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An Intrinsic Case Study of Two Homeschooled Undergraduates' Decisions to Become and Remain Music Education Majors

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Abstract

The purpose of this intrinsic case study was to investigate two homeschooled undergraduates' decisions to become and remain music education majors. Two senior music education participants' data were used holistically to capture their experiences over a 12-month period. Individual interviews, weekly journals, and field notes comprised the data sources, whereas verification procedures included triangulation, member checking, and peer review. Participant profiles are included in the results as well as three themes: (a) remembered moments and the desire to facilitate those experiences for others; (b) parents, teachers, and other important role models within musical and teacher development; and (c) personal qualities and overcoming obstacles. Results reflect several past studies and highlight the need for homeschooled individuals to participate continually in field experiences at the undergraduate level.

Keywords

music teacher socialization, homeschool, homeschool music education majors, case study

Homeschooling was the norm until the late 19th century when compulsory school attendance and the training of educated professionals to teach within school contexts became more prominent (Ray, 2000). Since the 1970s, the practice of homeschooling

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has experienced resurgence in the United States with more than 1 million children being homeschooled each year (Romanowski, 2006). Although there are several reasons for this resurgence, self-reported participant data have cited the following reasons for homeschooling: (a) traditional schools are poor learning environments, (b) the desire to raise children in the home for religious reasons, and (c) parents can provide a better education at home (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003).

Although research on the homeschooling experience is developing rapidly, extant studies appear to be limited in reach. Districts may not collect data on homeschooled students within their radius because they are not given any incentive or reimbursement to do so (Isenberg, 2007). Furthermore, from state to state, different requirements exist about how to indicate that a child is being homeschooled. As a result, it is possible that nationally, several thousand children are being homeschooled that remain unidentified. The following categories emerged from the extant studies: (a) homeschooling addressing children with exceptionalities (Arora, 2006; Duffey, 2002; Duvall, Delquadri, & Ward, 2004; Winstanley, 2009); (b) academic achievement and outcomes for homeschooled children (Cogan, 2010; Jones & Gloeckner, 2004; Ray, 1997); (c) legal issues and the political backdrop of homeschooling (Plecnik, 2007; Yuracko, 2008); and (d) concern for socialization and homeschooling (Chatham-Carpenter, 1994; Medlin, 2000; Romanowski, 2006; Shyers, 1992).

Research addressing children with exceptionalities has explored families' experiences with public schools and homeschooling as a way to meet children's educational needs. Studies focused on academic achievement found homeschoolers have high levels of readiness and perform well in higher education settings (Jones & Gloeckner, 2004). Finally, with regards to concerns of isolation and lack of social development for homeschooled individuals, self-reported data indicated that homeschooled children interacted with an average of 49 individuals each month, whereas public school children interacted with an average of 56 individuals (Chatham-Carpenter, 1994). Homeschoolers interacted with younger children, adults, and peers, whereas public schoolers interacted primarily with peers.

The decision process for undergraduates declaring a major in music education has been investigated in several studies (Bergee, 1992; Bergee, Coffmann, Demorest, Humphreys, & Thornton, 2001; Gillespie & Hamann, 1999; Hamann & Walker, 1993; Madsen & Kelly, 2002; White, 1967). Findings indicated that many students decide to major in music education while in high school and music teachers were highly influential in students' decisions to become music education majors (Bergee, 1992; Bergee et al., 2001; Madsen & Kelly, 2002). High school music teachers also motivated students to pursue classes at the university level (Hamann & Walker, 1993). Participants reported the main reasons they become music education majors were to communicate their knowledge and love of music with others and to continue making music in their own lives (Bergee et al., 2001; Gillespie & Hamann, 1999).

Within music education research, the homeschooling experience has been studied by Nichols (2005) who phenomenologically investigated three families' reasons for music instruction and their methods of implementation within homeschool environments.

Findings articulated that families include music instruction within homeschool environments because it enriches a child's life experience, because it may reveal their individual gifts, and because it is as essential as other traditional academic subjects, such as math, english, science, and foreign language. Music instruction included private lessons on piano as well as other instruments, involvement in musical activities at church, and for one family with a parent who was a trained music educator, an individualized sequential music education method.

The purpose of this intrinsic case study was to understand two homeschooled undergraduates' decisions to become and remain music education majors. Previous studies provide an appropriate point of departure for the three main research questions of this study. First, whom do homeschooled students cite as their influential role models in the decision to become undergraduate music education majors? Second, what experiences do homeschooled participants discuss as important to their decision? Third, how does homeschooling prepare participants for an undergraduate music education major? For the purposes of this study, homeschooling is defined as "the practice in which the education of children is clearly parent-controlled or parent-directed (and sometimes student-directed) during the conventional-school hours during the conventional-school days of the week" (Ray, 2000, p. 71).

Method

I used intrinsic case study to thoroughly understand a particular circumstance, in this instance, the decision, for two homeschooled participants, to become music education majors (Mertens, 2010). The design of this case study was holistic because the data from both participants were analyzed together as the main unit of analysis (Yin, 2009). The case study was bound by the individuals' verbal discussion or writings concerning their decision to become and remain undergraduate music education majors as well as my own observations and field notes.

Sampling Strategy and Size

Within an intrinsic case study, the case is preselected (Stake, 1995). In this study, the case was bound by interview, written, and observational data about homeschooled participants' decisions to become and remain music educations majors. As a result, participants were required to meet the following criteria: (a) homeschooled throughout elementary, middle, and high school; (b) a declared music education major; and (c) far enough along in the program so that successful completion was imminent. These two particular students were also chosen because they represented a heterogeneous sample, with contrasting homeschooling and musical experiences. One participant was highly involved in community instrumental music ensembles and homeschool cooperatives, whereas the other studied piano privately and was homeschooled almost entirely at home. The sample size of this case study was purposefully small ($N = 2$) to

gather and analyze data specific to the case, explore the research questions, and determine whether future studies were warranted.

Ethical Issues

Ethical issues surrounded my position as researcher and professor. Though the interviews with participants occurred between semesters, I served as the instructor for one participant in elementary and choral methods courses. For another participant, I was her university supervisor within student teaching. Because this study was completely voluntary, it was my expectation that the students who elected to participate did so out of interest and not out of feelings of pressure. Furthermore, it is possible that our established rapport in past coursework and student teaching supervision was an asset in this study (Seidman, 2006).

Data Collection

The data collection began in January 2010 and concluded in December 2010. The primary data source included an individual interview with each participant, which lasted approximately 50 minutes. Though there was an interview guide, additional questions emerged as they came into the dialogue (Merriam, 2009). Examples of interview questions included (a) what experiences contributed to becoming a music education major, (b) who were the most important role models in the participants' music education development, and (c) how homeschooling had prepared them for teaching music. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. Audio recordings and transcripts were checked for accuracy the day after transcription.

Secondary data sources included 23 journal entries, submitted electronically each week by the participants as they progressed through their student teaching semester. I provided prompts to focus participants' writing with regards to the process of field experiences with students in school settings. I also observed the participants four times each during the student teaching semester, taking field notes at each observation.

Data Analysis and Verification Procedures

I used inductive data analysis, which moves from the specific to the general in order to gather data into larger themes (Hatch, 2002). After I looked at the variety of words and their meanings, I sought to interrelate the data to create categories of meaning (Conway & Borst, 2001). I coded each interview, participant journals, and memos using qualitative software, MaxQDA version 2007.

Verification procedures allow findings and interpretations to yield credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Both prolonged engagement with the participants as well as triangulation assisted the holistic case study design. Interacting with the participants through a 12-month period was important to more fully understand their decisions of becoming music education majors. Collecting multiple types and different data sources

within student teaching observations, individual interviews, and weekly journals also helped verify the results. Toward the end of the data collection and analysis, I also engaged in member checking with participants about what themes were emerging. Finally, I used peer review, which requires the investigator to discuss method and findings with another equal status peer, who is not connected to the study in any way, in order to check the process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Results

Participant Profiles

Allison.[1] Allison is an energetic and driven honors student with a GPA of a 3.99. She is the oldest of seven children who was homeschooled beginning at age six. Allison spent kindergarten and first grade attending a Montessori school outside a large metropolitan city. After age 6, Allison was solely homeschooled until she entered university at age 18. While her academic work in elementary school was in the home, her family participated in homeschool cooperatives for social events. Allison describes herself as an "ambitious, go-getter." An example of this was in her elementary years when she decided to read every classic novel. She made lists, crossing the titles off one by one as she finished each book until the list was exhausted. Beginning in late middle school and high school, she also took academic classes within homeschool cooperatives, such as calculus, Spanish, and physics.

Allison's mother was her teacher throughout her homeschool years. In addition to instructing math, language arts, social studies, and science, she taught music theory and music appreciation using worksheets and listening exercises. Allison knew at a young age that she enjoyed playing the flute and attending concerts. When she was 8 years old, she attended a youth symphony concert and "was blown away" that high school and middle school students were playing on stage. Although Allison's first flute teacher was her mother who had studied flute throughout high school and college, within 1 year, her mother found a different private teacher for her to study with. This led to Allison's involvement in several community, regional, and state youth orchestras as well as wind ensembles throughout middle and high school years. At university, she began as a performance major with her applied area as the flute. As a sophomore, Allison changed her major to music education. At the time of Allison's interview, she had recently finished her coursework and was about to student teach. Allison's weekly journal entries, from the following semester were included in the data corpus.

Catherine.[1] Catherine, the third of six children, was also homeschooled by her mother beginning at age 6 after attending a local church preschool and kindergarten program. Catherine described the structure of her homeschool days as breakfast and morning prayers at 7 a.m., household chores at 7:30 a.m. and school beginning at 8:00 a.m. While each child of her family would work at his or her own pace, the family would sit at the kitchen table and "be at school" from approximately 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. each day. Catherine described herself as "easily distracted," so she would often be finishing her work into the late afternoon and evening.

Catherine was not a member of any homeschool cooperatives but was enrolled in geometry and Greek classes outside of the home. Although she has detailed memories of loving to sing throughout her childhood, her first formal study was on the piano, beginning at age 6. Her remembered experiences included the university piano association's biannual recitals and passing through specific repertoire to move to the next level.

Catherine auditioned for university in both piano and voice. She was accepted as a music education major in applied piano with a voice minor. During Catherine's first year at university, she decided she wanted to study voice as her primary applied area. Hence, she auditioned and was accepted as a music education major with her applied area in voice at the end of her freshman year. At the time of Catherine's interview, she had just completed her student teaching semester and was anticipating graduation.

Themes

For both participants, the decision to become a music education major was influenced by three themes, including (a) remembered moments and the desire to facilitate those experiences for others; (b) parents, teachers, and other important role models within musical and teacher development; and (c) personal qualities and overcoming obstacles. In the following results, each theme will be discussed as well as the analytic and descriptive codes that emerged as data were analyzed.

Remembered Moments and the Desire to Facilitate Those Experiences for Others. For both participants, structured musical experiences contributed to their decision to become music education majors. I noted during Allison's interview that her face brightened considerably when discussing meaningful concerts that she performed in high school. She (Interview, May 5, 2010) also described several community ensemble experiences, including a homeschool band, youth orchestra, youth wind ensemble, and all state ensembles, saying, "I think it [the decision to be a music education major] was reinforced with meaningful ensemble experiences. I had a lot of experiences like 'this is amazing,' moments where I was taken aback, starting in the sixth grade."

Catherine also described performances, including piano association biannual gatherings and participating in her church Christmas program. Regarding the Christmas program, she said in her interview (May 9, 2010), "I loved it and wanted to do it all day, every day." Catherine's remembered moments also included listening to vocalists such as Sarah Brightman and Charlotte Church, seeking to emulate their voices and musicianship.

Private instruction illuminates the path. Both Catherine and Allison taught private students during their final years of homeschooling. Catherine taught community members on the advice of her father to see if she would enjoy teaching and hence, should become a music education major. She said (Interview, May 9, 2010), "I really enjoyed teaching privately . . . I like music and I could help other people in their understanding and pursuit of it." Allison also taught flute privately in her sophomore year of university, which assisted her move past her reticence for larger group music teaching. Teaching

privately as well as working with her younger siblings in the homeschooling environment "empowered [her] to work with younger kids."

Field experience and collegiate ensembles. For both participants, their first 2 years of undergraduate experiences were important influences in their decision to be music education majors. Catherine (Interview, May 9, 2010) discussed a pivotal middle school teaching moment during her sophomore year in field experience: "It was my first, first, first experience being in front of a class. It was great. I was nervous, but I knew what I was talking about and I did what I knew I needed to do."

Allison discussed her involvement in collegiate music ensembles: "I didn't have as many magical moments as I had in high school . . . I wanted to shift to creating that for other people." When I probed her a bit further in understanding how that change occurred, she said, "I would say the desire to create those opportunities for other students was a factor in wanting to be a teacher . . . and because they were very meaningful for me, personally" (Allison, Interview, May 5, 2010).

Interestingly, both Allison and Catherine discussed a shift from performer to teacher during their undergraduate education in both their journals and interviews. Allison said that her mother recently found a paper that she had written at age 5 about how she wanted to be a teacher. She said (Interview, May 5, 2010), "I didn't remember any childhood memories specifically saying that I wanted to teach. It was always, 'I want to be a flute player in an orchestra.'" Toward the end of Catherine's interview (May 9, 2010), I asked her what it felt like to be at the end of her student teaching experience. She said, "It was so much easier and so much more fun that I thought it was going to be . . . I don't think I thought about it until this very minute, but I guess I am a teacher."

Parents, Teachers, and Other Important Role Models in Musical and Teacher Development. Participants indicated that there were several mentors who filled different roles in their development as music education majors. Both participants acknowledged their parents' influence within their decision making and academic homeschool teachers. Music teachers appeared to hold an important role within the undergraduates' decisions.

Parents as the first teacher. As a child, Allison attended concerts with her parents. Her mother was her first flute teacher. Within the homeschooling environment, Allison indicated that her mother was a teacher role model because she always adapted to her children's learning styles. She would support each child's passions in whatever areas they had found. Allison said, "If any of us had a passion, I decided mine was music, she was going to drive me to all of those things" (Journal, August 15, 2010).

Catherine's dad was a trombone player in high school who enjoyed listening to instrumental music. Although her mother was her primary teacher, she did not think of her mom as a teacher, but as a mom. Catherine's mom would "set up" the work that needed to be completed and would be there to help. Overall, she felt her mom taught her to be self-motivated. Catherine (Interview, May 9, 2010) paraphrased what her mom would say, "Go get it, and if you need help, I'm here."

Homeschool teachers as positive models. Teachers within homeschool cooperative classes were positive models in high school for both participants. In her interview (May 9, 2010), Catherine discussed an influential geometry teacher and how he taught her to make learning fun, engaging, and inviting. She learned from him to "Let them know that you are a person. Don't be so removed." Allison (Interview, May 5, 2010) discussed a teacher who worked with her group in physics and calculus. She articulated that he was passionate about his subject, and "it wasn't about necessarily about how much he was getting paid."

Music teachers as pivotal. Both participants spoke of several music teachers who were important to their decision to major in music education. Allison attributes her first flute teacher to her firm technical foundation, whereas Catherine was highly influenced by her private piano teacher:

> She helped me to love it for myself and to let that love show through when I played. Music is something you did, you played the piano and you enjoyed it. [I thought] "You can't enjoy it while you are playing." That was a whole new level. She taught me that. (Journal, February 13, 2010)

On entering university, both participants discussed their applied instructors as influential. Allison articulated (Interview, May 5, 2010) that her private teacher intended to be a performer, but because of various reasons, had adapted to love teaching her students. She stated that her instructor did not learn this through a degree, but evolved as a person and a teacher. Catherine described her piano teacher as a "quiet, solid, loving figure."

In partnership with the applied teacher, the vocal music education professor also played a role in both participants' decision-making process. Catherine (Interview, May 9, 2010) said, "She was the first person I met when I came to this school. She said, 'Yes you can do it and I'll help you do it.'" When Allison also sat down with her applied teacher and music education professor, the music education professor also encouraged her, stating that she could do it. Allison described becoming empowered by her professor's response and, as a result, was willing to give the music education degree a try.

Unlike Catherine's self-described "solitary experience" with the piano, Allison credited several ensemble directors as inspiration toward her music education major. She described the youth wind conductor as "knowing how to create memorable experiences" and as being supportive of every student, stating "There were so many students that didn't have the money [to go on tours], but he said he would help. They were not in the capacity to pay him back . . . that was what he did." Furthermore, her flute choir director took a personal interest in her progress and would ask her to play for him.

Personal Qualities and Overcoming Obstacles. Participants indicated that there were a variety of personal qualities that suited them as undergraduate music education majors and future teachers. Because of homeschooling, they had to instill several organizational skills in themselves as children as a form of structure. They also developed

self-motivation and drive at a young age. Participants indicated they had to seek out musical opportunities and because of it, are both more passionate about music. In Catherine's journal (January 24, 2010), she articulated her strengths in playing piano and described that when she taught larger music classes, she treated them as group private instruction, "I want to impart everything about the piano as if it were a piano lesson."

Moving past the fear of large groups. Both participants expressed that they were reticent with larger groups in a school setting. Catherine said, "I lived in fear of student teaching, because I had never been in front of a class." Later in the interview (May 9, 2010), she said, "I don't have the personal experience of fifth grade, when relating to fifth graders. It's not a bad thing. It probably saved me a lot of pain." She resulted in saying that her fear is a "personality thing" and not a "homeschool thing." Allison (Interview, May 5, 2010) also discussed feeling scared and intimidated,

> That is why I wasn't considering a music education degree when I first came to college . . . it wasn't that I didn't want to do it, or wasn't considering it. It was, just obviously, a foreign environment for me, so I didn't think I could do it as well [as performance].

Allison moved past her feelings of fear when she taught privately in her sophomore year of university. She said, "It seemed I was more drawn to it than the performance aspect. So I guess I was scared, but I finally said, 'this shouldn't hold me back, from being a teacher'" (Interview, 5 May 2010).

In my field notes and memos, I often wrote about Allison and Catherine's self-criticism in group music teaching settings. Allison had particular classroom management issues as articulated in her journal entry (November 21, 2010), "I sometimes allow my insecurities to show and I take their comments and disinterested attitudes personally . . . I tend to apologize for things I shouldn't and am not firm enough."

In one of my memos (October 15, 2010), I wrote about a post-teaching discussion with Allison. I asked her how she thought her teaching went and she looked despondent, "Not the way I thought it would go." She then enumerated several aspects that could have been improved, including transitions, engaging the full class, and having a firmer foundation with her materials. I said, "How does it feel to be a music education major?" She said, "Hard. I knew it would be tough, but I didn't think it would challenge me like this." Catherine indicated similar struggles in both her journals, and interview. One journal (February 15, 2010) stated, "My lessons are still hopelessly full of pitfalls and they don't yet seem to flow just right."

We are more alike than different. Toward the end of her interview, Catherine articulated that each new teacher must "adapt to individual situations" because each school is different. In this way, she described herself as being like other new teachers. She also discussed that through the student teaching process, she realized that she was similar to the other student teachers, "Now that I have gone through the student teaching experience with all of these others [peers] by my side, I am seeing that we

are all having the same struggles" (Catherine, journal, April 18, 2010). She finished by stating that homeschooling gave her a very solid foundation. She was able to get more individual attention and might have fallen behind in a traditional classroom with 30 children.

Both participants also indicated they had benefitted from immersive student teaching experiences, allowing them to understand and grow more fully within the public school context. Catherine's journal (March 27, 2010) indicated that she was becoming a school music teacher:

> I have certainly grown to respect the teaching profession more since I've been a quasi part of this society. I appreciate more of the focus and hard work that it takes to be a teacher. I realize that what I do affects the children I teach, instead of just me, and I am not only answerable for my grades and myself anymore. I have a big responsibility and the evolution[ary] process has not been strictly technical, but instead it has been more of an emotional development . . . I have tried to grow and adapt to the responsibility and show myself worthy of the task of training these kids.

Lack of "automatic associations" as positive and negative. In journals and interviews, both participants discussed that they do not have school memories and school music teacher role models. Catherine (Interview, May 9, 2010) discussed never experiencing a graduation ceremony, school dance or prom. Allison stated she did not have a school music teacher role model and said she would have liked a good influence from a school music teacher. Because of the lack of school music models, both participants stated that field experience observations and teachings held a more important role in their teacher development. Simultaneously, the lack of "automatic associations" also allowed the participants to form who they wanted to be as music teachers, freeing them to create it for themselves.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the decision-making process of becoming music education majors for two homeschooled participants. The emergent themes reflect several findings of previous studies concerning role models and pivotal musical experiences while also differentiating these participants' experiences as homeschoolers. The following discussion will look at three common areas, including pivotal musical moments, influential individuals, and the importance of preservice teaching experiences.

Pivotal Musical Moments

Allison articulated several ensemble experiences that motivated her to pursue an undergraduate music education major. It became apparent through analyzing Allison's data that her desire to become a music teacher was highly influenced by the rich

ensemble membership she participated in as an adolescent. This depiction of Allison's development toward music education is reflective of Madsen and Kelly (2002), who describe a profound music experience followed up by greater practice, motivation, and the desire to take music participation seriously. Allison seemed to benefit from several of these experiences and influential individuals, which constantly moved her forward in her musical development. Once entering university, however, she became an example of one who changed majors from performance to education (Bergee et al., 2001). She described this because there was a general lack of "magical moments in college." She articulated, rather, that she evolved as a musician who desired to facilitate those experiences for others.

Catherine's passion for singing appears to have carried her through her music education major. Since she knew as a young child that she wanted to be a singer, and then emulated several artists as she got older, Catherine's love of choir and desire to be a part of a singing environment was a major influence in her decision to become a music education major. Previous studies also validate the desire to teach music because of the individual's love of music-making (Madsen & Kelly, 2002).

Influential Individuals

Congruent with past studies (Bergee, 1992; Bergee et al., 2001; Hamann & Walker, 1993; Madsen & Kelly, 2002), Allison and Catherine discussed several music teachers as highly influential on their decision to become a music education major, the greatest influences being their private applied instructors. This study also aligns with Hourigan and Scheib (2009), who found that applied study may strengthen individuals' skills for teaching. Both Allison and Catherine drew great strength and inspiration from their applied teachers. The pivotal role of influential university teachers for Allison and Catherine may reflect findings of previous studies in which students decide to become music educators after enrolled in university (Bergee et al., 2001; Madsen & Kelly, 2002).

Importance of Teaching Experiences

Participants' engagement in preservice teaching experiences prior to declaring the music education major appears significant in this study. Both Allison and Catherine describe enjoying teaching privately and experiencing what it feels like to teach. Additionally, teaching privately for Catherine not only validated her enjoyment of teaching but also her love for music, which echoes Frederickson's (2007) study of music majors' reasons for wanting to teach private lessons. Furthermore, while field experiences are cited as important for many undergraduates (Conway, 2002; Kerchner, 1998), it is possible that field experiences hold a particularly important role to homeschoolers because they are able to learn how schools function. Though both acknowledged each school is different and they are quick to adapt, field experiences in elementary, middle, and high school music classes as well as observations in general

education settings, give them the necessary induction into schools that they had not experienced before.

Both participants articulated their fear in managing a classroom full of children. Catherine suggested that her reticence was a "personality thing," and Allison declared that her fear was something she would not allow to stand in her way. Allison and Catherine's apparent struggle or fear of classroom management does not appear unique as previous studies have addressed preservice and new inservice teachers' challenges with classroom management (Bergee, 2002; Conway, Hansen, Schulz, Stimson, & Wozniak-Reese, 2004; Fallin & Royse, 1994).

Final Reflections

Throughout this study, and in observation conferences, seminars, and e-mails, I have come to understand that these two homeschooled participants, like other student teachers I have observed, are struggling with their slowly evolving teacher identity. They want to feel competent and confident with their craft but are often left dissatisfied. After considering Dolloff's (1999) narrative inquiry concerning participants' images of themselves as ideal teachers, I wonder what Allison and Catherine's images are of themselves as ideal teachers. If students select attributes from former teachers to begin forming their own teacher identities, then as Allison stated, there is both a loss, where potentially positive models could have made an impact, and a gain, where participants begin to create their own identities wholly and freely.

The decision to become a music education major and face the fear of student teaching appeared to be the biggest challenge for Allison and Catherine because of unfamiliarity. Once, however, they became acclimated through field experience and the first few weeks of student teaching, they face what Catherine calls, the "personality thing" of asserting themselves as teachers in the classroom. So, this then begs the question: What is the process of teacher identity development in homeschooled students? A future study investigating the process could provide important insight about how homeschoolers evolve into their newfound teacher identity.

Allison and Catherine both articulated that homeschooling prepared them well for a music education major. They described themselves as quick learners, organizationally strong, and excellent at goal setting. It appeared that homeschooling may have instilled them with a high level of self-esteem. A quantitative study addressing homeschoolers' levels of self-esteem compared with traditionally schooled students would provide an additional context to this area of inquiry.

Finally, this study challenges many assumptions that individuals may hold about homeschooled populations. Participants discussed the presence of role models, considerable meaningful experiences with music, and felt prepared by homeschooling experiences to enter traditional schools. A longitudinal study looking at the career trajectory of selected homeschooled students would provide potential insights about their unique perspective within school environments over time.

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1. A pseudonym was assigned to the participants during data transcription.

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