The purpose of this study was to examine the implications of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) for the kindergarten general music classroom. Ethnographic procedures (classroom observations, interviews, and artifact collection) were used to collect data in three kindergarten music classrooms throughout an academic year. Data were coded using five global dimensions of DAP (creating a caring community of learners, teaching to enhance development and understanding, constructing appropriate curriculum, assessing children's development and learning, and establishing reciprocal relationships with families), as published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Findings included practices congruent with DAP such as engagement as co-learners, inclusion of children's requests, inclusion of play, adjustment to individual needs, assessment in authentic contexts, and respect for family contexts. Incongruent practices included favoritism, lack of response to developmental needs, inflexible curricular decisions, and sparse communication with families. Implications included the need for early childhood coursework and mentorship.

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The Implications of Developmentally Appropriate Practice for the Kindergarten General Music Classroom

Kindergarten music education, as currently practiced in the United States, reflects the influence of tradition, governmental policies, parental concerns, initiatives by educational associations, research, and current thinking about practice. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), one leading early childhood organization, has contributed a line of thinking

about best practices for young children by adopting an official position statement (Bredekamp, 1987) that delineated guidelines for best practice with children from birth through 8 years of age. Subsequent publications (e.g., Hart, Burts, & Charlesworth, 1987; Thompson, 1995) and a further revision of the NAEYC position statement (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) comprise a body of information known as "Developmentally Appropriate Practice" (DAP) in journal articles, conference presentations, and early childhood textbooks (see Part 1 of Perry & Duru, 2000, for an annotated bibliography).

As a multifaceted set of guidelines, DAP does not reflect one theoretical view of early childhood education, but rather a synthesis of several views. Bredekamp and Copple (1997) comment, "Among the biggest challenges when describing children's development in various domains (such as physical, social, cognitive) is to accurately convey the degree to which development and learning are interconnected across and within domains" (p. 98). Because of the importance the DAP authors place on this interconnected perspective, the DAP position statement represents the theoretical perspectives of several researchers on children's physical, social, and cognitive development including:

• Characteristics of physical development that affect a child's ability to engage in the learning environment (Berk, 1997).

• Influence of social relationships on children's development (Hartup & Moore, 1990; Howes, 1998; Stipek et al., 1992).

• The biological foundation for language acquisition (Chomsky, 1968), as well as the influence of the child's experiences in the environment on communicative competence (Hart & Risley, 1995).

• Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, Piaget's (1952) preoperational theory, and information-processing theories on short- and long-term memory ability and use of cognitive strategies (Siefert, 1993; Siegler, 1983), as well as appropriate intellectual and perceptual challenges (Katz & Chard, 1989).

• Play theory (Smilansky & Shefatya, 1990) as a means to promote cognitive, socio-emotional, and academic development.

In this study, DAP is defined as a set of guidelines intended to provide a framework to support teacher decision-making based on knowledge of the children's development, individual characteristics, and social and family contexts.

Early childhood researchers have examined the implications of DAP for kindergarten classroom settings (Brostrom, 1992; Butcher, 1996; Christian & Bell, 1991; Tedder, 1999; Tyson, 1998; Wilson, 1991; Zepeda, 1993), specialized populations (e.g., Davies, 1997; Moberly, 1996), and adults in the kindergarten environment (e.g., Fei, 1995; Lambert, 1991). Music educators have also noted the implications of DAP for music education. Jordan-DeCarbo and Nelson (2002) identify DAP as an ideological position that governs practice. Andress (1995), Kenny (1997), and Sims (1995) incorporated DAP guidelines into their recommended practices for early

childhood music educators. Authors of the voluntary National Standards for Music Education (MENC, 1994) stress the importance of "developmentally appropriate" learning experiences. Miranda (2000) explored pedagogical practice in a Yamaha Music School for congruence with DAP guidelines. To date, however, there have been no systematic studies of DAP in the general music classroom.

Given the significant attention to issues of developmental appropriateness, I chose to conduct an investigation in which I viewed kindergarten music instruction through the lens of DAP in its current revision, not as an endorsement of the guidelines, but as an exploration of the implications of DAP for kindergarten music instruction. The purpose of this report is to present findings specific to a central question of the study, namely, "What insights might be gained through an examination of the kindergarten general music classroom when viewed from the perspective of DAP?" While the DAP guidelines include specific recommendations targeted to various stages of children's development (birth through age 8), on a broader scale, DAP authors set forth five interrelated and global dimensions of DAP that relate to early childhood professional practice: creating a caring community of learners, teaching to enhance development and learning, constructing appropriate curriculum, assessing children's development and learning, and establishing reciprocal relationships with families. With those dimensions in mind, I specifically asked, "In what ways are the interactions, activities, and instruction that occur in kindergarten general music classrooms congruent or not congruent with Developmentally Appropriate Practice?" Second, "What are the implications for children when congruent or incongruent interactions, activities, and instruction are present?"

METHOD

The DAP guidelines delineate considerations for practice based on teacher knowledge of children's development, awareness of individuals, and children's societal and family contexts. Within the context of this broad picture of DAP, I documented the interactions of kindergarten children and their general music teachers in three different music classrooms over the course of one academic year. A comparative case study model (multicase design) framed this study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Through purposive sampling, I selected one veteran music teacher (identified in this report as "Jenny," "Lisa," and "Rhonda") from each of three different schools representing economically diverse populations. Information about the schools and participants is found in Table 1.

I observed a single kindergarten class from each teacher's schedule representing different combinations of full-day and half-day schedules and morning and afternoon music classes (see Table 1). Classroom observations were conducted three times monthly (August through May) for a total of 90 observational sessions, includ-

Table 1
Overview of Participants

PARTICIPANT TEACHERS			SCHOOL SITES		PARTICIPANT CLASSES	
Teacher/Assigned School	Years Teaching	Earned Degrees/Specialization	Median home price	Percentage of free lunches	Schedule (number of classes in rotation)	Class size in August
Lisa Ratiolie at Ocean Elementary	17	B.S. Music Ed., M.S. Music Ed./Orff Levels I & II	High/$149,557	7%	All-day K— 2 per 6 days (morning)	24
Jenny Brasch at McKinley Elementary	11	B.S. Music Therapy; B.A./M.A. Music Ed	Middle/$105.277	33%	All-day K— 2 per 5 days (morning)	27
Rhonda Widger at Lincoln Elementary	20	B.S. Music Ed. & Physical Ed.; M.A. Music Ed./4 coaching endorsements	Low/$96,019	75%	Half-day K— 1 per 5 days (afternoon)	13

ing the first day and last week of school. In each 30-minute class, I collected ethnographic data including field notes, videotape, and audiotape recordings, resulting in a rich data set. Participant perspectives of the observations varied. While the children seemed comfortable with my presence in the classroom, the teachers expressed various degrees of comfort. For example, Lisa commented, "I don't think it [classroom observation] was uncomfortable. I just think it heightens your consciousness directly to the children. I was going around thinking of how you were interpreting things." From Lisa's perspective, my presence in the music classroom changed her relationships with the children and her ability to accomplish musical goals.

Videotapes and field notes served as primary data sources. I used the videotapes to make accurate transcriptions of classroom dialog, determine placement of individual singing voices, review children's movements, and record details of nonverbal interactions. I also collected data through lapel microphones, worn by two children in each class, connected by a wireless system to cassette tape recorders. I recorded memos on selected portions of the tapes corresponding to transition or "free-time" moments when the children talked with each other. Data sources also included formal and informal interviews with the participant teachers and collection of artifacts such as lesson plans, curriculum materials, teacher schedules, and program materials. For each observed class, a transcription containing verbatim dialog, nonverbal interactions, and field note observations served as a primary source for data analysis in conjunction with researcher memos and interview transcriptions.

I conducted the analysis of the data using a process similar to the constant comparative method as outlined by Bogden and Biklen (1998). I coded the data based on the five global dimensions of DAP listed above. As the study continued, I examined the data for exemplars of events and interactions congruent with DAP, as well as those not congruent with DAP.

To address trustworthiness (Krefting, 1999), I invited feedback from multiple reviewers (a university professor who teaches qualitative research, graduate students, a parent, and a kindergarten teacher). Reviewers examined field notes, coded transcripts, and compared selected videotaped segments against their corresponding transcripts for accuracy. Reviewers offered suggestions for follow-up questions, provided additional material for reflection, asked questions about the process of data collection, and provided observations about the classes that both confirmed and disconfirmed my observations and memos in the data set for the corresponding class. This report reflects findings from the study, as influenced by analysis of the data and reviewer comments.

FINDINGS

For the purposes of this report, findings are presented framed by five global dimensions of DAP: creating a caring community of learn-

ers, teaching to enhance development and learning, constructing appropriate curriculum, assessing children's development and learning, and establishing reciprocal relationships with families.

Dimension 1: Creating a Caring Community of Learners

Bredekamp and Copple (1997) comment on the importance of relationships "between adults and children, among children, among teachers. ... Such a community reflects what is known about the social construction of knowledge and the importance of establishing a caring, inclusive community in which all children can develop and learn" (p. 16). The learning environment is a crucial component in developmentally appropriate settings. The times that activities and interactions were most congruent with appropriate practice were the times I observed the teacher and children relate as co-learners within the framework of a caring community. For example:

> It is the second day of school at Lincoln Elementary. As Miss Skyler's kindergartners enter the music room, Rhonda reaches out to the children and asks them to join her as she sits down. The children cluster around her. She speaks to the children in a half-whispered voice. "Look around this big room. It's huge! You know why it's so big? Because we're going to do music. We're going to do activities, we're going to move to music. We're going to play games. Won't that be fun? I think so! And you're going to come and see me every Tuesday afternoon."

Rhonda's outstretched arms, smile, and eye-level position seemed to draw the children in as they clustered around her. Likewise, Rhonda's whispered tone and recognition of the new environment apparently put the children at ease, and the children remained attuned throughout the lesson.

I witnessed moments within the "caring community of learners" in which the joy of music-making seemed to resonate with everyone—teacher and children alike. For example, when both music and classroom teachers and children skipped and played a singing game together, when Lisa and the children explored the sounds of the triangle, or when the children clustered around Jenny during a vocal exploration story, the sense of community was joyful, musical, and powerful. It appeared that an interaction between learning environment and the children's active and willing engagement in music existed and that the presence of one fostered the other. In those moments, the children expressed a desire to repeat activities (e.g., "Can we do it again?") and pride in their accomplishments (e.g., "Can we show our teacher?"). When teachers created a caring community consistent with DAP, the children exhibited initiative and engagement.

I also observed practices incongruent with DAP. For example, within moments of beginning kindergarten on the first day of school, Joey walked into Jenny's room in tears. Then the following occurred:

> The children stand, sit, and clap with the lyrics of the song, except for Joey, whose crying intensifies. Jenny continues leading the children through the

song, and Joey screams, "I want my Dad, I want my Dad! Aaaaaaaa!" Jenny looks his direction and says, "Joey, stop it! That's enough." Joey quiets his crying to a sniffle, turns his back to the class, and continues to cry.

While crying on the first day of school is not unusual, I did not observe Jenny respond to Joey's distress in a way that put him at ease or drew him into the classroom community. Rather, Joey turned his back to the class. Other children in the class did seem to engage in the opening song and lesson activity, and, over a period of several classes, Joey began to participate as well. However, in contrast to the personal and energetic sense of community I observed in Rhonda's classroom, Jenny's interactions with the children seemed distant, formal, and lacked energy—a learning environment often incongruent with DAP.

Analysis of the data also indicated that recognition of individuals by name fostered individual engagement and contributed to a sense of community consistent with DAP. While certain names appeared frequently in the transcripts, I noted that some children's names only appeared when the teacher called on each child in the circle, or did not appear at all. I also observed patterns of interaction that appeared to favor some children while others went unrecognized, indicating uneven participation in the community.

Dimension 2: Teaching to Enhance Development and Understanding

In the DAP position statement, "teaching to enhance development and learning" encompasses more than teaching approaches. As effective as the teaching might be, if respect for and recognition of individuals is not present, if intellectually engaging and responsive environments are not fostered, and if awareness of children's a priori knowledge and individual developmental characteristics does not guide classroom interactions, then developmentally appropriate practice does not occur and learning is hampered. Upon reflection, I narrowed the point of departure between congruent and incongruent teaching practices to one of two origins: the teacher's awareness or comprehension of the children's knowledge, abilities, and developmental needs, or the teacher's ability to act on that knowledge. For example, although the children might fidget (e.g., whispering, looking around the room, playing "foot tag" with a neighbor) during meaningless repetition or prolonged discussion, the teachers did not always acknowledge the children's need for physical movement and their natural propensity to connect learning with physical expression. Likewise, in most cases, I did not observe teachers adjusting their teaching approaches in response to children's requests (e.g., "Can we make our own music?" or "Can't we just do this?").

Lisa often reflected on her practice using phrases such as, "I should have ..." or "See, I didn't do that." Particularly as she watched videotapes, her comments reflected knowledge of child develop-

ment and DAP principles, even as she recognized that sometimes her practices did not reflect her knowledge. Jenny reflected on extant knowledge that may or may not have been present in her practices. In a closure interview, she admitted:

> The only thing that is hard is that you are asking questions about things I don't normally think about. For thirteen years they (the children) have just been there. I know what to expect; I know what I'm after. ... When you ask me questions, I really have to pull myself back into it and remember why.

In several classes, I observed knowledge and practice work together in effective and appropriate ways. For example, Lisa and Rhonda appeared sensitive to the children's response to a playful demeanor or a dramatic play experience and engaged the children in pretend play—one of the children's developmental strengths. Lisa adapted a playful approach to a xylophone experience:

> Lisa: I think I'm going all the way around to the xylophone. When we were here last time, we talked together about that funny name "xylophone," and the word *xylo* that means [*She pauses to tap one of the bars.*] ...
>
> Jane: [*Calls out.*] Hard.
>
> Lisa: What are these things made out of?
>
> Several children: Wood.
>
> Lisa [*Nods.*]: Wood. They sure are. [*Lisa picks up one of the bars, holds it like a telephone receiver.*] I'll try to make a call. Is Luke home?
>
> Several children: Yeah!
>
> Lisa: Luke Thomas. Luke. Oh, Luke. I hear your voice. Luke, would you ask your mom if you can come over?
>
> Luke: [*Smiles.*] Okay.
>
> Lisa: Ask your mom if you can come over and play the big xylophone with me.
>
> Luke: [*Nods.*] Okay, I'll bring a drum.
>
> Lisa: [*Smiles.*] Wonderful! Come on over.

Lisa and Luke demonstrated the xylophone part. Then, Lisa rotated several children at the instruments, and I observed children tapping on various parts of the xylophones and playing their part. Perhaps the playfulness of the experience prompted musical engagement. As noted by sociocultural, preoperational, and play theorists referenced in the DAP guidelines, play and exploration are integral components of children's development. I observed that when the teachers in this study incorporated play and exploration, the children seemed comfortable, since the learning experience matched their developmental

strengths.

When teachers exhibited practices congruent with "teaching to enhance development and learning," the flow of instruction was seamless, children were engaged as active learners, and time "flew." In these moments, the children seemed surprised when music ended. For example, as the last few minutes of class approached Rhonda often said, "Oh, kindergartners, look at the clock. We only have a few minutes left," the children' facial expressions changed, and some groaned because music was over. In contrast, other children rarely seemed disappointed that music was over. I observed some children checking the time, whispering to a neighbor, or looking toward the door as if anticipating the classroom teacher's arrival. In several classes, a small number of children developed a game of scooting toward the door, in small increments, during the last 3–4 minutes of class. I also observed if the classroom teacher arrived early and stepped inside the classroom, several children would stand up and move toward the door without waiting for the lesson to finish or the music teacher's directions.

Dimension 3: Constructing Appropriate Curriculum

When DAP authors refer to "constructing" curriculum, they refer to the choices that teachers make, whether adapting an existing curricular model or creating one of their own. At each site, I observed teachers using either an existing district curriculum guide or a textbook approved by the district as a foundation for curricular content. I also observed each teacher integrating materials from outside sources, such as personal libraries, workshop materials, advanced coursework, and unknown sources, described by the teachers as "stealing from everywhere." When the teachers offered a rationale for curricular choices, they gave reasons such as, "I've used that for years," or "I thought that was fun," or "I've always liked that story" to explain choices of material, rather than referencing children's abilities. That is not to say that consideration of the children was not present; it simply was not voiced.

However, the choice of materials is only a part of constructing appropriate curriculum; goals and objectives matter as well. Here, the DAP authors caution against two potential pitfalls: either a "watered-down" or unchallenging curriculum or a "pushed-down" curriculum (Katz, 1988) in which expectations for the next grade are integrated into the current grade level. On some occasions, I observed both pitfalls in the kindergarten music classrooms. If the teachers chose an activity for generic reasons, rather than either considering the specific interests and abilities of children in their class, curricular goals and objectives, or both, the experience could result in either boredom or frustration as the children did not have the opportunity to make meaningful or intellectually stimulating choices (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). For example, in one class, Lisa selected a lengthy children's book about popcorn to introduce the song

"Popping Corn." Lisa read the book to the children, an activity that took 20 minutes, followed by the song and one instrument part. After the first few pages, several children appeared to lose interest until Lisa introduced the instrument part during the last 5 minutes of class. Likewise, when the teachers chose material beyond the capabilities of the children, frustration ensued as typified by responses like "This is too hard," or "I guess nobody does [understand]." The issue of teacher decision-making is integral to construction of appropriate curriculum, not only in terms of content but also in the teacher's ability to modify decisions in response to the children.

Rhonda was consistent in her flexibility with curricular decisions. For example, during a lesson from the district curriculum guide, she changed the specified instructional sequence that "just was not working" to match the children's emerging language skills. Furthermore, Rhonda also responded "in the moment" to opportunities to extend the children's problem-solving skills, as exemplified by a conversation I observed as the children learned a new singing game: "Valentine, Valentine won't you be my Valentine? Number 1, number 2, number 3—it must be you. Take my heart along with you." As the children sang, each was chosen on the cue "number 3" to join the outside circle. The game continued until Alice was chosen, and only Darryl and Cecelia were left in the middle. Darryl called out, "Now we have to stop." Rhonda started the song again, and when the class began to sing, "Number 1, number 2, number 3," Rhonda paused the game.

Rhonda: Stop just a moment, we have a problem to solve.

Alice: We just got two.

Rhonda: [To the class.] She [Alice] went. She touched him, she went, number one, number two, where's number three?

Girl: Number three.

Boy: There is no number three.

Rhonda: So what are we going to do?

Girl: There's a number two.

Rhonda: There's just two people. Number 1, number 2.

Darryl: We can pick you.

Rhonda: No, I'm not going to play. What are we going to do next?

Lenny: Touch Darryl again?

Rhonda: Oh Lenny, you are so good. Number 1, number 2, number 3. Good job. So Darryl is hooked on. What's going to happen now when it's Cecelia?

What are we going to do?

Several children: Touch her three times.

A few children: We say number 3.

Rhonda: We're going to touch her number 1, number 2, number 3. Here we go.

Rhonda chose to include children's ideas and requests for favorite activities, and she also responded to unplanned events—both exemplary curricular practices consistent with DAP.

Constructing appropriate curriculum from the perspective of DAP involves teachers making decisions based not only on appropriate materials but also on a holistic view of the individual needs and capabilities of the children. Equally important, DAP authors refer to fostering "dispositions to use and apply skills and to go on to further learning." DAP authors recognize that:

> Individual kindergarten classrooms will vary, and curriculum will vary according to the interests and backgrounds of the children. But all developmentally appropriate kindergarten classrooms will have one thing in common: the focus will be on the child as a whole. (NAEYC, 1996)

Throughout this study, I observed many incidents when the children made an instantaneous connection with the lesson and appeared ready to move forward—ready to create, ready to take ownership, ready to make their own music—only to have these signals unrecognized or ignored and opportunities missed to foster the children's desire for additional learning through active participation built on the children's interests. Instead, while the children showed a readiness to engage in an active way, the teachers tended to stay with their predetermined plan.

Dimension 4: Assessing Children's Development and Learning

DAP authors view assessment in holistic terms stating, "In developmentally appropriate programs, assessment and curriculum are integrated, with teachers continually engaging in observational assessment for the purpose of improving teaching and learning" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 21). Therefore, assessment includes observation of development, description of children's behavior, collections of work products, and opportunities to demonstrate performance, with the ultimate purpose of contributing to teacher planning for further learning experiences.

The teachers at all three sites engaged in informal assessment congruent with DAP as they collected observational impressions of the children's participation in classroom activities. Over time, their observations enabled them to recognize and acknowledge the progress of individuals. For example, Rhonda commented on the children's beat-keeping accomplishments, both to the children and

in postclass conversations. Similarly, Jenny was acutely aware of the breakthrough for Jack when, although he hesitated, he performed a solo for the first time using a correct singing voice. Jenny responded, "Jack … you sang absolutely perfectly …"

In this study, teachers rarely created records or written documentation of children's musical skill development. However, one aspect of appropriate assessment that I observed involved evaluation of children during authentic activities rather than contrived incidents outside a meaningful musical context. When Jenny and Rhonda conducted formal assessments of singing voice with the children, they reflected appropriate practice in their selection of a familiar singing game that incorporated solo singing in a meaningful context. In contrast, Jenny also demonstrated inappropriate practice in her assessment of the children's rhythm-reading ability during a lesson in which she introduced new information, and then assessed their reading ability; an experience for which the children lacked prior experience and clearly struggled.

Then again, teachers' acknowledgment of musical growth was often sparse compared with their recognition of behavior and general participation, which was often the focus of specific feedback to children and classroom teachers. Furthermore, even though the teachers engaged in informal and formal assessment, their means of recording and reporting the children's musical accomplishments to parents and other adults was not systematic over time and seemed to be a low priority. On rare occasions, I observed teachers marking a seating chart or class list during a musical activity, but I did not observe evidence of communication to classroom teachers or parents, and teachers did not talk about assessment during interviews.

Dimension 5: Establishing Reciprocal Relationships with Families

Appropriate practice is predicated on an awareness that children develop within a context. Hence, building reciprocal relationships with families and seeking an understanding of the child's broader culture is facilitated when teachers "acknowledge parents' choices and goals for children and respond with sensitivity and respect" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 22). It seemed that, in the case of holiday music, the teachers were aware of the children's cultural contexts. In an interview, Jenny stated:

> I push the envelope, but ever so slightly. Every now and then I might pull [use] some sort of a Christmas carol that refers to the birth of Christ or whatever, but we have to be really careful, because we have several kids who either celebrate Kwanzaa or don't celebrate at all. We have Jewish kids and other kids who don't celebrate holidays or birthdays at all, so it's important to know who those kids are before you even start. However, I have found that lessons can be adjusted in lots of different ways so that it doesn't have to even be an issue.

In this study, I also found that when teachers communicated a respect for the children's families, the children responded with an

openness that seemed to influence their level of engagement in musical experiences in positive ways. For the most part, the children enjoyed sharing about a family trip or event and on occasion made a connection to music in their homes.

A crucial aspect of building relationships with families is establishing communication. While the DAP authors present a picture of teachers and parents exchanging personal knowledge and input, the teaching load of over 600 students for each of the participant teachers presented obvious challenges to that model. For example, for most of the school year, once a week the children went home with a stamp on one hand from Rhonda for their participation in music. But, the missing link is what the parents understood from a stamp on the hand, if indeed the child shared the stamp with a parent or caregiver at all.

The end-of-the-year concerts may have provided a time for Rhonda and Lisa to communicate with parents. I observed a kindergarten concert presentation during a school assembly and noted several parents in attendance. At the conclusion of the assembly, while the classroom teachers attended to the children, I watched to see if any parents initiated conversations with Lisa or if Lisa approached any parents, and I did not observe any such interactions. Instead, the parents visited with each other while Lisa interacted with the kindergarten teachers, other grade-level teachers, and the school principal. I did not observe their evening concerts, and neither teacher commented on talking with parents the night of the concert as we reflected on their concert experiences.

DISCUSSION

The authors of DAP assume that DAP guidelines are appropriate regardless of context. However, the purpose of this report was to investigate a central question of this study, "What insights might be gained through an examination of the kindergarten general music classroom when viewed from the perspective of DAP?" For this report, I asked two specific research questions. First, "In what ways are the interactions, activities, and instruction that occur in kindergarten general music classrooms congruent or not congruent with Developmentally Appropriate Practice?"

Findings concerning the five global dimensions of DAP indicated a mixture of practices. Teachers exhibited practices congruent with DAP when they engaged as co-learners, recognized individuals, exuded a playful demeanor, included children's requests, adjusted to individual needs, assessed children's musical expressions in authentic contexts, and communicated a respect for children's families. Teachers exhibited practices incongruent with DAP when they showed favoritism, did not respond to children's developmental needs, presented simplified material or experiences beyond the children's abilities, lacked flexibility, introduced assessment without preparation, or failed to communicate with teachers and parents.

Based on the children's responses to both appropriate and inappropriate practices, it seems that incorporation of practices consistent with the DAP guidelines merits further discussion.

However, the portrait of a flexible and responsive teacher—one who uses appropriate practices—is predicated on the assumption that the teacher has a fundamental understanding of developmental appropriateness. After a year of observation, I wondered how the three teachers in this study would define DAP. At the end of the year, I conducted closure interviews with each teacher with two primary purposes: to gather their reflections on the year and to explore their understanding of DAP. In each case, I asked a question similar to, "I've been hearing and reading about a term, 'developmentally appropriate practice,' so I thought I'd ask you what you think that means, or what comes to your mind when you hear that." The teachers responded with their understanding and interpretation of DAP.

Jenny framed the same question of "developmentally appropriate practice" within the context of curriculum and personal accomplishment.

> Jenny: [*Long pause*] Hmmm, that's kind of a tough call for me, because as I look at my curriculum I really push my kids towards the next level right off the bat. And generally what my kids know is about a year ahead of what a lot of my (pause) what the other music teachers do. Because I'm one of those people that feels if you don't push them, they're just gonna stay where you have them. And I really want these kids to have the feeling of success, and yet I want them to be pushed ...

> Martina: So when you say "push," are you saying that when you hear "developmentally appropriate," that there's an image that's different from that in some way?

> Jenny: I don't know that it's different. I just think that I'm not going to let the kids get stagnant. If they are developmentally able to move on as a class, I am certainly going to encourage that, and, in fact, I try to foster that. I really try to push for that, as opposed to holding them back and say, "Okay, I've done everything that kindergarten is supposed to cover, so now I'm done and I can just coast the rest of the year." ... So I kind of have a gray area with the developmental appropriateness issue.

Jenny extended her comments to other elementary grade levels, methodological choices, and her perspectives on some of the kindergarten children. She concluded:

> that has definitely been a term I heard more when I was doing the therapy side of things because we'd be looking at age-appropriate as opposed to developmentally appropriate. ... So, to my way of speaking, if anybody has half a logical brain, and eyes to see what kids can do, developmental appropriateness just is not an issue.

Jenny defined the term "developmentally appropriate" differently than did the DAP authors, possibly drawing from her therapy background gleaned during music therapy training. For Jenny, the drive to accomplish and succeed, as she defined success, resulted in per-

sonal satisfaction that "her kids" were beyond the others in the district. Her desire to "push" the children toward expectations for the next grade level dominated classroom events and interactions—representing an antonym of DAP in many interactions, events, and activities.

Lisa articulated a very different perspective, one focused on the children's age and developmental stage:

> What comes to mind is looking at kindergartners as five-year-olds rather than as kindergartners. I guess the difference is they're not just, bang, five-year-olds at the beginning of school. ... I used to look at them and think, "They're ready for school, they're here to do all the things we think about school. They're ready to walk in a straight line, and they're ready to raise their hands and be quiet, and all those things." And developmentally appropriate means looking at those stages. ... And what do five-year-olds do? What are they anxious about? What body controls do they have, and what understandings do they have? And then we need to make where we want them to go in the school curriculum somehow fit that. I don't think I always do it right, but that's what I think developmentally appropriate is.

Lisa's response indicates a child-centered perspective and sensitivity, while reflecting a position that age-level expectations do not depend on physical age, but a continuum of development.

Rhonda also took a child-centered perspective and expressed a developmental view of children as individuals:

> A lot of times we think that because a kid is a certain age, they should be able to do whatever those characteristics are for that age. And what we forget is that, just because you are six years old, or just because you are five years old, doesn't mean socially or emotionally or even physically that you're ready to do those things. ... Maybe you haven't had the experiences, or maybe your brain hasn't grown enough to accomplish that task. ... So that's what we call developmentally appropriate ... I think that at Lincoln we try really hard to do developmentally appropriate things.

When I asked for examples of "developmentally appropriate things," Rhonda listed many of the activities I had observed throughout the year in which the children were actively engaged in music making, connected to her and each other in positive ways, and responsive to her teaching.

I examined the teachers' responses through the lens of the definition of DAP used throughout this study: a framework to support teacher decision-making based on the teacher's awareness of child development, children as individuals, and family and societal contexts. More specifically, I analyzed the data through the categories of the five global dimensions of DAP. Given previous research, it was not surprising to find that these music teachers, who taught multiple classes and grade levels, reflected a mixture of practices both congruent and incongruent with DAP. Several other researchers have also found that teachers within a single classroom setting exhibit a mixture of appropriate and inappropriate practices (Christian & Bell, 1991; Fei, 1995; Lambert, 1991; Tedder, 1999; Zepeda, 1993). Wilson (1991) comments:

> Teachers may in fact hold attitudes and beliefs that are counterproductive to the implementation of developmentally appropriate practice in the classroom. ... It is further suggested that teachers may think they are offering a developmentally appropriate program due to the presence and use of appropriate equipment and materials when the materials and equipment are not offered in a developmentally appropriate way at all. (pp. 75–76)

In this study, Jenny's description and practice were the furthest removed from DAP, although by her own definition her actions reflected appropriateness, a finding consistent with other researchers who identified a discrepancy between teachers' beliefs and actual practices (Davies, 1997; Fei, 1995; Wilson, 1991). Rhonda and Lisa both responded with comments about children's development. For all three teachers their practices reflected the differences they articulated. Jenny often referred to the children as a class. In spite of her use of names and her consistent practice of calling on individuals, she saw the children as a group. Jenny called on the children, but I did not observe her respond to individual ideas, suggestions, or input from the children. In contrast, in her descriptions of DAP, Rhonda framed references to "a child" in the singular, indicating an awareness of individuals certainly demonstrated in her classroom practice. Clearly, the rationale behind all three teachers' descriptions of DAP related to their classroom practice and had a clear impact on the quality of musical experiences for the children.

As to the global dimensions of DAP, the importance of classroom community emerged as a prominent theme throughout this study. Consistent with Moberly's (1996) identification of community as a component of appropriate practice, Butcher (1996) also identified rituals and routines as crucial components building a foundation for community. In this study, the teachers in all three sites developed rituals and routines that facilitated the children's adaptation to school. However, I also observed that when teachers demonstrated lack of response to a distressed child, a lack of respect, favoritism, or lack of recognition, community suffered. In these moments the children did not smile or laugh, reach for a hug, or initiate musical ideas or requests. Instead, the children withdrew, were quiet and subdued, or behaved in ways that teachers treated as inappropriate. Stone (2001) noted the power of an appropriate classroom climate. In describing her visit to a preschool classroom, she commented, "What captures my attention is the dynamic, comfortable atmosphere" (p. 6). Classroom climate involves the socio-psychological nature of classroom life including cooperation, shared interests and goals, focus and clarity in organization and planning, pace of instruction, and match of task difficulty with student ability (Haertel, Walberg, & Haertel, 1981). I recorded numerous examples of an appropriate climate within the music classrooms. When a positive learning environment was evident teachers and children functioned as co-learners, lesson sequences were focused and well-paced, and the children responded as engaged learners.

Moberly (1996) investigated the practices of language arts teachers. Among Moberly's findings, teachers who develop a sense of community and balance choice of activities with district curriculum requirements reflect patterns congruent with appropriate practice. Brostrom (1992) also recommends that kindergarten activities reflect a balance between teacher- and child-controlled options. Rhonda typified a teacher who consciously "[balanced] choice of activities and district curriculum requirements." She honored the children's repeated requests for favorite activities, referenced and implemented the district curriculum, and adjusted lesson sequences that did not match the children's abilities. In contrast, the children in Jenny's classroom seemed to develop few "favorite" activities. Lisa meandered through the curriculum, and without consistency or repetition on her part, the children may not have had an opportunity to develop preferences. Jenny determined curricular content, even when that lay beyond district recommendations for kindergarten children, and she did not adjust her plans even when the children seemed lost or made suggestions.

Implications of DAP for Music Educators

At the beginning of this report, I asked, "What insights might be gained through an examination of the kindergarten general music classroom when viewed from the perspective of DAP?" I believe that findings from this study support the effectiveness of DAP guidelines in establishing a classroom environment conducive to learning, encouraging appropriate relationships between teachers and kindergarten children with particular attention to the needs of individuals, and facilitating communication that promotes active and responsive learning experiences. I also asked, "What are the implications for children when congruent or incongruent interactions, activities, and instruction are present?" Ultimately, it seemed that the more consistently teachers implemented practices congruent with DAP guidelines, the more consistently children attuned to the interactions, activities, and instructional content.

According to the findings in this study, practices congruent with DAP guidelines foster children's engagement as members of a caring musical community. Teaching to enhance development and learning occurs as music teachers make informed choices that reflect an understanding and sensitivity to the children's needs. A music curriculum consistent with DAP guidelines should consist of appropriate content but should not be approached in a rigid and inflexible way. Rather, teachers who seek to construct appropriate musical experiences for kindergarten children need to plan for content and allow opportunities for the children to create and experiment either through extensions to existing lessons or through dedicated time for small groups and individuals to manipulate, explore, and create music.

Equally important, if assessment from a DAP perspective serves as

a catalyst for planning and improvement of instruction, then music teachers who seek to apply developmentally appropriate assessment practices will look not only to the children's musical performance but also to their own teaching strategies. After additional analysis of the relationship of assessment to teaching practice, I wondered what the result might have been had the teachers incorporated opportunities for small group and individual work in which children could demonstrate their musical understanding in varied contexts and thus contribute to a holistic perspective of individual growth and accomplishments. Furthermore, in this study, teachers' focus on behavior and participation overshadowed feedback on musical growth and accomplishment. Social skills comprise one aspect of children's development, and feedback regarding appropriate behavior provides necessary guidance. However, in the context of the general music classroom, assessment practices consistent with DAP will focus on the children's musical development rather than behavior.

The music teachers in this study managed multiple responsibilities, and their limited time likely hindered their opportunities to communicate information to families in person or in written form. Unfortunately, the data are limited with respect to families, pointing to the need for further attention to the possible benefits for children of communication between music teachers and parents.

Given the crucial role of the teacher as decision maker in the music classroom, what implications from this study pertain to the preparation of future teachers? Analysis and reflection of the data indicate two primary areas of attention. First, the course content of existing music teacher preparation programs needs attention. If one accepts the premise that early childhood encompasses children through second grade, then nearly half of a K–6 general music teaching load consists of young children for which teachers lack substantive early childhood preparation. A course in child development may be required, but the greater question is in what ways, if any, preservice teachers are in a position to transfer knowledge to practice.

Mentorship is a second area of need, both for preservice teachers and novice teachers. Rhonda not only articulated the words of her district mentor, she put them into practice. Clearly, a mentor sensitive to the needs of young children made a difference in Rhonda's practice. Therefore, an implication of this study is the need for preservice teachers to have guided experience with young children so that delivery skills as well as knowledge can be developed concurrently. Finally, what of the veteran teacher? Perhaps veteran teachers run the risk of allowing apparent continued success to foster complacency and loss of a "critical eye." As I reflected on this phenomenon, it occurred to me that new information and changes in thinking regarding DAP have emerged during the period of time that the teachers in this study have been active professionals, and I pondered how new information might be disseminated to them and their peers. Questions about how to help experienced music teachers gain current perspectives on appropriateness and prompt their contin-

ued reflection on practice remain matters worthy of future consideration.

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