenon of interest.

To source participants, I contacted friends and colleagues and requested referrals to anyone who fit the criteria and who my contacts believed could give descriptive, insightful answers. This method proved successful, and I was connected with four former non-music majors who agreed to participate in the study. Following the initial agreement, I sent a cover letter to each participant; reviewing the cover letter served as their official agreement to continue with the study (for a copy of the cover letter, see Appendix A). All individual interviews were

conducted on Zoom and recorded for future transcription. Communication of written response questions and answers took place through email correspondence.

Instrumentation Design

To gather participant responses, I developed interview and written response instruments. The interviews were designed using a semi-structured format, with pre-prepared lines of questioning geared toward eliciting information about the individual's initial interest in taking applied horn lessons, the decision not to major in music, the lesson experience, and a retrospective analysis of how applied horn lessons contributed to the interviewee's post-college personal and professional life. The written responses included lines of questioning related to the respondent's experience and perceptions on the general experience of non-majors in applied lessons.

The decision to incorporate interviews and written responses has two rationales. First, offering two different means of response allows for some triangulation of the data. Interview participants were not prepared on the questions ahead of time, so their responses represent an off-the-cuff approach to discussing experience. Conversely, the written response participant was given a set of questions that required more critical thinking and time to consider the questions before responding, so their responses represent a more considered approach. Comparing prompted and unprompted responses helps elucidate a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon through the convergence of information from different sources (Carter et al., 2014). The second rationale is accommodating participant comfort and preference. Giving participants a choice between interview and written response options allowed them to respond in a way that best suited their strengths, preferences, and time constraints.

Researcher Role

As the interviewer and assigner of written response questions, I aimed to draw out narratives that included a combination of recounting experience and reflecting on experience. Therefore, I viewed my role as both a recorder of a story and as an instigator of conversation on how the story affects the student, the professor, and the music department. The semi-structured interview format was a useful way to fill this role, as I had the opportunity to pre-plan questions that would let interviewees share the details of their story, with unstructured follow-up questions available to encourage interviewees to contextualize the impact of their story. I wanted the interviewees to feel that our interview was in the form of a conversation, rather than a question-and-answer session. Therefore, I sometimes asked follow-up questions that did not pertain to the present study (e.g. a line of questioning about performing with a pit orchestra). In cases where these tangential conversations also included large amounts of identifying information, I elected to remove them from the transcript.

Although I wanted interviewees to feel that we were having a conversation, I generally refrained from offering my own opinions and stories because I wanted participants to feel that the time we spent talking was dedicated to them. I believed that they would be more willing to share their stories if I ensured that our time together was focused on their stories and reflections. I also wanted to minimize the amount of my own bias that I brought into the conversation. This was a way to acknowledge my bias as a former non-major in applied horn lessons who did not have professional aspirations until after graduation. However, although I worked to restrict my bias, I do not believe that full objectivity is attainable. Because I was once a member of the population I am studying, I am naturally going to see patterns that are informed by my own experience. I see the analysis of the interviews and written responses as the place where I will

add a little of my own voice to the conversation. Additionally, because I am not generalizing about the entire population, the subjectivity of my analysis still allows for meaningful results.

Analysis and Synthesis

Following each interview, I transcribed the responses into a written format. The process of transcription is tedious, but it is a valuable way to spend quality time with each participant's responses and to set up for the next steps in analysis. For each transcription I began with a micro-level annotation. At a sentence level, I highlighted descriptive words, phrases, and sentences, and assigned labels to them. For example, a sentence describing the importance of a scholarship in the decision to take private lessons may have been labeled 'external motivation,' or the mention of a Mozart Concerto may have been labeled 'repertoire.'

Having built a list of annotations, I organized them into a flowchart that represented hierarchies of importance and connections between the annotations. These flowcharts helped me draw conclusions about what aspects of the respondents' experiences were most significant. Comparing flowcharts between respondents also allowed me to see how they valued their experiences differently. After analyzing the interviews, annotations, and flowcharts, I established what I believed to be the most significant themes that emerged from each response. Together, the themes from each interview informed my conclusions, as I discussed the most significant themes that emerged when viewing all the responses as a unit.

Ethical Considerations and Limitations

Participants faced little to no physical or emotional risk from participating in this study. That said, I enacted some anonymity protocols to make sure participants felt comfortable speaking freely about their experience. Participants' names and identifying information are

redacted, and a few tangential statements have been removed from the transcript where redacting information rendered the statement unintelligible. All participants have had the opportunity to read this paper and ensure that their views are accurately represented prior to publication.

One limitation of this study is the lack of diverse response methodology. Originally I intended to have three response sources: interviews, written responses, and a focus group. Having three response sources would have allowed for improved data triangulation. However, during the recruitment stage the focus group option was not popular, as respondents preferred to participate individually. Due to the difficulty of finding participants willing to take part in a focus group, I elected to remove the focus group option in favor of additional individual interviews.

The structure of this study is not designed to elucidate generalizations about the population. The qualitative nature of the responses and the low sample size only allow me to draw results about those who participated. However, even without population-level generalizations, there is still useful information to be gleaned from this study. Even though I cannot make claims as to how the entire population feels about their lesson experience, I can make the claim that at least some people within the population have felt a certain way. Based on the responses given here, it is likely that others within the population have similar experiences and opinions on those experiences. Therefore, it is still worth drawing conclusions and recommendations so that professors and music departments can discuss whether their non-majors share similar opinions and how those opinions may be addressed.

Results

Introduction

In total, I worked with four participants, three of whom sat for individual interviews and one who gave written responses.⁵ These four individuals represent studies with three different professors at four different universities in the Southeast and Midwest United States. They also represent education levels ranging from completed bachelors to completed doctorate.

The individual interviews proved to be the richest source of information, likely owing to their greater length and the ability to ask clarifying and follow-up questions. Therefore, they will form the backbone of this case study analysis. The written response will be used as a secondary point of reference to which the themes drawn out from the interviews can be compared.

For each interview, I will begin by summarizing the case, including background information and response summaries.⁶ I will next describe the process of annotating and categorizing the responses, and provide a flowchart that shows connections between the annotations. The annotations and flowchart are meant to give a sense for my process of analyzing the interviews and to demonstrate how I came to my conclusions on emergent themes. Finally, I will give the emergent themes drawn out through this analysis and discuss their implications.

For the written response, I will provide a summary of the respondent's thoughts and the major themes that emerged from them.

⁵ All four participants identified as female, and I will use she/her/hers pronouns in referring to each of them.

⁶ Per IRB requirements for preserving anonymity, certain identifying information has been suppressed, including respondent names, place of residence, professor names, and institution names.

Interview #1: KK⁷***Case Summary***

KK's high school experience was equal parts rewarding and frustrating. On one hand, she enjoyed being in ensembles and taking private lessons, and she felt that her high school experience set her up well to be successful in college lessons and ensembles; she also participated in a local community orchestra. On the other hand, she found that high school tended to stretch her thin, with the consistent expectation that she would do lots of activities and do them all well. High school horn lessons were a valuable experience, as they helped her audition successfully for the school's upper-level band. They were also useful for preparing audition material and developing sight-reading skills for all-state competitions and college auditions. Although she enjoyed music as a high schooler, she did not consider majoring in music, opting instead to enter college for a degree in a STEM field. In choosing a school, her primary interest with the music department was their ensemble offerings, specifically concert band and orchestra. She did not factor the horn professor or the ability to take horn lessons into her school choice.

KK chose a regional university in the Southeast United States, with total enrollment between 10,000 and 15,000 students, most of whom are undergraduates. Although she was unsure of the music department's total enrollment, she estimates that at most six or seven horn players were enrolled in the studio at any time. The first reason she cited for choosing to take horn lessons was that they were required for a scholarship. The second reason was to help prepare for rehearsals in her chosen ensemble, the orchestra. Most of the work she did in her

⁷ This interview was conducted on April 26th, 2023.

lessons was directly related to preparing the orchestral repertoire, with some work in her second year being dedicated to studies out of an etude book. She emphasized the relaxed nature of her lesson experience, saying, “I think I was actually more relaxed during lesson than during practice and rehearsals, and definitely more relaxed compared to when I took lessons in high school.” She said that her professor’s willingness to respect that her priorities were outside the music department and resultant willingness to not hold her to strict accountability on practicing and lesson preparedness allowed for a more relaxing experience.

KK also discussed her ensemble experience. At her university, most brass players participated in both wind ensemble and orchestra; KK recalls being the only brass player to exclusively play in the orchestra. The decision to focus on the orchestra was informed by her high school experience. In high school, KK participated in a community orchestra, and found that she enjoyed orchestral repertoire more than wind band repertoire. When the transition to college came, she had in her mind that she would choose either orchestra or wind band, and so she chose orchestra. In addition to her time in the orchestra, KK was asked by her horn professor to join the university horn ensemble, with which she spent a few months.

Our discussion of the horn ensemble led to an exchange about her place in the social setting of the music department. KK said that she was not heavily involved in the horn studio’s social atmosphere, and that being the only brass player to participate in a single ensemble felt isolating at times. However, she notes that this is not due to the department’s social environment; rather, she made a conscious choice to limit her involvement within the department due to the time and mental constraints of additional social commitments. Participating in the horn ensemble did give her a chance to get to know her fellow horn players a little better before she departed the university, although she has not remained in contact with them since her graduation.

Following graduation, KK continued her studies with a doctoral program in a STEM field. During her time as a doctoral student, KK did not play her horn regularly, citing the additional time and mental energy required by a graduate program. However, she still owns her horn, and she maintains the hope of coming back to it someday. When reflecting on her lesson experience, she speaks of her time in lessons and her professor in a positive light, again citing the respectfulness of her time and the low-stress environment. When asked about any changes she would have liked in her lesson experience, she expressed a desire to have been challenged a little more while maintaining that relaxed atmosphere. A larger project like a solo piece would have been a welcome addition to the usual diet of orchestral music, etudes, and duets.

In closing our interview, we discussed perceived learning outcomes and advice to professors of non-majors. The main learning outcome KK mentioned was understanding the value of practice, both in music and in math, her primary field of interest. She says that practice is also a core principle of getting good at higher level math, so practicing for lessons and learning to work consistently toward an objective have complemented her math training. When speaking on advice to professors, KK again referenced consideration of the student's time, being aware that non-majors may not always be able to devote the same time to preparing for lessons as majors. Additionally, she mentioned emphasizing positive reinforcement as a teaching tool. Because non-majors are actively choosing to pursue lessons, professors should acknowledge this choice with lots of positive feedback and encouragement.

Annotations and Categorizations

Annotation of KK's high school experience emphasized statements which I labeled "goals." KK's discussion of her high school lesson experience mostly related to how her lessons helped her achieve tangible goals: making the high school's upper-level band, making the all-

state band, and succeeding in college auditions. She also referenced extracurriculars in mentioning her time with the community orchestra and in discussing how a focus on extracurricular activity contributed to feelings of stress and mental over-expenditure. In her college lessons, KK described her goals as being “short-term” and “immediate,” with goals being focused on immediate proficiency in the repertoire, rather than developing larger ideas about technique or musicality.

A separate but related category to tangible goals is “motivation.” Where tangible goals describes KK’s desired goals and outcomes, motivation describes external factors that contributed to establishing goals. The offer of scholarship money motivated KK to take horn lessons, and a positive community orchestra experience motivated KK to choose the college orchestra as her primary ensemble. Similarly, KK discussed the heightened demands of solo repertoire as a motivating challenge that she wished had been a part of her lesson experience.

I identified three annotations directly related to the lesson experience: “lesson structure,” “repertoire,” and “lesson atmosphere.” Lesson structure describes the technical details of the lesson experience. This includes the actual structure of a typical lesson (coming in, warming up, ensemble pieces/etudes) and the lack of additional requirements like juries or studio class participation. Repertoire identifies pieces of music that KK studied in lessons, again mostly focusing on orchestra repertoire and etudes, with little focus on solo repertoire. Of these three annotations, the lesson atmosphere was the most heavily discussed. The following are a sample of words and phrases that KK used to describe the lesson atmosphere: “relaxed,” “just for fun,” “easier [than lessons for majors],” and “respectful [of time constraints].”

Other annotations that emerged from my analysis of KK’s interview include “social atmosphere,” “conflicts,” and “learning outcomes.” In terms of social atmosphere, KK

emphasized choice, specifically her choice to minimize her involvement in the social atmosphere of the horn studio. Choosing not to be socially involved was related to a larger decision on KK's part not to emphasize the social experience of college, saying that she "chose not to be socially involved in that many areas in the first place."

Conflicts that KK cited were the time and mental expenditure required of music participation, which contributed to her decision to discontinue musical participation in graduate school. However, she connected the expenditure conflict to the ambition of someday returning to her horn. When directly questioned about learning outcomes, KK responded by mentioning the value of practice in building musical proficiency and the similarities to practicing math skills. Though not a direct response to a line of inquiry on learning outcomes, she also discussed building confidence through time spent in lessons and ensembles. She connected confidence to practicing, saying, "...but then once I was able to practice, then it was like... you have the confidence, and you can enjoy yourself more."

Annotation Flowchart

Based on the annotations drawn out from KK's interview, I prepared a flowchart that represents hierarchies of importance and connections between the annotations.

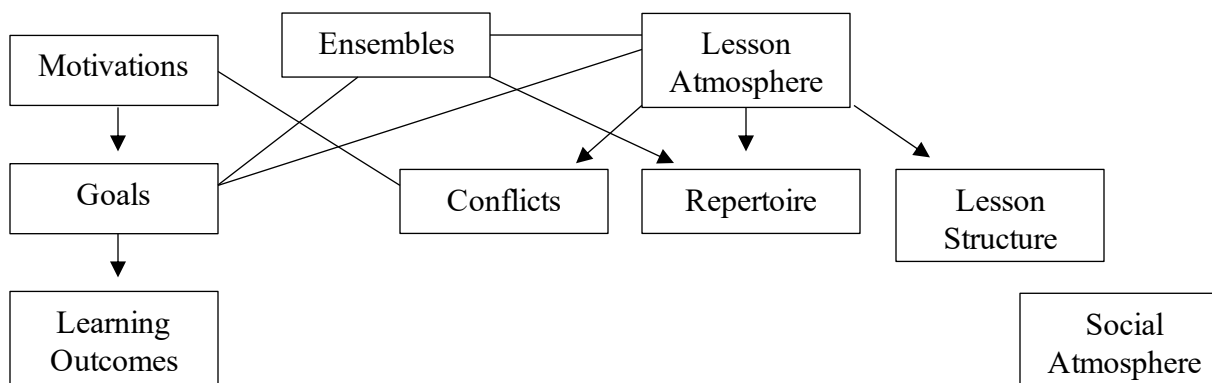


Figure 1. Flow chart based on annotations from KK's interview.

In this flowchart, arrows represent a progression between annotations. For example, the motivation of the positive community orchestra experience led to participation in the university orchestra, which led to goalsetting related to preparing the orchestral repertoire. The overarching importance of a relaxed lesson atmosphere led to specific examples from structure, repertoire, and conflicts that contributed to the desired atmosphere. Non-arrow lines represent connections between annotations that do not necessarily represent a progression. In KK's experience, the goals set during lessons contributed to a relaxed lesson atmosphere by being short-term, easily attainable, and focused on her primary goal of succeeding in orchestra. Conflicts and motivation are connected by KK's professor's respect for time and mental energy expenditure; because she was willing to work around KK's conflicts, KK was motivated to continue horn lessons throughout her time as a student. The social atmosphere annotation stands unconnected to the rest of the flowchart, as socialization with the rest of the studio and the music department did not play a significant role in KK's experience.

Emergent Themes

KK's experience offers insight into the decision-making process for a non-major considering taking horn lessons, and into the importance of lesson atmosphere in giving a non-major the greatest potential for a positive experience. For KK, the choice to pursue collegiate-level horn lessons was influenced by external motivations (e.g. scholarship money and the community orchestra experience) and goals (e.g. success in the college orchestra). It is perhaps uninformative to say that the decision to take college horn lessons is influenced by a combination of past experiences, external motivators, and internal ambitions; however, KK's interview sheds some light on the specific experiences, motivators, and ambitions that are important for a non-major. For example, KK's decision to take lessons was a product of a scholarship offer and seen

as a supplement to participation in the orchestra; it was not influenced by a relationship with the horn professor or other members of the studio.

The most prominent theme in KK's interview was the importance of lesson atmosphere. KK repeatedly emphasized a relaxed atmosphere as being central to her positive reflection on her experience. In my annotation flowchart, lesson atmosphere is a central node to which most annotations related to the lesson experience were connected, including repertoire, lesson structure, goals, ensembles, and conflicts. For example, KK connected a relaxed lesson atmosphere to the focus on orchestral repertoire in lieu of solos. Similarly, the professor's respect for KK's time and mental energy expenditure allowed KK to feel relaxed in her lessons. If there was ever a week where she had less practice time due to academic commitments, she felt confident that the lesson atmosphere she valued would not be negatively affected.

Interview #2: EK⁸***Case Summary***

EK did not begin her grade school experience as a horn player; until her junior year, her primary instrument was the clarinet. Upon switching to the horn, she began taking horn lessons with a local teacher at an instrument repair shop, where she also worked. She identified her high school as being competitive and said that most of the students shared a similar level of dedication to the band as she did. By constantly being surrounded by a high level of music as a high schooler, she felt that continuing with music in college would be a natural progression. Although she considered majoring in music, she decided that she preferred to keep it as a hobby, so she entered college with a major in a STEM field. She selected her university for the unique degree program they offered in her chosen STEM major.

Initially, EK began college in only ensembles, participating in the marching band, basketball pep band, and horn choir. Upon joining the horn choir, the university's horn professor suggested she consider taking lessons. A few factors led to her decision to accept the professor's suggestion: her relationship with the professor cultivated through the horn ensemble, the fact that lessons would cost no extra money, and her desire to keep up with other members of the ensembles she was in, as most of them were majoring music and so spent more time practicing music. EK repeatedly emphasized social atmosphere as being a reason for her continued participation in ensembles and horn lessons. She spoke especially highly of the social atmosphere in ensembles like marching band and horn choir, though she says she was involved

⁸ This interview was conducted on May 3rd, 2023.

in the social environment of the horn studio only a medium amount, possibly because she did not participate in the weekly studio class.

In each lesson, EK and her professor would start with breathing exercises, scales, and warmups, and then would focus on repertoire. Her professor emphasized solo repertoire with her, and they did not focus on ensemble music in lessons. She specifically cited the Mozart Horn Concertos as typical of the type of repertoire that she studied. She recalled performing one of the concertos with a pianist for the studio, saying that it was a unique and memorable experience because she had never performed solo repertoire for an audience before, as her emphasis had always been on ensemble playing. She mentioned a certain amount of nervousness performing for members of the studio, believing that they would be able to judge her playing critically because they were actively studying music. Although she enjoyed her lessons, EK emphasized the personal value she derived from the ensemble experience. Ensembles gave her the chance to interact with students outside her major, to stay connected with a favorite hobby, and to work with peers who shared a common desire to be in these ensembles.

Following graduation, EK secured a job at a site where she interned, and she continues to work for that organization. Because she works in a technical field, she does not feel that she uses many of the musical skills she developed in her career. Currently, she does not play her horn regularly, although she hopes to join a local community band soon. In reflecting on her lesson experience, EK said that taking lessons helped reinforce intangible skills like advance preparation. When asked if she would give any advice to a professor teaching non-majors, she emphasized finding ways to make the experience low-commitment and less serious. She said that professors should remember that lessons are not the student's priority, and they should be understanding if non-major students have weeks where they do not practice.

Annotations and Categorizations

In speaking about her high school experience, EK drew connections between the environment with which she was surrounded and the motivations which led to her studying horn privately, which eventually led to her continuing with horn studies in college. She described being surrounded by music as characteristic of her high school experience and suggested that being in a musical environment motivated her to continue studying music. Similarly, a switch to the horn as a junior and a competitive high school band program were external motivations, and the desire to make it into the all-state band was a tangible goal. I have annotated EK's discussion of her decision not to major in music as a "conflict," though this is not a conflict of something tangible like time expenditure. What EK described is the conflict at the intersection of hobby and career that many professionals face, particularly musicians. According to EK, though she considered majoring in music, she decided that it was valuable to keep music fun by maintaining it as something she could choose to do when she pleased: "I didn't want it to be all it did. I liked keeping it as something I enjoyed and got to do when I wanted to, not because I had to."

In deciding to take college lessons, EK cited two motivations: the ability to take lessons at no extra cost, and a relationship cultivated with the horn professor through participation in the horn choir. Additionally, she cited an intangible goal: a desire to play at the same level as the other horn players. She connected this goal to the social atmosphere of the studio, suggesting that she did not want to be perceived as not pulling her weight in the ensemble: "I didn't want to be the one falling behind in horn choir, so I had to make sure I kept up the parts." The goal to play at a high level is also connected to my annotation of EK's perceived learning outcomes. Notably, she claimed that playing-related learning outcomes were her objective for taking lessons, and she did not aim to gain anything extra-musical from her lesson experience.

The lesson structure and repertoire annotations elucidate EK's professor's approach to teaching a non-major. EK's description of typical lesson structure and repertoire suggests similarity in approach between her lessons and lessons for majors. For example, repertoire selection emphasized breathing techniques, scales, and solo repertoire, with little to no focus on ensemble music. The primary difference was in the quantity and degree of difficulty of technical exercises and repertoire.

Because EK talked at length about the importance of ensemble playing in her music-making, I have included an "ensembles" annotation as a node. The ensembles annotation is connected to the central node, "social atmosphere." EK said of her ensemble experience:

I really loved the social aspect. I liked making friends outside of my core classes. It was nice to be able to meet other non-engineering people sometimes. I liked being able to branch out. I liked being able to stay connected to music since I love it, and there were people of that common interest in the groups. I liked the social aspect for sure.

EK also connected her ensemble experience to the conflict annotation, this time talking about time commitment. According to EK, the time commitment conflict led her to discontinue participation in the marching band and horn choir after two years, and to continue with basketball pep band as her primary ensemble outlet. EK says, "I kept up with basketball pep band for all of college because it was the least time commitment, but I still got the social aspect."

The conflicts annotation also emerged from EK's response to a question on advice to professors teaching non-majors. EK asked professors to remember that lessons are not a priority for non-majors, and that they are not necessarily why the student is paying the university. Therefore, professors should be aware of the time constraints put on non-majors and adjust their teaching to minimize weekly commitments.

Annotation Flowchart

Following is the flowchart based on my annotation of EK's interview:

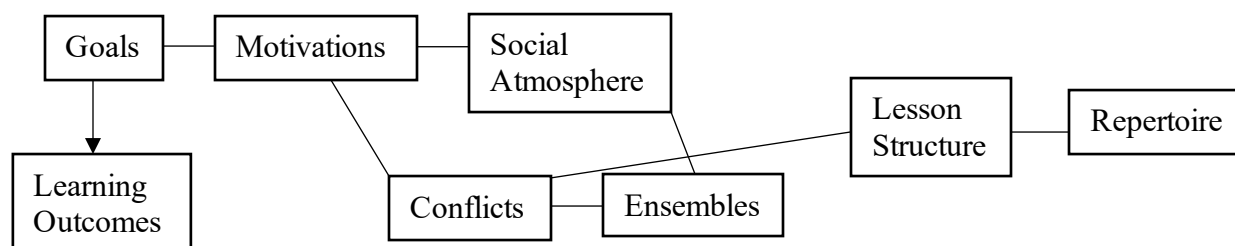


Figure 2. Flowchart based on annotations from EK's interview.

Social atmosphere is the central node off which this flowchart is based. This reflects EK's emphasis on the social aspect of her college music experience. Lesson structure and repertoire are slightly set off from the rest of the flowchart because EK did not specify a strong connection between the particulars of her lesson experience and the rest of her musical experience. For example, she noted that most of the repertoire she studied in lessons was solo repertoire like the Mozart concertos, whereas she self-described as primarily interested in ensemble playing. The one connection between these annotations and the rest of the flowchart is the conflicts annotation, owing to her assessment that a good lesson structure for non-majors should reflect an understanding of non-majors' commitments outside of music. It is also noteworthy that the lesson atmosphere annotation is absent from this flowchart, as EK did not connect the details of her lesson experience to any descriptors of lesson atmosphere (e.g. relaxed, demanding, etc.).

Emergent Themes

I have drawn out two main themes from EK's interview. First, the social atmosphere was the most significant contributor to EK's positive experience within the music department. Second, ensembles tended to be the focus of EK's musical efforts, with lessons being an

auxiliary part of the experience. EK spoke about social atmosphere throughout the interview. Being surrounded by fellow musicians in high school contributed to her decision to continue with music in college; her desire to be perceived as a contributing member of the horn ensemble led to her taking lessons; and her response to questions on the ensemble setting focused on valuation of the social environment. EK is undoubtedly not alone in the high value she placed on social interaction. She summarized the value of the social setting in her comment, “I liked making friends outside of my core classes; it was nice to be able to meet other non-engineering people sometimes.” For non-majors, participating in the music department helps diversify the college social experience.

It is worth noting that EK seemed to have the strongest assessment of her experience when talking about ensembles, not lessons. She even pointed out that her decision to take lessons emerged after first participating in the university horn choir, and her studies in lessons were directed toward developing skills to keep up with the demands of that ensemble. Interestingly, she alluded to a disconnect between her intention for the lessons and the structure of the lessons themselves, stating that they rarely worked on horn choir music in lessons, instead focusing on solo repertoire. However, she did not specifically mention this disconnect in her interview, and she noted a positive reception of her lesson experience, saying that it met her expectations.

Interview #3: DM⁹

Case Summary

DM claims to have been unable to play a single note when she picked up the horn in eighth grade after switching from trumpet. However, with lots of practice she quickly improved, and by ninth grade she placed in the regional honor band. Having noticed her rapid improvement, DM's high school band director suggested she begin taking private lessons. At DM's high school, a private teacher would come to the school to teach after the school day, and DM began taking lessons with her. She commented that her experience with high school lessons was positive, as she found her teacher's honest, sometimes harsh approach refreshing, and she continued to improve. By her sophomore year, she placed in the all-state band, and she continued to compete for all-state placement throughout her high school career.

As with many high school band students, music was a significant hobby for DM, and she considered parlaying that into a career in music therapy. However, the coursework required for a music therapy degree (she specifically cited applied piano lessons) and the desire to keep music as a stress-free source of enjoyment led her into a STEM field. Then a friend recommended her for the school's Fine and Performing Arts program, which provided scholarship funding in exchange for a student either majoring or minoring in an art. Therefore, DM decided to add a music minor to her STEM studies. Per the minor's requirements, she had to take lessons until a certain lesson level was reached; however, she continued in lessons after achieving this level because it motivated her to continue practicing. Additionally, because she viewed music as a

⁹ This interview was conducted on May 16th, 2023.

source of stress-relief, having lessons forced her to take time out of her week for something she enjoyed.

DM worked on a variety of repertoire in her lessons, including lyrical etudes, solo repertoire for juries, and ensemble music. She notes that selection of repertoire for juries was lenient; her professor would give her a list of repertoire from which she would select her jury pieces for the semester. DM wanted to improve her tone quality, as her high school teacher had told her that her unusual embouchure shape would cause difficulties in producing a good tone. Musically, she wanted to learn how to be less rigid in interpreting the repertoire; she cited the copious breath marks in Richard Strauss's first horn concerto as an example of notation that she initially thought she had to follow. More generally, she felt that learning to be less rigid in her musical interpretation helped her learn to be less rigid in other aspects of her life. For example, she went into college with a plan for her educational trajectory, but as she worked in lessons on flexibility of interpretation, she felt that her educational trajectory could use more flexibility too, which led to her taking two unplanned gap years before continuing to medical school.

DM made many positive remarks regarding her lesson experience. She felt that her professor was effective at teaching a non-major by communicating ideas in a way that aligned with her personality and interests, and she felt that he was adept at doing this for every student in his studio. She also appreciated that he was willing to create an independent study opportunity for her and to create other opportunities for her within the studio, even though he was an adjunct. However, her positive comments did not extend to the rest of the music department. She felt that other professors in the music department expected too much of her and the rest of the non-majors. For example, she thought that juries were too strict given her non-major status. This conflict extended to other members of the horn studio. DM says she sometimes felt a disconnect

with the other players because they talked as if she could not understand how busy music majors are. Additionally, the major students would talk about professors or assignments for classes of which she was not a part, which also contributed to feelings of social disconnect.

In terms of ensemble participation, DM spoke of her time with a woodwind quintet and the university wind ensemble. The woodwind quintet was a positive experience. DM enjoyed the soloistic nature of the ensemble and felt that it pushed her to greater improvement as a horn player and musician. She did feel a slight disconnect with other members of the ensemble, saying that they sometimes shared with their professors the attitude of unreasonably elevated expectations for a non-major. DM did not have a positive experience with the wind ensemble, owing to personal conflicts with the director and feeling that the ensemble played at a lower level than she had hoped. Therefore, she only participated in the wind ensemble for one semester.

Eventually, the time commitments of a STEM degree and the completion of her minor requirements led DM to reduce her participation in the music department. Eventually, she discontinued participation in lessons. Since graduating, she has also largely stopped playing her horn, mostly because she has not owned one of her own and was unable to rent one from the university owing to her reduced participation in department activities. However, she has since borrowed a horn from her high school, and she hopes to get back into playing someday soon. At present, she is finishing applications for a doctoral degree in her STEM field.

In reflecting on her experience with the music department, she was critical of the department's inability to work effectively with non-majors, and reminded professors to be aware that musical commitments are not a non-major's priority. However, she looks back on her lesson experience with fond memories, again noting her professor's kindness, adeptness at teaching a variety of students (including non-majors), and willingness to go the extra mile for her.

Annotations and Categorizations

DM's decision to take lessons in high school was predicated primarily on external motivation, as lessons were first suggested by her high school band director. Upon beginning lessons, DM cited both tangible and intangible goals as products of her time in lessons, tangible goals being placement in the school's top ensemble and in state honor bands, and intangible goals being improved confidence on the instrument. DM also drew a connection between the confidence goal and her decision to forego a music degree, owing to her lack of confidence in other aspects of musicianship like singing and piano skills. The conflict annotation applies to this decision; like EK, DM was concerned about the intersection of hobby and career leading to resentment of musical pursuits.

Much like her high school lessons, DM's decision to pursue lessons in college was influenced by a combination of external motivations and internal goals. Admittance to the school's Fine and Performing Arts program required the addition of a music minor to her STEM path, but the financial benefits of the program warranted the added coursework. Therefore, financials became a contributing external motivator. Internal goals included continued improvement on the horn and the desire to have a form of stress relief built into her weekly schedule.

In describing her lessons, DM connected the goals she set for herself to the learning outcomes she retrospectively cites as being important skills that have influenced her life outside of music. She set out to improve in her musicality, and along the way she recognized a certain rigidity in her approach not only to music, but to other aspects of her life as well. The goal of improved musicality then led to the learning outcome of embracing flexibility and subjectivity in decision-making. She also connected her goals with an annotation that I have labeled "teaching

strategies.” DM spoke about how her professor connected with her naturally analytical mindset. For example, he connected playing the horn to doing a research protocol. Much as in research, musicians continually craft a hypothesis, test the hypothesis, then adjust based on results. The repertoire DM studied in lessons was mostly lyrical etudes and solos, with the occasional lesson on woodwind quintet repertoire. Musically, she learned to recognize the differences in approach between solo repertoire, chamber music, and large ensemble repertoire.

When not discussing her lessons, conflict was a central theme of DM’s interview. Time conflict was the primary type of conflict DM encountered during her music studies, and it led to other types of conflict between her and other members of the music department. For example, when talking about her experience with the wind ensemble, DM found conflict with the group’s skill level and with the director’s attitude. Although she enjoyed her time with the woodwind quintet, she found herself occasionally frustrated by the sense that other students and faculty involved with the group did not respect the significant time commitments she had in her major studies. She says, “...It was just kind of like... why do you not know this piece by heart by now, but everyone else in the room can play it? Well, everyone else was a music major. They didn’t have lab reports to write. They had time to practice that I didn’t really have... Weekly I had to prioritize what I was practicing, and I feel like no one really understood that.” DM also connected conflict to the social atmosphere of the horn studio. She shared a similar sentiment about the studio as with the woodwind quintet, saying,

...They would always talk about, like, I have to take, you know, nine classes just to have fifteen credit hours, or whatever, and they were like, ‘oh, it’s so much work,’ and they would kind of treat it as I’m working less than they are on school stuff, and it was kind of like, it’s all the same. We’re all equally as busy, you are not busier than I am just because you’re a music major and you’re taking more courses.

She also cited a tendency for her studio mates to talk about shared experiences, which sometimes left her feeling disconnected: “I kind of felt like, not like an outcast, but like I couldn’t really connect with them in the same way. They would be talking about, like, ‘oh, this professor said this for this assignment,’ and I would just be like, ‘okay.’ I would work on my lab report or something while they’re talking about this.”

When increased time pressures forced DM to discontinue lessons, conflict with the wind ensemble director led to DM’s inability to continue practicing the horn. She did not own a horn herself, and the director would not allow her to borrow one because students not participating in ensembles or lessons were not allowed to use school instruments. Any exception to this rule was unlikely because “for whatever reason [the ensemble director] didn’t really like [her].”

Annotation Flowchart

Following is the flowchart based on my annotation of DM’s interview:

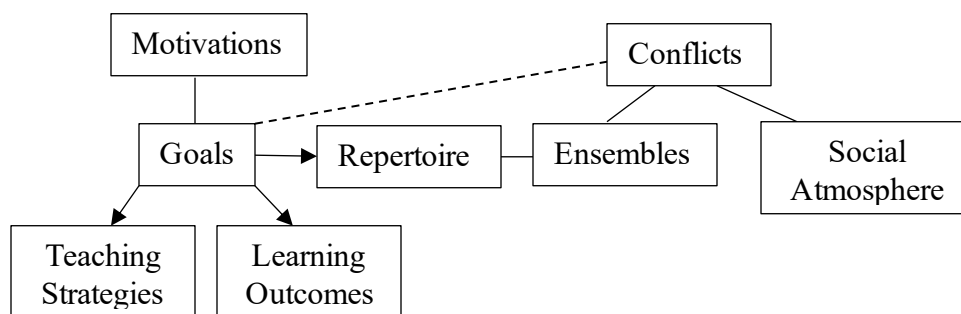


Figure 3. Annotation flowchart based on DM’s interview.

This flowchart represents the importance of external motivations and goals (both external and internal) in DM’s decision to pursue undergraduate music studies, and the prevalence of conflicts that arose during her time with the music department. I have only partially connected the goals annotation to the conflicts annotation, a decision represented by a dotted line. This is

because DM seemed to indicate that her goals for her lesson experience were met with relatively little conflict, though the same cannot be said for other aspects of her time as a music student.

Emergent Themes

The common theme throughout DM's interview was a critical assessment of the department's efficacy in working with non-majors, though she felt that her horn professor was successful in this respect. DM's improvement goals were central to her interest in taking lessons, and she notes that her goals were met because her professor was able to communicate concepts in a way that connected to her science background. The theme of lessons being connected to intangible growth was present in DM's interview. She had a strong assessment of learning outcomes that connected musical advancement with extra-musical achievement in reevaluating the rigidity with which she had structured her life. Time conflict arose as a central theme of DM's experience, and again, she cited her professor's responsiveness to her time constraints as a factor in having a successful lesson experience.

DM felt that she was adequately supported by her lesson professor, but not by the department. In our interview, I posited that the possible reason for this lack of support was the department's heavy reliance on non-majors to fill out ensembles and lesson rosters. Whatever the cause, further study would be warranted to analyze non-majors' opinions about departmental support, specifically whether they feel like they are being overburdened by ensemble directors' expectations.

Written Response

Response Summary

Respondent #1 (NP) graduated from a university in the Midwest with a degree in the finance sector, and now works in the tax industry. She had not taken private lessons before college, but she felt that involvement in a collegiate music department would require a more advanced level of playing, hence the decision to pursue lessons. Lesson repertoire mostly focused on sonatas and other solo repertoire, which she would perform on the end-of-semester studio recital. NP felt tremendous growth from her time in lessons. In addition to advancing as a horn player, she felt that lessons reinforced in her the value of hard work and existing outside one's comfort zone. Her active involvement in the music department also enabled her to take enough elective courses to graduate a semester early. NP's piece of advice to professors is that it is okay to push non-major students, as they will be better for it.

Emergent Themes

Because the written response questions were slightly different from the interview questions, the emergent themes are also slightly different. This led NP to focus more on the learning outcomes from her time in lessons. She spoke highly of her lessons as a place where she developed persistence and the desire to tackle new challenges. Notably, she was the only respondent who did not mention the need for professors to be cognizant of non-majors' time constraints; in fact, she offered a bit of a contrast by saying that professors should know that it is okay to be hard on their non-majors. This response emphasizes the need for professors to communicate with their non-majors to determine how hard the students want to be pushed.

Conclusions

Introduction

These four respondents have put a spotlight on the experience of non-major horn players. Each participant's experience is unique and is informed by a combination of high school background, university environment, professor philosophies, and individual personalities. Nevertheless, I have identified a list of themes that emerged in common across these responses. This list of themes represents a distillation of the responses given in this research. I also believe that these themes could be extrapolated for use in other studies of non-music majors. What follows are section headings that present the theme, and a summary of how the responses encapsulate that theme.

Emergent Themes

Respondents were active horn players in high school, and likely took private lessons.

All respondents went beyond the fundamental requirements of participation in their high school band program. KK, EK, and DM all participated in their state's all-state honor band at least once and were regular participants in regional honor bands. This is consistent with Poulter (1997), who found that participation in an all-state choir was a significant predictor of a high schooler's decision to continue participation in college choirs. Outside of school-related commitments, KK participated in a local community orchestra, and EK worked in a music repair shop. Being consistently surrounded by music meant that becoming involved in a college music program was a seamless transition. NP corroborated this assessment, saying, "I was very involved in everything music in high school."

Applied horn lessons in high school were another commonality among respondents. NP was the only respondent who indicated that she did not take lessons as a high schooler. For some respondents, lessons were a way to help facilitate the transition to the horn from other instruments, and some respondents suggested that lessons helped them achieve tangible goals like all-state participation. All three interviewees indicated that the lessons gave them a significant boost to their playing ability and their confidence on the instrument, which helped them feel prepared to participate in a college music program.

Respondents may have considered majoring in music, but a desire to keep hobby and career separate led them to other majors.

A common theme among all respondents was the desire to maintain music as a stress-free hobby. EK and DM mentioned this in the context of the decision whether to major in music. Both considered pursuing music as a career, but worried that they would lose enjoyment in music if they were forced to spend the time required to build a career in it. Even though KK did not consider majoring in music, she concurred with the importance of maintaining musical pursuits as a stress-free experience. This is not a novel concern; the intersection of hobby and career is a challenging one to figure out for most professionals.

The academic demographic of the respondents is also worth noting. All three interviewees ended up majoring in a STEM field, and the written respondent pursued a degree in a STEM-adjacent field. The small sample in this study falls in line with Moder's (2013) finding that most non-major music students are in STEM fields. There is a rich history of STEM students who are active music hobbyists. However, as I will discuss, these STEM majors do not always feel that they are well-supported as a non-major in a music department.

Money is a valuable motivator to get non-majors involved in lessons.

All three interviewees cited some monetary factor as contributing to their decision to take lessons. KK and DM were awarded scholarship funds with the attached requirement of lessons, while EK was able to take lessons for free because of her status as a full-time student. Though not directly related to money, NP's involvement with the horn studio (and ensembles) gave her enough elective credits to graduate a semester early, which would have saved her a semester of tuition payments. Financial conversations are usually difficult for any music department, but the utility of scholarship money in bolstering lesson enrollment cannot be overstated.

Of course, financial incentives were not the respondents' only consideration when choosing to take lessons. For example, a strong high school experience was also mentioned by all respondents. However, although the high school experience influenced all respondents, no respondent cited their high school lessons as being a direct factor in their decision to continue into college lessons. Furthermore, NP also mentioned that she had never taken lessons before coming to college. I conclude that high school lessons had an indirect effect on the pursuit of college lessons; high school lessons influenced the high school experience, which then influenced the decision to pursue college lessons.

A relationship with the college professor was an inconclusive predictor of college lesson enrollment. EK got to know her professor first through the horn choir, and that relationship ultimately led to lessons. Conversely, KK stated that she did not consider the horn professor in her decision-making process. DM and NP did not address the effect of the professor in their responses. Finally, an internal desire to improve, either for the external pressure of keeping up in ensembles or simply for the sake of improvement, motivated all participants to enroll in lessons.

Respondents valued a lesson atmosphere that prioritized flexibility and respect for time conflicts.

This was the most heavily discussed theme across all three interviews. Having lessons that were minimally intrusive on the primary area of study was a significant contributor to a positive overall assessment of the lesson experience. When asked what they would say to a professor teaching non-major students, the following is how the three interviewees responded:

KK: “Just be aware that some weeks, maybe you can’t dedicate as much time as other weeks, and that’s a little bit different for non-music majors versus music majors.”

EK: “It’s definitely important to focus on serious techniques and skills, but this isn’t our priority, this isn’t what we’re paying the college for entirely. I liked my lessons because they weren’t super high commitment. There were some weeks I didn’t have time to practice because I was doing whatever calculus assignments and stuff, and [my professor] was very understanding of that, and I definitely appreciated it.”

DM: “I think [my professor] was great about this, the department was not, but like understanding that, for non-majors, practicing is not the main priority for them. And so, if a non-major comes in, and they’re like, I didn’t really get to practice this this week, chastising them is not going to help. It’s just going to push them away from continuing lessons or doing music at all.”

In responding to the same question, NP had a different answer, suggesting that professors should be comfortable pushing their non-major students. Taken together, these responses suggest that professors should regularly consult with their non-major students to make sure they are receiving an appropriate amount of challenge while not feeling pressured to complete the same amount of practice as their major counterparts. In addition to being respectful of non-majors’ time

constraints, professors should ensure that their lessons with non-majors emphasize flexibility and positive reinforcement.

Ensembles were respondents' priorities, with lessons being secondary/supplemental.

Although respondents generally felt that their lessons contributed positively to their time as undergraduate musicians, they also suggested that the lessons were a secondary part of the experience, with ensembles being their priority. This was especially true for KK and EK, who indicated that they viewed lessons as being a supplement to success in ensembles:

KK: "When I was looking at colleges, I would look to see if they had a band and orchestra program, and I didn't specifically, I don't remember seeking out a horn professor in particular. I just wanted the opportunity to play in a group setting to be available to me, so I wasn't really thinking about horn lessons when selecting schools... the primary thing [in lessons] was working on ensemble pieces. Probably in at least the first semester through the first year, I would say that at least half of the lessons were focused on that."

EK: "When I joined the horn choir, [my professor] recommended I take lessons, and I thought that was a good idea, so that's how I ended up beginning taking lessons... I wanted to be able to keep up with the other members of the ensemble. Most of the rest of them were within the [department of music], so they all got to spend a lot more time dedicated to music, and I didn't want to be the one falling behind in horn choir, so I had to make sure I kept up the parts."

Perhaps because she minored in music, DM did not suggest as strongly that she viewed her lessons as supplementary to her ensembles. However, she did note that her time in a woodwind quintet informed some of the assignments she was given by her professor, and that understanding how to play in a chamber ensemble was a learning outcome from her lessons.

When asked to discuss the connection between ensembles and lesson repertoire, respondents offered a mixed assessment on the strength of that relationship. For KK, most of her time in lessons was spent on whatever repertoire the orchestra and horn choir were preparing. Conversely, EK indicated that most of her time in lessons was spent on fundamentals and solo repertoire like the Mozart concertos. NP recalled a similar focus on sonatas, especially in preparation for an end-of-semester studio recital. DM remembers mostly focusing on etudes and solo repertoire, with some work on woodwind ensemble repertoire. DM said that lesson repertoire was generally chosen by her from a list given by her professor at the beginning of the semester; the other respondents did not indicate the extent to which they were involved in the repertoire selection process. Although the repertoire focuses varied, none of the respondents indicated dissatisfaction with their lesson repertoire. Perhaps this indicates that, as long as the non-majors can sense progress in their playing abilities and as long as their ensemble playing goals are being met, the means used to instigate the progress and goal-achieving are less significant. Even so, professors should communicate with their non-major students to make sure their playing goals are being met, especially with respect to ensembles, and that the repertoire they study is of satisfactory interest. This could also mean letting non-majors select their own repertoire, with some guidance.

Social relationships with the rest of the studio were mixed.

For a variety of reasons, respondents indicated that they were not heavily involved in the social atmosphere of the horn studio. In KK's case, this was by choice: the mental expenditure of additional social commitments led her to focus her attention on other relationships. EK said that she was involved in the social atmosphere "a medium amount," owing to her being involved in the horn choir but not involved in the weekly studio class. She enjoyed the social interaction that

came from playing in ensembles with the other members of the studio, though it is not clear if she interacted with her studio mates outside of ensemble commitments. EK emphasized the value of social interaction in building a positive experience with the music department, though her strongest assessment of social atmosphere came in her discussion of the non-studio ensembles, especially the marching band and basketball pep band. DM did not feel connected to the studio's social environment and suggested that this could have been caused by her not being a music major. Because she was not involved in the same classes and ensembles as the music majors, she felt distanced when the majors would talk about their experiences. Unlike KK, it did seem that being disconnected from her studio mates frustrated DM.

Based on the interviewees' assessments, I believe studio professors should consult with their music majors, especially leaders within the studio, to make sure that non-majors feel included in the studio's social atmosphere. This could mean inviting them to participate in social gatherings outside of ensembles or simply ensuring that conversations do not detour into territory which inherently excludes non-majors. However, if the non-major indicates that they are not interested in the studio's social atmosphere, the professor should not force the issue, understanding that the student is likely getting the social stimulation they need outside of the studio.

Non-musical learning outcomes included skills transferable into careers and personal lives.

Respondents indicated that their applied lessons helped them develop useful skills for their professional and personal lives. Furthermore, the specific skills were individualized to the person based on their personalities and career interests, with little overlap between respondents. For KK, the primary skill she cited was the value of practice. Lessons helped reinforce the value of consistent practice in improving a skill, which she applied to her math studies. NP shared a

similar assessment, mentioning the value of hard work and consistent dedication, as well as learning how to feel comfortable with being uncomfortable and how to know when it is time to take a break from a pursuit. DM said that lessons led her to incorporate more flexibility into her life. Before her college lessons, she felt that she needed to have a plan for whatever music she was playing that directly reflected what was written on the page; similarly, coming into college she had a plan for college and beyond and was determined to stick out that plan. However, as she worked in her college lessons, she began to view sheet music as a “roadmap” from which little deviations were encouraged. This realization contributed to her reevaluating the plan she had made for college and beyond, and she ultimately decided to eschew that plan by taking two gap years. Taken together, these three respondents demonstrate the value that non-majors can gain from applied lessons even after their time in lessons has concluded.

Recommendations for Future Research

The present research lays the foundation for future study of non-majors in applied lessons. Based on this study’s design, implementation, and analysis, three directions for future research come to mind.

First, the demographics could be adjusted to study different non-major populations. A future study could interview students of different instruments and voice types or could compare responses between current and former students.

Second, the study’s design could be adjusted, or the scope could be expanded. For example, a different set of interview questions could focus on the reasons a student decided to take lessons or on the student’s perception of the relationship between lessons and ensembles. Additional interview structures could also improve data triangulation. Such structures could

include focus groups, video reviews of past performances (if available), journaling for current students, etc. Another design alteration could turn the question of non-major lesson experience into a survey instrument. A survey instrument would allow for a larger sample size and quantitative assessment of results that could lead to better generalizations about the population.

Third, future research could analyze the non-major applied lesson experience from the perspective of the professor. It is essential to assess how the students feel about their lessons, but students are less likely to have a positive experience if there is a disconnect between their opinions and those of their professors. Interviewing professors could shed light on their approach to teaching non-majors and whether that approach aligns with the non-majors' interests. For example, it would be worth addressing whether professors tend to value flexibility and understanding of non-majors' time commitments as highly as the students seem to hope that they will. Eventually, I hope that research including case studies and surveys from the perspectives of current students, former students, and professors will make it so that the non-major applied lesson experience is better understood.

Conclusion

My purpose in this study has been to share the stories of four former non-major students who took applied horn lessons as undergraduates. By sharing their stories, I have gained insight into how some non-majors viewed their time in lessons and how their lessons have continued to impact them now that their time in college has concluded. Whether motivated by external factors like scholarships or internal factors like the desire to improve, all respondents chose to take horn lessons even though they would have no direct bearing on their career trajectories. In their lessons, respondents encountered a positive, supportive environment with professors who understood the additional time and mental expenditure required of a non-major. Although lessons

tended to be secondary to ensembles and the studio social environment, all respondents still looked back on their lessons with fondness and appreciation for the dedication their professors showed to teaching students who they knew would likely not go on to careers in music. Even though none of the respondents regularly play their horns anymore, they still believe that lessons were valuable in developing intangible skills like personal responsibility and a willingness to accept challenges. All told, respondents were grateful for the role that applied lessons played in their undergraduate musical experiences. It is my hope that their stories lay the groundwork for future inquiry into the relationship between non-majors and applied lessons so that all non-majors feel supported if they choose to pursue lessons. The present research and future studies will ensure that non-majors who take applied lessons will have fruitful experiences that carry them through college and beyond.

Appendix A: Participant Cover Letter

Dear Prospective Participant,

This letter is a request for you to participate in a research project to understand the experiences of non-music majors who took applied horn lessons as undergraduate students, to identify learning outcomes perceived by these former students, and to discern best practices for instructing non-music majors in correlation with these perceived learning outcomes. This project is being conducted by Jordan Bennett, DMA Candidate in the Department of Music at WVU under the supervision of Dr. Keith Jackson, Dean of the College of Creative Arts, to fulfill requirements for a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Music – Horn Performance.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to take part in either an individual interview, a focus group, or a set of essay responses. Your participation in this project will take approximately one hour. In order to participate in this study, you must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Took applied horn lessons for at least one academic year while enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student.
- 2) Obtained a bachelor's degree in a non-music area and did not simultaneously obtain a music major.
- 3) Currently identify your primary employment as being in a non-music field. You may participate in the study if you are occasionally compensated for music-related engagements (teaching, performing, etc.), as long as you do not identify music as your primary source of income.

You must be 18 years of age or older to participate. You will receive no compensation or payment for participating in this study.

Your participation in this project will be kept as confidential as legally possible. All data will be reported in the aggregate. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may skip any question that you do not wish to answer, and you may stop participating at any time. The West Virginia University Institutional Review Board's approval of this project is on file with the WVU Office of Human Research Protections.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me at (423)-557-8613 or by email at jwb00004@mix.wvu.edu. You may also contact Dr. Keith Jackson at (304)-293-4351 or by

West Virginia University OHRP
PO Box 6845, Morgantown, WV 26506-6845
Phone: 304-293-7073 Email: irb@mail.wvu.edu

email at keith.jackson@mail.wvu.edu. Additionally, you can contact the WVU Office of Human Research Protections at 304-293-7073.

I hope that you will participate in this research project, as it could help us better understand how former non-majors perceive the learning outcomes associated with their lessons, and whether the desired learning outcomes were shared and met by their professors. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jordan Bennett

Appendix B: Interview Transcripts

Interview #1 (KK)

Jordan Bennett: Start by just telling me a little bit about what high school was like for you as a horn player. Did you take applied lessons? What was the high school experience like playing horn for you?

KK: Yeah, I did take lessons in high school for, I actually can't remember if it was for the full four years. It might have just been three out of the four, so like from my sophomore to my senior year, and so those were once a week for like an hour or so after school. I'm glad that I took lessons in high school, it was a good chance to, when I was early in high school, you know, practice to be in like the upper-level band for the two levels that there were, and then later on prepare audition pieces for college or practice sight reading for the all-state competitions or the regional competitions. I guess I can say that I enjoyed playing horn in high school, if I had to go back I would still choose horn and I would want to be in band and orchestra. I was in a community orchestra too during high school, but not as part of high school.

JB: So, tell me a little bit about the process of, coming out of high school, deciding what your major was going to be. Did you ever consider majoring in music?

KK: I didn't consider music. Before high school I enjoyed math and sciences, and throughout high school I kind of started narrowing down what sciences I liked more than others, and so really I was only considering majoring in like math or physics. I ended up choosing math just because I liked the challenge more. I had planned to continue playing horn in college and see if there were scholarships or anything, but just keep it as an extra activity, not a major.

JB: When you were choosing a college then, did the ability to take the horn lessons there, or did the horn professor there, have a significant impact on your college decision?

KK: So when I was looking at colleges, I would look to see if they had a band and orchestra program, and I don't remember seeking out a horn professor in particular. I just wanted the opportunity to play in a group setting to be available to me, so I wasn't really thinking about horn lessons when selecting schools.

JB: Can you tell me a little bit about the college setting. What's the size of the school, the music department size, is it more of an urban or rural school?

KK: So I went to [a regional university in the Southeast], and it's like a mid-size state school. I think at the time it was somewhere between 10,000 – 15,000 students total, like with the undergraduate and they had some masters programs, but it was mainly an undergrad focused university. The music department, I don't know the size of it, but at least for other horn players that I interacted with there were at the most six or seven. I guess that gives that gives a good size of the program itself, because usually there aren't tons of horn players.

JB: As a student, what were your goals with taking horn lessons, both from a musical perspective and from like a non-musical perspective, what did you want to get out of taking horn lessons?

KK: I guess the very non-musical side is I wanted to have the scholarship money for playing horn and so that required lessons. When it came to the purpose of the lessons themselves, the horn professor knew that I was in math and that I was on that track and not really going to go into any form of music education or serious performance, so I think that gave it a more relaxed approach to give some small pieces to work on and practice, or to look at the orchestra music that we were performing during the semester and just helping with that.

JB: Would you say then that working on stuff for ensembles was your primary musical goal, or did you have other musical goals that you wanted to achieve as well?

KK: Yes, that was the primary thing was working on ensemble pieces. Probably in at least the first semester through the first year, I would say that at least half of the lessons were focused on that. Then, later on I had, it's not even a workbook, it's just a collection of pieces and we would just pick one and work on it for a couple of weeks at a time, and then pick a new one. It was just for fun I suppose.

JB: Did you ever have to do a jury or anything like that at the end of the semester?

KK: No, I didn't have to do a jury since I wasn't in the music department. And I forgot, part of the lessons was for a horn ensemble group that I joined because they were needing a person, and I was available, so I kind of got roped into that. I spent a few months working on those specific pieces, which is quite different than just ensemble.

JB: When you would go in for a typical horn lesson, what structurally did that look like? What was the first thing you would work on, what was the next thing you would work on, how would you usually spend that hour?

KK: So it always started with just warming up. Sometimes it would just be her listening to me or [us playing] together, and that was pretty brief, less than ten minutes. Then [she was] asking to look at the ensemble pieces and kind of marking sections to go over. That would be at least half, and at the beginning maybe the whole time was just on the ensemble excerpts.

JB: So you didn't spend much time working on solo repertoire or orchestral excerpts or things like that?

KK: That's right. Yeah, probably one because I didn't have a jury, like most of the other horns, they had those final evaluations, so it was something to work towards really. The only deadlines to work towards [for me] were the actual concerts at the end of the semester, and then between then it was just setting very short-term goals, like I want to be able to play this piece that she chose for me well, as in, I've improved in some aspect of being a horn player, whether that's like having better range in one direction or better breath control, or something like that.

JB: Do you feel like there's anything specifically that your professor did in your lessons to accommodate you being a non-major that they wouldn't have done for majors or that they would have done differently with a major?

KK: Yeah, my perception, which is not confirmed, is that maybe she went a little bit easier on me just because I had other goals to accomplish, like in the math department, and doing my own research in math so that, you know there was an expectation of practice during the week, but it wasn't like very strict accountability I would say, [it was] just gentler.

JB: Is there anything that you wish that your professor had maybe done differently in order to be more accommodating to you as a non-major?

KK: I think that it was quite go with the flow, so maybe being presented with other options that she felt would be enriching would have been nice, just to see what challenges there were that I could take on. Most of it was just, like, what's the immediate issue, like do I need help playing this for orchestra? Then, kind of just straight into small solo work or duet pieces to play in the lessons.

JB: Maybe like a larger project like a solo piece that she could have pushed for you, or something like that.

KK: Yeah, I think so. Being in a non-major, there's less obligation, I suppose. Like when you're a music major you want to make sure to keep the faculty happy, because you want those good strong connections as you get out of school. Whereas my important connections were in the math department, and I definitely focused on those. So yeah, I agree, having like a larger solo piece, even though I knew I wouldn't be explicitly graded on it.

JB: Since you were talking about connections in the music department, tell me a little bit about your ensemble experience. Which ensembles were you in, just in general how was that experience for you?

KK: Most of the horn players were in one of the two level bands, and then there was only one orchestra. I was the only one who was only in orchestra, and I believe everyone else was in both. And actually, most of the brass players in general were in both. I guess that felt a little bit isolating at times, because I wasn't involved in the music department at all, I didn't do marching band or things like that.

JB: Tell me a bit about your decision to just focus on orchestra, instead of doing both. Was that like a time consideration mostly, or some other reasons?

KK: I think, in my mind, I was going to choose either band or orchestra, and I kind of based it on my high school experience in doing the community orchestra outside of high school band. I really enjoyed that experience, so I was like, if I have to choose one or the other, I think I like the orchestra music more.

JB: And it sounds like you spent a lot of time in your lessons working on orchestra music as well.

KK: Mhm. And some of the stuff we worked on maybe was lower level than others, just from not doing music all the time. Even just having to transpose yourself from, like, sheet music, that's just not a skill I had to have before then.

JB: Did you work on doing transposition in lessons?

KK: Yeah, I did.

JB: So how did you feel about, specifically in orchestra, were you generally able to keep up pretty well?

KK: Yeah, I think so. By the end, I felt confident, but definitely in the earlier stages I felt like maybe it took more personal effort for me to be at the same level. But I guess that's true for many sections, there are just varying skill levels.

JB: So, do you still play your horn on a regular basis at all?

KK: I don't play on a regular basis. I still have my horn. I keep it because I like the hope of, like, maybe I'll come back to it. But when I decided to go to grad school, I decided that I wasn't going to join any musical ensemble group for at least two to three years, just because I knew the intensity of being in grad school would be a lot, so I just didn't want to overwhelm myself.

JB: That makes sense. So just mostly a time consideration?

KK: Yeah, time and also the mental expenditure, too. It requires a different mentality to contribute to a musical ensemble.

JB: Right. You saying that about mental expenditures is interesting for me, because I think about my undergraduate experience, where it was such a low-stress experience, it was almost a relaxing experience to get to go and do music instead, so it was rejuvenating. Do you ever find that, as an undergraduate, that you had that, or did you feel like it was just a little more stress in your life?

KK: There were, like what I mentioned before, moments where it was more stress than relaxing, but then once I was able to practice, then it was like, you have the confidence and you can enjoy yourself more, and that's why it was worth it to stay in orchestra for my time in undergrad. I also got to be in the pit for like an opera that they did one year, that was fun.

JB: That's cool.

KK: I thought rehearsals for that were relaxing.

JB: Which opera did they do, do you remember?

KK: I don't remember. Something Western.

JB: So thinking now in retrospect on your lesson experience, is there one particular memory or moment that sticks out to you when thinking about lessons? Like, as you think back on your lessons time now (as a former student)?

KK: I would say, just the overall... it was just a more relaxing experience. I think I was actually more relaxed during lessons than during practice and rehearsals, and definitely more relaxed compared to when I took lessons in high school. So it was kind of just that change of pace, which undergrad was in general. It was just a big relief to be in college and not be in high school anymore.

JB: Would you say there's anything your professor did in undergrad that made it a more relaxing experience than your experience in high school?

KK: I think that overall it just felt more respectful that I was, like my main focus was in math. And just being sensitive to [the fact] that the majority of my time would be spent not in music, and that I still enjoyed music because I had felt it was very enriching to be a part of, but again, I just wasn't in the mind to commit a large section of my time and my mental energy to it. I think she was respectful of that, whereas before... when you do a lot of things in high school, you're

stretching yourself very thin, so normally things are just more stressful. You feel like you have to be really good in everything you do.

JB: I definitely get that. Tell me a little bit about the social experience of being involved in the horn studio. As a non-major, did you still feel like you were very involved in the social atmosphere of the studio?

KK: If I had to say yes or no, I would have to say no. Part of that is not due to the actual environment of the horn group, like it wasn't because of the professor. Part of it was my own doing, like choosing not to be socially involved in that many areas in the first place. But I don't think it was the environment that made me feel like I couldn't be socially involved. I would say though that I did feel a difference being part of that specific, it was like a horn quartet or something, in my last year, where I actually got to know the horn players better because we were spending more time together. I was there for their rehearsals, and that was nice.

JB: Have you maintained any connections with any of them since you graduated?

KK: I have, like, maybe a couple on LinkedIn, but not constant communication.

JB: Sure. So, again, thinking in retrospect about your lesson experience, what would you say that you learned in your lessons that has continued to impact you since you graduated?

KK: Lessons for me personally have enforced that practice is necessary in music, and then also it really helped in math as well because practice is another core principle in being very good at math, like you have to practice. Maybe it's counterintuitive, when you get into higher level math, people don't think of practice, but it is very important. So lessons kind of complemented that, seeing that in different fields, and being able to transfer that discipline, working on something consistently, is what has helped the most now.

JB: So, is there anything from your experience taking lessons as a non-major, is there anything you would want to tell other horn professors about the experience of teaching non-majors, like what should they know?

KK: I guess like I said before, just be aware that some weeks maybe you can't dedicate as much time as other weeks, and that's a little bit different for non-music majors versus music majors. Maybe (also) just to be in general focused on positive encouragement, I mean most of the time when you're non-music, it's less of an obligation to be in lessons, and you're choosing to... you definitely want to be there for it, so I think positive reinforcement was a good thing that I experienced and would encourage other horn professors to try.

JB: Is there anything you'd like to say about your experience?

KK: I don't know. I've been thinking as well about if I could pinpoint a more specific moment that I remember from lessons to give you for one of your previous questions. I don't know if there is one, I feel like I have a terrible memory. Maybe this happened to you in grad school, too, you just push out what isn't immediately necessary to get your degree.

JB: I remember very little about my time in grad school *laughs*. But anyway, I'll let you go. Thanks for your time, I appreciate it.

KK: Yeah, thank you!

Interview #2 (EK)

Jordan Bennett: If you could, start with your high school experience. Just tell me a little bit about what playing the horn in high school was like for you. Did you take applied lessons at all in high school?

EK: Yes, I took private lessons at, not at school, it was at a local music repair shop. So I did those about once a week, but I also worked at the music shop, so I was always kind of surrounded by music. So I did that and I did high school marching band and symphonic band. We were a pretty competitive school, all the band kids were pretty dedicated to it. So it was kind of a natural flow to keep up with that when I started college.

JB: How would you say that your lesson experience in high impacted your overall high school music experience?

EK: I had switched to horn a little bit later in high school, I think my junior year. I had switched from clarinet to horn, so I really had to step [up] with that a little bit. It definitely made me more confident about it. I was able to go to all state my senior year for that. It definitely improved my high school experience for sure.

JB: Now, you majored in, you said, engineering. What led you to choose that major. Did you ever consider majoring in music at all?

EK: I did, but I liked music more for enjoyment, rather than trying to make it a career, rather than trying to make money off of it. I didn't want it to be all I did, I liked keeping it as something I enjoyed and got to do when I wanted to, not because I had to. So, I liked music, but I didn't want to major in it though.

JB: Makes sense. How did you choose the major you ultimately wound up with?

EK: In middle school I liked space things, I thought they were neat, and then I found out about engineering, and I was like, oh, I'm good at math and science, I like solving problems, and it was kind of like, oh, why has no one shown me this. So that's kind of how I chose engineering. Then, because of [my university's] dual degree program where you get [two engineering degrees], I was kind of like, okay why not?

JB: What led you to decide to take horn lessons specifically in college?

EK: I had been taking the private lessons through high school, and then when I got to college, since it was just a credit hour and I was already a full time student, so it wasn't any extra money, it was kind of like free lessons. I was in the marching band on mellophone and then also the horn choir. When I joined the horn choir, [my professor] recommended I take lessons, and I thought that was a good idea, so that's how I ended up beginning taking lessons.

JB: Could you tell me a little bit about the college setting. What was the size of the school, the size of the music department, all that?

EK: It's a large school, but not exceptionally large. Then the music school is large, small, average, I don't know.

JB: It's average I think.

EK: Okay, yeah, average.

JB: So when you were a student, you talked about that you had done the horn ensemble, and that kind of led you into taking horn lessons. When you were taking horn lessons, what goals did you have, both musically and outside of music. What did you want to gain from taking horn lessons?

EK: I wanted to be able to keep up with the other members of the ensemble. Most of the rest of them were within the [music department], so they all got to spend a lot more time dedicated to music, and I didn't want to be the one falling behind in horn choir, so I had to make sure I kept up the parts.

JB: Did you have any goals that you wanted to gain from horn lessons that were not directly musical, or were they mostly musical?

EK: I think they were music goals.

JB: Since you were talking about the other horn players, tell me about the social environment of the horn studio. Were you pretty involved in the social aspect of the horn studio?

EK: I would say about a medium amount. I wasn't in the horn studio class that they had, but I liked all the members of the horn choir, I think they were all in horn studio. I definitely liked the social aspect, I definitely get more enjoyment out of playing within a larger group, rather than just playing on my own.

JB: Yeah, I get that. So, what did a typical horn lesson look like for you. Like, when you would go in, what was the first thing you would do, the next thing you would do?

EK: We would start with breathing exercises, scales, warm ups, and then... I don't think we actually worked on the horn choir pieces, I think me and [my professor] found some other random pieces for me to work on just to keep with my skills. So we would work on those for a little bit, and I would play what I had been practicing, and we would workshop that a little bit, then we would do another part, workshop that a little bit, [etc.].

JB: So he had you playing, like, a lot of solo repertoire, things like that?

EK: Not a lot, because you know, I only had lessons once a week, and I wasn't dedicating all my time to music, I was only practicing outside of lessons and choir and marching band about one other time a week. So it was just some easy old Mozart stuff, like the Mozart Horn Concertos I think.

JB: Do you feel like your professor was able to adjust their teaching to reflect the interests of a non-major?

EK: For sure, yeah.

JB: What are some of the things that they did that were catered to teaching a non-major that they wouldn't have done for a major?

EK: We definitely didn't focus as much on scales and music theory. We just focused on the normal register, like I didn't practice high register or low register too much. It was a bit catered toward general skills, things that I could use to keep up during horn choir and marching band,

and just overall musicianship, but never too in-depth on the topics. Like, I didn't learn natural horn, historical aspects, or any of that either.

JB: Is there anything that you would have wanted to have done differently since you were a non-major? Or do you feel like everyone was pretty good?

EK: Yeah, it met my expectations.

JB: Okay. Now let's talk about college ensembles for a second. You said you were involved in the marching band, were you involved in concert band and orchestra too, or just marching band?

EK: Marching band, horn choir, and basketball pep band.

JB: Okay. How do you feel like being in the ensembles contributed to your experience as a student?

EK: They really increased it. I only did marching band and horn choir my first two years of college, but those just gave me a really solid foundation. I really loved the social aspect. I liked making friends outside of my core classes; it was nice to be able to meet other non-engineering people sometimes. I liked being able to branch out. I liked being able to stay connected to music since I love it, and there were people of that common interest in the groups. I liked the social aspect for sure. And then I kept up with basketball pep band for all of college because it was the least time commitment, but I still got the social aspect.

JB: Did you do marching band all four years?

EK: No, just the first two years.

JB: Okay, tell me a little bit about life after college. What do you do now, have you gone on to do more schooling, anything like that?

EK: I graduated, I did some internships during college, and then I got a job where I interned. I'm not currently pursuing a graduate degree, but I'd like to soon. It's within a very technical field, so I don't use music during my job. There is a local community band; I just took my horn to the shop the other day because I haven't touched it and I haven't gotten it [out] in so long, so it's getting tuned up, and I hope to join the local community band soon.

JB: Cool. So thinking back now on your lesson experience, is there a particular memory that comes to mind to you about your time in lessons?

EK: No, not really; or, I think toward the end of one semester, one of the Mozart Concertos I'd been working on, we got one of the pianists to accompany me, and I think I played it for the horn studio or something. It was kind of fun; I'd never played solo repertoire, I was always more of an ensemble person, so it was a little bit scary to play just me in front of a group of other horn players. They were all nice and they were my friends, but they all knew a lot more about musical technique than me.

JB: It's a different experience, isn't it?

EK: Mhm.

JB: Do you feel like there's any non-musical skills that you learned in applied lessons that you use now?

EK: I guess, it was more like practicing things early, or getting to things before immediately they were due. I remember at first I would forget to practice all week, and then the hour before the lesson is when I would do my practicing for the week, and then my chops would be kind of blown by the time I would get into my lessons. So it was more of, be a little bit more proactive during the week.

JB: Yeah, I've been there, too. I'll ask you one more thing: is there anything, just in general, you would want to tell a professor about what it's like to teach a non-major, anything specifically they should know?

EK: If the student is a non-major but still wanting to pursue serious, like, professional musicianship, then I'd say they could keep the lessons the same, but if the student's doing it for more enjoyment, try to make it more enjoyable, I guess. It's definitely important to focus on serious techniques and skills, but this isn't our priority, this isn't what we're paying the college for entirely. I liked my lessons because they weren't super high-commitment. There were some weeks I didn't take time to practice because I was doing whatever calculus assignments and stuff, and [my professor] was very understanding of that, and I definitely appreciated it.

JB: Cool. Well that's all I have, is there anything else you want me to know?

EK: No, I think that last bit gets the gist of it.

JB: Great. Well, thank you for taking the time to meet with me, I really appreciate it.

EK: Yeah, no problem!

Interview #3 (DM)

Jordan Bennett: So let's go back to high school for a second. Just tell me a little bit about your experience as a horn player in high school. What ensembles were you in? Did you take applied lessons at all?

DM: So when I started high school I was really really bad, because I had just switched from trumpet in eighth grade, I think, and no one was really helping me. So I was just practicing a lot, and I would just play long tones, and then I started working on my range. Then in, I think ninth grade, I tried out for [all-region band], and I got, I think, sixth chair, which I think they take the top four for all-state. And my director was like, you've really improved since middle school. He was like, "in eighth grade like you could not play a single note," and I was like, yeah, I know, thanks. And so he was like, let's see if we can get you into lessons, I think you can really improve. And so he worked out something with [my teacher] to where, because she was out of time slots after school, my lesson would start like ten minutes before the school day ended or something, and go just a little bit longer. So I did start taking applied lessons, but it was maybe like February of ninth grade. In ninth grade I was in symphonic band, and I think I had placed second chair, and then I challenged and ended up getting first chair. Then my sophomore year, I was in wind ensemble, and I was in wind ensemble every year after that, and I was first chair every year after that, and then I made all-state sophomore year. I was second chair at [all-region band], I think, and like seventh in all-state, and then junior and senior year, I didn't make all-state. I just went [all region]. So yeah, I took applied lessons for two, three and a half years maybe.

JB: How do you feel like your high school applied lessons contributed to your overall experience in high school?

DM: I enjoyed it a lot. I felt like I was improving a lot. and it gave me a lot of the confidence that I needed, because [my teacher] was very honest. Like if I would play something, she'd be like, "you didn't actually practice that, did you?" and [I would be] like, no. But then, if you did a good job, she would really... like, she was always right, and she was harsh, but she was honest. And so, her telling me things like, [for example] my sophomore year, she was like, "I would be surprised if you didn't make all state." And so, when she was right, it helped my confidence a lot. Because she's not the type of person that would just say that just to say it.

JB: Tell me a little bit about how you decided on what to major in in college. Did you ever consider majoring in music, or, if not, how did you come into deciding what to major in?

DM: So my senior year of high school, I had really considered music therapy and doing that because I liked caring for patients and stuff like that, and I also really was enjoying music at that point. But then I was stuck between doing pre-med stuff or doing music therapy. And then I kind of wanted to stay close the home, [my band director] told me that [a nearby university] had \$500 tuition or something like that, and they had a music therapy program. So I looked into that, and I looked at the classes, and it was like applied piano every single semester. And then I realized I would have to sing to patients, and I can't sing, and I took piano lessons for like seven years, and I still can't play a single thing on piano. So I was like, I'm not going to enjoy my life. So I was like, I'll do pre-med stuff. And also I really didn't want music to be a thing that was stressful for me, because it had always been something that was fun, and I knew that if I majored in it, it

would take all the fun out of it, and I would just be stressed out all the time, and I would end up hating it.

JB: So you ultimately decided to do pre-med.

DM: Yeah.

JB: What factors led to you taking lessons in college?

DM: [My friend] actually told me about the FPA program. So I applied for that, and I got in, and one of the stipulations was, you had to either major or minor in your art. So I chose to minor in it, and one of the parts of the minor was that you had to get to applied lessons Level 2, and so that part was kind of by force. But I also I wanted to keep improving. So even after I reached Level 2 I continued lessons until I just didn't have time for it anymore, because I wanted to keep improving, and I knew that if I didn't take lessons, and I didn't have something to keep me accountable to practice, then I would just be like, I don't have time for this. Whereas if I have, you know, if I have my lesson this week, I have to at least practice a little bit. And music does help relieve a lot of my stress. So it was a good, forced way to have a built-in stress reliever.

JB: Can you tell me a bit about what the FPA program is?

DM: So it's an honors program at [my university]. They accept like fourteen students or something like that. You have to submit a portfolio and all this, but they accept students of all arts. So in my program there was theater, there was dance, there was graphic design, there was music. So yeah, you take a few classes about art, philosophy, that kind of stuff, and you do interdisciplinary projects, and you have to form groups of people with different art forms than you when you come together, you build a project, and you make something. And then it pays for your tuition, and you write a thesis, and you take like four extra classes.

JB: What kind of projects did you wind up doing as part of that?

DM: Okay, so you take it once as a sophomore, once as a junior. And when you're a sophomore, the juniors are leading your group, and when you're the junior, you're leading the group. So both times we did a movie type thing. My sophomore year the theme was colors. The professor gives you a theme that you have to follow, so sophomore year it was colors, and so it was me and a graphic designer, and we made this sort of movie that, we chose music based on different colors, and the graphic designer kind of added in... it was all in black and white. And then, as she dances through the movie, then all these colors get added in, based on music. And then junior year, the theme was games. We had this video game type thing with a voice-over of a poem that someone had written. And the point of the video game was, because this was during Covid, the theme was trying to be like, everything happening to you, and you just feel like you have no control over it.

JB: Those sound like pretty unique projects. Can you tell me a little about the college setting where you went to school, the size of the school, the size of the music department?

DM: Yeah. So I went to [a university in the Southeast], and I would say it's a large college; they have to have two different graduation times, because there's so many people. The music department is not really a focus of the college, I would say. I don't think there's a ton of funding in it, and most of the faculty is adjunct, like they rarely have full time, full-fledged professors.

JB: Was your professor an adjunct?

DM: Yes, he was adjunct.

JB: Okay. So let's talk about lessons for a second. As a student, what were your primary goals in taking horn lessons, both musically and sort of extramusically?

DM: So musically, I really wanted to improve on my tone, because [my teacher] had told me that my embouchure was weird because I had switched from trumpet, and no one had ever taught me the proper embouchure. So I guess I just adapted my trumpet embouchure until it made a sound on the horn. And so she said, "it looks exactly like a trumpet embouchure that you just kind of adjusted." And she was like, "it's wrong, but it kind of works. But you'll probably have to work a little harder to get a good tone." And then also, I wanted to improve musically, because I'm very, like, rigid, and so like in Strauss's concerto, with every single breath mark I was like, I have to take it. And every single marking I was like, this is exactly how it has to be. And so, [I worked on] getting out of that mindset and trying to be more flexible. And I had to use the correct fingerings, and in the last movement my professor was like, there are shortcuts, which I was like, no, there's no way. So that is also kind of, like, extra-musically, learning like to be less rigid about things. And yeah, I'm very competitive. So even if I'm not competing against anyone, I really wanted to do well.

JB: Sometimes I think the goal of horn education is just to learn all the shortcuts.

DM: Yeah, pretty much.

JB: How do you feel like your lessons helped you achieve your goals?

DM: My professor was really good at knowing his students, and knowing how to explain things to them. So like for me, for slurs and stuff, if he was trying to get me to understand that it needs to be smoother and [not to] huff so much, he would explain it in a more, like, scientific way, like in a way that my brain can understand better, and he would not explain it in the same way to other students in the studio. He would do it during studio class too, like he would explain it one way, and if someone looked confused he would go to the way of explaining that that person understood.

JB: What did a typical horn lesson look like for you? When you would come in, what was like the first thing you'd work on, what was the next thing you'd work on, what's some of the typical repertoire you would work on?

DM: Normally for me, I would work on either lyrical etudes, or mostly I was working on my jury music. And he was very lenient with jury music. At the beginning of the semester he would write out a list of like pieces that [he thought] would be good. He would say, "go, listen to them and tell me which one you like." Yeah, that's basically what we would work on, and we would play through it, and he would give me pointers and that type of thing. Which I assume is probably not how lessons for a music major was.

JB: So you would go in, and you would kind of just play the music, and he'd give you some pointers. Did you ever do technical exercises and things like that? Or was it mostly focused on the repertoire?

DM: It was mostly focused on the repertoire. I had this book of, like, melodious etudes for the horn player. And he would assign a few of those throughout the semester, and I would play it, and he would just be like, if you find something that you feel like you need to improve on, these are good for that, or I would play something in the repertoire, and he would be like, okay, go through and play this. This is what you focus on for the week. Come back and play it. and then he would try to get me to understand that I had to translate to the repertoire, because that was, I guess, something I struggled with.

JB: Hmm. Gotcha. You talked a little bit about this already, but how do you feel like he adjusted his teaching for a non-major as compared to a major?

DM: I think that he tried hard to understand what your major was, and what it entailed, and he tried to explain things to you in a way that related to your major. We had another girl in our studio who was an international student, and she had majored in some other non-music thing, and he would explain things to her in a way that made sense based on her interests. And so, whenever someone didn't understand something, he would try to explain it to based on either intellectually what you were interested in, or if he couldn't figure that out, he would just be like, tell me something you like. And then he would relate it to that.

JB: Can you think of any specific examples from yourself of a time when he said something specific to your interests to help you learn something?

DM: He would always kind of relate it to something with science. Like, going back to, I'm very rigid. Because I was involved in research, he was like, "when you do your research, do you go and follow the protocol exactly?" And I was like, no. You adjust it. And he was like, "this is the same thing, you play how it's written, and then, if it sounds bad, you adjust it and it's fine to adjust it. That's how you get results." And I was like, yeah, I guess it's all the same.

JB: Is there anything that you would have wanted him to do differently to better accommodate you being a non-major?

DM: Not necessarily. But I think that the department has a lot of work to do, because in the music department, rarely do the music majors have like... I mean, I know that I know that they do have it, but it's not like every week they have a lab report to write, and that type of thing, so mostly their homework is practicing and improving. And so I thought that there was a lot of pressure on me as a non-major to keep up with the majors, and do just as well, if not better than them. You know, I'm spending four hours in organic chemistry lab per week, and then I have to go and do my lab report, and then I have to write the prelab for the following week, and I have to keep up with my notebook, and that's just one lab out of the two and three science classes that I was taking. And then, you know, on top of that, in my lessons they expected me to perform very, very well in my juries. I feel like they expected me to practice like a major, but not really be a major.

JB: Where do you feel like that Expectation comes from? Like what was what was the root of that?

DM: So, I was in woodwind ensemble, and it was just kind of like, no one ever said it, but it was kind of like, why do you not know this piece by heart by now, but everyone else in the room can play it? Well, everyone else was a music major. They didn't have lab reports to write. They had time to practice that I didn't really have. And so between woodwind ensemble and wind

ensemble, and then lessons, and all my other classes, weekly I had to prioritize what I was practicing. and I feel like no one really understood that, like I didn't get any like grace, basically.

JB: Hmm. That's interesting. I wonder if it's because they maybe don't have as many majors, so they feel like they need the non-majors to step up or something. I don't know what that cause is.

DM: I have no idea.

JB: Well, let's talk about ensembles for just a second. Can you tell me which ensembles you were in? And how do you feel like they contributed to your overall experience as a student?

DM: I think I did wind ensemble for one semester, and then I did woodwind ensemble for multiple semesters. I liked woodwind ensemble a lot. I liked being able to play a different kind of music, and it was very exposed. I couldn't hide anymore. Whereas in big ensembles, if there's a part that I don't really know how the rhythm goes, I can just, you know, wait and listen, and then catch on to it. But like in woodwind ensemble, you had to actually know your part. You had to be able to play it. And just playing chamber music when I had never played it before was a different experience. I enjoyed it. And then I was in wind ensemble. It was fine. I didn't really like it a whole lot. I felt like the level of the wind ensemble at my university was at a lower level than my high school wind ensemble. And so it was just really discouraging, like I get there and it's like, okay, this was supposed to be better. We're supposed to be playing harder music and we're playing the exact same music. And I was like, oh okay.

JB: So how do you feel like your ensembles contributed to the work you did in your applied lessons. Was there much connection between the two?

DM: Yeah, there was a lot because there were times when I would work on my woodwind ensemble music in my lessons because the director of the woodwind quintet was the double reeds professor, and so she would tell me, I really don't know how it works, but it needs to sound more like this, so ask [my professor]. So I would write it down, and I would go to my lessons. And he would be like, okay, this is what she said, and he would give me some pointers and stuff. I felt like that helped a lot in my repertoire too, because there were times when he would be like, "oh, well, you just play it the same as you're playing this other part," or he would be like, "this is your solo music, it's very different from your chamber music. It's the same marking in both places, but you have to adjust. You have to play it more like everyone else in the ensemble is playing it, whereas if it's your solo music, you're fine."

JB: Right. Let's talk for just a second about life after undergrad. So what have you been doing now? Are you pursuing additional schooling? What have you been up to lately?

DM: So I graduated May 2022, and since then I took my MCAT and I have been working and stuff, and I'm getting ready to submit my application to medical school at the end of the month.

JB: Okay. Congratulations!

DM: Thank you.

JB: I hear stories about the MCAT.

DM: Yeah.

JB: Do you still play your horn at all?

DM: For a while, for a very long time, I didn't have one. The wind ensemble director at [my university] for whatever reason didn't really like me, and I asked him if I could borrow a horn, and he was like, "no, you have to be taking wind ensemble or applied lessons to borrow one of our instruments," and I was like, well, I don't really have time for lessons right now in my schedule. And he was like, "okay, well then, you don't get a horn." So I went to my high school band director, and I was like, can I borrow a horn? He was like, yeah, I don't care. And so, I was able to kind of keep up with it. But I kind of pushed it off to the side, so I haven't really been playing it a ton, but I have been trying to get back into it.

JB: Okay. I meant to ask about this, and I forgot. I also wanted to talk a little bit about the social environment of the applied lesson studio. Do you feel like you were actively involved in the social atmosphere of the horn studio?

DM: Not really. I don't know how to phrase this exactly, but it was like, they would always talk about, like, I have to take, you know, nine classes, just to have fifteen credit hours, or whatever, and they were like, oh, it's so much work, and all this, and they would kind of treat it as if I'm working less than they are on school stuff, and it was kind of like it's all the same. We're all equally as busy, you are not busier than I am just because you're a music major and you're taking more courses. You're taking more courses, but I'm having to do extracurricular stuff. And so I kind of felt like, not like an outcast, but like I couldn't really connect with them in the same way. They would be talking about like, oh, this professor said this for this assignment, and I would just be like, okay. I would work on my lab report or something while they were talking about this.

JB: So a little bit of a disconnect, maybe, because you weren't a you weren't a major.

DM: Yeah.

JB: was the was the rest of the studio, mostly majors, then?

DM: Yeah, I think it was me and one other girl that were not majors. And then we had the international student for maybe one year, and she was not a major. And off the top of my head there's four that I can think of that were majors.

JB: Gotcha. So in thinking back on your lesson experience, what lessons would you say you learned in lessons that have continued to impact you since you graduated?

DM: I learned to be a lot more flexible. Five years ago I had this exact plan for my life. I'm not going to take a gap year. I'm going to go straight through to medical school, and I'm going to get in here, and I'm going to do this, and that was just not how it worked out. I got to like my senior year of college, and I was like, I really just don't want to go to school right now. And then and I was like, but that's not okay. And I was like, actually, it really doesn't matter. So then, now I'm taking two gap years. And so, just knowing you can have plans for yourself, but if it doesn't work out that way, it is really not the end of the world. That was big for me. Again, I would look at a piece of music I was like, that is exactly how I have to play it, and [my professor] was like, that's not really how that works. So he taught me a lot that the music is not, like, a suggestion, but it's kind of like your roadmap. And then if you want to take a little detour, it's okay.

JB: What should a professor know about teaching a non-major, like what are the most important things the professor needs to do in order to be able to teach a non-major effectively?

DM: I think [my professor] was great about this, the department was not, but like understanding that, for non-majors, practicing is not the main priority for them. And so, if a non-major comes in and they're like, I didn't really get to practice this this week, chastising them is not going to help. It's just going to push them away from continuing lessons or doing music at all. And then, being able to understand what your non-major student is studying and how to connect that back to music, to try to get them to understand the translations.

JB: Yeah, I like both of those thoughts a lot. Well, that's most of the questions I've had for you. Is there anything else you want to say about your experience? Is there maybe a specific memory that comes back to mind to you when you think about your lessons?

DM: I have a lot of fond memories of [my professor] and how kind he was. Like, because at [my university] there are not a ton of upper-level classes that are interesting to non-majors, he created a course for me. It was like an independent study thing, and it was related to music and science. He tried really hard to help me fulfill my minor requirements without having me have to take two different classes because [with] lots of the upper division classes... you just take nine credits. There were two three-credit hour ones, and then everything else was like two credit hours or one credit hour. So he was like, there's no point in you having to take two and three extra classes. I was very appreciative that he like did that for me, because he again he was adjunct. He lived [two hours away], and he was playing in all these different ensembles and stuff. And I felt like he went out of his way to help me.

JB: Awesome. Yeah, he sounds great.

DM: He is awesome.

JB: Anyway, is there anything else you want to say about your experience?

DM: It wasn't the best experience just because of [the wind ensemble director]. But I think that that is probably not a universal experience, I think it's just an individual type thing. But yeah, just as long as the whole department is on board with the non-majors, that this is not their priority, I think that it really could draw more non-majors to music, because at [my university], I don't think that there's a lot of non-majors that are in concert band. They're mostly in marching band, I think, because I don't think it's as much of a time commitment, you know. You just show up to practices and you go to football games, and that's basically it. Whereas concert music, you have to go to every single rehearsal. You have to practice. You have to take lessons. You have to do all kinds of extra things that just are not appealing to non-majors.

JB: Right. Anyway, thank you very much for talking to me. I really appreciate it.

DM: Yeah, no problem!

Appendix C: Written Response Transcript

1. Please briefly share a bit about yourself, including when and where you attended college, what your major was, what you do for work now, and whether you still play your horn on a regular basis (define “regular” as approximately once per week or more).

I attended college at [a university in the Midwest] from August of 2014 to December of 2018 and obtained bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Accountancy. I am currently [working in the tax industry] in [a city in the Midwest]. My husband works in the music field, and is a DMA candidate at [a university in the Midwest], so I am still fairly exposed to the music world, but I do not play my horn on a regular basis. I would say occasionally - roughly once or twice per month.

2. What did a typical horn lesson look like for you?

A typical horn lesson would include a run through of the sonatas that were assigned for my lesson that week, and then spending time going back through them and fine-tuning details. Then we would usually work on the piece that I had chosen to prepare for the studio recital for that semester. Sometimes lessons included talking about life and future goals, and sometimes it was all about the horn.

3. What skills did you hope to learn by taking horn lessons? These could be musical or non-musical skills. In what ways do you still use these skills today?

I took horn lessons in hopes of staying involved in music, even though I didn’t want to major in music. I had never taken lessons before, but I was very involved in everything music in high school, and I figured if I wanted to be involved at the collegiate level that I would need to work on my playing abilities. So, I had hoped to learn how to play at a more advanced level. That did happen, but I also learned so much about myself and about life along the way. I learned the value of being dedicated to something, and the cliché “you can do anything you put your mind to.” I learned that sometimes, hard work and putting forth effort goes further than natural ability. I learned that sometimes, big pieces of coiled metal are the devil, and you just have to put it down and try again tomorrow! And I learned that you normally have to step outside of your comfort zone to experience true growth. These are all life skills and lessons that I still use on a regular basis today, both in my personal and professional life.

4. In what ways did your horn lesson experience impact your overall experience as an undergraduate?

Taking horn lessons and being involved in the ensembles & studio counted as electives toward my degree, so it enabled me to finish my undergraduate degree a semester early. It did get to be a lot at times, studying for my major classes, working 25 or so hours per week, and trying to find the time to practice and be prepared for my weekly lessons. But I am so glad that I did it, and I wouldn’t change a thing. I met some of my best friends in the music school, and developed good relationships with professors that have continued to this day.

5. What would you want applied horn professors to know about teaching non-majors?

That it’s okay to be hard on your non-major students. It’s good for them in the long run, and it will help them to become better players and better people.

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