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Learning Habits and Attitudes in the Revivalist Old-Time Community of Practice

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ABSTRACT

The revivalist musicians who participate in the old-time music scene constitute what Lave and Wenger (1991) term a "community of practice." This study seeks to analyze the learning habits of revivalist old-time musicians from the perspective of Lave and Wenger and to explain how their approaches to and attitudes toward learning can serve to position cohort members within this community of practice. To do so, the study provides a framework for positioning individuals in the revivalist community of practice, establishes the criteria for "full" and "peripheral" participation in that community, examines the learning approaches and attitudes reported by revivalist old-time players, and demonstrates that approaches to learning are tied to community position. The data for this mixed-methods study was collected in 2017 at 5 old-time music festivals and camps in the Southeast United States, where 100 adult musicians completed a questionnaire containing demographic items, Likert-type items, and open-ended questions. This study concludes that the most significant marker of full participant status in the community of practice is a strong aversion to the use of notation and tablature, while a preference for learning from field and historical recordings, a tendency to learn tunes at jams, the possession of historical knowledge about tunes, and the ability to identify regional playing styles are also markers of full participant status.

INTRODUCTION

Music educators have always understood that learning takes place both inside and outside of the classroom, and that informal and community-based approaches to music learning can be remarkably effective (Smilde, 2018). In recent years, researchers have become increasingly interested in the learning habits of adults who participate in traditional music scenes (Blanton, 2016; McMahon, 2014). These musicians, who constitute what Lave and Wenger (1991) term "communities of practice," exhibit great dedication to their craft and report high levels of enjoyment—two outcomes that are considered highly desirable in the music education profession. This study addresses the revivalist players who participate in the old-time instrumental tradition of the Southern Appalachians. The subjects are adult amateurs who attend local jams, travel to festivals,

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enroll in summer camps, engage with online learning resources, and study the history and nuances of their chosen tradition with remarkable dedication.

This article brings the methodological framework of Lave and Wenger (1991) to bear upon the analysis of data collected from 100 revivalist old-time players. The purpose of the data collection, which was conducted by means of a mixed-methods questionnaire, was to determine what sources old-time players used to learn tunes and what attitudes they held toward those sources and learning practices in the old-time tradition. The data supports Lave and Wenger's assertion that participation in a community of practice occurs along a spectrum from "peripheral" to "full." In this study, I argue that an individual's approach to learning is one important marker of his or her position within a revivalist community, and I explore the tension between historical and contemporary learning approaches and attitudes within this community. I will demonstrate that, while participants in this community of practice make use of a wide variety of pedagogical resources, certain attitudes and preferences—namely, an aversion to notation, a tendency to learn from historical and field recordings, a tendency to learn from homemade and peer-made recordings, and a broad respect for history and tradition—mark the individuals who are most fully integrated into the community. This conclusion has implications for how researchers and participants should understand the significance of preferred learning practices in the revivalist old-time community of practice. My analysis suggests that learning styles are shaped not only by personal preference or perceived efficacy but also by social factors. If this is true, musicians and educators in the old-time community and beyond will benefit from acknowledging and questioning the power of community to mold learning habits.

My conclusions are limited by the scope and methodology of the data collection. While the old-time community of practice encompasses a variety of sung and played traditions that are reenacted around the world by heterogeneous participants, this study is confined by its methodology to participants in the instrumental tradition who attend festivals and music camps in North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. Most of the responses came from students at music camps, which suggests that my conclusions might apply most strongly to the population of revivalists who regularly pursue formal study. While I sought to mitigate these limitations with my analytical approach, it must be stated that my results are highly suggestive, not conclusive. All the same, they invite serious consideration and further study.

FRAMEWORKS

I begin my contextual development by explaining the analytical framework provided by Lave and Wenger (1991) and by introducing additional terms and concepts that complement that framework. Second, I survey historical learning practices in the old-time tradition. A participant's position in the old-time community is based in part on his or her relationship to learning practices that are perceived as historically authentic, yet I

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show that such authenticity is more complex than its contemporary perception. Finally, I survey related music education research and draw connections with the present study.

Communities of Practice

As other scholars have already observed (Blanton, 2016; Waldron, 2011, 2013a, 2013b), revivalist old-time musicians constitute a community of practice. Communities of practice have been most recently defined as "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 1). The revivalist old-time community of practice can be variously identified at local, regional, national, and global levels, and it can be described as a place-based community, a portable community (Gardner, 2004), an online community, or as a convergent online and offline community (Waldron, 2013a, 2013b). This study considers the revivalist old-time community of practice as a monolithic body, but it is important to remember that most members of this monolithic community also participate in more narrowly prescribed communities of practice and therefore embody multiple social identities, each of which might be examined in its own context.

Revivalists can be defined as musicians who engage in a folk tradition but who were not born in the region to which the tradition is native and/or were not enculturated into the tradition as children (Dabback & Waldron, 2012). Many participants in the revivalist old-time community of practice share a passion for the repertoire of fiddle and banjo tunes that has historically flourished in the Southern Appalachians and parts of the Midwest, and they seek to grow their personal repertoires, improve their knowledge of the music, and develop their technical abilities to execute the tunes (Jabbour, 2014). Members of this community of practice engage with one another in person at jams, festivals, and music camps, in lessons and classes, and online by means of shared-interest websites, video platforms, and social media (Waldron, 2013b; Wooley, 2003).

I borrow several terms and concepts from Lave and Wenger (1991). The first of these is the distinction between formal and informal learning, which—following Schippers (2010)—I understand as a continuum extending from learning-focused experiences to participation-focused experiences. In the old-time community of practice, lessons and classes, whether in-person or video-based, exist at the formal end of the spectrum, while jams exist at the informal end. All the same, participants in this community have been observed to chart their own "pathways to learning" by approaching these experiences with varying objectives (Blanton, 2016). Informal learning can take place in classes, either because the class focuses on experiential learning or because the participants conceive of the class as an opportunity for "making music," while jams can become sites of formal learning when participants are focused on the task of "learning how to make music" (Folkestad, 2006, p. 138).

Although all members of a community of practice are "legitimate participants" (Blanton, 2016, p. 7), members can be positioned within the community based on

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the breadth and depth of their involvement. Lave and Wenger (1991) use the term "full" participant to indicate members of a community who are fully synchronized with its aims and rituals. As a rule, participants in revivalist communities seek to model their practice on that of enculturated "icon" figures (Feintuch, 1993, p. 189). Full participants, therefore, are those who have matched their practice to that of the icons with maximum success, a process Cantwell (1993) terms "ethnomimesis." In the revivalist old-time community of practice, this means learning the tunes, mastering the technique, embodying the personal style, and knowing the biographical details of one or more icon musicians. These individuals have participated for many years, enjoy extensive interpersonal connections with other players, and understand the tacit rules of community membership—in other words, they possess a great deal of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000; Commins, 2014). "Peripheral" participants, on the other hand, have participated either for a brief span of time or at a superficial level, and they tend to lack refined skill, historical knowledge, and awareness of community norms. Participant status is not an either/or condition: Members of a community of practice might be located anywhere on the spectrum between full and peripheral. Furthermore, participant status can be fixed or fluid. While the Lave and Wenger model suggests that peripheral participants are on a path to become full participants, such a presumption does not apply to all participants in the old-time revivalist community of practice. To address this, Stekert (1993) has proposed the parallel terms "imitators" and "utilizers" (pp. 97–98). These relate to Lave and Wenger's terms, but are not equivalent. While imitators, who seek maximum fidelity to a model perceived as authentic, might also be identified as peripheral or full participants depending on their level of experience and achievement, utilizers, who borrow traditional styles to achieve their own creative ends and therefore by definition seek only shallow engagement with the practices of the community, can never be full participants. Lave and Wenger also employ the terms "old-timers" and "newcomers," which I will use to designate participants with long and short histories in the community, respectively.

The exercise of locating participants within a community of practice is not merely academic. To begin with, most participants already have a strong sense of their status (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The ambition of becoming full participants might motivate peripheral participants to develop their expertise and skill, to commit time and money to participatory activities, and to place a high value on the practice. In this way, the existence of a range of participatory statuses can shape the development of the community and grant symbolic authority to its practices. To understand the requirements for full participation, therefore, is to understand something profound and powerful about a community of practice.

Turino (2008) distinguishes between different types of communities of practice in his discussion of participatory music making. He describes a "cultural formation" as "a group of people who have in common a majority of habits that constitute most parts of each member's individual self" (Turino, 2008, p. 112). In the context of Appalachian

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or Midwestern traditional music, the cultural formation is made up of the players who were born in the region, continuously exposed to old-time music as a part of daily life, and initiated into its practices as children; I term these players "enculturated players." In contrast, Turino (2008) describes a "cultural cohort" as a group of people "that form along the lines of specific constellations of shared habits based in similarities of *parts* of the self" (p. 111). He applies this concept to folk revivalists, who might come from different communities, possess different political and religious beliefs, work different jobs, identify with different cultural or ethnic backgrounds, or even represent different nationalities. Individuals' shared interest in old-time music and dance brings them into the cohort, even if their lives might not otherwise intersect.

Old-Time Music: Definition and Historical Learning Practices

If participants in the revivalist old-time community of practice are to be positioned with respect to an ethnomimetic participatory ideal, then the characteristics of that ideal must be established. In this section, therefore, I will outline the traditional learning practices of enculturated players. Because participants in this study were asked about their approaches to learning old-time tunes, I will focus here on historical and theoretical facets of transmission, defined by Rice (2010) as "the means by which musical compositions, performing practices and knowledge are passed from musician to musician."

The designation "old-time music" is generally understood to refer to the body of instrumental dance music and songs that has been maintained and developed in the Southern Appalachian region and parts of the Midwest since the 17th century (Waldron, 2013b). Old-time music is typically performed on stringed instruments including the fiddle, banjo, mandolin, guitar, and bass. Performance technique and style, while far from homogenous, are considered central to the identity of old-time music (Jabbour, 2014).

Musicians have historically relied on informal, face-to-face transmission processes to learn and share the body of old-time tunes. Indeed, oral/aural transmission has often been considered essential to the existence of folk tradition (Ward, 2016). Oral transmission refers to the passing on of information by means of speaking or singing (e.g., providing a verbal history of a tune), while aural transmission refers to the receipt of information by means of listening (e.g., learning a tune by ear). The transmission of old-time tunes has been primarily aural, but historical information, details on performance practice, and technical guidance might be transmitted orally. There is also a long tradition of musicians teaching, learning, and memorizing tunes by means of singing or humming (a form of oral transmission), even when the intention is eventually to play the tune on an instrument (Cauthen, 1989; Goetzen, 2015; E. Marshall, 2007). In the old-time tradition, the transmission of repertoire can seldom be separated from the transmission of technique and style. It is typical for a novice player to acquire all three simultaneously by means of imitation based on aural and visual cues (Burman-Hall, 1974).

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Although the discourse has always emphasized oral/aural transmission, visual (used here to refer exclusively to the practice of observing a model) and kinesthetic learning techniques are also explicitly employed in the old-time tradition. These techniques are significant in folk traditions around the world and often provide a necessary supplement to the oral/aural process, as Rice (1996) observed in his study of Bulgarian bagpipers. Old-time fiddlers often learn bowings and fingering by watching and imitating other players, while guitarists copy hand shapes to form the correct chords. In some cases, wholesale imitation might even lead a musician to adopt nonessential habits from a model, such as posture (Guntharp, 1980). Ward (2016) has contributed significantly to the understanding of visual, kinesthetic, and tactile learning in traditional music communities and has encouraged scholars to address these methods especially when "considering changing processes of transmission" (p. 105). Ward's understanding of kinesthetic learning is rooted in Hahn's (2007) concept of kinesthetic empathy, which requires a physical response to a model performance. Tactile learning, on the other hand, relies on the physical experience of sound vibrations. All three of these modes combine in the transmission of instrumental music when a fiddler, for example, watches the bowings and fingerings of another player, knows intuitively how it would feel to execute the same motions, feels the pulse of tapping feet, and finally picks up an instrument to replicate the performance. In another instance, any old-time musician might watch the guitar player for chord changes or have the kinesthetic experience of feeling the instrument's vibrations, but only another guitar player will likely respond with kinesthetic empathy to the shifting hand shapes.[1]

Historically, a player usually gained entrance to the local musical community of practice by experimenting independently until he or she was skilled enough to perform a complete tune (Bayard, 1956; Beisswenger, 2002; Cauthen, 1989; Milnes, 1999; Thomas, 2004). After developing basic skills, a musician might acquire tunes by playing at musical gatherings or for dances (Cauthen, 1989; Thomas, 2004) or by listening to local fiddlers (Beisswenger, 2002; Feintuch, 1975; Goetzen, 2015; E. Marshall, 2007; Thomas, 2004) or touring professional musicians (Cauthen, 1989; Milnes, 1999). These tunes were mentally fixed on the spot and subsequently worked out in practice sessions (Bayard, 1956; Cauthen, 1989), often by means of a process that involved singing, humming, or whistling the tune (Cauthen, 1989; Feintuch, 1975).

Many researchers have stressed the fact that their subjects could not read or write staff notation and relied entirely on aural, visual, and kinesthetic learning processes (Beisswenger, 2002; Cauthen, 1989; E. Marshall, 2007). At the same time, face-to-face transmission of old-time repertoire has always functioned in dialogue with literate and mediated transmission processes (Blaustein, 1975). Many old-time tunes exist in printed or handwritten collections, and there are numerous historical records of musicians using written notation to learn tunes (Cauthen, 1989; Graf, 1999; Leary, 1984), to preserve their own repertoires (Goetzen, 2015; Guntharp, 1980; McMahon, 2014; Thede, 1970), and to actively facilitate transmission (Burman-Hall, 1974). In other

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cases, literate compositions have entered the aural tradition (H. W. Marshall, 2012). Among literate players, most initially learned by aural and visual processes but later acquired note-reading ability for the purpose of repertoire development (Bayard, 1956; Goetzen, 2015; Thede, 1962). In the present day, old-time players use a variety of notation systems, including staff notation, guitar tablature, banjo tablature, fiddle tablature, and ABC notation. While the use of notation is widespread (as the results of this study demonstrate), players do not typically refer to notation during jam sessions or performances. Notation is most often granted peripheral status as a supplement to aural tradition, and therefore no single artifact of notation is considered to be authoritative, just as no single performance or recording is generally considered to represent the "correct" version of a tune (also indicated by the results of this study).

In the course of the 20th century, technological advancements transformed learning practices. Beginning in the 1910s, rural communities began to consume phonograph records, while radio became a factor in the 1920s. Players quickly adopted new technologies to facilitate their learning processes, whether this meant slowing down gramophone records (Cauthen, 1989) or making tape recordings to study and share (Feintuch, 1975; E. Marshall, 2007; Milnes, 1999). In more recent years, musicians have turned to LPs, cassette tapes, videotapes, CDs, DVDs, and online video and audio streaming platforms (such as YouTube, Vimeo, and Spotify) as sources from which to learn tunes and technique, and teachers often encourage students to record tunes for later study (Goetzen, 2008; Thomas, 2004). The Internet, computers, and mobile devices have made it easy to create, share, and slow down recordings for the purpose of tune learning (Waldron, 2013b).

Studies in Music Education

The account of historical learning practices outlined above was culled from the work of ethnomusicologists and folklorists, who first turned their attention to the enculturated folk instrumentalists of the Southern Appalachians in the 1930s (Rosenberg, 1993). Although revivalist musicians adopted Appalachian instruments, styles, and repertoires soon thereafter, scholars—mostly in the field of music education—have only recently taken an interest in their learning practices. Studies of revivalist communities of practice reflect the tension between historical approaches to teaching and learning, which tended to be informal, and the expectations of revivalists, who tend to be comfortable with formal learning situations and techniques and often seek out formal tutelage (Blanton, MacLeod, & Dillon, 2014; Dabczynski, 1994; Forsyth, 2011; Garrison, 1985). These studies also reveal the ease with which members of the revivalist old-time community of practice have adopted new technologies for learning and communication.

Waldron (2009; 2011, 2013a, 2013b; Dabback & Waldron, 2012) has published extensively on the topic of music learning in online traditional music communities, including the Banjo Hangout, a website frequented by banjo players of all skill levels in

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the old-time and bluegrass traditions. Her cyber ethnographic methodology included participant observation, the collection of narrative texts, and the completion of interviews or open-ended questionnaires with 26 informants. Waldron (2013a, 2013b) then examined the ways in which adult learners engaged with user-generated content, including forums, tablature, and YouTube videos, to facilitate their learning experiences and tracked the convergence of online and offline music communities. She also published an in-depth study of three old-timers in the Banjo Hangout community, documenting their habits of curating blogs, creating YouTube videos, and posting hyperlinks to a variety of documentary and pedagogical sources (Waldron, 2011). Waldron (2009, 2011, 2013b) has argued that Banjo Hangout constitutes an online community of practice and, with her distinction between old-timers and "newbies," has acknowledged the existence of various participatory identities. She has concluded that the participatory culture of Banjo Hangout creates significant learning opportunities both for isolated musicians and for those who have access to a physical community.

Blanton (2016) examined the learning practices of five adult fiddlers whom she observed and interviewed at the Swannanoa Gathering (also a collection site for the present study). Blanton identified these fiddlers as belonging to a community of practice and concluded that each had engaged successfully in self-directed learning by identifying resources, setting goals, and drawing on prior knowledge. Although her approach—in contrast to that of the present study—relied on in-depth data gathered from a few select informants, Blanton documented many of the same tune-learning sources, including jams, classes, peers, and notation/tablature, and encountered the same learning strategies, including aural and visual learning. Her informants also confirmed the existence of standards for full participation in the community of practice. As one of her subjects reported, "I was determined to learn to play fiddle entirely by ear, as this seemed to be the accepted form of participation within the local jamming community" (Blanton, 2016, p. 11). Such evidence of community standards is vital to any attempt to position participants in the old-time community of practice.

Scholars have also examined the teaching practices of old-time musicians, and their findings have highlighted the chasm between historical and revivalist learning processes. In their study of three "tradition bearers" who teach at the Swannanoa Gathering, Blanton and colleagues (2014) observed three typical teaching behaviors: (a) demonstration, including the use of recordings, performance at tempo, and performance below tempo; (b) verbal instruction, including descriptions of technique, feedback, and storytelling; and (c) group play of whole tunes and phrases both at and below tempo. All three informants emphasized oral/aural learning, while one made minimal use of tablature. When reflecting on their own learning experiences, however, the tradition bearers all indicated that formal learning opportunities were not available when they entered the tradition and that their mentors did not slow down or dissect tunes.

In their studies of traditional music programs in institutions of higher education, Frank (2014) and Goad (2015) made similar observations. Frank found that bluegrass

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and traditional music instructors relied primarily on aural teaching methods but frequently used tablature and sometimes used staff notation, depending on the strengths of the student. All of her informants agreed that it was beneficial for a musician to be comfortable with multiple modes of tune acquisition, including oral/aural and literate, and encouraged students to memorize tunes as quickly as possible. Goad found that bluegrass and traditional music instructors relied on aural teaching methods, including the use of recording equipment, and did not often engage with musical notation.

METHODS

Prior to this investigation, no previous study had surveyed a large number of participants to produce data about how revivalist old-time musicians learn tunes. One of its aims, therefore, was to gather quantifiable responses from as many participants as possible. While this data sheds light on the norms of the old-time community of practice and facilitates the positioning of individual participants, it also provides a snapshot of learning methods and attitudes in 2017. As discussed above, old-time players have access to a greater variety of tune-learning sources today than ever before, while the Internet has facilitated the distribution of sources, the spread of information, and the emergence of online communities of practice. In all likelihood, the tune-learning landscape will continue to transform, and at an even more rapid pace. This data, therefore, will provide a significant point of reference for future studies of tune learning in the revivalist old-time community.

Data for this mixed-methods study was collected using a questionnaire containing four demographic items, 50 Likert-type items, and three open-ended questions. The demographic items ascertained collection site, age, age upon entrance into the old-time community of practice, and number of years of participation in the community of practice. The Likert-type items addressed four topics: (a) the frequency with which the respondent played old-time music in each of a variety of settings; (b) the frequency with which the respondent used each of a variety of sources for learning tunes; (c) the attitudes that the respondent held toward those sources; and (d) the attitudes that the respondent held toward authentic learning in the old-time tradition. Two additional Likert-type items determined the respondent's note- or tablature-reading ability and the frequency with which the respondent used slowed-down recordings to learn tunes. The purpose of the open-ended questions was to discover how the respondent chose which tunes to learn, what approach to learning a tune he or she thought was best, and what online resources he or she used to learn tunes.

In lieu of conducting a pilot study, I developed the research instrument using a community-based process. I have been participating in my local old-time scene as a fiddler and banjo player since 2016, and it was ongoing conversation with local revivalist players about tune-learning sources and methods that inspired me to undertake this study in the first place. I developed the questionnaire in collaboration with members

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of my local old-time community, for I intended from the outset to include items that were of interest to the community and to share the results with all study participants. The contents of the questionnaire, therefore, were shaped both by my own research questions and by the interests of my nonacademic collaborators. This questionnaire was not designed to investigate the theories of Lave and Wenger (1991). Instead, I sought answers to an assortment of broad queries with which I had become preoccupied:

> In the Internet era, what sources and methods do musicians use to learn tunes?
> What attitudes do they hold toward those sources and methods?
> Are all approaches to learning esteemed equally, or is there a hierarchy?
> How is authenticity defined, and is it valued?
> How prevalent is music literacy, and how does the ability to read music impact habits or attitudes?

Although I drafted the questionnaire with these queries in mind, I am indebted to my collaborators for helping me to address a wide variety of tune sources and attitudes with my instrument.[2] After finalizing the questionnaire, I completed the approval process with my university's Institutional Review Board.

I distributed the questionnaire in hard copy to every musician I met at five old-time music events in 2017. The first event was the Bear on the Square Mountain Festival (April 22–23), which takes place every year in Dahlonega, Georgia. Musicians travel from within several hours of the town to attend workshops, hear bands, and jam in the street. Respondents from this collection site included members of my local old-time community, many of whom also attended one or more of the other events. The second event was the Mount Airy Fiddlers Convention (June 1–3) in Mount Airy, North Carolina. Although the focus of this event is formal competition, the convention also offers a day of workshops and attracts thousands of visitors who camp on-site and jam informally.

The last three events at which I gathered data were all residential music camps that cater to amateur adult musicians. These camps offer classes, workshops, concerts, performance opportunities, and occasions for jamming, and they attract a fairly affluent clientele who can afford both the time and money required to participate. These camps were: Blue Ridge Old-Time Music Week (June 4–10) at Mars Hill University in Mars Hill, North Carolina; Old-Time Week at the Swannanoa Gathering (July 23–29) at Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, North Carolina; and Old-Time Weekend at the Alabama Folk School (October 12–15) in Nauvoo, Alabama (see Figure 1). At each of these three sites, many respondents were members of classes in which I was enrolled: advanced fiddle, beginning guitar, and flatfoot dance at Mars Hill; two advanced fiddle classes and intermediate banjo at Swannanoa; and advanced banjo at Alabama Folk School. Although all three camps took place in the Southeast, they attracted participants from beyond the region. I was able to obtain records from the Swannanoa and Mars Hill events that indicated participants' places of origin. At Swannanoa, they came from 33 states and nine non-U.S. countries, while at Mars Hill they came from 32 states and

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two non-U.S. countries. In both cases, North Carolina was the best represented state. Swannanoa attracted a significant number of students from California and New York, while most Mars Hill students came from Southeastern states.

In total, I gathered 100 completed questionnaires. I obtained responses from 28 (14%) of the 196 students at Mars Hill and 33 (12%) of the 280 students at Swannanoa. No attendance data was available for the other collection sites. Response rates ranged from 83% at Mount Airy, where I had several days to forge relationships and encourage the completion of questionnaires, to 22% at Bear on the Square, where musicians were reluctant to stop jamming in order to complete surveys. The rate of response at the camps averaged 66%. The fact that I collected exactly 100 completed questionnaires was coincidental. Although all respondents completed the quantitative portion of the questionnaire with only occasional skipped items, the response rate diminished slightly with the open-ended questions (the first elicited 97 responses, the second 96, and the third 94).

Statistical analysis was performed on the quantitative data with the aim of ascertaining the relationship, if any, between three demographic items and reading ability on the one hand, and the remaining 38 Likert-type items on the other.[3] This analytical approach was developed with two purposes in mind. First, it was important to reduce the impact of the collection sites on the data. Old-time players attend festivals and music camps for different reasons, and, while there is overlap, different populations are

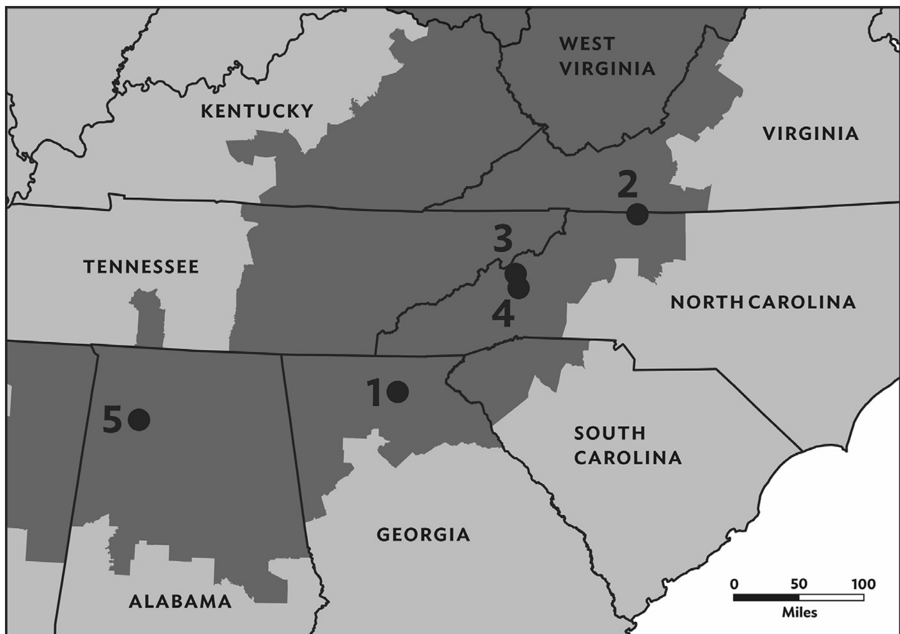

Figure 1. Collection sites (1. Bear on the Square Mountain Festival; 2. Mount Airy Fiddlers Convention; 3. Blue Ridge Old-Time Week at Mars Hill University; 4. Old-Time Week at the Swannanoa Gathering; 5. Old-Time Weekend at the Alabama Folk School).

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drawn to each type of event. In general, festivals attract skilled players who are deeply connected with the community and who seek an opportunity to socialize and jam, while music camps attract players with low to moderate skill levels who may or may not have social connections within the community and who seek an opportunity to learn. Skilled players are likely to have participated in the tradition for a longer time and might have become involved at a younger age, which I hypothesized could have an impact on habits and attitudes. Median ages at the various collection sites also seemed to differ, which I hypothesized could influence the use of digital and Internet-based sources and tools. By analyzing the data in terms of age, age upon entrance into the tradition, and experience, I sought to mitigate any bias introduced by diversity within the participant population. Second, I was particularly interested in the impact of music literacy (understood to encompass all music notation systems) on the learning habits of old-time players. It was therefore important to me to compare the habits and perspectives of readers to nonreaders. I chose not to analyze the data based on collection site after encountering many of the same individuals at two or more sites.

To complete the analysis, I visually examined LOESS best fit lines in all 152 comparison scatter plots. If the best fit line displayed no obvious nonmonotonicity, Spearman's rank order correlation (ρ) of the two items was calculated. If nonmonotonicity was evident, a test was completed for the presence of group differences using Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance. For all Kruskal-Wallis tests, I merged the two smallest groups to ensure that there were at least eight observations in each group. Where appropriate, a post hoc analysis of pairwise group differences using Dunn's multiple comparison test was also performed.

Additionally, I defined various subpopulations using participant responses. These were identified both to further mitigate concerns that the collection sites or methods might have biased the results and to uncover relationships between community position and learning habits. The subpopulations are described in detail below. For each of the three pairs of defined subpopulations (professional vs. nonprofessional, knowledgeable vs. less knowledgeable, traditionalist vs. nontraditionalist), Mann-Whitney U tests were carried out to check for differences with respect to the Likert-type items not used to define those subpopulations. In all cases, a false discovery rate correction (Benjamini & Hochberg, 1995) was applied to the resulting p-values, and the null hypothesis of zero Spearman correlation or no group differences was rejected for $q < 0.05$.

Open-ended responses were simultaneously coded using descriptive and values methods (Saldana, 2009). Answers to the question about how participants chose which tunes to learn were coded for sources, values related to music, and values related to the community of practice. Answers to the question about how participants best learned tunes were coded for modes of transmission, approaches to learning, and values related to the community of practice. Answers to the question about which websites participants visited for recordings, tablature, notation, or repertoire ideas were simply compiled and counted.

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RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

I will begin by identifying the participants in this study and establishing the baseline attributes of their engagement with the revivalist old-time community of practice. I will then examine the ways in which habits and values varied between groups within the community of practice.

Demographics

Demographic items were included in the questionnaire both for the purpose of analysis and for the purpose of characterizing the community under investigation. The value of the first demographic item, collection site, was largely nullified by the fact that many of my respondents were present at two or more events. As a result, meaningful comparisons could not be drawn between the data gathered at different collection sites. However, it is worth noting that 76% of the questionnaires were completed at music camps, which suggests that the results of this study apply most strongly to the population of old-time musicians who attend camps. The responses to the other demographic items can be viewed in Figures 2, 3, and 4. The preponderance of respondents were 55 or older and had been participants in the old-time community of practice for at least 10 years. Most of the respondents had entered the cohort as adults, with half falling into the 35–54 range. The responses to the note- or tablature-reading ability item can be viewed in Figure 5. These indicate that most respondents possessed at least a rudimentary reading ability and that nearly half were proficient. The typical respondent, therefore, was of retirement age, had become involved with old-time music in middle age, had a decade or more of experience, and possessed considerable reading ability.

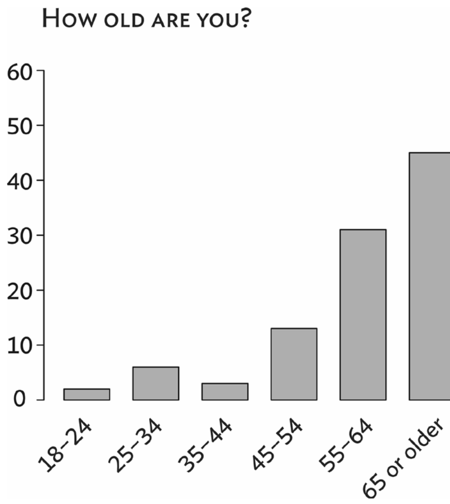

Figure 2. Age of participant.

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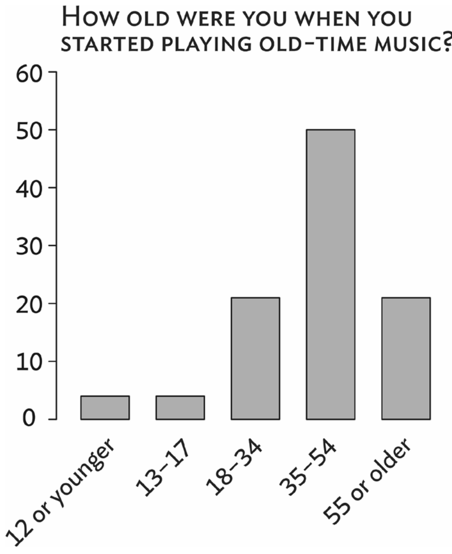

Figure 3. Participant's age upon entrance into the community of practice.

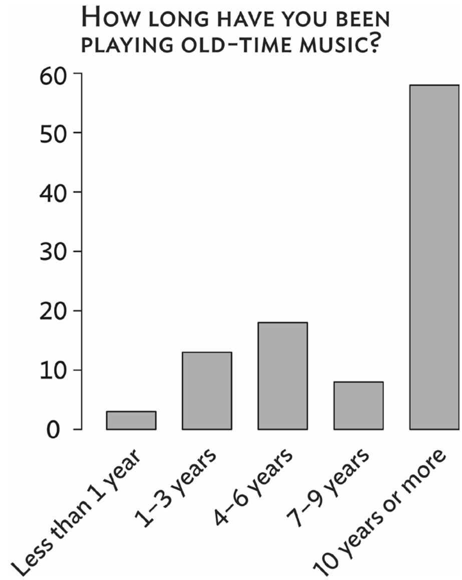

Figure 4. Number of years of participation in the community of practice.

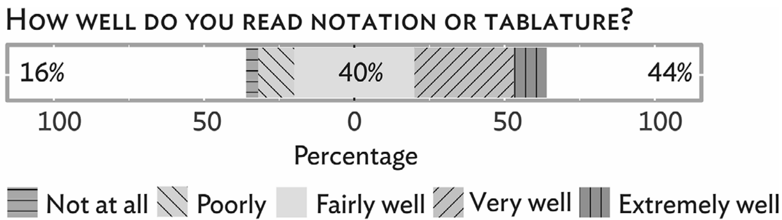

Figure 5. Participant's notation-reading ability.

In order to assess whether or not my sample was representative of the environment at large, I sought to procure demographic data from each of the festivals and camps. Although only the Swannanoa Gathering was able to provide data on participant age groups, the age distribution at Swannanoa closely mirrored the age distribution of my respondents, which suggests that I was able to obtain a representative sample from that perspective.[4]

The Role of Community in Learning

The frequency with which respondents played old-time music in each of a variety of settings can be viewed in Figure 6. "On my own" was a surprise frontrunner. Other studies have demonstrated that participants in traditional music cultural cohorts are motivated primarily by their membership in a community and that they derive the most satisfaction from playing as part of a group. My own respondents confirmed these values

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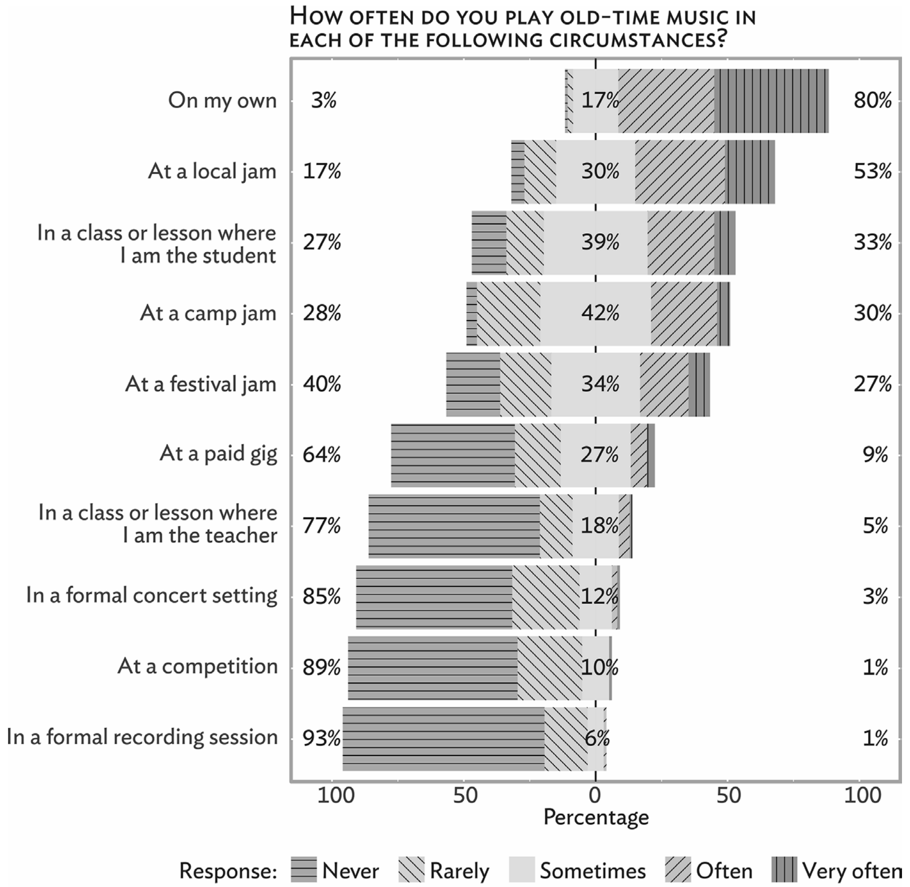

Figure 6. Frequency with which participant played in various settings.

in their responses to the open-ended questions, but they also indicated that they spend considerable time practicing alone in order to be able to participate in group music making. In answering the open-ended questions, 35% of respondents indicated that they learned tunes that would allow them to participate in jams, while 17% mentioned jamming when describing the best way to learn a tune. More than a third (36%) of respondents explicitly mentioned an in-person learning process, for which the transmitting musician was physically present. While 76 (78%) of the respondents wrote that they chose to learn a tune because they heard it and liked it, 12 of these respondents reported that they first heard such tunes at jams. A typical response to the question about how the participant chose which tunes to learn was, "1. The ones I like from a jam OR 2. ones I think will allow me to participate in more jams." Clearly, respondents were focused on their role as members of a community of practice, and their learning choices were guided by that community.

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The importance of jams is also indicated by the quantitative results. As Figure 6 indicates, respondents reported playing old-time music frequently in jams of various types. Jams, which are informal, unpaid, and conducted for the benefit of participants, may be contrasted with commercial presentations, in which professional musicians perform for an audience and expect to be compensated. Most of the respondents indicated that they never or seldom played in gigs, concerts, or recording sessions. Likewise, very few respondents participated in competitions, although many attended the festivals at which competitions take place in order to jam. Finally, most respondents indicated that they played old-time music in the context of a class or lesson, which is not surprising given that 76% of the respondents were enrolled in classes at the time they completed the questionnaire.

Sources and Methods

The frequency with which respondents used each source for learning a tune can be viewed in Figure 7. The sources have been reordered from most used to least used. Although "other amateur recordings" was not defined on the instrument, it can be understood to include homemade recordings of formal concerts or of informal performances other than jams, such as when one musician consents to perform a tune so that another can record it. Every source elicited every response, which indicates that members of the cohort engage with a wide variety of learning practices.

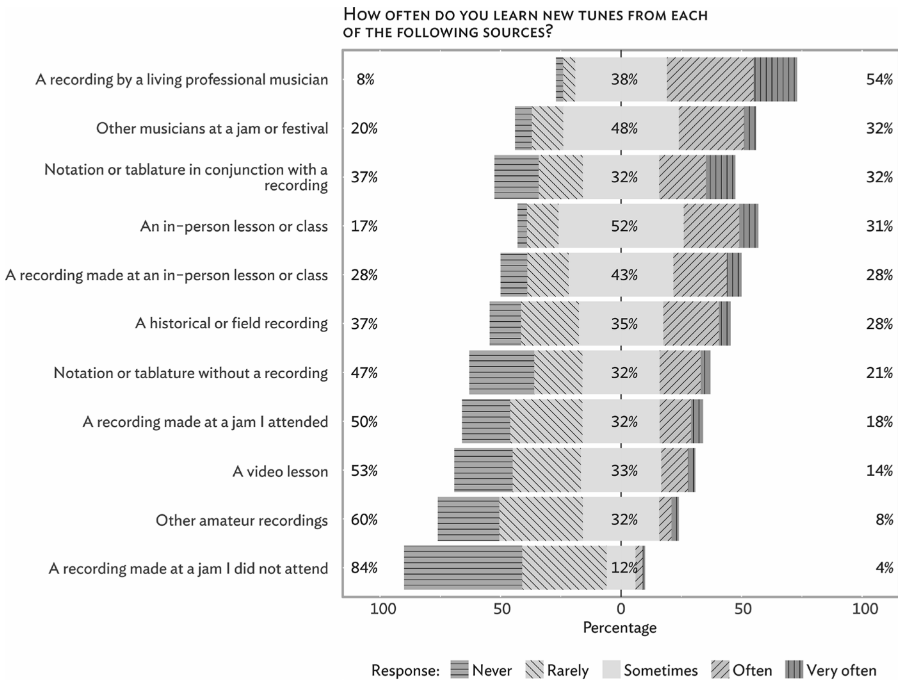

Figure 7. Frequency with which participant learned tunes from various sources.

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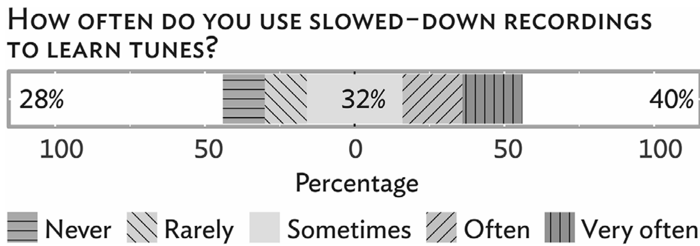

Figure 8. Frequency with which participant slowed down tunes for the purpose of learning.

Responses to the open-ended questions mentioned sources as well, but they dealt more consistently with learning methods, many of which recalled the traditional approaches outlined above. Of the respondents, 84% indicated that they preferred to learn by ear, with 33% preferring to learn from recordings as opposed to in person. An additional Likert-type item revealed that most respondents slowed those recordings down in order to learn tunes (Figure 8). Some respondents described their learning processes in great detail. Eight mentioned the importance of internalizing a tune before attempting to play it, four of whom regularly sang the tune before picking up an instrument. Six respondents reported that they broke the tune into sections (a nontraditional approach employed by many teachers), although another respondent condemned this practice.

The opinions held by respondents toward each of the sources for tune learning can be viewed in Figure 9. There was considerably greater consensus among respondents when it came to evaluating sources than there was when they were asked to report source usage. All but three of the sources were judged to be "good" or "very good" by more than half of the respondents. The remaining three—"notation or tablature without a recording," "other amateur recordings," and "a recording made at a jam I did not attend"—provoked a full range of judgments. Of these, "notation or tablature without a recording" was the most frequently condemned, yet also earned the support of 30% of respondents. The open-ended questions revealed that, while many respondents (34) used notation, their approaches to doing so varied widely. Only three reported that they preferred notation as the primary means by which to learn a tune. Six used notation in equal combination with an aural or visual source, while 19 learned primarily from an aural or visual source and then turned to notation to refine their grasp of the tune. Additionally, six respondents reported that they produced notation or tablature as part of the learning process. Further insight into the wide distribution of opinions on notation emerged when the data was examined from different perspectives, as presented below.

Finally, respondents were asked to rate their agreement with a series of general statements concerning knowledge, values, and learning processes (Figure 10). These statements, although not ordered as such in the questionnaire, outlined four categories: attitudes toward authenticity, attitudes toward historical value, attitudes toward regionality, and attitudes toward notation.

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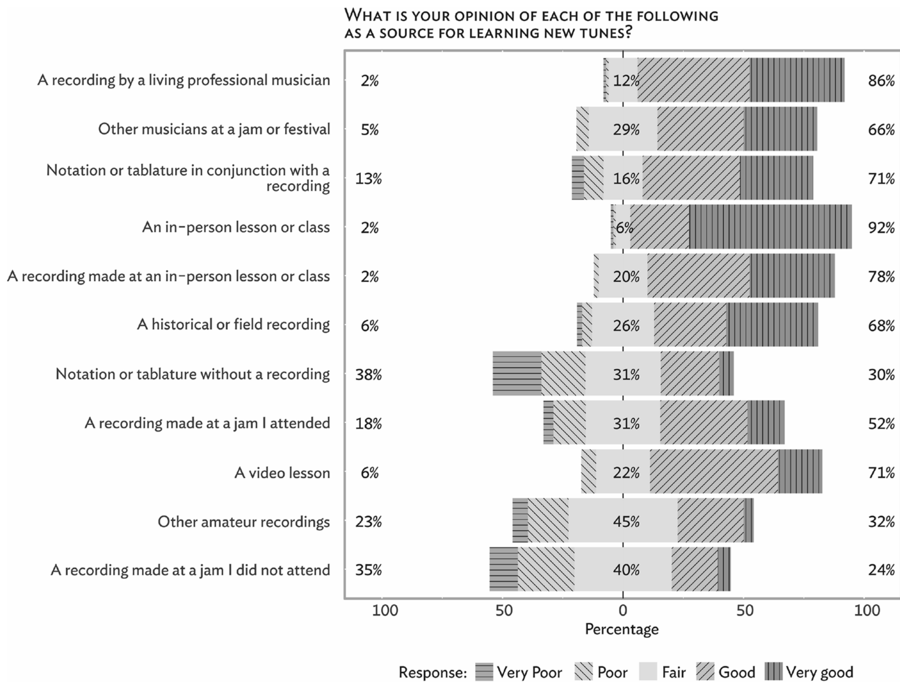

Figure 9. Attitudes held by participant toward various tune-learning sources.

With a single exception, the attitudes toward authenticity were highly variable. Respondents only exhibited consensus on one point: There is not a single correct version of every tune. A slight majority gave thought to the sources from which they learned tunes and a slight majority often knew where their sources had acquired their tunes in turn, but otherwise no trends emerged. In their narratives, eight respondents mentioned the importance of tradition when choosing what tunes to learn. Additionally, 10 respondents mentioned the importance of tradition to their learning processes. These respondents expressed their respect for tradition in various ways. Some placed a high value on source recordings, some expressed a preference for learning from tradition bearers, some reported that they learned aurally because it was traditional, and some sought to create new traditions.

The attitudes toward historical value were more conclusive, although still broad-ranging. Most respondents did not know the history of every tune they played but did place value on such knowledge. At the same time, a majority of respondents did not prefer old tunes to new. Likewise, attitudes toward regionality were broadly distributed, although a slight majority of respondents placed value on knowledge concerning the regional origins of tunes. Five respondents mentioned in their narratives that they chose to learn tunes based on which region they were from.

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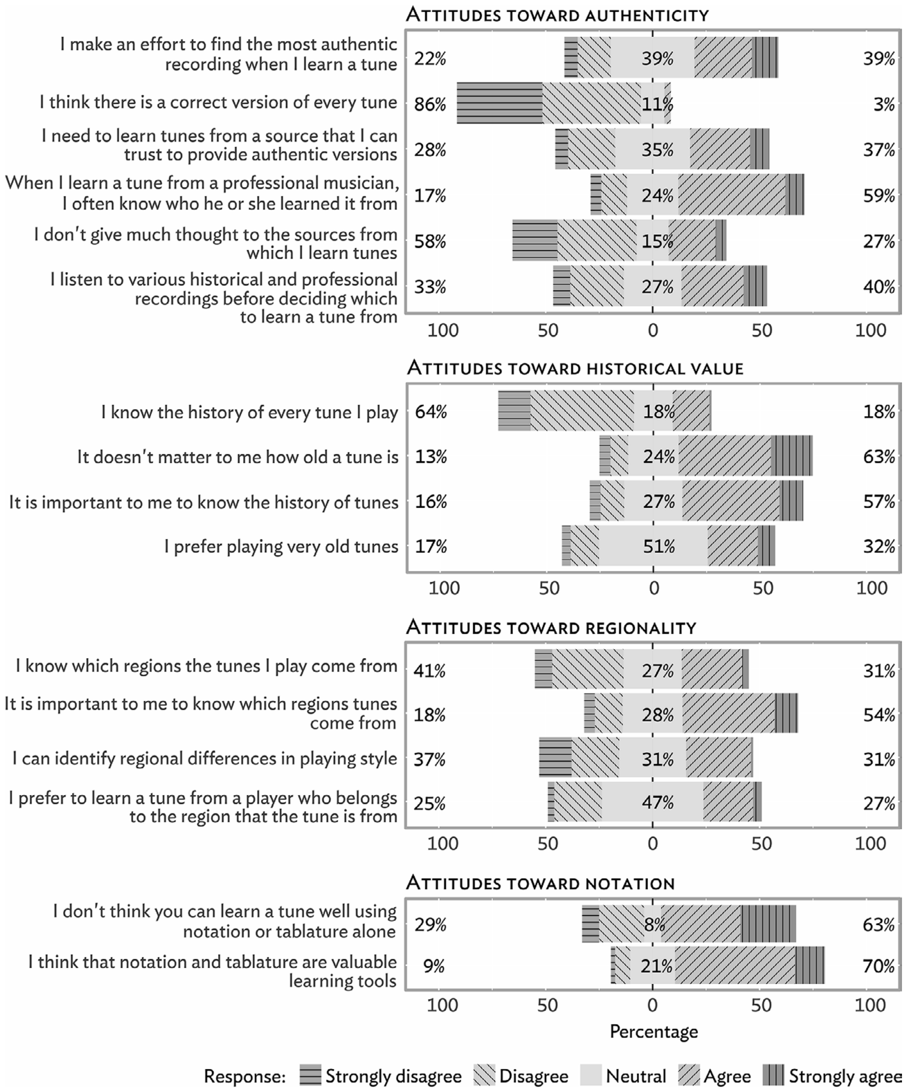

Figure 10. Attitudes held by participant toward authenticity, historical value, regionality, and notation.

The attitudes toward notation were the most interesting. The statement, "I don't think you can learn a tune well using tablature or notation alone," provoked the strongest response of any attitude item (that is to say, very few responses were neutral). Although a majority of respondents agreed, a significant minority disagreed. At the same time, the statement, "I think that tablature and notation are valuable learning tools," elicited the most positive response of any attitude item. As the narratives indicated, respondents used

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notation in a variety of ways, even though they only rarely relied on it as a primary source for tune learning.

Subpopulations

In order to map variations in the habits and values of participants in the old-time community of practice, the results were analyzed to compare responses between several subpopulations. These included participants grouped by age, age upon entrance into cohort, years in cohort, and reading ability. Three additional groups were also identified, and their responses were compared with all group nonmembers. These were "professionals," "players who value tradition," and "knowledgeable players." Professionals ($n = 11$) were defined as respondents who played often or very often at a gig, in class as a teacher, in a formal concert setting, or in a formal recording session. Players who value tradition ($n = 50$) were defined as respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with two out of three positive statements about traditional values: (a) "It is important to me to know the history of tunes" (Q10f), (b) "It is important to me to know which regions tunes come from" (Q10g), and (c) "I need to learn tunes from a source that I can trust to provide authentic versions" (Q10m). Knowledgeable players ($n = 24$) were defined as respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with two out of three positive statements about knowledge: (a) "I know the history of every tune I play" (Q10b), (b) "I know which regions the tunes I play come from" (Q10c), and (c) "I can identify regional differences in playing style" (Q10h). Age had no significant effect on the data collected, nor was there a significant difference between the responses of professionals and non-professionals.

The age at which a respondent entered the old-time cultural cohort had some influence on that individual's habits and knowledge. The younger a respondent was at the time of entrance into the cohort the more likely he or she was to learn from other amateur recordings ($\rho = -0.383$, $df = 96$, $p < 0.001$, $q = 0.001$). This makes sense: A player who entered the cohort at a young age would probably be positioned within a network of old-time musicians and therefore have mentors and peers to record and with whom to exchange recordings. The Internet makes it simple for anyone to access or disseminate homemade recordings, but it is feasible that social connections would encourage and guide this practice. Such a player might also be more likely to have encountered and recorded musical icons. Additionally, respondents who entered the community of practice at the most advanced age reported the lowest ability to differentiate between regional playing styles (Kruskal-Wallis H = 15.097, $df = 3$, $p = 0.002$, $q = 0.047$; Dunn's test finds significant pairwise differences, $p < 0.006$ and $q < 0.012$, between this group and all other groups).

How long a respondent had been a member of the cohort had a wide-ranging impact on the sources he or she would use to learn tunes (see Table 1 at http://bcrme.press.illinois.edu/media/221/). Respondents who had played for 10 or more years (old-

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timers) were significantly more likely than other respondents to learn from historical or field recordings (Dunn's test finds significant pairwise differences, $p < 0.006$ and $q < 0.012$, between old-timers and all other groups and no significant pairwise differences among any of the other groups). This result must be viewed through the lens of the attitude items, which revealed several trends when examined from the perspective of years in the cohort. Responses to the statements, "I know the history of every tune I play," and, "I can identify regional differences in playing style," were positively correlated with years of cohort membership ($\rho = 0.265$, $df = 97$, $p = 0.008$, $q = 0.034$ and $\rho = 0.361$, $df = 97$, $p < 0.001$, $q = 0.002$, respectively). This indicates that old-timers would be likely to have a greater knowledge of and interest in historical and field recordings than other respondents. Respondents also differed by years of cohort membership in their attitudes to the statements, "I know which regions the tunes I play come from," and, "I need to learn tunes from a source that I can trust to provide authentic versions." The more years that one participates in the old-time revivalist community, it would appear, the more knowledge one accumulates and the more value one places on authentic reproduction. A preference for learning from historical and field recordings, which represent the most "authentic" sources for tunes, reflects these trends. Experienced players would also be more likely to possess the aural skills necessary to learn from historical and field recordings, which are often low fidelity and therefore challenging to decipher. The frequency of a respondent learning from other amateur recordings was also positively correlated with years in the cohort ($\rho = 0.342$, $df = 96$, $p = 0.001$, $q = 0.003$), probably because players develop a network of mentors and peers over time. Finally, the frequency of a respondent learning tunes from other musicians at a jam or festival was positively correlated with years of cohort membership ($\rho = 0.239$, $df = 98$, $p = 0.017$, $q = 0.047$). This can also be explained by the fact that these players are connected to the community and have the skills to pick up tunes in a jam setting, in which they are played at full speed and not broken apart for demonstration purposes.

Despite the broad impact of years of cohort membership on the sources that a respondent used to learn tunes, there was no impact on the attitudes held toward those sources. Two additional items, however, did provoke responses that correlated with years of cohort membership. These were the two attitude statements concerning notation. Participants who had been cohort members for less than 3 years responded significantly more positively to the statement, "I think that notation and tablature are valuable learning tools" (Table 1; Dunn's test finds significant pairwise differences, $p < 0.004$ and $q < 0.011$, between this group and most other groups and no significant pairwise differences among any of the other groups), while responses to the statement, "I don't think you can learn a tune well using notation or tablature alone," were positively correlated with years of cohort membership ($\rho = 0.251$, $df = 98$, $p = 0.012$, $q = 0.040$). Clearly, newcomers to the cohort have a much more positive attitude toward notation and are more willing to rely on it as a source for tune learning. This can be explained in two ways. First, learning from notation is easier than learning by ear for players who have a classical background

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(e.g., those who have played in a school orchestra or have taken violin lessons). It takes time to develop the aural skills necessary to learn tunes by ear, and many newcomers seem hesitant to give up the comfort of notation. At the same time, negative attitudes toward notation prevail in the cohort, especially among those who have been members for many years. It would appear that newcomers become aware of these attitudes over time and eventually accept them, even if they initially favored notation.

The other factor to impact a respondent's use of and attitude toward notation and tablature was, naturally, reading ability (see Table 2 at http://bcrme.press.illinois.edu/media/221/). The better a respondent was able to read notation or tablature, the more likely that respondent was to use notation or tablature. Respondents who read poorly or not at all were significantly less likely to use notation or tablature without a recording than were other respondents (Dunn's test finds significant pairwise differences, $p < 0.012$ and $q < 0.018$, between this group and all other groups), while the likelihood that a respondent would use notation or tablature in conjunction with a recording was positively correlated with reading ability ($\rho = 0.516$, $df = 96$, $p < 0.001$, $q < 0.001$). At the same time, respondents who read notation poorly or not at all had a significantly lower opinion of notation or tablature (again both with and without a recording) as a source from which to learn tunes than did respondents with intermediate reading ability (Dunn's test finds significant pairwise differences, $p < 0.001$ and $q < 0.003$, between this group and intermediate reading ability groups). They were also significantly less likely to consider notation and tablature to be valuable learning tools than respondents with intermediate reading ability (Dunn's test finds significant pairwise differences, $p < 0.002$ and $q < 0.005$, between this group and intermediate reading ability groups).

Finally, there were trends in the responses from players who value tradition and knowledgeable players (see Tables 3 and 4 at http://bcrme.press.illinois.edu/media/221/). Both subpopulations were more likely than other respondents to learn from a historical or field recording and more likely to hold a positive attitude toward that source. Players who value tradition would naturally seek out such sources and esteem them highly, for historical recordings represent the oldest preserved renditions of tunes while field recordings are perceived to provide the most authentic versions of tunes. At the same time, knowledgeable players would be aware of such sources and appreciate their historical and documentary value. Players who value tradition were also more likely than other respondents to learn from other amateur recordings, perhaps due to heightened participation in musical communities, and from recordings by living professional musicians, perhaps due to their respect for these tradition bearers. Additionally, they were more likely to hold a negative attitude toward tune learning from notation or tablature without a recording—even though they were just as likely as other respondents to use this approach. Players who value tradition were also significantly more likely than others to respond positively to the statement, "I don't think you can learn a tune well using notation or tablature alone." As one such respondent advised, "Hear it a zillion times and then play it. Tab is bad. Paper addiction kills authenticity (IMHO

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[in my humble opinion]).” This result once again exhibits the bias against notation that is widespread in the old-time community of practice. It appears that the disapproval of notation is strongest among cohort members who place the greatest value on tradition.

Because the subpopulations “players who value tradition” and “knowledgeable players” were defined by their responses to attitude items, it is not surprising that there were many significant trends in these subpopulations’ responses to attitude items in general. At the same time, these trends suggest that the subpopulations themselves are valid and were not identified by anomalous means. Respondents in the two subpopulations demonstrated general agreement, such that 19 of the 24 knowledgeable players were also identified as players who value tradition. To begin with, players who value tradition were more likely than others to respond positively to all three statements used to identify knowledgeable players, while knowledgeable players were more likely than others to respond positively to two of the three statements used to identify players who value tradition (Q10m was the exception). Respondents in both subpopulations were more likely than other respondents to make an effort to find the most authentic recording from which to learn a tune, to give thought to the sources they used to learn tunes, to listen to a variety of historical and professionally recorded tunes before deciding which to learn from, and to prefer to learn a tune from a player regionally associated with it. Knowledgeable players affirmed their status by returning more positive responses than others to the statement, “When I learn a tune from a professional musician, I often know who he or she learned it from,” while players who value tradition were more likely than other respondents to care about how old a tune is.

CONCLUSIONS

This study indicates that, while the learning practices and attitudes of revivalist old-time players are remarkably diverse, certain groups of cohort members are likely to exhibit consistent habits and preferences. These groups may all be situated on the spectrum that extends from full participation to peripheral participation. In the case of participants who entered the cohort at a young age, the status of full participant is suggested by early enculturation. In the case of participants who have been cohort members for many years, the status of full participant is suggested by the status of old-timer. In the case of participants who cannot read notation or tablature, the status of full participant is suggested by a reliance on oral/aural tradition and the absence of a formal music education. In the case of participants who can be identified as players who value tradition or as knowledgeable players, the status of full participant is suggested by commitment to the history and principles of the community of practice. There are doubtless exceptions to these correlations between identity and status. There are certainly some participants who, despite having entered the cohort at a young age, having been members for many years, or possessing a great deal of knowledge, should be identified as peripheral participants due to the scope of their engagement with the community of practice.

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However, it seems likely that the above-mentioned identifiers do indeed correlate with full-participant status.

When the results of this study are examined from the perspective of group membership, clear trends emerge. Although "other amateur recordings" was one of the least common sources for learning a tune, three of the groups likely to contain full participants—players who had started young, old-timers, and players who value tradition—were significantly more prone to employ this source than were groups likely to contain peripheral participants. Likewise, old-timers, players who value tradition, and knowledgeable players all exhibited a greater likelihood to learn from field or historical recordings than did members of groups likely to contain peripheral participants. I suggest, therefore, that the use of homemade, field, and historical recordings for the purpose of tune learning is itself a marker of full participation in the revivalist old-time community of practice. Similarly, a preference for learning from field and historical recordings, a tendency to learn tunes at jams, the possession of historical knowledge about tunes, and the ability to identify regional playing styles were all linked with groups likely to contain full participants. These, too, might be markers of full participant status.

However, it seems that the most significant marker of participant status is the attitude one holds toward notation. Several groups likely to include full participants—old-timers, nonreaders, and players who value tradition—all indicated a disapproval of notation and tablature, while only newcomers were likely to hold notation and tablature in high esteem. At the same time, only reading ability influenced the likelihood that a respondent would in fact use notation or tablature. It would appear, therefore, that while members of all groups except nonreaders are equally likely to use notation or tablature, disparaging those sources is a vital means of marking full-participant status. In this way, participants in the revivalist old-time community of practice proclaim their allegiance to the oral/aural tradition and advertise their knowledge that learning by ear is, as one respondent put it, "the traditional way."

But is it? As I indicated above, enculturated players have long made use of notation, as their skill sets allowed. Music literacy was in fact highly valued in Appalachia of the 19th and early 20th centuries, when singing masters traveled the countryside teaching the shape note system, and many musicians learned to read staff notation at singing schools (Graham, 1971; Malone, 2017). While oral/aural tradition is indeed a hallmark of old-time practice, it is ahistorical to erase notated transmission.

When not speaking of tradition, respondents indicated that only aural learning allows one to "get the full feel of the tune and the nuance." As another respondent put it, "so many nuances are so difficult to convey in written form." This is true, of course—but not just of music in the old-time tradition. The nuances of Bach and Mozart are equally difficult to convey in written form, which is why aspiring classical musicians must develop a sense of stylistic fidelity by listening, watching, and imitating. One study participant told me that it was okay for players who had mastered the style

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to use notation, seeing as they could be trusted to make the music sound right. Again, this observation might be applied to classical repertoire with equal validity.

When participants in the revivalist old-time community of practice condemn notation, they are both embracing a community-sanctioned version of history and distancing themselves from the practices of Western art music and formal music education. I can report firsthand that many old-time players are suspicious of participants who have a background in art music. It took time for me to convince some members of my local community that I wasn't there to judge or instruct them. Blanton (2016) has reported on the "scars" some old-time musicians bear from their experience with school music programs. These are left when teachers tell children that they lack talent, or that they will never be good enough, or that they don't have futures as musicians. Other participants might be self-conscious about their lack of formal training, which is valued by mainstream society. When one declines to prioritize notation, therefore, or even denigrates it, one also rebels against the traditions and systems that sanctify it. By doing so, even formally educated musicians who read notation fluently can declare themselves full participants in this community of practice.

It is important to distinguish between the efficacy of a tune-learning method and a learner's preference for using it. While the results of this study clearly indicate that some sources and methods are widely preferred over others, they provide no insight into which sources and methods produce the best learning outcomes. My analysis indicates that old-time players craft individualized pathways to learning (to use the phrase from Blanton, 2016) based both on perceived outcomes and on social norms. It seems likely, therefore, that some old-time musicians forgo learning approaches that might be efficacious only because they are not sanctioned by the community. At the same time, the existence of strong community norms seems to heighten participant motivation, which itself leads to positive learning outcomes. Furthermore, the specific norms of the old-time community help it to flourish: An emphasis on in-person learning brings people together, while the elevation of aural/visual processes admits those without music literacy to the community and fosters intimate connections in the jam setting, where sheet music is not welcome. (Although an implicit ban on sheet music is typical of most communities, Blanton, 2016, p. 67, has described an exception. This is yet another reminder that diversity exists within this community of practice.)

While there are many good reasons for old-time players to conform to the learning norms of their community of practice, there are also reasons to question those norms. Participants in all musical communities of practice should examine their community's learning norms and assess dispassionately whether or not learning preferences are guided by community standards that discount efficacious approaches to learning. Further research might seek to determine the relative efficacy of the learning techniques used by old-time players. This information could help participants in the community to thoughtfully craft their individual pathways to learning. Future studies might also systematically weigh individual learning outcomes against the values of community

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membership, which extend beyond the mastery of technique and tunes. Finally, in-depth qualitative studies are needed to support my own conclusions. In particular, there is much more to know about why individual players—including full participants, peripheral participants, and those in-between—adopt or reject the use of notation and about the many ways in which they incorporate notation into their practice.

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SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Tables 1–4 are available online at http://bcrme.press.illinois.edu/media/221/.

NOTES

1. I have surveyed modes of learning here because they are significant to the history and practices of old-time music, but the present study casts only limited illumination on this issue. When a participant reports that he or she learned from a video or in a class, for example, we cannot know whether they engaged with the source on an aural, visual, or kinesthetic level. A banjo player, for example, might learn a tune aurally from a video of a fiddle player, or a mandolin player might employ aural learning in a repertoire class in which only the fiddle and banjo parts are demonstrated.

2. Special thanks to Alice Ferland, Cathy Pittman, Ann Whitley, Doug Olsen, Craig Wilson, and Jon Mehlferber.

3. This analytical procedure was designed and completed with the assistance of Jura Pintar.

4. According to office records pertaining to the 2017 Swannanoa Gathering, 8% of the participants were under 16, 4% were 17–20, 1% were 21–30, 14% were 20–45, 39% were 45–65, and 34% were over 65. The overlap between age categories exists in the official records.

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