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## **A Narrative Case Study of Transfer Students in Instrumental Music Education**

Ashley Glenn

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A NARRATIVE CASE STUDY OF TRANSFER STUDENTS IN INSTRUMENTAL  
MUSIC EDUCATION

by

Ashley E. Glenn

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate School,  
the College of Arts and Sciences  
and the School of Music  
at The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## ABSTRACT

Transfer students in music fields face challenges that are different from other fields of study. Research has shown that transfer students in music are expected to acclimate and operate as upperclassmen with minimal onboarding while also potentially having to retake courses they received credit for at the community college level. This study examines the experiences of five transfer students in music education through the lens of Schlossberg's transition theory and Dewey's model of transaction. Building on existing transfer student research, it asks: what do transfer students experience in terms of acceptance and self-integration, and how do these experiences affect transfer students' self-awareness of the same? In this context, transfer students are defined as students who have completed an associate degree of the arts at a community college holding an articulation agreement with the receiving four-year institution.

Based on a review of the literature on transfer student issues and theories of transition and transaction, five transfer students in music education were selected to participate in open-ended interviews and asked questions related to their experiences before, during, and after their transition to the receiving institution. Analysis of the responses indicated that while each participant experienced parts of the transfer process differently, there were several experiences and interpretations common to the group. The results indicate that transfer students in music education are acutely self-aware of their integration into the academic and cultural environments of the receiving institution, and that they rely most on their applied instrument teachers and other transfer students in their instrument studios and ensembles for information related to scheduling, coursework, and cues leading to social integration. On this basis, it is recommended that departments and

schools of music regularly review the effectiveness of their transfer student policies and programs through direct communication with transfer students. Further research is needed to create an instrument that can be effectively implemented across a wide range of departments and schools of music for this purpose.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This study would not have happened had it not been for the students who participated as part of the research case and the applied faculty members who provided insight into the lives of transfer students in music. While I cannot acknowledge them by name, they know who they are and that I am profoundly thankful for their honesty and straightforwardness during the research process.

I want to thank my students and colleagues at Grand Valley State University for their patience and encouragement as I finished the writing process. Their encouragement and care kept me going on many a cold Michigan day. I would be remiss if I did not mention my family. I could not have done any of this without my loving wife, Rachel, and our children, Preston and Emma. They have stood by me every step of this journey and I would not have made it without their support, understanding, and encouragement. Both of our families and extended families provided significant moral support despite our

having to move half a continent away. We are working our way back home, slowly but surely.

## DEDICATION

For Rachel, Preston, and Emma; thank you for everything.

To the memory of my father-in-law David Jones, who passed away during my first year  
of doctoral work.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ASSIST</i>	Articulation System Stimulating Interinstitutional Student Transfer
<i>FERPA</i>	Family Education Right to Privacy Act
<i>IHL</i>	Institutes of Higher Learning
<i>LACTS</i>	Liaison Advisory Committee on Transfer Students
<i>MCCB</i>	Mississippi Community College Board
<i>NASM</i>	National Association of Schools of Music
<i>STEM</i>	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
<i>TCCNS</i>	Texas Common Course Numbering System

## CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

I stood on the stage of the Performing Arts Center in August of 2015 waiting to meet the new members of the marching band. Being new myself, I had only been on campus for a week preparing to begin my doctoral studies. The students ambling across the stage to check in came in an assortment of ages one would generally not expect to see in first-year college marching band members. It stood out to me the number of students marking themselves as juniors on the first-year registration form; I had not yet learned just how prevalent community college attendance was for college students in the state. My home state primarily used community colleges for technical certificates and making up failed prerequisite coursework universities, so the idea of a comprehensive community college music program was a foreign concept.

Over time, growing to know several transfer students well, I began to ask them about their experiences. I wanted to know why they decided to attend a community college first; what drew them to this university; and what their experiences getting started here were like. Had they had to sit through multiple meetings and training sessions on academic culture, School of Music academic and performance expectations, and appropriate student disposition as I had? Were transfer students introduced to the School of Music leadership hierarchy, and did they know who oversaw their division? Did they know where to find their degree path information or who to talk with if they needed help with a concern outside of their classes or studio lessons? These questions were generally met with frustration or confusion.

Although these transfer students had been offered an opportunity of an abbreviated introduction to the university through a transfer student orientation—a

campus tour, introduction to school history and tradition, and pointing out service locations—their introductory experience was left at that. Coming into the School of Music dropped them in the middle of a high-performance, high-expectation culture that expected them, as credit-bearing upperclassmen, to know how to navigate course conflicts, scheduling the recital hall, getting an accompanist, and the other components of being a music major with minimal assistance as they dealt with their new requirements and changing institutional identities.

The depth of the challenges faced by transfer students became evident to me while I was working as the graduate teaching assistant for the Introduction to Music Education class. Community college transfer students made up roughly half the class, with native four-year students comprising the other half. Many transfer students were surprised to learn they had access to no-cost productivity software and a campus writing assistance program; native students had known of these resources before the semester began. The more transfer students I spoke with, the more concerned I became at what I perceived to be a general lack of information. This led many students to share feelings of frustration and separation, with some openly acknowledging that they missed the less complicated atmosphere of their previous schools. As someone who has chosen to pursue a career in higher education, I felt responsible to see what could be done to study and address the situation; I could not in good conscience allow students to feel frustrated because of misdirected efforts on behalf of the School of Music.

Additionally, I sought to better understand the transfer process in order to prepare pre-service teachers to more conscientiously guide their future students through their own transfer and transition experiences. The movement between academic institutions

requires students to undergo a transition of identity from one school to the next. Students not only experience an increase in expectation and requirement, they experience a period of social upheaval and reintegration. Teachers must be prepared to understand their students' individual and group transition experiences in order to successfully guide students to a place of stability and prepare them to learn in the new environment.

Having these thoughts in mind—addressing the needs that our own transfer students had expressed, and finding a way to prepare future teachers to aid students in their own transitions—I began the task of finding literature that demonstrated how other schools or departments of music had addressed their transfer students' issues. Research dealing with arts-specific transfer student issues was almost non-existent. I was able to find two studies that were applicable to the situation. Wilson (2006) addressed the experiences of transfer students in music, but from the vantage point of the school or department chairperson; there was no interaction with the class of students in question. Boyenga (2009) used a narrative case study approach with theater students she taught at both the community college and four-year university level. This study offered significant insight into the mindset and experiences of transfer students in the arts, but the descriptions of theater department operations and culture painted a significantly different picture than what is found in most schools or departments of music.

Such a large gap in applicable research left me uncomfortable creating and implementing plans to address the transfer students' issues. Transfer students I encountered while working as a graduate teaching assistant had shared their feelings through informal conversations about their experiences. Several students shared frustration over having little or no direct guidance between the time they left the sending



institution—the community college they graduated from—and began their coursework at the receiving institution where they would complete their bachelor’s degree in music education. Others were concerned that their initial schedule had been put together in just a few minutes by a university general advisor, only to have to be painstakingly redone to address course conflicts and prerequisites once they met their assigned advisor. Concerns were shared about spending time and money retaking courses they had passed at the sending institution because of their performance on a one-time placement test at the receiving institution, or because their new applied instrument instructor did not believe the transfer students’ music performance to be comparable to those of native students at the same level. Most transfer students were also frustrated that younger native students looked up to them as experienced leaders, yet the new transfer students had little to no institutional knowledge themselves.

Students entering a four year institution at the freshman level go through an intensive series of activities and events to bring them into the campus identity; transfer students are generally provided a basic orientation and an overview of resources (Andres & Carpenter, 1997; Arnold, 2001; Berger & Balaney, 2003; O’Brien, 2011). The change in expectations of academic performance, self-regulation and monitoring, social involvement within the program, and increased continuity of attendance often lead to a less than ideal situation for the transfer student. This phenomenon is called transfer shock. Transfer shock is most often associated with a drop in grade point average during the first year, but may also include difficulty becoming academically and socially integrated into the new sheltering institution (the school responsible for degree conferment), extended time required to complete the degree, and, in some cases, result in

withdrawal from the university (Alba & Lavin, 1981; Andres & Carpenter, 1997; Astin, 1975; Astin, 1982; Berger & Balaney, 2003; Boyenga, 2009; Carter, Coyle, & Leslie, 2011, Cohen & Sanchez, 1997; Dickerson, 2008; Edge & Richards 1998; Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1976; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Tinto, 1975, 1982, 1988, 1993, 2006; Wilson, 2006).

The community college system in the state studied is an integral part of the state's tertiary education system. Two-year colleges provide students the flexibility to take classes as they feel ready while also allowing for increased external demands found with employment and parental responsibilities (Alba & Lavin, 1981; Borden, 2004; Cejda 1997; Cohen & Brawer, 1996, 2013; Diener, 1985). One of the goals of community college programs is to equip their graduates to enter the four-year university environment on equal footing with those students who have been a part of the university programs from the beginning of their collegiate education (Hoachlander, Sikora, Horn, & Carroll, 2003).

Community colleges and universities meet on an annual or biannual basis to review their programs and prepare a document, called an Articulation Agreement, that thoroughly details the expectation of preparation by and transferability of coursework from the community college level to the four-year universities (Mississippi Institute of Higher Learning, 2018; Texas Common Course Numbering System, 2015; Transfer in Iowa, 2020; ASSIST, 2019; State of Oregon: Policy & Collaboration - Transfer and Credit Policy, 2020). Articulation agreement contains the specific amount and classification of transferrable credit from the sending schools to the receiving colleges

and universities. The accepted credit transfer amounts are typically limited to no more than half the hours required to graduate from the receiving institution's specific program.

Music students who transfer to the receiving institution in this study from articulating community and junior colleges with a completed Associate of Arts in Music degree have the general expectation of graduating within two and a half to three years, including the teaching internship for those students seeking a Bachelor of Music in Music Education (NASM, 2020). These students must also pass a placement exam in music theory and demonstrate a characteristic level of performance facility for their studio teacher. Failure to pass these placement exams may result in having to retake courses for which they received credit at the community college level. This increases time spent at the university and may delay graduation.

Students and schools of music share a transactional relationship (Dewey, 1975; Vanderstraeten, 2002); a transactional relationship is a relationship in which both parties gain benefit from the participation of another. Schools of music offer instruction, practice and performance venues, promotion and publicity, and, ultimately, credentials recognized by potential employers. Students reciprocate by providing their sheltering institutions with the best quality academic and performance work they can produce and, once they become teachers, by encouraging their own best students to attend the university (Nettle, 1995). For both entities—the student and the school—to receive the greatest benefit, there must be an intentional movement towards synchronizing the effort of the student to the expectations and resources of the school as quickly as possible (Dewey, 1975). Anecdotal information provided by transfer students in music points to the need for the institution to understand the special needs of its transfer students and adapt accordingly,

as do multiple researchers studying the same phenomena across multiple fields (Knoell, 1996; Mallette & Cabrera, 1991; Wilson, 2006).

A narrative case study format was chosen as the means for collecting data to answer the research questions because of the very personal nature of the transfer student experience (Gilgun, 1994; Clandinin, 2016). No two students share identical experiences even if they share the same environment and stimuli. The narrative process allows participants to share their experiences directly, clearly, and to guide the research as co-investigators by answering open-ended questions and providing additional information during the review process. Having the participants guide the interview process and review the interview transcriptions allows for themes to emerge organically, revealing a much more thick and rich data set than surveys and questionnaires would uncover (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017).

Qualitative research methods such as narrative case studies benefit from a smaller, more selective participant set so that conditions can be more tightly controlled with fewer additional variables to consider; smaller sample sizes allow for the collection of much deeper data within a very small topic focus. The case was limited to five students enrolled in the host institution as instrumental music education majors; these participants had completed an associate degree of the arts in music at an articulating community college. Applied wind faculty nominated a pool of candidates who met these criteria and who most closely matched the faculties' experiences working with transfer students at the host institution; specifically, students who had completed at least one full semester without a catastrophic academic or life event that resulted in their premature departure from the receiving institution.

Consideration of the anecdotal information provided by the transfer students and a brief overview of available literature led to the formation of the guiding questions that would become the focus of the study:

1. What do transfer students experience in acceptance and integration by other students in the same field? By faculty and staff?
2. How do these experiences affect transfer students' self-awareness and perceptions of acceptance and integration as they move through the transition process?

These questions would guide selection of both literature for deeper research and the selection of theoretical framework for data analysis.

## Definition of Terms

*Articulation agreement:* An agreement between schools that determines what credits will transfer from one school to the other, and how many transfer credits will count towards degree completion.

*Native student:* A student who has stayed at an institution since their freshman year without transferring.

*Receiving institution:* The school to which a student is transferring. In this study, it refers specifically to a four-year institution.

*Sending institution:* The school from which a student is leaving during a transfer. In this study, it refers specifically to community college.

*Transfer shock:* In this study, it refers to the academic and social issues that come from difficulty integrating into the receiving institution following a transfer.

*Transfer student:* A student who has transferred from one institution to another.

## CHAPTER II – REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Introduction

The amount of research that has been put into understanding the multiple phenomena facing transfer students is extensive. There are countless studies that investigate the reasons why students chose to attend a community college first, studies that examine their grade point average change in the year following a successful transfer to a four-year institution, and studies that examine the influence of parent coercion on which type of schools to attend as a student navigates their intended degree path.

It would be very easy to lose focus on the situation specific to the students participating in this study—transfer students seeking a bachelor’s degree in music education—so a framework of questions was used to help guide the selection of literature to include in the body of research. The guiding questions were:

1. Does the literature address the experiences of the participants at the community college and four-year university levels?
2. Does the literature address the experiences of the participants as they transition from the community college to the four-year institution?
3. Does the literature address the experiences of the participants as they attempt to integrate into the social and academic life at the four-year institution?
4. Does the literature adequately explain why the experience of transferring with intent to gain a degree in music education is worthy of study?
5. Does the literature adequately explain why the study of transfer in the arts, particularly that of students of music, is worthy of study?

The creation of these guiding questions aided significantly in narrowing the scope of literature into a more relevant, focused set of data that could be directly applied to the experiences of the participants during the analysis phase of this study.

The literature in this chapter is organized in a way that leads the reader through the experience of transferring alongside members of the case study. The first section, *The Community College*, introduces the community college concept and the issues students must consider as they prepare to transfer to a four-year institution. *The Transition Experience* discusses Schlossberg's transition theory and literature related to the experience of acclimating to a new campus environment. *The Transaction Experience* explains Dewey's theory of transaction and the construct of the transactional relationship between teacher and student and literature related to the experience of entering and maintaining those relationships. *The School of Music* provides an overview of a school of music at a four-year institution similar in structure and practice to the host institution for this study.

### The Community College

Junior colleges offered a more diverse amount of coursework than the extended agricultural high school and, as part of the recognized state higher education system, allowed students to continue their education at a four-year university (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). The community college was meant to be a campus of general coursework with introductory courses for full major study, allowing graduates moving on to the university level the opportunity to focus on their narrowed area of study without the disruption of prerequisite courses (Arnold, 2001; Berger & Balaney, 2003; Cohen, 2005, Cohen & Brawer, 1996, 2013).



Community college curriculum generally includes tracked majors that prepare students for upper division coursework in their desired field. These majors carry the designation of tracked because they follow a systematic and prescriptive plan of study to prepare students for upper division tertiary education within a specific field (Alba & Lavin, 1981; Knoell, 1996). Despite this structured system of curriculum, many students still find themselves able to maintain employment and attend to home and family responsibilities. In some cases, these responsibilities may require a student to spend a semester or two away from the classroom. Provided a student completes the coursework within the track and ultimately obtains an associate degree, they are considered prepared by both the sending and receiving institutions for the next level of education (Berger & Balaney, 2003; Borden, 2004; Wilson, 2006).

The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) is the organization that reviews music programs at degree-conferring institutions and provides accreditation if those programs meet a rigorous set of standards set out in the NASM Handbook (2020). Because of the number of two-year institutions, including community colleges, that offer associate degrees or transfer credit (if coursework counts towards degree conferral at a partner four-year institution), the NASM Handbook includes program planning and review systems specific to the two-year institutions. According to the NASM Handbook, two-year institutions that offer courses intended to transfer to a four-year institution are expected to “maintain curricular requirements equivalent to the first two years of a four-year baccalaureate program.” (p.95) The guideline is intended to minimize students having to repeat coursework taken at the sending institution.

Transferring is an expected part of many students' community college experiences. Even for students on a technical track, Dougherty (1992) and Hunter and Sheldon (1980) estimated that approximately three-fourths of students completing an associate's degree in a technical subject ultimately decide to move on and complete their bachelor's degree at a four-year institution. Predicting where a student will likely attend after completion of the associate's degree is a combination of a "student's background characteristics including age, gender, family socioeconomic status, parent's education, high school diploma type, the student's educational expectation, and financial constraints" (Yang, 2005, p. 153). In his study of student transfer between Oregon community colleges and Oregon University System institutions, Arnold (2001) examines the timeline frequently followed by students engaged in the high school to community college to four-year institution path. His study discusses at length several issues which make the transition from the community college to the four-year institution difficult to navigate specifically for students in Oregon; this study shares several common themes to other studies from other locations.

The first issue Arnold discusses is credit loss during the transfer between schools. Even with articulation agreements in place between many community colleges and four-year institutions, students may take courses that are not accepted towards the completion of a bachelor's degree. A study of transfer student transcripts in the Portland metropolitan areas (Kinnick et al., 1998) finds four areas in which students may not have courses transfer from the community college to the four-year institution (p. 57):

- Low grades may not be accepted if a degree program requires a minimum passing grade for a course to count towards graduation

- Developmental education courses, meant to bring students up to collegiate standards if their high school transcript or entrance exam scores were not satisfactory, do not count towards degree completion.
- Courses leading towards a professional certification in a technical track often do not count towards bachelor's degree completion requirements
- Courses over the maximum amount of transferrable credit hours are not counted towards degree completion at the four-year institution.

Arnold attributes these issues to a lack of information on the part of either the adviser, the student, or both. He suggests that advisers assigned to students in transfer track fields take the time to familiarize themselves thoroughly with articulation agreements and program requirements to make sure that transfer track students are taking courses appropriate to both their community college experience and in preparation for their continuation at the four-year institution.

The other issue Arnold (2001) introduces is a lack of vertical data sharing between the universities and community colleges. Once a student leaves the community college level, there is no direct tracking mechanism by which the community colleges can view transfer student achievement data from the four-year institution. Unless there is an agreement in place as part of the articulation agreement and including a signed waiver of the Family Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA) on behalf of the transferring student, data cannot be shared down from the four-year institution (p. 58). The recommendation is made in the article that the state of Oregon, as the host of the study, consider assembling representatives from community colleges and four-year institutions to examine the legal

and ethical issues involved in an academic data tracking system and work towards implementation.

Andrews' (1995, via Wilson, 2006) study of the visual and performing arts in Florida's community colleges found dissonance between faculty at two-year institutions and four-year institutions concerning preparedness for upper level coursework by transferring students (Wilson, 2006, p. 19). Faculty at the two-year institutions emphasized their belief that those students who have passed prerequisite classes at the sending institution are ready to continue their degree track at the receiving institution without impediment. Faculty at four-year institutions preferred to see skill proficiency in the form of music auditions and academic placement exams, occasionally resulting in students having to repeat coursework already completed prior to transferring. This information, paired with Arnold's (2001) research findings on lack of academic data sharing between articulating institutions, points to the possibility of transfer students adding costly semesters at the receiving institution because of incongruent expectations.

While the transition from the sending institution to the receiving institution does have its operational challenges, there have been steps taken by many states to alleviate some of the more common difficulties involved with the transfer process. In addition to the articulation agreement between the Mississippi Community College Board and the Institutes of Higher Learning, the state of Mississippi also offers an Articulation and Transfer Tool website (Mississippi Articulation and Transfer Tool, 2015). This website guides students through a series of questions including the sending institution, the student's major or concentration, and the intended receiving institution and provides an output that includes the coursework required at each institution. The state of Texas

utilizes a common course numbering system across participating institutions. The Texas Common Course Numbering System website (TCCNS, 2015) allows users to search the course offerings by school or major and view a list of comparable courses at other state institutions. In situations in which schools do not participate in the TCCNS, equivalent courses and course numbers are provided for articulated programs. California's ASSIST website (ASSIST, 2020) provides school by school, program by program transfer documentation that creates download PDF files containing program information and a list of courses that will transfer. The output clearly emphasizes situations where there are no transferrable courses.

The most thorough state transfer guides are found in Iowa's *Transfer in Iowa* system under the Transition Guides heading (Transfer in Iowa, 2020). While each of the three major state universities includes their own transfer information website linked from the main page, the universities have collaborated to assemble program-specific guides for biological sciences, chemistry, and mathematics. These guides are full-color, easy to read, comprehensive, and detail-oriented. A potential transfer student reading one of these transfer-specific guides not only has a list of the prerequisite courses needed to continue study at the receiving institution, they also have a detailed understanding of the social and academic culture and expectations of the program. A review of music program literature across a wide geographic range of schools and departments of music yielded no comparable document.

### The Transition Experience

The overall flexible nature of the community college lays the foundation for difficulty in transitioning and assimilating into what many students describe as a more

rigid and less accommodating university culture. Kates (2010) documents comments by respondents related to the difference between instructors and professors at both school environments. Respondents reported that teachers were much more likely at the community college level to walk the entire class through an assignment step by step even if the guide was included verbatim in the assignment notes; teachers were also more likely to go back and clarify parts of the assignment during class rather than waiting for individual students to approach and ask for assistance (p. 39). One respondent shared that being constantly reminded in class and by email of approaching deadlines for assignments and projects made it easier to remember to submit them on time. This same student reported experiencing high amounts of frustration at the university level, where teachers would refer concerns about assignment deadlines to the syllabus document (p. 38). Many students found the lack of warning about increased expectations for self-responsibility to be highly frustrating; there was little or no preparation provided to help alleviate the stress of having greater ownership over meeting and keeping deadlines. For those who knew to expect a less personalized, less flexible environment at the university level, there was still a feeling of trepidation as upper-division students are expected to already have systems in place to organize and self-monitor their assignments.

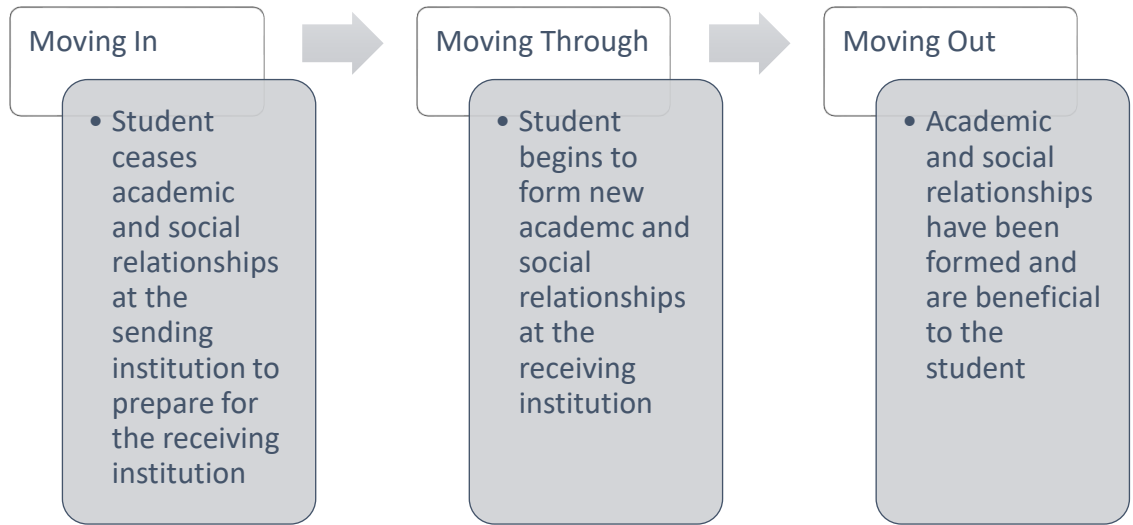


Figure 1. *Schlossberg's Transition Model*

The transition from senior high school to the college level is a large jump for many students, hence the resources spent on orientation events and classes. Schlossberg and Chickering (1995) detail three specific phases through which an individual moves during the transition process: moving in, moving through, and moving out. The “moving in” stage is characterized by the initial confrontation with the transition, such as one would experience towards the end of their time at a school or institution. The “moving through” stage marks the turning point, where the student begins to take charge of their day-to-day existence in the new location or situation. “Moving out” is characterized by the end of the transition and the settling into the new location or situation as a matter of accepted day-to-day reality.

As a way of better understanding the mental processes that permeate the three stages of transition, Schlossberg, Waters, and Goodman (1995) used four terms to approach the thought process and lead to greater understanding:

- *Situation* is how the transition is perceived by the individual. Does the individual perceive their transition as a positive or negative situation? Was it expected or unexpected? Is the transition at a time controlled by the individual or out of their control completely? Was the transition a result of personal choice or outside factors?
- *Self* refers to the position the individual perceives themselves to be during the transition. Does the individual feel as if they are in control of the situation or being manipulated by outside forces? Does the individual perceive themselves as being the primary benefactor of the transition or are they unsure of what benefit there is to the transition?
- *Support* refers to the people, organizations, and institutions that are involved in facilitating the transition. It is up to the individual to determine need and request aid, to respond to aid provided, and to determine if an entity providing support is more of a hindrance than a help.
- *Strategies* refer to the individual's ability to cope with the change through measured means at their disposal. Strategies depend on a variety of issues related to prior experience and preparation. Does the individual have a set of coping tools at their disposal that can be used appropriately? Can the individual predict and discern what decisions need to be made in advance or as situations arise?

There has been one case study of transfer student issues within the limits of upper-division coursework in the arts that centered on student experiences rather than faculty perceptions. Boyenga (2009) studied students in theater who had transferred from a community college theater program into the theater program at an associated four-year



institution. The case study focused on both the expectations the transfer students had coming into the program and their response to their experiences having to integrate into the new environment. Over the course of the case study, Boyenga found that transfer students, especially those who held leadership positions at the community college level, had tremendous difficulty acclimating to the environment at the four-year institution. The transfer students had the experience of leading set building and striking, making costumes, applying makeup, and other senior duties at the community college level; at the university, many attempted to continue their learned roles despite an environment where they were no longer the senior students and decision makers. Some students reported frustration that younger students—specifically native sophomores—received preferential assignments as they were already integrated into the established community and were better prepared to meet the expectations of the faculty because of that familiarity.

The dissatisfaction of losing preferential treatment, the inability to put skills acquired at the community college level to immediate use, and adapting to a larger campus with greater academic expectation led to lower grades and an increased drop rate of transfer students over native students. Recommendations for several program changes between the university and articulating community colleges included: using a common numbering system to create logical course progression from one level to the next, learning skills development opportunities at the community college level, creation of learning plan in conjuncture with both community college and university advising staff prior to transfer, and transfer student group meetings with university level faculty and

student leaders in the program to explain the student hierarchy and how the transfer students will fit into it (Boyenga, 2009, p. 135).

The change in support structure, increasing amounts of student responsibility, and increase in coursework difficulty create a transfer experience that many students find to be stressful. Townsend and Wilson (2006) acknowledge that many campuses have, through partnerships between faculty and student affairs, addressed the issues of transition needs of students coming from high school by offering residential transition communities, first-year seminars, and common interest groups (p. 440). Some universities also offer transfer-specific onboarding programs that focus on the specific needs of students who are coming into a more rigorous, demanding collegiate experience than they may have been a part of at the community college level. For many institutions, these efforts are often limited to a one-day orientation that is not mandatory for transfer students to attend (Jacobs, Busby, and Leath, 1992). These programs exist with a broad campus focus (Arnold, 2001; Berger & Balaney, 2003). Transfer students are often at a point where they expect to be spending most of their time in their specific division without the need to navigate multiple colleges and schools within the sheltering university (Wilson, 2006).

Townsend and Wilson's (2006) studied the experiences of students ( $n=19$ ) transferring from community colleges to a large, Midwestern, research-intensive university. The students in the study were generally happy with their educational outcomes at the community college level (p. 446) in preparation for the transition to the four-year institution but found the administrative and functional parts of the transfer experience to be lacking. Thirteen of the participants in the study stated that little to no

assistance was received from the community college as to which of their courses would transfer to their intended programs; of these thirteen, only four had approached their advisors or other staff for assistance and all four stated they were displeased with the outcome. Students typically did their own work in preparing their applications and determining which courses would transfer.

Once these students were in place at the four-year university, they found just as much frustration with the transition experience. Even though sixteen of the 19 students attended one of the university's Student or Transfer Welcome sessions, the participants still related significant amounts of frustration with acclimating to the new campus. The study's informal title comes from an interview with one of the participants (p. 446), who said:

*"I think what they need to do is . . . realize that transfers are a pretty sizable chunk of incoming class each year . . . and we need to extend things out to them. They're going to need as much of a hand hold for a little bit as the freshman maybe a little bit less over the course of the year, but especially just getting in.*

This visualization of a handhold, as a parent would do introducing their child to a new situation, appeared again in another interview. The transfer students in the study were treated as experienced upperclassmen by the university when they desired assistance in getting a firmer foundation in how the school operated.

Townsend and Wilson (2009) performed a follow-up study two years later, after these students were able to finish settling in and be able to look back on the experience with a little more distance. Of the original nineteen participants in the previous study, only twelve were available for a follow-up interview. Townsend and Wilson approached the interviews using Tinto's (1975, 1987, 1993) theory of student retention as a

framework for the inquiry, focusing on the academic and social integration portions of his model of student persistence.

In their discussion of findings, Townsend and Wilson found minimal signs of transfer shock (p. 414) as the participants reported only minimal downward change in grade point average. These slight drops were attributed by the students to the change in teaching styles, difficulty in forming new support structures, and the need to maintain work-school balance. The participants expressed needing more support from the university during their first semester, suggesting increased offerings of transfer-specific tutoring, grouping together transfer students in specific courses within their majors, and spending more time informing transfer students of the academic retention services offered by the institution.

Townsend and Wilson also noted difficulties related by the participants in integrating socially into the greater university structure. The participants related that living off campus was a hindrance, as “once you get off campus you get kind of lazy because you don’t want to have to come back to campus.” (p. 415). Several of these students also had evening jobs that prevented them from attending events. The primary vehicle of social integration was through program-specific Greek and special interest groups. The participants generally had no suggestions to offer the university due to the understood complexity of the problem, but one student did express the need for universities to prepare for a greater amount of non-traditional students as changes in the job market are causing greater numbers of married students and parents to return to school to prepare for new career paths (p. 416).

Townsend (2008), prior to the print release of the follow-up study above, examined the results of her two studies with Wilson with a focus on the pre- and post-transfer needs of the students. "Feeling Like a Freshman Again" highlights the suggestions found during the individual interviews and focus groups that transfer students believe would make their experiences more conducive to a successful settling into the receiving institution. The most frequent suggestion made by the participants is the development of transfer-friendly policies regarding housing and parking. Several students likened the experience of coming to the new campus as being a freshman again; they mentioned the difficulties of not having upperclassman priority in purchasing parking permits a semester early as they are not yet on campus as students. Those transfer students staying in dormitories found themselves paired with freshman who were still exploring the new freedoms of living away from home, often leading to disrupted study and sleep patterns as the younger roommates were still "wanting to go out and party, night after night" (p. 73). Townsend recommended that schools consider a transfer floor for dormitories. Such a space would allow transfer students to be paired with other transfer students so that they can ease into life at the receiving institution alongside students of a similar age and social experience and with a dedicated Resident Assistant who could provide appropriate guidance and programming. Another recommendation proffered by Townsend is a social gathering between faculty and transfer students at the beginning of the academic year in the form of a dinner or other low-turnover event where the new upperclassmen can meet their faculty outside of the classroom and begin to develop beneficial social relationships with them (p. 75).

Similar comments were made concerning academic issues (Townsend, 2008). As professors do not have categorized course rosters, they rely on transfer students to come forward and ask for help, something that many transfer students are often not comfortable with as they do not want to bring attention to themselves as individuals. Offering transfer-student exclusive or majority sections of courses commonly taken by transfer students may help ease tensions and lower the stigma of asking in-class questions to which other upperclassmen would likely already know the answers. (p. 75). Having a campus-wide or college-wide transfer community group that meets formally as a student organization lends validity to the challenges faced by transfer students and provides them with a formalized method of receiving support and providing feedback (p. 76).

Wilson (2006) approached the study of transfer students in music through interviews with music department chairs across several institutions to gain their view on the factors contributing towards transfer students' success. Her summary of findings presents the collection of their beliefs and a distillation of those statements into a single, overarching statement (p. 114):

*What is a successful music transfer student? A successful music transfer student is one who enters a four-year music program at the same level academically and musically as their native music student counterpart. . . A successful music transfer student is one who is able to enter a four-year program seamlessly—almost as if they had always been there.*

The participants in Wilson's (2006) study—music department chairpersons—would not quantify a definition of positive growth nor suggest a specific amount or measure of talent or skills progress, only that talent and skills progress must grow in order for a transfer student to be considered successful (p. 107). Each instrument instructor was responsible for setting a subjective set of guidelines for acceptance into

their studio and progress towards course completion. Academic course success would be assessed through completed coursework and testing. However, it was made clear by the respondents that the transfer students' successes were up to their tenacity, drive, and desire to do what was necessary to succeed in the environment as it already existed (p. 108). No mention was made of accommodations or assistance provided tailored to the specific needs of the transfer student population.

Wilson (2006) next examined the participants' responses to the lack of time transfer students have at the receiving institution verses a native student. Respondents felt that faculty had to play catch-up at developing working relationships with the transfer students. The goal, according to Wilson's interpretation of the participants' responses, was not to continue the development of the transfer student towards being a self-sufficient, self-deterministic musician, but to remake the musician in the desired mold of the studio and school (p. 108). Wilson felt this created a sense of institutional ownership of the student and converted the student into a product rather than a partner.

#### The Transaction Experience

Universities place great importance on inculcation and integration programs to streamline native students into the academic and social culture of a new sheltering institution. Pre-term orientation programs generally include a walk-through of campus amenities, social and academic opportunities, introduction to the community, and college-specific rituals and traditions (Andersen, 2016). Universities may also have follow-up policies and practices in place to more closely monitor student performance. Hyman (1995) details the efforts of Ball State University in implementing mid-term interventions by advisors, professors, and residence hall directors with those students

who demonstrate excessive absenteeism and poor grades. These pieces, put together, are meant to set students up for success academically and socially.

Transfer difficulties are not limited to students in arts programs; universities have found measurable successes in retention by helping all students transition into the new university environment. These programs take a formal, structured, and practical approach to student orientation. One such example is the Freshman 101 program at the University of South Carolina. Shanley and Witten (1990), two faculty involved in the Freshman 101 program, describe the three-hour elective provided exclusively to first-semester freshman as “provide [sic] caring, student-centered instructors in small class settings that focus on affective rather than cognitive dimensions of student development” (p. 345). While delivery may differ from professor to professor, each section of the program includes research methods and library usage training, an introduction to collegiate level reading and writing expectations, academic and career planning, and group building exercises. A study of 2,776 freshman indicated a statistically significant correlation between successful completion of the Freshman 101 course and increased persistence, retention, and graduation rates by participants (Shanley & Witten, 1990).

### *Theory*

These introductory activities and programs that help move the students out of the final transitional stage also propel them into the first stage of Dewey’s theory of transactionalism (Dewey, 1896; 1930). According to the theory of transactionalism, there is a symbiotic relationship between environment and organism in which each entity provides something the other entity needs in a mutually beneficial manner (p. 140). This is a constructed relationship in which each of the disparate parts cannot successfully exist



on their own. Vanderstraeten (2002) explains this relationship as one “not merely what the organism has done but exhibits it with the qualities that attach to it as part of the process of determining what the organism is to do” (p. 236). The environment, then, projects stimuli onto the organism to prompt it to react. The organism reacts in a way that the result of the environmental reaction will be in some way rewarding. It is in this dance of beneficial actions that the transactional relationship is built.

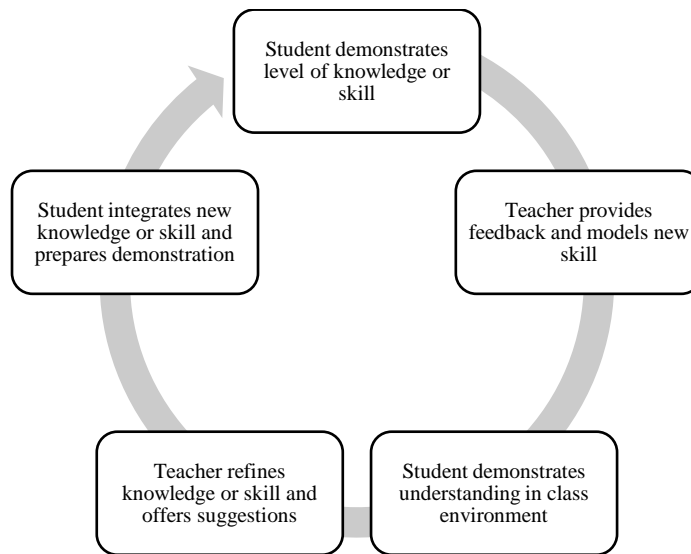


Figure 2. *Academic Transaction Cycle*

Graphic representation of academic transaction cycle

The transactional relationship between environment and organism is readily apparent in the relationship between the school or department of music (the environment) and the students contained therein (the organism). Music students are expected to bring music to individual and ensemble meetings that has been practiced and prepared to a level previously detailed by the teacher. When this expectation is met, the music professor can provide feedback and remedial instruction that the student then uses to refine his or her abilities. This back and forth trading of preparation and instruction come

full circle in public performances. The student and/or ensemble perform publicly, with a quality performance resulting in increased prestige for the student, teacher, and the school of music. This in turn helps recruit new students to the school of music, and the cycle begins over again. Graduating students benefit from increased exposure and a reputation commensurate with their performance quality, making them desirable as graduate students at other universities or as teachers or performers outside of higher education. The transactional cycle begins anew the following year.

Within the transaction cycle, the critical phase is the introductory phase in which the standards and practices of the symbiotic relationship are formally agreed upon and begun in earnest (Dewey & Bentley, 1960). The outcome of a weak or nonexistent initial transactional phase was evident among participants in Boyenga's (2009) work: transfer students may find themselves having difficulty acclimating to the changes in academic rigor and instructional expectations without a well-executed initial experience and ongoing supports. They may experience territorial disputes with native students when attempting to continue to fulfill the roles they established at the community college level. They may be unsuccessful at integrating into the new school or department socially. They may also find the time of degree completion to be extended due to negative outcomes resulting from their difficulty integrating into the receiving institution.

When difficulties completing the transition and becoming fully vested in the receiving institution academically and socially occur, the symbiotic relationship between teacher and student breaks down and neither entity can reap the benefits of the partnership. The breakdown in the transactional relationship can be dire for both parties: the student may suffer academically and leave the institution either of his own free will or

by requirement; the ensemble may not be able to perform at or above its reputation and potential students may lose interest in auditioning and attending; and the teacher may become frustrated with the lack of progress and place less energy towards working with that student. None of these outcomes are beneficial.

### The School of Music

Schools of music are an educational enclave that exists on the periphery of tertiary education; students enrolled as music majors often find themselves almost exclusively in the music building with the rare exception of required math, language arts, and science classes. Nettl (1995) explored the culture and practice of schools of music and found that schools of music reflect a quite different academic experience for their students than other liberal arts majors experience in their own schools and departments on the university campus. Music students do not have the wide berth of advisor and professor choices afforded students in other disciplines; advisors are automatically assigned by major and area of concentration due to the generally small number of faculty that intersect those academic requirements. Where theater students may be able to choose their acting coach, students of music are assigned private instructors based on their instrument and desired field upon graduation (p. 71). Ensembles do not always change for each concert, as do theater casts for each performance or lab teams for each experiment; the audition at the beginning of the semester (or year, depending on the ensemble and studio) determines students' performance placement for a set period (p. 77). Rank in the section or ensemble becomes a point of pride and has the possibility of generating opportunities for those who earn high placement (p. 55). For new students, the first ensemble performance is an initiation rite; students have practiced and prepared their

role, and in the performance are introduced publicly as a full member of the ensemble and representative of the school of music.

The complexity of intersection of the transfer student paradigm and the institution of the school of music cannot be overstated. There are several critical components in each that are delicate and can cause harm to either entity if they become unbalanced. For the symbiotic relationship to flourish for each side, extra care must be taken to make sure that transfer students have a quality and thorough onboarding experience without disrupting the series of transactional relationships already functioning within the School of Music. Boyenga's study (2009) provides a meticulous and comprehensive exploration of transfer shock experienced by students in a field of the arts, but the operations and structures of theater education differ enough from that of music education to warrant deeper study. Wilson's research into the administrative attitudes towards transfer students in schools of music (2006) provides a top-down view of the phenomenon but is observational and thus disconnected from the students in transition.

This research studied the experiences of transfer students in music at a four-year university in the southeastern United States. During this research, the following questions were addressed:

1. What do transfer students experience in acceptance and integration by other students in the same field? By faculty and staff?
2. How do these experiences affect transfer students' self-awareness and perceptions of acceptance and integration?

### CHAPTER III – METHODOLOGY

Each of us has a story to tell. We do not appear and disappear at each salient period in our lives with nothing in between; there are events of importance along the way that color our experiences and affect the choices we make. The importance of telling and hearing stories was imparted on me early in life through the oral history tradition in the Cumberland Mountains of middle Tennessee. Summers spent with my grandparents were filled with the passing of tales of the old logging trails across the plateau, the families that settled the area, and the communities that formed over the course of a century. The ‘why’ and ‘how’ were always just as important as the ‘what’ part the stories because of the context they provided.

The importance of the whole story that was true with oral history is true of the experience of instrumental music education students who have transferred from community college to a university setting. Stories are presented in a manner that are discursive, historical, institutional, and interactional (Riessman, 2008). Stories are also the most relatable manner by which those experiencing a phenomenon such as the collegiate transfer experience can relate their experiences to other people. The life and educational situations surrounding the decision to attend a community college prior to transferring to a university setting are complex and varied and affect each student differently (McAdams, Josselson, & Leiblich, 2001).

The purpose of this study was to conduct a narrative case study to collect narratives from instrumental music students who transferred to a southern university after completing an Associate of the Arts in Music degree. Gilgun (1994) describes the narrative case study as a research instrument used for “the in-depth study of social and

clinic problems, to understand stages or phases in processes, and to investigate a phenomenon within its environment context.” The opportunity for gathering rich, influential experiences from the student participants is best handled through narrative inquiry due to the wide range of family, social, monetary, and academic influences affecting the student’s choice of initial institution and the transition to the university environment (Clandinin, 2016). In this research endeavor, the case was limited to instrumental music education students who had completed at least one year at the southern university following the completion of an Associate of the Arts in Music degree at an articulating community college.

### *Theoretical Influences*

Two overarching themes appeared throughout the literature on transfer shock and transfer student experiences: transition and transaction. Schlossberg et al. (1995) view the transfer state as a transitional experience divided into a series of processes, a longitudinal event where students “move in” to the process of transition, “move through” the process of transition, and “move out” to a state of regularity within the new environment or situation. The three stages of transition may be experienced differently by each student, requiring the formation of a narrative to express and explain their experiences during the transitional processes.

The initiation of the transactional process is key to a successful transition for both student and sheltering institution. According to Dewey and Bentley (1949), education is a co-constructivist activity in which each party is provided with necessary materials from the other in a form of symbiotic relationship. In the case of a classical instrumental music education, the student is provided with individual instruction and group and individual

performance opportunities and, in turn, provides the sheltering institution with quality performances that enhance both parties' reputations and future opportunities.

### *Methodology*

The overall design of this research took a narrative case study approach; I used a formal, systematic, and rigorous process where data are used to answer the following research questions:

1. What do transfer students experience in acceptance and integration by other students in the same field? By faculty and staff?
2. How do these experiences affect transfer students' self-awareness and perceptions of acceptance and integration?

### Research Method

This dissertation employs narrative case study research methodology. Narrative case study is defined by Merriam (1998) as, "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon" (p. xiii). Yin (2003) provides more specific boundaries for case study. It is an empirical inquiry that,

1. investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear.
2. copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points: and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion; and as another result, benefits from the prior

development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (p. 13-14)

The subject case included students who have completed an Associate's Degree of Art in Music at a community college in the Mississippi Community College Board system, have completed at least one semester as a student at the university level, and are currently enrolled as students in the instrumental music program.

### *Participants*

Applied wind and percussion faculty—the teachers who work one on one with their students weekly on their primary instrument—were asked to provide a list of transfer students currently taking instrumental lessons as a member of their studio. They were asked to recommend students enrolled in music education who most closely exemplify experiences of transfer students in the studio over time. From this pool, five participants were chosen to take part as the case. No more than two case participants were included per community college so that a wider representation of experiences could be included.

- Chris was a 20-year-old community college Associate of Arts graduate who chose to attend the receiving institution because of direct recruitment by and interaction with his major professor at the receiving institution. He was completing his first year at the receiving institution at the time of his interview.
- Eric was a 21-year-old community college Associate of Arts graduate who chose to attend the receiving institution after reviewing his options for staying in-state and continuing his studies. He was completing his first year at the receiving institution at the time of his interview.



- Rich was a 23-year old community college Associate of Arts graduate who chose to attend the receiving institution at the recommendation of his sending institution director. He was completing his second year at the receiving institution at the time of his interview.
- Samantha was a 23-year-old community college Associate of Arts graduate who chose to attend the receiving institution because of the positive experience she had with her major instrument professor who had also studied at the receiving institution. She was completing her second year at the receiving institution at the time of her interview.
- Jesse was a 22-year-old community college Associate of Arts graduate who chose to attend the receiving institution to continue a family tradition before she began studies at the sending institution. She was completing her second year at the receiving institution at the time of her interview.

#### Data Collection and Research Procedures

Data collection occurred through face-to-face interviews of between one to two hours; interview questions are documented in Appendix A. The interviews were semi-structured so that the participants were empowered to bring up topics not originally thought of by the researchers. All questions were open-ended, and students were encouraged to share freely, with the goal of encouraging the participants to provide thick, rich descriptions of their experiences and interpretations. Interview sessions were recorded digitally, transcribed electronically using the Sonix.AI transcription service, manually reviewed for accuracy and corrected as needed, and error-checked by participants to make sure their responses are accurately represented. Transcriptions were

coded based on emergent themes in the interviews, with a thematic matrix used to cross-check themes across participants' interviews (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017)

Member checking is integral to the narrative case study process. Member checking following transcription and following thematic analysis create a high level of reliability on behalf of the participants; participants were not only able to clear up any transcription issues that arose but were also able to provide context and other explanation for items that were not clear in the initial interview. Members of the case reviewed transcriptions, interpretations, and analysis and were encouraged to provide insight and further information and clarification. This practice not only establishes credibility with the members of the case, it also allows them agency in the research as direct actors and directors (Creswell, 2013).

Member checking was followed up by triangulation of data. Patton (2002) describes triangulation not as a process for seeing that different sources point to the same conclusion but for developing a deeper understanding of the data by studying both the consistencies and inconsistencies (p. 556). Data used for triangulation came from two secondary sources. First, interviews were scheduled, recorded, transcribed, and coded with the instrumental studio professors to collect their experiences in working with transfer students and their observations of experiences specifically related to transfer students. Second, a comprehensive research journal was kept recording the researcher's thoughts, remarks, and informal analysis at every step of the research process. Themes emerging from the case participant interviews and lesson observations were compared to the emergent themes from the research journal.

Maintaining participant confidentiality is paramount to the research process. The methods used are outlined in the Informed Consent Document found in Appendix D. Participants were required to fill out this document prior to participating in any phase of the research; they were provided a copy of the document for their records. Participant identities were kept separate from the interview and observation data. Participants are referred to by pseudonyms in all written and visual presentations resulting from this research. The interview recordings, interview transcriptions, and all other collected data not necessary for publication are available only to the researcher, his advisor, and the degree committee. All information not required for submission once the research is completed will be destroyed following the successful completion and acceptance of this document.

## CHAPTER IV – FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

### Introduction

I have found the narrative case study vein of qualitative research to be much like the challenge of conducting a wind ensemble. When I am acting in the role of conductor, my job is to use the ensemble in front of me to communicate the composer's ideas to the audience. Through careful and thoughtful study of the score, the composer, and common practice, I am able to minimize my own interjections and allow the intent of the composer to come through the ensemble. That is also my goal in representing the members of the case participants in this study. Although I have included some commentary on specific items that require explanation or interpretation, my primary goal throughout was to give the clearest voice possible to the students and their experiences.

The narratives recorded in this inquiry were originally coded for common themes based on the chronological progression from the community college to the four-year institution (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). The narratives were then re-coded based on Schlossberg's (1984) transition theory and Schlossberg, Waters, and Goodman's (1995) model of transition. Dewey's (1896) transaction theory was used as a lens to examine the recoded material. With transition and transaction theory used as a framework for the evaluation of the transition experiences as described through the lens of the model of transition, the narratives create a clear picture of the students transitioning from the community college level to the four-year institution with the intent of completing a bachelor's degree in music education.

### *Schlossberg's Transition Theory and Dewey's Transaction Theory*

Schlossberg's transition theory (1984) provides a useful theoretical lens through which we can more easily see the different components of students' experiences moving from one institution to another. Schlossberg believed that students experienced the stages of transition at their own pace, moving from a preoccupation and preparation for transition to feeling as if the transition had completed through personal experience. No two students experience transition the same way, even moving together from the same origin program and school to the new program and school.

Schlossberg et al (1995) further broke down the transition into three main components. The first stage is moving in, where the individual separates from previous institutional loyalties and makes movement towards the new institution. The second stage is moving through, where the individual begins to integrate into the culture of the new institution and developing working relationships with students and faculty. The final stage is moving out, where the student now identifies primarily with the new institution.

Dewey's (1923) transaction theory intersects directly with Schlossberg's transition theory. As students are "moving in" to the transition phase, they either make use of their transactional relationships at the community college to propel themselves into the next phase of their education or their dissatisfaction allows them to end the transactional relationship and move themselves forward. "Moving through" the transition involves the initial seeking and creating of new transactional relationships at the four-year institution, while "moving out" of the transition is the result of these transactional relationships solidifying and becoming a regular and meaningful part of the student's academic and social life.

Nettl (1995) sets the stage on which Schlossberg et al.'s (1995) model and Dewey's (1923) theory plays out. Nettle's ethnography of a large midwestern school of music provides a detailed look at the very distinct environment through which students move during their studies and which they experience transactional relationships with the school or department of music, their applied teachers, and the performing ensembles.

### Moving In

Despite commonalities among the five members of the case—two attended the same junior college, two are members of the same studio—each student experienced the initial move away from their community college to the four-year institution differently.

Chris was extremely comfortable in his experience in the community college music department working towards his associate degree. His relationship with his applied low brass instructor was extremely fulfilling, both as an instructor of his instrument and as support for his desire to move forward:

*She constantly gave me different websites for scholarships to this school to that school and she, when I chose USM she gave me a whole manila folder about like that thick. They just filled with scholarship opportunities and here's what you need to know about going USM. And here's how you get how you can do that online. And then she walked me through the process too. So she helped me a lot.*

Chris went on talking about the relationship with his applied instrument teacher, very openly excited about the change in their relationship. He felt as if she helped to shepherd him into the next phase very intentionally, moving them from a transactional relationship of teacher and student to one of collegiality and mentorship:

*She's like family now. I just thought we could look... After, after the years of working with her, I could just talk to her about anything. Even now she's one of my mentors now. I always talk to her.*

The relationship between an applied instructor and student often includes ongoing discussions of the next part of the student's journey, either in education or occupation, and the assistance in moving forward is generally more involved than with other faculty due to the significant amount of one-on-one time spent working together. For Chris, though, there was more direct assistance tailored to his decision of where to finish his bachelor's degree.

Students transferring to a four-year institution, whether they are coming from a community college or other four-year school, often must take theory placement exams to make sure they have the working skills needed to thrive in upper division coursework. Chris's theory teacher at the community college had previously taught theory at his destination school, an advantage that she used to make sure he was thoroughly prepared for the placement exam.

*Well in the theory class our teacher there she was also a teacher here and she took a lot of the same methods and moved in there. So our theory course was exactly aligned with what happens here. And so when I came to take the theory placement test I passed with flying colors. And then also when I took the piano competency the same competency that was taught here was taught there. And, uh, they would have done it for any other college. She said, she told us to ask if you're going to this so say if they went to [another school], she would have prepared you to go to that school. They went out of their way for each individual student to transfer where they wanted to and to make sure that they would get into that school.*

The amount and intention of preparation Chris experienced was not just a component of a few concerned teachers but was a cornerstone of his community college experience. For students who were up front about their desire to ultimately earn a bachelor's degree in music, the trajectory towards transitioning from one level to the next was addressed from the very beginning of their time on campus. Chris shared that one of

his first experiences as a first-year music major was one of his teachers laying out the expectations for his community college experience.

*That's from day one, from the day one in theory class. We didn't talk about that. We talked about you're here and you need to transfer because this isn't a four-year college. That was established from day one.*

Eric, like most of the members of the case, spoke with high praise about his time at the community college level. His overall experience reminded me more than anyone else of the situations described in *A Hand Hold for a Little Bit* (Townsend & Wilson, 2006), where community college students had almost unfettered access to and guidance from their teachers:

*It was very personalized. It was very small. Um, I loved every minute of it. We, you were surrounded by instructors and every time you needed something they were always right there for you despite their schedule. Everything was when you needed it, handed to you, and you got to work with many different professors at the same time. Does that make sense?*

Eric's relationship with his applied low brass teacher was remarkably like Chris's relationship, including the change of the transactional relationship from one of teacher and student to mentor and mentee. Eric spoke very fondly of their continued relationship, despite the distance from one campus to the next.

*I would have to say she's like a mother to me. It's been two years since I've been there and we still communicate. We still have a good positive relationship and she's always there for me whenever I need anything. If I ever need any information on any kind of topic she's always there.*

Chris and Eric both came into their community college experiences not knowing where they were going to finish their bachelor's degrees. They both took the same path to deciding where to go next, basing it on their primary instrument and the faculty they would be working closely with for the next two or three years. While Chris started and



finished his selection process with a private lesson with the instrument instructor, Eric began his selection process with a little less guidance from those around him:

*Towards the end of my last year I was researching a lot of schools in the state. A lot of universities. And I found out [the receiving institution] was the best to my advantage. Education wise.*

Once that decision was made, he began preparations for the musical portion of the audition and entrance process by engaging the transaction process with his future studio teacher before coming on campus. Both teachers were open to continuing the teacher/student relationship in parallel during this stage of the transition process, which both Eric and his instructor at the four-year institution felt was very much to his advantage.

*Lessons were a very positive experience at the community college. I would always talk with [my applied instructor] here, talk to him about some things and ideas to play and then she would give me some ideas to play and we would, it was just definitely, definitely a positive experience too. I mean I had no trouble auditioning; like, I felt at ease.*

The experience of handing-off the transactional relationship from one instructor to another was unique among this case. Students serious about attending Southern Miss as a music major usually have a lesson or two with their future instructor prior to their audition, then go home and work on implementing what they have learned so they can begin at the demonstration phase when they are on the four-year institution campus full time. Eric not only benefitted from this lesson arrangement, but also took things a step further and attended rehearsals and concerts with his future instrumental ensemble so he could see the dynamic of the studio in action.

Despite coming from a community college on the opposite side of the state as Chris, Eric was impressed with his preparation in music theory. Eric was pleased that his

instructors put him in a position to be successful at the intake placement exam at the four-year institution, helping to ease the tension that comes from entering the transition between the two schools.

*Um, so on the theory side, theory placement exam, we were always being, you know, she let us know from the start, "Hey when you transfer from here you have to be into test that you place in the theory" and she researches and she communicates with all the different schools in the universities that her students are thinking about going to and that's what she focuses on and tries to figure out how they teach theory and she does her foundation of theory and tries to wrap it around and make sure she covers everything that she needs to be, that needs to be taught in order for her students to be successful into the university level.*

For Rich and Samantha, both experienced quite a bit of the same pleasure with the preparation for their transition within their field. Although neither Rich nor Samantha mentioned maintaining the same intense level of relationship with their community college studio instructors that Chris and Eric did, both were extremely complimentary of the preparation they had been given for the intake audition at the four-year institution. Samantha went as far as transitioning to a new instrument while at the community college level—a daunting task at any institution—but was extremely confident in her training as her teachers were former students of the studio teacher she would later study from at the four-year institution.

Rich was extremely competent in music theory prior to his community college experience and needed little help with the preparation for the placement test. Samantha, who had completed an associate degree in science prior to returning for her associate degree in the arts, took advantage of every music theory placement exam preparation she could attend to catch up. Rather than fast-tracking students in class, Samantha's teacher held night sessions for students who were intent on passing out of theory at their next destination. These sessions were optional and intense, with information geared towards a

high level of overall content knowledge rather than simply preparing students for one or two of the programs in the state.

*We had night classes where [our instructor] would, she would, we would come at six o'clock when everything's done in the music building. We would go to the theory room and she would have packets. I still have those packets and they are thick packets. So thick we weren't gonna finish all of it.*

Samantha's enthusiasm with preparation was not shared by her fellow community college schoolmate Jesse. Even though Jesse and Samantha had the same music theory instructor, their experiences could not have been more different. Samantha lived on campus and was able to attend the extra sessions regularly, while Jesse lived away from campus and had trouble making things work out to attend the sessions regularly. That Jesse could not attend the extra sessions caused increased frustrations that bubbled over into class, resulting in a broken transactional relationship where neither party worked well with the other. Jesse expressed her frustrations very clearly:

*I didn't feel, well... Our theory teacher? she's very nice but she was very scary at the same time. I was terrified of her because she's a, she was a strong woman and she just like if you didn't know what your stuff was she would be rude, not necessarily rude, but like "You know you should know this, we've been over this a bunch of times," and I just if I'm scared of something I won't get it. That's just me. If I need help I will go to someone who I'm most comfortable with before I go to, um, if it is the theory teacher or the Lit teacher.*

Jesse's frustrations with her relationship with her music theory instructor was not the only factor that caused a negative beginning to the transition pipeline. Where each of the other case members expressed pleasure and a desire for a continuing relationship with their instrument instructor, Jesse was ambivalent towards the experience from an academic standpoint even though she enjoyed the kind and straightforward nature of her teacher:

*And I will say she, she was the whole woodwind instructor? So she did flute, clarinet, saxophone, oboe. She did all those. I will say one thing that I didn't really enjoy was that if she were to do examples or she would play with me she wouldn't play on a clarinet. She'd play on the flute. I would have enjoyed it on a clarinet. That's just, that's a me thing.*

Where the other case members received instruction that would help them to begin their transactional relationship with their new studio teacher as quickly as possible, Jesse actually felt more nervous headed towards the end of her time at the community college rather than excited about the future. The others had already taken a lesson or worked with their future studio teacher; Jesse had not taken the opportunity to make contact and begin cultivating the relationship. She was ready for her audition but nervous about the unknown.

As Jesse, Samantha, Eric, Chris, and Rich walked away from their community colleges as graduates, they also walked out of the “moving in” phase of transition and into the “moving through” phase. Although they were all attending the same four-year university, their experiences would be just as unique as they were pre-transfer.

### Moving Through

The “moving through” phase of transition is where students begin to both take on the identity of the new school and settle into their new academic and social transactional relationships. For transfer students in the School of Music, this can be as stressful as moving into the transition; they are simultaneously first year students new to the institution and upperclassmen expected to demonstrate leadership and academic success. They still must navigate several difficult items before being settled in and taking advantage of everything their new institution has to offer.

For most students, their initiation into the campus culture comes as part of a robust orientation program. That is not always the case for instrumental music education students transferring in from community colleges and other institutions. The case members who were able to find time to take part in the transfer orientation in between hectic marching band and ensemble schedules found it to be rather underwhelming; Rich referred to it as “*just the basics*” of campus. Aside from the foundational academic orientations, the university does have an all-inclusive new (native and transfer) student kickoff program as school begins called Welcome Week, but marching band rehearsals—and a performance at one of the largest events—meant that both native and transfer students were on duty as musicians rather than able to participate as students.

Most transfer students who have completed their general education—or “gen ed”—courses required of almost every major have the expectation that they will be spending most of their time in focused work towards their intended degree. For the future instrumental music educators in this case study, that meant they would be spending most of their time in the music classes and ensembles and trying to make up the two years of transactional advantage that native students had over them. Transfer students, despite being ahead in credit hours, lacked the institutional knowledge of who to go to for the various challenges they would face. Rich was quite straightforward about the onboarding experience, or lack of one, for getting up to speed with the culture in the school of music:

*I think the best way to sum up the entire experience is that when you have a little kid who doesn't know how to swim and you just throw him in the pool. Oh yeah. I think that's the best way to put it. And I don't I want to say nothing was done because it makes it sound so bad. But I know as far as like Hey we're a committee we're here for you. I never received any information on that either non-existent or didn't. Hey you're a transfer, here's, here's a transfer orientation for you.*

Chris found his greatest help to be with other students when it came to fit into the school of music culture. He, and others, leaned heavily on other students to learn how to navigate the faculty/student dynamic in the program.

*So the only people that helped me do that were the students. Making friends here is what helped me get established. I got... The only other help that the school music gave me was, "Oh, don't have this conflict, kind of like don't have this. What can I do about this?" And then they helped me with that but although otherwise getting adjusted I didn't get much help. Which I don't know if I would have needed help or what.*

Without a School of Music orientation to help acclimate transfer students to their new environment, the first official course-related responsibility the case members had—outside of marching band—was their advising sessions. These sessions ended up not being at all what three case members expected and left them having to lean on other transfer students or their instrument studio teacher to have a chance at a working schedule. Samantha was upset as she recounted her experience with an academic advisor helping her register for classes:

*You don't know what's for you , what's for another music major. Yeah. I'm trying to get into music lit. Do I have to take instrumental lit now? Is that added? If that's added then that's a whole 'nother semester I have to take. But if your advisor doesn't know, you end up taking it and you're here for another semester for nothing.*

Chris was more frustrated than Samantha:

*And so the advising session was not good. I, uh, they just put you in 15 hours and called it day. They said you just can't leave this room unless we have 15 hours. And so I got signed up just random class of 15 hours. They didn't explain to me which were what, what was what, is this a 300-level class 100 and why is that? Why should I take this one? And they didn't answer any questions they just made sure you are in 15 hours and then you left.*

And Jesse's experience could be considered traumatic:

*I thought that my music lit class that I took at community college counted as my music history. So for a while I didn't mess with it. I didn't even really mess with it.*

*I have anxiety really bad with people. I don't have it with you. I'm very comfortable around you because I would have told you, but... I felt on my first advisement meeting, you know, I didn't... This isn't what the person said but it's just the vibe that I got. You know, "She went to community college why doesn't she have these classes," you know, "Is she stupid or something?" I just kind of felt that vibe. And then ever since then I really don't like to meet with my adviser because I just feel like that the person thinks that I'm stupid.*

While discussing these findings with the case members' instrumental studio teachers, it was shared by the teachers that the School of Music uses generic advising staff from the campus academic advising office due to the hectic School of Music schedule at the beginning of the semester. These advisors had not been trained to work with the music education course progression or handle the course conflicts that come from having to take some courses out of sequence as a transfer student. Unless a student actively seeks out help from School of Music faculty or other students as early as possible in the semester, the only remedy is to wait until they meet their official School of Music advisor later that fall and try to correct what problems they can in the spring semester.

The first active and continuous relationship students in instrumental music education develop is often with the directors of the marching band. Each of the students participating in the narrative case study were required to participate in the school marching band as a component of their degree track and, for those receiving a service award, part of the fulfillment of their award requirements. The directors of the marching band also direct the major ensembles, so students in music education see them multiple times per week across different ensembles. There was a marked difference where experiences with the ensemble directors was concerned. Eric had a rough start and had trouble connecting with his major ensemble directors:

*They have definitely grown for sure. When I first got here there was no communication, no relationship. But over the past year they have definitely grown*

*into a positive experience and I feel like I could walk into the office at any available time that they are, and talk to them about any situation or issue or something positive that I have to say.*

Chris, Jesse, and Rich were also please with the rapport they held with the ensemble directors. Jesse was rather direct in her praise for the level of preparation required by her major concert ensemble director.

*I enjoy the way he does rehearsals. If, I mean, if you don't know your music he will call you out and you know that's your fact that's your bad. You know, that's your fault if you don't know your music. I do know that this semester there was a section that could not play their music and he went with you know one by one and they couldn't play it. And I remember the first chair girl afterwards said, "Well that's just not fair. He shouldn't have called us out." and I was like "You should have just known your music."*

Samantha, though, was not pleased either on field, in the rehearsal hall, or in the directors' offices. She shared her frustration with her experiences working with the directors:

*Nothing. I felt OK. At first, nothing. I was lucky to get the scholarship I got, and it wasn't because of the school of music. It was because of [my applied instructor]. As I, you know, got comfortable and got to know [the ensemble directors], They claim that they are respectful towards you. They respect what you do and they encourage you. They don't. They don't. Especially in [marching band] and stuff.*

There is another component to the advising difficulties that can make putting students in appropriate courses even more difficult. In order to graduate with an Associate's Degree of the Arts from their respective community colleges, students have to pass four semesters of music theory. These completed courses may have to be repeated as the result of the theory placement exam despite having been accepted by the four-year institution, setting transfer students back further and increasing the likelihood of course conflicts with their upper-division work. The academic transactional relationship could



be rocky for those students who either chose or were required to begin in the middle of the sequence.

Samantha passed her first-year theory placement exam but, for her own remediation, decided to retake second year theory. She found herself having to learn Schenkerian analysis, a system not used in either her community college or the placement exams but taught as part of the first-year theory sequence at the four-year institution. She initially went looking through the Theory Department's graduate assistants for help but ended up more frustrated than before.

*I like the studio that I'm in. I like, you know, where I'm at personally but as far as the classes go I just to say they don't care about you. They... I feel like, I feel like they don't. Maybe they do but I feel like if you are left behind and you are begging for help they don't care. Especially some of the theory GAs here. Some of this theory GAs and the ear training. I've had one guy for ear training and he told us that where we all came from, they taught y'all wrong. This is the way we need to be doing it. And if you can't do it you need to leave the classroom.*

Samantha's fellow studio member Chris also felt quite the same frustration despite passing both theory placement exams and being allowed to choose an upper division music theory course. They both ended up finding help from the same place: fellow studio members. Chris recalled relief at having help close at hand:

*Oh yeah we. We got assigned signed graduate assistant lesson instructors and that was [our graduate assistant] and he helped me. He just helped me a lot with that. That was his job is to help and I think [the other graduate assistant] has the same job.*

Eric was required to retake second year theory following his placement exam. Unlike Samantha and Chris, he found the experience to be disappointing and not what he expected. Eric shared:

*I had one theory teacher here. And I was not, I was not pleased at all with the direction that I was supposed to be learning as an upper level, as I'm supposed to*

*be redoing my theory and having a higher level of learning and I felt like I was getting a lower level and wasting my time.*

The two students who had positive experiences with their theory placements were Rick and Jesse. Rick had passed out of both years of theory and took counterpoint. He found the class fulfilling but still had plenty of time to help other transfer students, especially those who were having difficulties adapting to Schenkerian analysis. Jesse elected to start over from the beginning and was much more pleased with the outcome than she was at the community college. Jesse shared that:

*I like it slow because here, the professor would go slow and if, um, I didn't understand it he taught it in a different way, you know, and he'd go over it over instead of like at the community college where she'd be like "[repeated nonsense syllables]; OK we're going to move on." I enjoyed theory here more than ever there and I felt more comfortable with the teacher here.*

Jesse, looking back, felt she had made the right decision for herself as the clean start in the theory rotation helped her to get a better footing towards understanding what was expected at the School of Music.

The final issue presented by case members—specifically Jesse and Rich—as taking time to accept as part of their new experience was the upper division performance barrier jury. As the school of music at the four-year institution is a major program in both the state and the region, there is a high level of expectation for graduate and undergraduate students alike. The program leading to a degree in music education includes the requirement of one upper division semester of lessons and a recital, but with a performance barrier jury acting as a gate. These juries are held at the end of the fall and spring terms, meaning the case members would have to spend at least one semester in lower division studio lessons despite having demonstrated their skill during scholarship auditions. For students in the woodwind division, this included several other components.

Jesse described an experience that went well beyond simply playing music at a high level:

*For proficiency you had to know all 48 scales; 12 major and then the 36 different minors. You had two pieces, one with a pianist and one without a pianist. And then you had questions that our teacher gave us for us to look up answers and we'd answer, and we'd bring them back more or less next lesson and she would say, you know, "OK, these are good answers, these aren't good answers, this is what I would say." She would help us out with that.*

Jesse waited until the Spring semester, her second semester in the studio, to make her attempt and was successful. Rich, though, was exasperated by a three-semester wait before he was cleared by his studio teacher. This was the one thing he was not prepared for as part of the transfer experience, and he was clear with his displeasure.

*But you still have to take your barrier here, your proficiency here. So that means that in my case when I auditioned here I still had to take a year of lessons, a year and a half of lessons just to get to the upper level because you have to take I think the equivalent of two years of lower level lessons, pass your barrier proficiency, then take however many years or semesters of upper level lessons. Right. But when my time is limited when it's supposed to be limited. It makes it very hard to do that when you're being told, "No you still need to take lessons here, then take a proficiency, and then..." Will it ever stop?*

The interviews with the studio faculty addressed this issue, and the difference between Jesse's experience and Rich's experience in this situation was the result of differing studio teacher approaches to curriculum and presentation. Jesse's professor judged student preparation based on the quality of the transactional relationship and confidence that the student would represent themselves as ready to begin upper division study. Rich's professor, though, had an established prescriptive curriculum that students had to sequence through in a specific order and time regardless of their ability to move forward.

If there is a single statement from across the interviews that encapsulates the frustrations experienced by the case members as they worked through their transition and

adjusted to their new environment, it was Rich's continued reaction to the surprise of the upper division barrier jury:

*Like, hey! You're auditioning for the School of Music; here's, here's a flyer of what our expectations are from you as far as lessons are concerned. Lessons, coursework, whatever. Put it in the syllabus even, like... Or even less than that, have a flyer that you can hand out, like, "Hey, you should know: these are things." And I don't remember being made aware to me that the proficiency is a thing.*

Ultimately, each of the participants did make it through to a point of stability. They did find firm footing and began functional transactional relationships both academically and socially. And with that, they were able to move out of transition.

### Moving Out

The final stage of Schlossberg's transition theory is "moving out" of transition. At this stage, students have completed their transition to the new school and have achieved a functional, and hopefully rewarding, level of transactional relationships with their instructors, the school, and their social support system. Students at the end of this stage have fully taken on the identity of the new institution and are able to look back and reflect critically on the experiences that led up to that point. For these students, there was plenty for everyone to say about their journey and what led them to a solid footing.

Eric found himself having to adjust to a physical reality that came from his new experiences. He visited the campus while still attending his community college and watched his future instrument ensemble rehearsal, but he was still surprised by the sheer amount and intensity of the experience. The way his body reacted to the increase in stress led him to self-examination and wondering if he had made the right choice.

*I was definitely questioning what I was doing in my life. And I was at a stress level that I had never been at before because of the schedule. Or the busyness of*

*it. I was taking naps and stuff. I don't normally do that. You know, there was just... Health wise I kind of went downhill.*

Eric was also used to an open-door and collegial relationship with his studio teacher at the community college, and adapting to his new teacher's more straightforward, workmanlike demeanor took some getting used to. He described his lessons as if he was talking to his boss, but he still felt as if he had made the right choice.

Coursework both in the School of Music and in the College of Education was fulfilling for Eric and helped him develop a better understanding of himself as well as prepare for his intended future career. Courses most students find daunting, Eric thrived in.

*Classroom management was definitely one of the most beneficial classes I have had here on campus. Just because I see the classroom from two sides now from a teaching aspect and a procedure management aspect. And I definitely have realized the importance of that and understood a good foundation for one classroom.*

He also found similar fulfillment in his academic courses in the School of Music.

*I really enjoyed my secondary methods class and my conducting classes, both of them. They definitely gave me a foundation to ha... to learn how to utilize myself to get through something. You know, utilize your resources, utilize people, utilize all of these ideas, and they just gave me a very good foundation to know how to do things. And I think that's very important.*

The possibility for quality transactional experiences related to music was the primary reason Eric chose to attend this four-year institution, and he beamed when recounting his experiences thus far.

*Well first foremost the Pride and the musical experiences I've had here with ensembles, all ensembles that... I never imagined I'd be playing the content or doing the things that I've done here at Southern in my life. That's the biggest thing I would have to say.*

When asked if he thought this might be something he grows weary of at some point, Eric related that there was not much of an opportunity to be bored in his new environment. As he put it, *“If something gets old, there's something new coming the next week, you know. There's never a dull moment.”*

At the end of his interview, Eric reflected on his time thus far and summed up what advice he would say to himself or others who find themselves tired and wondering if they had made the right decision. He would offer this advice:

*But, uh, the biggest thing I would have to say is that just know it's OK to say you're tired and to know that you are maybe questioning what you're doing. But if you truly love something and you don't ever question it then maybe there's something wrong. You know, everyone questions what they love in life. And the best advice is the learning how to manage your time. If you take care of yourself first and manage your health, everything will fall into place after that.*

For Chris, finding his footing was not so much a challenge academically, but it presented its difficulties socially. When Chris arrived on campus, even with his established relationship with his new studio teacher, he felt as if he had trouble fitting in with students his own age. He was twenty-two, but most of his common experiences were with the first-year students coming in from high school. Eventually, as he settled in, Chris discovered that the social connections he made with both native and transfer students helped him feel comfortable as he began his academic relationships with his professors. Chris ultimately found his most dynamic social relationships came not from a studio but from Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia. As the furthest travelling student in the case, this proved extremely beneficial on many occasions:

*They're like almost family now. I asked [a brother] if I could stay at his place during this time so I don't have to drive up from the coast and he said “Yeah.”*

Academically, Chris thrived in both his studio work and his coursework. But despite being an instrumental music major the most exhilarating experience for him came from his performances with the choral program. He learned of the program during one of his campus visits and decided to audition, a decision that he made no qualms about being integral to his pleasure with his choice of four-year institution.

*I never thought I would ever be in New York nor do I think I would ever be a choral singer at the level of that. And it was just incredible. And that is one thing that a four year has over [my community college]. We premiered Tony Kerlitz's Moreland Elegies. And it was amazing. And we got to meet him and he was super amazing. And if I wasn't here I wouldn't have been able to do that. So yeah that was one of the best times of my life.*

After settling in, Chris did find the same level of comfort with his instructors that he had at his community college. He became comfortable making use of the open-door policies held by both his instrumental and choral directors. He found his theory and history teachers to be easy to communicate with and ready to provide the resources needed to thrive in their classrooms. Given the confidence he has developed once establishing the critical first few sets of transactional relationships, he expects his successes to continue as he heads into the College of Education course components of his degree.

Rich prides himself on his ability to adapt to new situations and thrive in them the best he can, even if the situation is not exactly what he was hoping for. Taking a semester off between community college and the four-year university to work helped reinforce his interpersonal skills and made him more comfortable with reaching out and making friends and building support structures around him.

*And it's weird when you jump in like halfway through. Like you jump in but you're supposed to be treated as a junior but you're new. So everyone wants to really*

*think of you as a freshman. So it's, it's like for me... For me it wasn't hard to make friends because that's kind of guy that I am but I can see how I guess regular old Bobby Sue you know has a difficult time trying to, like, make friends because you don't have that opportunity to go through orientation together. You don't have really got... Other than band and the school of music. Like I don't think I can count on one hand how many friends I have outside of it.*

Rich also developed a rapport with his studio teacher that went beyond meeting requirements and following sequences—one his studio teacher acknowledged as being rare across his thirty plus years of teaching. And even though Rich was still frustrated with the course sequencing affecting his ability to pass into upper division lessons, the conversation that sparked that rapport had become a powerful moment between them:

*I truly wanted to know how he got there and how he ended up in that chair, right. So we carry on and I'd never, like, I never took any words he said specifically about that for granted. And I looked at him. And at the end the conversation he looked at me and kind of grins for a little bit and then stops for a second and looks up at me and says, "You know I have students coming out of this office every week, and I've done it for years, but I can count on one hand how many people have asked me how I got here. They see all the signs and they see all the evidence," as he put it, "but they never ask me how."*

The ensembles also became a place of stability for Rich, not just his instrument studio ensemble but also the marching band and concert bands. The experience when he realized just how large of a community and culture he was now a part of came during his first football pregame experience, in front of tens of thousands of fans. He had been part of many practice runs of the pregame routine, but it had never been rehearsed with the cannon that signaled the team taking the field.

*And that was that moment that I realized that I was [here]. Really. That's, that's when all I did when the clouds parted with the angels saying, "To the top!" like that's when it all hit me like that.*

Rich took this same sense of wonderment into his concert ensemble experiences. His studio was large and full of masters and doctoral candidates as well as undergraduates, so



highly talented and well-prepared students still found themselves in the third ensemble.

Rich took this in stride, offering advice with a combination of understood reality but excitement about what he had the opportunity to do.

*So I spent the majority of my time here in concert band. Not, nothing against concert band but it's concert band. Cool. And I'd like to say that that falls on my head as far as I like being able to go one, on one rung up the ladder. So the last semester I was an ensemble setting. I was in symphonic band, and I was in Symphonic Winds and it was great; no doubt about it. So I think that growth of being able to expand upon and grow into a higher ensemble. I like to say higher doesn't make this seem like there's some lesser connotation with concert band. But hey you get good things out of it regardless you know.*

Looking back on the experiences he had transitioning from his community college to the four-year institution, Rich identified what would have been the most beneficial assistance he could have received: actual documentation. For Rich, a student who was confident in his academic and performance abilities, the most important component of a successful transition was simply knowing what was to come:

*Like here's all, all the expectations. Here's all the resource documents that you may need like phone numbers that call offices to check out all that stuff. That would have been great but a lot of it was like I have to figure out my own. And I'm not saying that it can't be done. Again, I'm not like the most ideal role model for this sort of thing but I can see how when people coming in don't have those resources they tend to shut down.*

Jesse found her most solid footing through the social aspects of her studies. As a member of both the marching band and her studio ensemble, her gregarious nature and equal footing with those around her helped build a level of comfort and camaraderie.

*When I got here it took a minute because I didn't know anybody. I knew maybe two people. But once, you know, if you're in marching band you're with them all the time. [laughs] So you get to know people really quick a while, especially music majors as the same instrument because then you'll see on all day and then you're a part of pride all day or you'll be at football games all day with people. So it took, it took a minute but other than that. Ever since then I've felt very welcome.*

Possibly the most powerful thing for Jesse, even though she had already completed her associate degree, was the fresh start in a fresh environment. Rather than seeing herself transitioning from one studio instructor to the next, Jesse saw the opportunity to work with a studio teacher who played the same instrument and could not only teach but demonstrate the skills.

The environment of an active school of music with high standards also gave her a boost. Once Jesse had settled in and was beyond the traumatic experience of her initial advising and scheduling, she was able to take in the fact that she was finally at the place she wanted to be at to begin her journey in earnest. Even better, that was the attitude of many around her.

*It's more, they're more intense about music here instead at community college. At community college. Yeah. Yeah. You're a music major. But it's like "You're a music major, Ok cool." But here it's like, "You're a music major! You get to do gigs and be with people, more people than maybe like two people in your studio! You have like you can have like 20 people in your studio. And then all the ensemble people are music majors, or the majority of the ensemble is music majors so they know how to do music and they know what to do instead of having to sit there in a rehearsal spending 40 minutes on tuning or a simple rhythm.*

I asked Jesse to go deeper into the sentiment she shared about ensemble rehearsals and the performance environment she shared. Not only did she feel she had a quality relationship with her studio teacher, but she greatly appreciated the standards set in her concert ensembles. Yes, she had anxious moments dealing with her advising situation, but the anxiety did not come when she or others were asked to play their part by the concert ensemble directors; it meant that expectations were high across the board and that everyone had to buy in to the high standard.

I asked Jesse if she had any words of wisdom to share with her former self and with students preparing to make the transition from community college to the four-year

institution and she was clear in her message: be active in planning your education, find out what has to be done, and make decisions that will benefit you in the long run.

*Get your gen eds out of the way, please get them out of the way. Doesn't matter if you don't want to do them, just do it. Get it over with. Because it would set you back. And to be comfortable with your advisor because, like I said, I just have my anxiety problems with people. And if I don't feel comfortable around you I will not, I won't put myself in that spot. and I feel like if I was more comfortable with my advisor I could probably get a lot more done. So to say. But I look at the degree plan that's online and I look at what I don't have and I take what I - so I'm on the right path right now.*

Samantha's path to her new institution was long—two associate degrees earned, plus a change in major instrument—but in the end she found herself in a place where she felt like a part of something larger than herself. The transactional relationship with her studio teacher was jumpstarted by the fact that, at the community college, she had learned from one of his recent former students. There were some differences in approach, but she ultimately found herself in a situation that was more of a handoff from one instructor to the next

*Playing wise I got a completely different experience. I got someone who when [my old teacher] couldn't push me when he was, he couldn't push me even further, I got [my new teacher] who pushed me even further. It was like All right I'm here and he just pushed me. He, he took, he took the reins from them.*

Her other academic classes did not go as smoothly as her instrumental transition, but she learned to lean on those who had already been through the grind and knew from experience how to survive. One of the most important pieces of advice she received from a fellow studio member and senior transfer student was to just do what was asked of her in her other classes and try not to push the envelope. Samantha's desire to excel and her frustration with trying to figure out how to get back on a reasonable graduation path kept

her stressed out and leaning on other transfer students for help and advice, but there were bright spots to her experience thus far.

Despite having changed instruments during her time at the community college, Samantha had become an adept player and earned a position in the studio's select performance ensemble and performed at regional and international conference events. The Monday evening select ensemble rehearsals had become the highlight of her week. Outside of her musical experiences, the elementary music methods class was the class she looked forward to the most.

*I think that the least overwhelming class when it comes to the methods classes is elementary methods. And that's because we're not on different instruments. Everybody's not on a different instrument. Everybody is set in an elementary classroom. Like the way that that classroom setup is set up as an elementary classroom and you're in that element and you're learning about that.*

Samantha may be the least fulfilled of the case members at this point in her time at the four-year institution, but that in no way diminishes the importance of the advice she would give those students considering following in her footsteps. If anything, being during the most tenuous set of transactional relationships once her transition was completed adds weight to her words. She echoes many of the same themes shared by the others—do not go it alone, rely on those who have been there before, have a plan, and stand up for yourself— but with a level of authority:

*So transfer's stress level was here (motions at chest level). Now it's up here (motions above her head) and there's, when there's stress there just there's depression because when are we going to finish. And some people when they get so depressed they quit. What could have been great band directors now can't teach because of all this stuff... Get to know other transfer students. Stick together. Don't do it alone. You do it alone, two years is going to turn to six. I promise. And even if you are here for four years don't give up. There is always light at the end of the tunnel. Ask questions. Don't be afraid to put your foot down and say I need help.*

## Conclusion

Interpretation of the case members' interviews began traditionally, with transcription, deductive coding, and inductive analysis. The data were examined for recurrent themes related to the transition and academic and social transaction experiences of music students coming from a community college to the four-year institution. Qualitative researchers make use of inductive analytical techniques such as coding to examine themes common among the narratives then present them in a chronological format so the reader could ascertain their own meaning from the presented experiences. This method of data presentation, along with dividing the students' experiences by transition phase, provided the optimum platform for allowing the reader to access and make sense of the narratives in a holistic manner.

## CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### Introduction

Students are increasingly beginning their collegiate careers in community colleges for financial and personal reasons, and programs lowering the financial burden to attend community colleges are creating a more enticing environment (Cohen, 2005). While four-year institutions and community colleges are taking more active roles in the transfer process (Handel, 2007), there is still a need for careful and intentional action on behalf of a school or department of music to increase the quality of the transition and transaction experiences of incoming students from articulating community colleges.

The purpose of this study was to explore a narrow set of transition and transaction experiences, specifically those of students who had completed an associate's degree of the arts in music and had transferred to a four-year institution with the intent of earning a bachelor's degree of music in instrumental music education. A case of five students was recruited, representing four community colleges and three instrumental studios. These students participated in a narrative case study, with the results documented in the previous chapter and further discussed below.

### *Research Design*

This study used a narrative case study approach (Merriam, 1998). Participants were identified by the applied wind faculty as students who most closely exemplified the traits and experiences of transfer students in their studio over time; specifically, the case nominees were those students who had transferred without facing a catastrophic academic or life event leading to their departure from the receiving institution. From this pool, five participants were chosen to take part as the case. No more than two case

participants were included per community college so that a wider representation of experiences could be included.

Data were collected through audio recordings of semi-structured interviews. These interviews were transcribed electronically then verified manually for maximum accuracy. Copies of the transcribed interviews were provided electronically to each of the five participants with a request for feedback to ensure that the transcription was true to the interview and clearly represented their experiences and thoughts. Each of the five participants responded, and none of the five participants recommended changes in their story. Transcriptions were coded according to experiences, then recoded according to emergent themes as related to the conceptual framework. Research journaling and interviews with the nominating applied studio faculty were used for data triangulation.

### *Conceptual Framework*

The framework for this study is at the intersection of two theories. Schlossberg's (1995) theory of transition proposes that students experience three specific phases of transition as they move from one institution to the next: moving in, moving through, and moving out. Dewey's (1896, 1930) theory of transaction describes the mutually beneficial relationship that exists between teacher and student, where both parties contribute and receive from the relationship while constantly monitoring its effectiveness.

These theories intersect through the student's commitment to transactional relationships during each phase of the transition. As a student begins the "moving in" stage, they prepare to end the academic and social transactional relationships at sending institution; in this study, the community college. As they work in the "moving through" stage of transition, they actively seek, initiate, and establish functional academic and

social transactional relationships at the new four-year institution, the receiving institution. This stage of transition does not end with the beginning of the academic term at the new school, but when the student feels settled in and comfortable with the transactional relationships. The “moving out” stage is realized when the student has acclimated to the new educational institution, is participating in functional academic and social transactional relationships, and has taken on the identity of a member of the institution.

Nettl’s (1995) ethnography of a large midwestern school of music describes in detail the environment that Schlossberg’s (1995) model and Dewey’s (1960) theory work in and through. The intricate and highly individual relationships between the student and their applied teacher, ensemble directors, and academic course teachers operates differently than most other majors. Applied lesson study is based on each student’s individual abilities and tailored to their growth over time; participation in ensembles is dependent on each student’s performance in an audition rather than by seniority or other non-performance factors. A student’s place in applied studio study and ensembles, along with their academic coursework, can have a profound effect on how they are perceived in the receiving institution’s school or department of music and ultimately affect additional opportunities for performance or study..

#### Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

##### *Assumptions*

It is assumed that participants responded openly and honestly due to the addressing of privacy concerns; students remained anonymous during and will remain anonymous after the research and publication, and every effort will be made to not violate their confidentiality. As the research was a narrative case study, it was participant



driven. Participants maintained significant amounts of control in this research style as they had the opportunity to withdraw at any time, revoking access to their associated collected information. Participants also took ownership of the research process through open-ended questions that allowed them to share their experiences freely under their own terms, and through reviewing transcripts and

### *Limitations*

Participants for the case in this study were recruited through their instrument studio teachers and were limited to students who have completed an associate degree in the arts and, at the time of the interview, working towards a degree in instrumental music education.

As this study took place in the spring semester, there was at minimum one semester separation between participants and their community college and transfer experiences. Participants were asked to take extra time during the member checking phase to make sure they have answered questions as thoroughly and as truthfully as possible despite the time of separation.

### *Delimitations*

To create a manageable data set, the scope of research was limited to only students working towards a bachelor's degree in instrumental music education. Original plans for study included vocal music education majors, but the increase in potential confounds and the loss of clarity due to a greatly expanded case size helped to limit the scope of the study.

Due to the differences in community college roles from state to state, only students who attended a community college with membership in the host state's

community college association were considered for inclusion in the case. This ensured that there is a standing articulation agreement between the community college and the university level with an expectation of continuation of study from one level to another.

### Findings and discussion

*Research question 1: What do transfer students experience in acceptance and integration by other students in the same field? By faculty and staff?*

Each of the members of the case study had a unique transfer and transaction experience, but none of them mentioned anything negative concerning other students in either their major or their ensembles during or after their transition to the four-year university. Two members of the case spoke very positively about the environment, stating that the expectation for high-quality musical and academic experiences by the students helped foster an attitude of camaraderie and common purpose early on. This was especially apparent with other transfer students, who had developed an informal community that would provide support to new transfer students.

The unique experiences of case participants are most apparent in their experiences with faculty and staff. Although each case member related enjoying an academically beneficial transactional relationship with their studio teacher, there was frustration by one member that there was little return in the social aspect of their relationship; all interactions were cordial, but business-like. The most profound difference in their experiences came from their interactions with their non-studio ensemble directors. Those members of the case who discussed their transition experience more negatively were more likely to report that they did not feel welcomed by or able to approach the

ensemble directors, while those who reported the fewest difficulties during the transition experience reported feeling more openness by their ensemble directors.

Research question 2: How do these experiences affect transfer students' self-awareness and perceptions of acceptance and integration as they move through the transition process?

The transfer students are hyper-aware of their individual situations; there is both the requirement of meeting upperclassmen-level academic and integrational expectations and the reality of being a first-year student having to acclimate to a completely new environment. Each participant mentioned experiencing a quick acceptance into their applied studio ensemble and their other ensembles by the other student members. This is most likely due to the high expectation of performance in each ensemble requiring the members, once placed on their part, to contribute to the whole in short order.

Except for one participant's experience in the music theory rotation, the case members also reported feeling part of a positive transactional relationship with their non-ensemble course instructors. The dissatisfied student was having to acclimate to a style of music analysis they had not been prepared to encounter and this dissatisfaction was both audible and visible during the interview. This same student was one of two to report feeling unwelcomed by their large ensemble directors, with both mentioning feeling as if their needs or attempts at contact were dismissed and unimportant.

#### Recommendations for Departments and Schools of Music

The following recommendations are specific to the community colleges and School of Music in the narrative case study and address the issues that presented themselves in the data collected from each member of the case. These recommendations

are based on the programs suggested by Townsend (2006) for improving transfer student integration into the receiving institution:

#### *Maintenance of Contact*

The period between high school recruitment by university faculty or display of interest by the high school student and the enrollment at the four-year institution is extremely important for maintaining and further developing student desire to attend the university following completion of the Associate's degree. Consistent, regular communication with the potential student through both physical and electronic means will keep the university and the goal of a bachelor's degree in music education in the forefront of the student's mind. Physical and electronic mailings that include instrumental and studio ensemble concerts, invitations to clinics with guest artists, and calendars of general university and School of Music events and individualized invitations to special studio events from the potential studio teacher create an inclusive atmosphere that shows continued interest on behalf of the university and may help to positively influence students who may be considering attending another institution following their time at the community college.

#### *Co-Advising and Articulation Agreement Focus*

There are other important contacts to be made outside of event calendars and concert and clinic invitations. The articulation agreement between community colleges and universities in the state studied is extremely specific regarding what credits are necessary for completion to transfer with minimal added time. The addition of a transfer coordinator position or duty track at the university level would provide a direct point of contact for the student as they plan their path and work with their advisor at the

community college. As the articulation document is well over a hundred pages in length and contains every potential transferable major for every combination of community college and university in the state studied, the transfer coordinator would be able to provide each potential transfer student with a focused copy of the agreement between their community college and prospective university. Ideally, this simplified document would aid the pre-transfer student and their advisor at the community college in planning towards both the completion of the associate degree and the completion of all possible pre-transfer coursework.

After students complete their associate degree and commit to the four-year institution, there is still more to do to ensure that the transition experience is smooth and that the transactional experience begins with as little difficulty as possible.

#### *Linking Scholarship Auditions with Upper Division Qualifying Jury*

Transfer students must still go through the scholarship and placement audition process. Case members related that the semester wait before performing their upper division qualifying jury puts them at a perceived delay; the audition process could be modified for transfer students to provide those who believe they are ready to perform their qualifying jury the opportunity to use the scholarship audition for both purposes. As upper division qualifying juries require specially prescribed musical selections, the student contact system mentioned previously would be the ideal method for explaining this requirement well in advance and offering students the opportunity to request the prescribed selections and obtain an accompanist (if one is needed). As upper division qualifying juries require the division faculty to be present, these combination auditions would need to be scheduled well in advance and with student understanding that having

to choose a different audition date may result in having to take the qualifying jury at the end of the first semester as is the current operating procedure.

#### *Transfer-Specific School of Music Orientation*

Because the transfer students have two years fewer of institutional knowledge than their native student counterparts in the same grade classification, an orientation program specific to the School of Music and attuned to transfer students' needs is paramount to helping them begin their time at the four-year institution. Information such as the division chairs, how to reserve a hall for recital or rehearsal, what value-added benefits are available to students in the School of Music, and how to address and contact faculty members to request meetings or information are necessary to remove roadblocks to student success and make it easier to catch up operationally to native students.

#### *Specialized Advising*

Coordinating initial advising sessions for transfer students is another integral part of the end-phase transition and early-phase transaction process. Rather than using general university advisors who are not intimately familiar with School of Music scheduling and course progression for the music education path, it is recommended that School of Music faculty with direct experience or special training working with transfer student scheduling participate in initial advising sessions. This is critical for students who have completed their associate's degree but have not tightly followed the articulation agreements' recommended community college course path as their schedules often require special attention to avoid general education requirement conflicts with concurrent School of Music course conflicts. Directly confronting this challenge with the student

builds trust and faith in the School of Music faculty and provides students with the confidence that their experience is at the forefront of program planning.

### *Transfer Student Support Groups*

Each of the case members mentioned that other transfer students who were further along in the degree process were critical in helping fill in gaps in information, especially regarding preferences of professors for certain courses and in-place social structures that may be beneficial to social advancement or deeper integration into School of Music culture. For students not originally from the area surrounding the School of Music, the older transfer students also provided information regarding businesses offering student discounts or specials, preferential places to shop based on price, and other day-to-day information that aid in students' everyday lives. Due to scheduling, these older transfer students are generally found in the transfer students' instrumental studios.

Implementing a broad cross-division transfer student mentoring program that encourages veteran and new transfer students to meet in an informal group setting increases the amount of interaction and transference of institutional and regional knowledge from one generation to the next. Utilizing the School of Music Transfer Coordinator or other faculty member as faculty sponsor and advisor will help maintain quality control and minimize sharing of overtly negative or incorrect information. The use of an official faculty advisor or sponsor would also create the potential for more immediate funding of a mentor group and provide for small food and drink items to contribute to a more informal, welcoming environment.

## Final Thoughts

### *Future Action by Departments or Schools of Music*

This research in no way suggests or recommends adoption of a specific instrument for program review, especially outside the bounds of the included institutions. However, there is need for regular, intentional data collection at the department or school of music level to ensure that transfer students' needs for guided integration and rapid stability are met. This could occur as an informal part of the regular cadence of advising sessions or through annual or semi-annual focus groups.

### *Future Research*

The percentage of college students who begin their journeys at a four-year institution is growing annually and many states are beginning to pass into law programs that make community college a much more financially feasible starting point. This means that even more students will be entering music programs at four-year institutions as upperclassmen.

Future researchers may find interest in the development of an instrument to quantitatively measure transfer students' entrance into the receiving institution music programs. Possible avenues for measurement could include a Likert scale survey that gives transfer students the opportunity to rate the quality of their official onboarding and advising experiences as well as measurements over time of their sense of integration and acceptance into their program of study, ensembles, and the department or school of music culture.

Other research that may be pertinent to the interests of teachers and administrators at this level would be a longitudinal comparison of student persistence (Tinto, 1988) in a



specific music program based on their score on the Duckworth (2007) short-form grit scale at the beginning of their freshman year. A comparison of grit score between students who began their journey at a community college versus those who began the same journey at the four-year institution may reveal data that could improve recruitment and retention practices by the four-year institution.

### *Personal Reflection*

This research has been a long and arduous process for many reasons, not the least of which include experiencing a multitude of transitions at the personal and family level during the research process. That made it more important to separate myself from the research process and focus on maintaining a high level of validity and reliability throughout. This sensitivity to bias at each stage of the research contributed positively to the process of collecting and analyzing the case members' stories. I have confidence as I look back on the results and analysis that their experiences have been represented in as objective a manner as possible.

If we were to count the number of planned transitions we encounter as part of our lives, we would likely lose count very quickly. There is the transition into education, either through Pre-K programs or kindergarten. There is the movement between each level of schooling, usually marked by a ceremony at the end of one division and a welcoming at the beginning of the next. We experience initiations marking our transitions into community groups, religious organizations, and secret societies. We experience increasing amounts of onboarding and initial training as we transition into new jobs and new careers. We celebrate the transition into lifetime partnerships with marriage or union ceremonies. Each of these specially marked occasions includes some

experience of moving in, moving through, and moving out of transition, and each of these includes some measure of acceptance through the thoughtful development of transactional relationships that lead us out of the transitory state.

It is my hope that the research conducted, analyzed, and reported on in this document leads to a more intentional and thoughtful approach to easing the transition for community college students as they enter into their final years of undergraduate music study at the four-year institution.

APPENDIX A – Case Participant Interview Questions

Question	Theory
What was your experience like studying music at the community college?	Transaction
At what point in your education did you decide that you wanted to be a music major?	Transaction
How would you describe your relationship with your instrument/voice professor at the community college?	Transaction
How would you describe your relationship with your ensemble directors at the community college?	Transaction
How would you describe the ability to get help with classwork and projects while there?	Transaction
When did you decide to attend this university to finish your music undergraduate work?	Transition
Please describe what was done by the community college to prepare you for the transfer to the university level?	Transition
What assistance was offered to prepare you for placement exams at the university?	Transition
How would you describe your experience so far in the music program here?	Transaction
How would you describe your relationship with your current instrument teacher?	Transaction
How would you describe your relationship with the ensemble directors here?	Transaction
What did the School of Music do to aid and assist you with the transition during the transfer process?	Transaction
What did the School of Music do to aid and assist you with the transition once enrolled?	Transition

How would you describe the academic expectations of your theory and history teachers here?	Transaction
How would you describe the academic expectations of the university as a whole?	Transaction
How would you describe the ability to get help with classwork and projects?	Transaction
Was there any assistance offered by the School of Music to prepare you for entrance or barrier exams?	Transition / Transaction
Have you had any exciting experiences in your program here?	Transaction
What help would have been beneficial for you and others to receive from the School of Music before your transition here? During your transition?	Transition

## APPENDIX B – Faculty Interview Questions

1. Which community colleges do most transfer students in your studio come from?
2. In your experience, how long does it take transfer students to appear fully settled into the program?
3. What do you find yourself having to help transfer students with most often?
4. How do the transfer students deal with the transition academically?
5. What do you see as the challenges transfer students face in becoming part of the social structure of your studio?
6. How do transfer students react when facing embouchure or other technique adjustments?
7. What do you wish transfer students knew coming into [this four-year institution]?
8. What other thoughts or experiences do you have regarding the transfer student experience?

## APPENDIX C – Student Recruitment Letter

DATE

Dear PARTICIPANT ,

This is an invitation to assist with my final research project at The University of Southern Mississippi. The project consists of an interview that will last between one half and one hour. The interview will consist of questions pertaining to your experiences with the process of transition to and integration in the School of Music after completing an Associate's degree of the Arts in Music at a Community College Board affiliated community college.

The subject of the interview is not believed to be controversial or harmful. The results of the interviews will be analyzed for recurrent themes, combined with the results of the other participants, and presented in written form and in group presentation. Individual results will not be made available. There will be a more complete document informing you of your rights and protections for you to read and sign prior to the interview.

There will be bottled water and snack cakes available during the interviews. To sign up for an interview time, please visit the following URL [ ]. If none of these times work for you, please let me know so I can make schedule accommodations to make it easier for you to participate.

Thank you in advance for your help. Please do not hesitate to contact me by email at a.glenn@usm.edu or by cell phone at 865-686-6826 with any questions you may have.

Kind regards,

Ashley Glenn

APPENDIX D – Informed Consent Form



▶ INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
**STANDARD (SIGNED) INFORMED CONSENT**

<b>STANDARD (SIGNED) INFORMED CONSENT PROCEDURE §</b>
<p>This completed document must be signed by each consenting research participant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Project Information and Research Description sections of this form should be completed by the Principal Investigator before submitting this form for IRB approval.</li> <li>• Signed copies of the consent form should be provided to all participants.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>Last Edited February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018</small></p>

Today's date:		
<b>PROJECT INFORMATION</b>		
Project Title: A study of transition, transaction, persistence, and grit in community college transfer students seeking a bachelor's degree in instrumental music education		
Principal Investigator: Ashley E. Glenn	Phone: 665.686.6826	Email: a.glenn@usm.edu
College: Arts & Sciences	Department: School of Music	
<b>RESEARCH DESCRIPTION</b>		
<p><b>1. Purpose:</b></p> <p>This study examines the transition and integration experiences of students who have transferred to The University of Southern Mississippi and completed at least two semesters of coursework following the completion of an Associates Degree of the Arts at an articulating Mississippi community college.</p> <p><b>2. Description of Study:</b></p> <p>The study consists of two components: individual interviews of thirty minutes to one hour with participants and collection of unofficial transcripts of the participants from their conferring community college and The University of Southern Mississippi. Interviews will be transcribed and returned to the participants for error checking. The transcribed interviews will be analyzed for recurrent themes, combined with the results of the other participants, and presented in written form and in group presentation.</p> <p><b>3. Benefits:</b></p> <p>There are no expected benefits for the participants in this study.</p> <p><b>4. Risks:</b></p> <p>The subject of the interview is not believed to be controversial or harmful.</p> <p><b>5. Confidentiality:</b></p> <p>Each participant will will be identified by a pseudonym in all presentations of the material and your identifying information will be kept separate from collected data to protect your identity. Only the primary researcher, his faculty advisor Dr. Colin McKenzie, and his committee members will have access to the data. Participants will receive a duplicate copy of this form for their records.</p>		

**6. Alternative Procedures:**

Those participants with documented mental handicap or chronic illness or disease are eligible to participate through the least restrictive means possible for them. The primary investigator should be notified of necessary modifications or modalities for participation prior to the interview session.

**7. Participant's Assurance:**

This project has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations.

Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the IRB at 601-266-5997. Participation in this project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits.

Any questions about the research should be directed to the Principal Investigator using the contact information provided in Project Information Section above.

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby consent to participate in this research project. All research procedures and their purpose were explained to me, and I had the opportunity to ask questions about both the procedures and their purpose. I received information about all expected benefits, risks, inconveniences, or discomforts, and I had the opportunity to ask questions about them. I understand my participation in the project is completely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the project at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. I understand the extent to which my personal information will be kept confidential. As the research proceeds, I understand that any new information that emerges and that might be relevant to my willingness to continue my participation will be provided to me.

Questions concerning the research, at any time during or after the project, should be directed to the Principal Investigator with the contact information provided above. This project and this consent form have been reviewed by USM's Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5116, Hattiesburg, MS 39408-0001, 601-266-5997.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Research Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Person Explaining the Study**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**



### NOTICE OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACTION

The project below has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services regulations (45 CFR Part 46), and University Policy to ensure:

- The risks to subjects are minimized and reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered involving risks to subjects must be reported immediately. Problems should be reported to ORI via the Incident template on Cayuse IRB.
- The period of approval is twelve months. An application for renewal must be submitted for projects exceeding twelve months.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: IRB-19-161

PROJECT TITLE: A study of transition and transaction experiences of community college transfer students seeking a bachelor's degree in instrumental music education.

SCHOOL/PROGRAM: Educational Research and Admin, School of Music

RESEARCHER(S): Ashley Glenn, Lilian Hill

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt

CATEGORY: Exempt

Category 2.(ii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).

Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation.

APPROVED STARTING: April 24, 2019

*Donald Sacco*

**Donald Sacco, Ph.D.**  
**Institutional Review Board Chairperson**

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