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Running Head: FACILITATED GROUP DRUMMING AND COMMUNITAS

**Drumming Toward Communitas:
A case study of facilitated recreational music making and
the Arthurian method**

By

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A thesis submitted for completion of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Applied Health Sciences
(Leisure Studies)

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Acknowledgements

What a journey this has been. From academics to personal relationship, travels and music, the last two years spent in the comfortable nest that is the department of Leisure studies have been the most challenging, eye-opening, life-discovering years thus far. Through all of these lessons and experiences, uphill climbs and downhill coasts, the one impression that has forever been ingrained in my mind and heart is the inspiring nature and infinite potential of the human spirit. I have taken away with me a new and deeper understanding of what matters most in life: relationship with self, others, and the Earth, and all for their own sweet sake. Looking back on this process there is not one thing I would change. I have learned that every challenge if endured will help you move closer to the person you want to be, that every frustration is an opportunity to become a better and closer friend, that 'letting go' is the essence of love and freedom, and that every perceived limitation is only that; a perception.

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Abstract

The phenomenon of communitas has been described as a moment ‘in and out of time’ in which a collective of individuals may be experienced by one as equal and individuated in an environment stripped of structural attributes (Turner, 1969). In these moments, emotional bonds form and an experience of perceived ‘oneness’ and synergy may be described. As a result of the perceived value of these experiences, it has been suggested by Sharpe (2005) that more clearly understanding how this phenomenon may be purposefully facilitated would be beneficial for leisure service providers.

Consequently, the purpose of this research endeavor was to examine the ways in which a particular leisure service provider systematically employs specific methods and sets specific parameters with the intention of guiding participants toward experiences associated with communitas or “shared spirit” as described by the organization. A qualitative case study taking a phenomenological approach was employed in order to capture the depth and complexity of both the phenomenon and the purposeful negotiation of experiences in guiding participants toward this phenomenon. The means through which these experiences were intentionally facilitated was recreational music making in a group drumming context. As such, an organization which employs specific methods of rhythm circle facilitation as well as trains other facilitators all over the world was chosen purposely for their recognition as the most respectable and credible in this field. The specific facilitator was chosen based on high recommendation by the organization due to her level of experience and expertise. Two rhythm circles were held, and participants were chosen randomly by the facilitator. Data was collected through observation in the first circle and participant- observation in the second, as well as through focus groups

with circle participants. Interviews with the facilitator were held both initially to gain broad understanding of concepts and phenomenon as well as after each circle to reflect on each circle specifically. Data was read repeatedly to draw out patterns which emerged and were coded and organized accordingly. It was found that this specific process or system of implementation lead to experiences associated with communitas by participants. In order to more clearly understand this process and the ways in which experiences associated with communitas manifest as a result of deliberate facilitator actions, these objective facilitator actions were plotted along a continuum relating to subjective participant experiences. These findings were then linked to the literature with regards to specific characteristics of communitas. In so doing, the intentional manifestation of these experiences may be more clearly understood for future facilitators in many contexts. Beyond this, findings summarized important considerations with regards to specific technical and communication competencies which were found to be essential to fostering these experiences for participants within each group. Findings surrounding the maintenance of a fluid negotiation of certain transition points within a group rhythm event overall were also highlighted, and this fluidity was found to be essential to the experience of absorption and engagement in the activity and experience. Emergent themes of structure, control, and consciousness have been presented as they manifested and were found to affect experiences within this study. Discussions surrounding the ethics and authenticity of these particular methods and their implementation has also been generated throughout. In conclusion, there was a breadth as well as depth of knowledge found in unpacking this complex process of guiding individuals toward experiences associated with communitas. The implications of these

findings contribute in broadening the current theoretical as well as practical understanding as to how certain intentional parameters may be set and methods employed which may lead to experiences of *communitas*, and as well contribute a greater knowledge to conceptualizing the manifestation of these experiences when broken down.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR STUDY

It has been suggested that facilitated group drumming may connect individuals to their authentic 'selves' while simultaneously connecting to the 'selves' of others in a positive, synergistic experience (Hull, 1998). These experiences occur by bringing attention to and creating a space for expressing what is within, as well as connecting individuals at a group level through musical creation (Camilleri, 2002; Hull, 1998). These communal experiences of synergy appear to be associated with 'in-the-moment' feelings of 'shared oneness' called *communitas* which have been described by Anthropologist Victor Turner.

Communitas has been defined as "a spontaneously generated relationship between leveled and equal total and individuated human beings, stripped of structural attributes" (Turner, 1974, p.202). In communitas people fully engage and surrender, express themselves creatively, and connect to their inner selves, while simultaneously forming unspoken feelings of group cohesion and bonding (Haworth, 1997; Turner, 1969). It is in these moments that, as Turner suggested, individuals are temporarily reminded that the external structures and roles which we create and fill on a daily basis do not make up all that we are as individuals and society (Turner, 1969). Communitas has been said to occur in expressive environments in which people let go, play, and connect to self and others who are also spontaneously shedding their everyday roles and structures (Turner, 1982).

Experiences of communitas have many desirable attributes, and feelings of bonding and connection linked with communitas promote a sense of well-being (Eckersley, 2005; Kleiber, 1999). Certain leisure activities and spaces have been said to

promote personal and communal growth and well-being through flow experience and group synergy, and thus lead to higher levels of happiness and connectedness (Haworth, 1997; Csikszentmihalyi, 1991; Kleiber). Similar to Csikszentmihalyi's flow theory which has been described as an optimal individual experience, communitas seems to represent an optimal group experience. With regard to psychological and social significance of communitas, breaking down barriers between individuals of all demographics and enhancing the quality of life for individuals are both areas of interest to leisure academics and practitioners. As Sharpe (2005) suggested in a study on communitas and wilderness adventure, because the experience of communitas is associated with such intensely positive feelings, leisure providers are motivated to generate this feeling whenever possible. It is clear to see then why understanding these experiences and how they manifest would be beneficial to the literature.

Victor Turner was the anthropologist who first studied the phenomenon of communitas in non-modern tribes of Africa. He could predict when these experiences of communitas might arise, but felt that there were many factors which contributed to the overall experience and that these various factors were dependent upon many circumstances. Thus the experience of communitas, with its spontaneous and elusive nature, would be a very difficult phenomenon to facilitate. Turner felt that by interfering even slightly, the feeling would dissipate, and that the essence of communitas was very fleeting. It seems however, that through practice, trial, and error, some leisure providers have begun to gain a sense and understanding as to how communitas can be facilitated through the individual methods they employ (Sharpe, 2005). Through the administration of specific communication, process, and technical skills in the pursuit of group synergy,

Arthur Hull, founder of Village Music Circles, seems to be one such provider. Through the facilitation method of group rhythm events which Hull has honed over his thirty year career, it appears that he has standardized a method that fits with the mission of his organization; to create experiences of community and ‘spirit sharing’ through group music making (Hull, 1998).

Currently, much of the focus within the facilitation literature is upon the ability of a facilitator to guide a group to the actualization of a specific lesson or successful task completion. The literature seems to lack however, knowledge on specific systems of delivery through which to do so. As well, much of literature seems to be focused around “accomplishing” as opposed to the facilitation of positive group social interactions for the sheer sake of enjoyment. In other words, practitioners focus on participation in an activity, while the literature focuses on the experiences involved, or the subjective evaluation of participation. Within the leisure literature, many researchers have studied and theorized about the many positive experiences involved in engagement in leisure. Knowledge of play, flow, group cohesion, perceived freedom, intrinsic motivation, etc. all suggest that leisure does provide participants with desirable experiences by way of these specific mechanisms. There is an understanding that leisure experiences can have many positive effects, but most practitioners simply ‘hope’ that these positive experiences will manifest as a result of introducing an activity and working toward an end goal. There is limited literature on the ways in which leisure practitioners may increase the chances of the manifestation of positive and enjoyable group experience. In understanding how enjoyment is facilitated, we may also understand more clearly how these positive experiences occur spontaneously as well.

This study was conducted in an effort to more clearly understand the ability of a facilitator, using specific methods, to guide participants to the experiences of self expression and group synergy that have been associated with communitas. The research question in this study then is “In what ways does the implementation of the Arthurian method aid in guiding participants to experiences associated with communitas?” An understanding of the methods employed by this recreation experience provider may lead facilitators within other contexts to a clearer understanding of the intricacies involved in fostering these optimal group experiences.

By understanding the ways in which this specific leisure service provider works to create very specific experiences of individual expression and group synergy associated with communitas, other leisure practitioners may gain insights with regard to facilitating similar experiences through specific methods. Findings may also introduce the concept of facilitated recreational music making and specifically the Arthurian method to the literature, and begin new conversation around this useful tool for the facilitation of expression and connection applicable in many contexts across a broad spectrum. The review of literature in Chapter Two will inform this study and will help frame this study in the minds of readers as they continue into the next chapters and Chapter Three will provide an in depth description of the methodology of this study. Chapter Four and Five will present findings with regard to descriptions of experiences and practical implications addressing the research question, and Chapter Six will end with a summary of contributions to the literature made by this study, as well as suggestions for future research and conclusions. The research question for this study again was “In what ways

does the implementation of the Arthurian method aid in guiding participants to experiences associated with communitas?"

Definition of Terms

Facilitation. "a way of providing leadership without taking the reigns" (Bens, 2000, p.7).

To make easier or more likely a specific process or outcome (Harvey et al., 2002).

Flow. An optimal state of being for an individual in which action follows action according to an internal logic, which seems to need no conscious intervention (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991).

Communitas. "A spontaneously generated *relationship* between leveled and equal total and individuated human beings, stripped of structural attributes" (Turner, 1974, p.202). These moments resemble Csikszentmihalyi's 'flow' concept, but are experienced by the individual as well as 'in the air' (Turner, 1974).

Liminal. The anti-structural *sphere or space* in which humans encountered each other "betwixt and between" structured existence (Turner, 1982).

Liminoid. The liminal-leisure phenomenon. These experiences, apparent in places such as bars, pubs, cafes, and social clubs within postindustrial societies, resemble the obligatory rituals of nonmodern tribes, but represent freedom from irksome obligation and freedom to voluntarily engage in an activity for its own in Modern cultures (Turner, 1969).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter a review of literature will be presented addressing the bodies of knowledge which will inform this study. These will include literature on flow theory as it was found to relate to the communitas literature, an extensive discussion on the anthropological phenomenon ‘communitas’, followed by a brief presentation of communitas as it has been studied in modern contexts. By being informed in these areas, the reader will understand the ways in which individuals experience connections firstly to the self, as well as group synergy or ‘oneness’. A discussion as to how the two phenomena relate within the context of this study will follow. From here, this chapter will summarize literature on facilitation, the role of a facilitator, and specifically the facilitation of communitas as it has been addressed within the literature.

Flow

It has been said that in the optimal moments of leisure, the mechanism through which connection to the self occurs is through flow experience or the feeling of complete absorption or surrender (Haworth, 1997; Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). Flow is one mechanism through which individuals connect to their authentic selves during a leisure activity (Csikszentmihalyi; Kleiber, 1999). Flow experiences have been recognized as vital with regard to quality of life; in particular with regards to full engagement, reconnecting to the ‘self’ and authentic happiness (Csikszentmihalyi; Seligman, 2002). Flow can be experienced during most artistic and expressive means, depending on the specific person and his or her interests, abilities, and the level of challenge the activity presents the individual (Csikszentmihalyi; Kleiber; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003;

Voelkl, Ellis, & Walker, 2003). The person experiencing flow can go to a place that is beyond the control of the mind, or at least where the control of the conscious mind is simply not necessary and the participant is 'at one' with the activity. It is the act of total involvement, and "a state in which action follows action according to an internal logic which seems to need no conscious intervention on our part...we experience it as a unified flowing from one moment to the next, in which we feel in control of our actions, and in which there is little distinction between self and environment; between stimulus and response; or between past, present, and future" (Turner, 1982, p. 56). These enjoyable activities, during which flow occurs, bring about intense absorption that leads predictably to the misperception of the passage of time and a lack of attention to one's surroundings (Kleiber). In sum, the characteristics of flow involve intense concentration, the merging of action and awareness, the loss of self-consciousness, and the transformation of time (Voelkl et al.).

Current leisure research, especially within the therapeutic recreation literature, has begun to establish links between flow and leisure with regard to certain personal benefits that this mechanism may provide individuals (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991; Carruthers & Hood, 2004). Reconnecting a person to the 'self' is one way that flow has been proven to increase personal well-being (Csikszentmihalyi), and a state of flow is often reached through leisure and artistic pursuits. While Csikszentmihalyi's flow experience seems to be the merging of action and awareness during a state where an individual is 'at one' with the self and the activity at hand, Turner's work on the phenomenon 'communitas', has been described as a feeling of 'oneness' with others

involved in a group experience (Turner, 1969). This phenomenon will be discussed in depth below.

Communitas

When people are engaged in a group experience in which they feel a strong sense of togetherness and unity, it can be a moment in time that seems to transcend their normal everyday structure and value systems. This experience can often feel “magical”, and may provide a sense of community and shared meaning for those involved. In the late 1960’s, anthropologist Victor Turner first described this moment or experience as an “essential we”. By this he meant that moment when people come together in an atmosphere of community and oneness, and the rest of the world, both time and space, seem to disappear. There are no cluttering thoughts or outside interferences; the group is just “in it”, and nothing else seems to exist. Turner coined the term *communitas* to represent this phenomenon (1969, p. 136). By definition, *communitas* is “a spontaneously generated relationship between leveled and equal total and individuated human beings, stripped of structural attributes” (Turner, 1974, p.202). This theory can be best understood by looking at its origins in Turner’s early work within the field of culture, and more specifically ritual.

In the early 1960’s, Turner’s research led him to conduct studies based on the ritual processes of nonmodern cultures. Specifically, he studied village life; the cycles, rites of passage, and dramas of the Ndembu tribe of Zambia, Africa (Turner, 1969). With a keen interest in human social life, he came to witness both the structural and anti-structural modes of the tribe, and after much time spent immersed in ethnographic study, he found himself convinced of the universal human applications to his findings (Turner,

1974). It is within a discussion of the terms structure and anti-structure that the true nature of Turner's *communitas* may be more clearly understood.

Anti-structure, as Turner (1974) defined it, is “the dissolution of normative social structure, with its role sets, statuses, jural rights and duties, etc...” (p.28). Within society, we have certain structural systems that define and shape society in an effort to organize and control. While structure is necessary in order for the systems in place to function in an organized fashion, one can not forget about the basic human attributes that are shared amongst our species; the attributes which are many times forgotten within a highly structured environment in which people play assigned roles. The realm of anti-structure provides those spaces within organized society where people break down barriers, let go of imposed social structures, and just “be” (Turner, 1982). Victor Turner studied these spaces of anti-structure, and was specifically interested in the village setting (or any community setting) in which people who lived and functioned together in a structured system, could also experience these moments of complete lack of structure and total leveling of roles. It was a place where everyone was just as they were as humans without the roles they had been assigned or had assigned themselves in life.

Turner further clarified that “*communitas* does not merge identities, it liberates them [people] from conformity to general norms” (1974, p. 277). In this sense he meant that in these moments, people may come together not through structured organization, but through a level of commonness found only when individual differentiation is embraced, and structure is diminished; the common humanity shared. Furthermore Turner felt that these anti-structural spaces provided an excellent forum for challenging old norms and

social functions that were perhaps outdated, and that new ideas and creativity could be born of these experiences.

This brings forth a discussion on the offspring of *communitas*; the outcomes and contributions this phenomenon has for the people and society in which it exists and is experienced. Turner (1969) believed that in modern cultures, *communitas* brought people together and provided a space where concerns and alternatives to current societal existence could be safely, collectively, and openly regarded. As people let go of their everyday structural roles, become comfortable in their new communal status, and move closer to the essence of their own humanity, a collective openness may be experienced. This openness, as Turner (1969) suggested, may provide an ideal space for evaluating specific aspects or the entirety of everyday structural life. As well, Hearn (1980) felt that *communitas* served as a way for the collective to come together in order to minimize stress, anxiety and uncertainty in certain situations where that which was accepted by the vast majority had begun to make less sense, and as a result, was widely challenged.

One criticism to these propositions of social leveling, is in questioning this “universal application” of findings of *communitas* across gender, culture, race, class, etc. Turner studied these moments in an exclusive African tribe, where all were assumingly of the same ethnicity and in which all would be well-known by each other. It stands to reason that in a more diverse population of individuals and relations, these moments of communal oneness might be less likely, difficult, if not impossible to occur. Turner has faced some critique within his work specifically from the feminist perspective. Juschka (2003) debated Turner’s claim that the act of pilgrimage provided a space which was composed of anti-structural elements as it occurred outside of structural society, and were

a rite of passage for those involved, resulting in *communitas*. Her criticism was of the brutal treatment of women in one particular pilgrimage, and suggested that despite these potentially conducive parameters for experiences of spontaneous communal oneness, preconceived social stigmas led instead to abuse and brutality. In this regard, gender discrimination served as a barrier to *communitas*. The universality of Turner's findings might also be questioned in other diverse populations in which there is outside strain on the inner potentials of *communitas* experiences among individuals. Future studies should address whether one can ever truly step outside of their roles and stereotypes in moments of anti-structure and stand in basic relation to other humans, or if these roles and stereotypes still serve as a hindrance to some degree. Regardless, these moments of anti-structure have been termed "liminal" experiences by Turner (1969), and will be described below.

Liminality and Communitas. While *communitas* is the word used to describe the *relations* experienced between individuals in these lucid moments, Turner used the word *liminal* when describing this *anti-structural sphere or space* in which humans encountered each other "betwixt and between" structured existence. *Liminal*, which is a Latin word, translates into English as "threshold", and is the actual "moment in and out of time" within the phenomenon of *communitas* (Turner, 1982, p. 96).

As Turner (1982) described, "in liminality, profane social relations may be discontinued, former rights and obligations are suspended, the social order may seem to have been turned upside down...in liminality people 'play' with the elements of the familiar and defamiliarize them "(p.27). This liminal moment may only be a flicker in the overall communal experience however, as these transitions are kept in check by

structured societies and tribes, and are very fleeting due to their reliance on multiple variables which must be in synch for the phenomenon to occur (Turner, 1982). In other words, liminality is a transient condition that is difficult to maintain. Turner also suggested that communitas is both cognitive and emotional in that we “know” the experience of communitas as a mutual unspoken understanding and recognition of each other’s mutual existence, but also “feel” this to be true. Sharpe (2002) described that “communitas is characterized by intense feelings of egalitarianism, bonding, and unity as humanity” (p.16). In moving back into a discussion on Turner’s work as it applies more directly to this study, below I have outlined the various types of communitas experience as labeled and described within his research.

Types of Communitas. There are three forms of communitas which Turner (1982) identified within his research; Spontaneous, Ideological, and Normative. Spontaneous communitas was described by Turner (1982) as, “a direct, immediate, and total confrontation of human identities...a deep rather than intense style of personal interaction” (p. 47). Turner describes this phenomenon as the moment when compatible people experience a “flash of lucid mutual understanding on the existential level, when they feel that all problems, not just their problems, could be resolved whether emotional or cognitive, if only the group which is felt (in the first person) as ‘essentially us’ could sustain its intersubjective illumination” (1982, p. 47). People experiencing this liminal mode of being are totally absorbed into a “single synchronized, fluid event” (p. 48) resembling a type of group flow.

Ideological communitas is simply a set of theoretical concepts, which experiencers of communitas utilize in an attempt to describe the phenomenon of spontaneous communitas. It is outside of the actual experience itself, and is the retrospective look, memory, or account by the individual involved in the communal experience. Since communitas is so difficult to maintain in any sense of longevity, ideological communitas is where the experiencer seeks language and culture to reiterate that experience; the merging of action and awareness (Turner, 1982, p. 48). Certainly one of the greatest challenges faced when studying the phenomenon of communitas is its abstract nature. It is a feeling which can only truly be understood once experienced, making it considerably hard to describe verbally. It is within ideological communitas that one attempts to describe this experience given the limitations of verbal language as the forum for expression, and will be most represented in this particular study.

Finally, normative communitas is defined by Turner (1982) as, “a social system, a subculture or group which attempts to foster and maintain relationships of spontaneous communitas on a more or less permanent basis” (p. 48). As an example, this phenomenon had a dominant presence within the counter-culture of the 1960’s. “Hippies” traveled in caravans and set up intentional living spaces called communes, as they attempted to remain in this lucid, essential “We” in a non-structured, “free” environment (Turner, 1969). In their state of communitas, they sought to bring peace, love, and harmony into their own lives and hoped that their message would be adopted by the world. The next terms which require explanation represent and explain the differences in the existence of communitas in both modern and non-modern societies.

Liminal and Liminoid. Liminal experiences as Turner (1982) described them in his research on nonmodern tribes, present themselves in all aspects of anti-structural tribal life, generally in the form of rituals and rites of passage. These rituals were a part of the on-going social processes of the tribe, and were thus obligatory, serious in nature, and in some case even dreaded. Turner noted the differences between modern and nonmodern life. Work as it is experienced in modern cultures, is something people do out of necessity, and is part of a very structured domain of status, hierarchy, and power differentiation.

Within modern cultures, Turner noticed that these liminal experiences occurred predominantly within the sphere of leisure which is associated with freedom of choice for personal pleasure and enjoyment (Sharpe, 2005). He began studying leisure in terms of its anti-structural or liminal elements, and defined this space as “a betwixt and between, a neither-this-nor-that domain between two spells of work or between occupational and familial civic activity” (1982, p.40); in other words, spaces where people experienced relative freedom to choose activities for non-obligatory reasons.

The term “liminal leisure” arose from these specific interests, and Turner coined a new term- “liminoid”- to describe this liminal leisure phenomenon. These experiences, apparent in places such as bars, pubs, cafes, and social clubs within postindustrial societies, resemble the obligatory rituals of nonmodern tribes, but of course provide entirely different meanings for its participants (Sharpe, 2002). Isaiah Berlin (1979) described these leisure spaces as the freedom from institutional obligations; freedom from the forced monotonous rhythms of factory and office; freedom to enjoy natural rhythms again; freedom to enter new worlds of entertainment; and freedom to transcend

social structural limitations; and the freedom to play with new ideas and social relationships.

Turner (1982) described this phenomenon of the liminoid taking place in neutral spaces or privileged areas, set aside from the “mainstream of production or political events”, and within our structured society he outlined the liminoid as existing within spaces of the leisure genre such as art, sport, pastimes, games, etc...(p.55). Turner (1982) clarified that, “leisure, then, presupposes work: it is a non-work, even an anti-work phase in the life of a person who also works” (p. 36), and is a product of industrialization. Many times, these experiences come in the form and projection of the arts, due to their spontaneous, creative elements.

Leisure experiences are completely voluntary by nature, and thus as Turner (1982) determined, “Leisure is potentially capable of releasing creative power, individual or communal, either to criticize or buttress the dominant social structural values” (p. 37). Hunnicut (1998) agreed that, “modern leisure provides openings for new ways of talking about existing social forms and roles, and consequently an unprecedented avenue for cultural transformation” (p. 145). Turner (1982) also linked the presence of leisure in one’s life and its creative, freeing elements to one’s own self-mastery, and even self-transcendence; Kleiber (1999) agreed. With leisure as the common avenue of experience, this brings the discussion back to the relationship between both flow and communitas as it relates to this study.

Comparing Flow and Communitas

In some regards, communitas seems to be a form of group flow. It is an optimal experience shared by individuals within a group of people who on some level are unified

by a collective consciousness of the moment and each other, and as a result, a group synchronicity evolves (Sawyer, 2006). While flow is the optimal experience of loss of time and space and connection to self, communitas is unique in the sense that the magical feeling is both personal as well as shared; it is felt within the individual, as well as “in the air”. People experiencing communitas recognize that they are feeling a shared oneness, often describing the phenomena as spiritual in nature, and so it is an internal as well as an external experience (Sawyer, 2006).

Turner (1982) acknowledged the similarities between flow experience and communitas; however he did outline a few differences in these two phenomena. He explained that the cognitive skills necessary to create flow can be learned and mastered, and the environment created, thereby increasing happiness. Flow also happens largely in structured environments, and does not require the anti-structural environment that is necessary for most experiences of communitas; the elements necessary to create the optimal experience of an individual can largely be controlled and created anywhere at any time. As Turner explained, “What I call communitas has something of a “flow” quality...”flow” is experienced within an individual, whereas communitas at its inception is evidently between or among individuals- it is what we believe we all share” (1982, p.58). While flow theory is presented as a framework toward the understanding and cultivation of optimal individual experiences then, communitas seems to exist as optimal communal experience.

Identifying Communitas

One of the difficulties of studying the phenomenon of communitas is deciphering whether or not what is being observed is in fact communitas. The trouble arises due to

the fact that communitas is much more of a shared feeling and meaning amongst its members than something that can be visually recognized, observed and described. While the phenomenon does have some externally observable qualities, it is also important to gain the perspectives of insiders, or those experiencing communitas in order to be completely sure of its occurrence (Sharpe, 2002). Due to this fact, it is important that researchers of this phenomenon collect and utilize both observations and in-depth interviews or narratives for study.

Dr. Erin Sharpe (2002), in her dissertation entitled *Delivering Communitas: Outdoor adventure and the making of community*, contributed to the literature with her summary of some of the objective and observable characteristics of communitas, based on the research of Victor Turner. The observable characteristics which Sharpe summarized are: reduction in differentiation among group members, an apparent loosening of social conventions, playfulness, an ethic of cooperation, and expressions of emotional attachment.

While Sharpe (2002) stressed that these be accompanied and validated through an emic (insider) perspective and account, they provide the basis upon which to make the initial assumption that what is being experienced may be communitas. From here, the emic perspective can be explored to further ascertain the occurrence of this illusive, intangible experience.

Communitas in Context

As Sharpe (2005) stated “once solely the domain of ritual, communitas has begun to enter the realm of leisure” (p.256). The literature seems to support the suggestion that communitas occurs within the realm of the arts and leisure within modern societies, and

investigating these places where communitas occurs, may “offer unique insights into understanding contemporary leisure rituals” (Sharpe, 2005, p. 257). Kemp (1999) described the appearance of communitas during dog sledding events held in the United States. As these races are ritually constructed, she described these events as an experience of communitas in celebration of co-operation and love of the sport. In this case the researcher commented on the feeling of communitas combating the natural drive towards competitiveness, and which brought people together in a sense of togetherness.

Another form of leisure in which communitas is central in Australia, is within the emergence of ‘doofs’ (Tramacchi, 2000). Doofs can be described as all night rave-like rituals held in a festival of community, lights, music, and where a general sense of freedom or letting go is shared amongst participants. “Doofers” use this ritual in order to create a space of communitas in which they could feel free, while at the same time be a part of something greater than themselves. Tramacchi explained,

The experience of autonomy is sought through the symbolic suspension or rejection of state imposed structures. Participants seek to dissolve conventional limitations on imagination and thought, momentarily inhabiting artificial islands of heterogeneity and exploration where novel connections and affiliations are forged and experimental social forms are incubated. (p. 203)

Within Native Indian culture, dance, drumming, and what can be deemed expressive arts, have been utilized for centuries as a form of ritual practice to create unity and community of the spirit (Kracht, 1994). Powwows provide this “timeless condition” which brings people together from many different social spaces, and provides an order which transcends the conditions of everyday social structure (Kracht; Turner, 1982). Kracht agreed that, “communitas works well to describe contemporary powwows, where participants unite as a dance community (p. 2).”

In 1994, Kracht conducted an interview with members of the Kiowa Gourd Clan with regard to their experiences in ritual powwows. Members described the dance practices as religious experiences which felt natural and appropriate, and an expression of the inner spirit. Natives have suffered from declining acceptance and practice of age-old rituals which have been in their cultures for generations. As these rituals diminish, so too does the heritage of its people. Again, perhaps as a sign of the times and the need for reconnection and community and a sense of belonging, an American Indian living in Dallas Texas recently commented on the “reawakening” of this dancing heritage (Kracht). The common celebration of Native traditions in powwows has been said to bridge history with the future survival of Native traditions and heritage, as Indian people gain strength both individually and collectively (Kracht).

Drumming and musical collaboration seem to be a playground for *communitas* to emerge. As many musicians and dedicated researchers of music will contend, there is something about music and rhythm that is within all of us (Hawkins, 1999; Redmond, 1997). When asked, ‘Why drum together?’ Hawkins stated, “Drumming is an efficient, non-verbal way to synchronize our energies. When two hearts are in close proximity to one another they tend to entrain; to find a common rhythm; to beat as one” (p. 37). People come together in synchronicity, much like they would in a state of *communitas*.

There has been some literature published, while somewhat limited, on the community building functions of drum circles. Most speak of outcomes that emerge such as increased cooperation and communication (Camillarrie, 2002; Stone, 2005). The Whittier Drum Project was an experiment in fostering communication, cooperation, and community with a group of at risk and troubled youth. The author and creator of the

program noticed how grounded and at peace drumming could make a person feel, and decided to incorporate drums into a program for youth. He noticed how drumming seemed to erase barriers, and transcend the individual to a place where all were joined by rhythm (Stone). Outcomes of this study showed increased cooperation among the youth involved, as well as more cohesive team-work and respect among individuals. Near the end of the project, youth family members were also invited to attend the drum projects meetings. The outcomes of this were increased family bonding and cooperation, and these outcomes were reported to carry over into daily family living beyond the Whittier Drum project. Siblings along with parents were invited to participate, and this had positive outcomes on sibling cooperation and home life as well.

Perhaps as a sign of the times and current personal and communal needs, there has recently been an overwhelming resurgence of community drum circles within Western culture (Redmond, 1997). Drumming is one of the most sacred forms of ritual humans practice and it is also one of the oldest. Hand held frame drums are among the oldest known musical instruments throughout history, and ritual is one of human nature's most important communal activities (Hawkins, 1996; Hull, 2006a; Redmond). Sacred drumming in ritual remained a powerful tool for communal bonding until the fall of the Roman Empire (Redmond). It has been used in many different parts of the world, including native populations, African, and Latin American cultures (Hull, 1998; Redmond; Teleso, 2003). Today, group drumming is being recognized as a way to build community, inspire creativity, enhance consciousness and awareness, express individuality, and "captivate the spirit" (Hull, 1998; Redmond; Teleso & Waterhawk). Group music and drum circles are being facilitated in schools, universities, hospitals,

retirement homes and communities, recreation and community centers, and special care facilities; almost anywhere that people congregate (Hull, 1998; Redmond).

To this point in the literature, it seems to have been accepted that while parameters for flow experience can be recreated, *communitas* is highly spontaneous and extremely dependent upon multiple intricate and unstable factors, and thus would be very difficult if not impossible to create. One can attempt to mirror the common setting for its occurrence, but as it is such an intricate phenomenon relying heavily on the sum of its parts, it is truly a spontaneous group experience which can never be entirely assured. Despite the phenomenon's illusive nature and the difficulties associated with recreating these experiences, some leisure facilitators recognize the value of such experiences and thus have begun to look closer at how they may be fostered among participants. This study will look at one specific provider of group drumming events that seems to facilitate these synergistic experiences. In understanding these methods, a deeper understanding of how *communitas* may be created and fostered may serve as a contribution to this literature. The issue of facilitated *communitas* will be further explored in the next section, but first, an overview of facilitation and the role of the facilitator are presented.

Facilitation

Facilitation has been addressed in many ways across a broad spectrum of disciplines within the literature. Fields such as education, management/ event management, counseling, therapy, group leadership, and outdoor recreation (to name a few) all have their own language and definitions. Each body of literature has its own set of terminology, processes, and goals specific to the context of the body of literature it represents. One example would be the outdoor leadership literature which as its own set

of language and processes in addressing experiential education and the philosophy of learning and personal/social development. Within this endless amount of literature, information that was seemingly most applicable based on previous knowledge of the organization was chosen. Counseling and therapy literature were avoided as the drum circle context did not carry with it the intent of therapeutic change. Outdoor recreation leadership literature provided some insight into definitions with regard to managing group process and technical skills, however the intentions of outdoor leadership often center on the ability to “teach” participants something about themselves through specific task completion with regard to personal development that they can take away (Martin, Cashel, Wagstaff, & Breunig, 2006). While this may be a potential outcome of group rhythm experiences, it is not the specific intention of this provider. Within this context and as mentioned in Chapter One the focus in this study was on the synergy born of the group experience itself; in essence the focus is directed toward creating experiences in-the-moment. In much of the facilitation literature, focus seems to be placed on completing specific tasks successfully. While the Arthurian method does seem to be somewhat task based, the emphasis in organizational purpose seems to be more on the experiences of participants from moment to moment. Thus, some group leadership literature seemed to be a good fit and will be touched upon in this section. Some of the event management literature applies to process and goals of creating synergy within a group working toward a common goal, however the focus again is greatly on the ‘successful’ completion of a specific task. This event management literature was helpful in clarifying some of the processes (i.e. decision-making and judgment, group dynamics) and thus has been addressed in the literature (Bens, 2000). As well, some information has

been taken from the outdoor leadership literature in defining certain competencies required of facilitators which will be addressed below. These pieces will serve to inform the reader at the onset of this study, and other related literature will be introduced throughout this study as the data calls for support and clarification framed in the facilitation literature.

It is important to address the issue of language choice in this section in order to reduce confusion. The words ‘facilitation’, ‘leadership’, and ‘management’ all have similarly overlapping yet slightly different meanings when looking at the different literatures, and all related to this specific study. Upon looking at each body of literature, it was decided that the definition of facilitation was the most appropriate with regards to the purposes of the Arthurian method. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defined a facilitator as “one that helps to bring about an outcome (as learning, productivity, or communication) by providing indirect or unobtrusive assistance, guidance, or supervision.” Within this definition, the word ‘guidance’ also appears. Throughout this study, the word ‘guide’ will also be used to describe the actions taken by the facilitator within this study. The word ‘guide’ was chosen over the word ‘lead’, as leadership seems to evoke a picture of one who directs followers, where as a guide is one who gently sets parameters and encourages group input, empowerment, and choice along a journey (Hull, 2006a). Facilitators also believe that since change is constant, those who can empower others to be self-directed and think critically and confidently on their own are the most effective (Lambert & Glacken, 2005; Peel, 2000). A facilitator is not one who simply dispels knowledge upon a group, but facilitates in such a way that the group will come together on its own as a result of effective facilitation (Laird, 1985; Lambert & Glacken). As

Vidal (2004) described, the facilitator becomes the director of performance, where each participant plays a central role. By the end of this performance, if a group synergy has been created (as should be one of the main goals of true facilitation), then all participants will “explode in a rush of happiness and pleasure, the pleasure of working creatively and collectively to achieve some goals” (p. 394). Very literally then, the role of the facilitator is to simply “make easier” (Harvey et al., 2002; Rogers & Friedberg, 1994). The facilitator aims to make easier specific processes (i.e. group dynamics and problem solving) as well as the group abilities with regard to necessary technical skills during all phases of the event.

There are many specific skills, experiences, and knowledge that the facilitator must possess which assist in the facilitation of the group event overall (Peel, 2000; Thomas, 2004). Experienced facilitators have at their disposal an intuition about the processes which they are guiding, which helps them “act on their feet” and make quick decisions with regards to the needs of a group or process (Peel). Facilitators gain knowledge as they acquire new skills and become quicker with their intuitive decision making abilities through experience (Nonaka, Toyama, & Konno, 2000).

Specifically in group settings, Ringer (1999) outlined two characteristics of effective guidance of outdoor adventure groups. These two aspects are what Ringer has labeled ‘linking’ and ‘containment’, and seem to relate to the context of this study. By linking, he referred to “the existence of links at both conscious and unconscious levels” which “involve each group member, the group as a whole, the leader, and the primary task of the group” (p. 5). By containment it was meant that group members would have the “conscious and unconscious sense of being firmly held in the group and its task, and

yet not immobilized by the experience” (p. 5). Containment involves creating boundaries that enable the group to function with a reasonable sense of security without harm, while linking involves “creating and maintaining the links that hold the internal structure together” (p. 5). In other words, containment is about eliminating outside stresses or uncertainties by providing a sense of structure and order, while linking is the “bringing together” of the elements within that structure (i.e. activities, people, etc.). In delivering these components then, it was found that there are three particularly important competencies that a facilitator of a group must be aware of including the specific communication, technical, and process skills in the negotiation of experiences. Below is a description of each of these competencies.

Communication Competencies. The primary role of the facilitator as outlined by Webne-Behrman (1998) is that of a communicator, “modeling effective communication and helping participants understand one another” (p. 11). When guiding group interactions, facilitators must convey certain messages and values to the group through effective means. As Webne-Behrman described, the facilitator “has not only the responsibility to model effective listening” but also to “demonstrate the skills required to make listening meaningful” (p. 14). He outlined that this is demonstrated through the use of assertive communication, and the sharing of one’s needs and concerns while still respecting the needs of others within the group. Webne-Behrman felt that by modeling this approach, “The facilitator helps build risk-taking behaviour and a willingness to apply the skills that exist among group members” (p. 15). Johnson and Johnson (1997) stated, “the very existence of a group depends on communication, on exchanging information and transmitting meaning” (p. 140). Constant effective communication is important

throughout each event in guiding groups in specific process and technical skills in group experiences. A discussion of these skills will be presented below.

Process and Technical Skills. One of the main tasks of a facilitator outlined within the literature is to provide processes that assist individuals moving toward overall purpose or goals (in this study group synergy itself was the purpose) (Bens, 2000). The specifics of these processes however, are generally left to each individual facilitator to design and implement. In regard to group dynamics and processes, Ringer (1999) described that,

Groups are complex. They involve the interdependence of a number of human beings whose actions, interactions and perceptions are constantly changing. The leader of a group is an integral part of the dynamic system that involves both conscious and unconscious processes of all present. Accordingly, he or she is strongly influenced by the emotional tides that move through the group. Being a member of a group challenges participants and leaders alike to maintain adequate emotional independence and behavioural autonomy, whilst simultaneously being influenced to act in ways that meets the approval of the group. Leading groups, then, is a challenging and complex business. (p. 5)

It is an important job as a facilitator then, to make sure that communication lines are open, that members of the team feel that they are being supported, and that specific processes and requirements are communicated throughout the overall process (Bens).

Communication can add to the complexity of group dynamics, as social experiences are made up of numerous interactions between various members of a team, all of whom bring their individual personalities, knowledge, skills, and communication styles to the table. In the facilitation of groups, most of the communication will move horizontally, thus breakdowns in communication efforts are decreased in this fairly democratic structure.

As Greenberg (2002) defined, “messages of this type are characterized by efforts at coordinating, or attempts to work together” (p. 201). If the proper communication

requirements have been articulated and set in place by the facilitator at the onset of the event, the facilitator should fade into the collective, only to be called upon to manage problems and situations as they may arise (Vidal, 2004). Facilitating communication within group processes then, can be seen as one of the most important roles of the facilitator.

As a facilitator, one is constantly listening, thinking, and reflecting throughout the experience as problem solving and decision making is occurring between group members. In any group situation, decisions will need to be made, and any conflicts will need to be resolved. Webne-Behrman (1998) outlined that the ways in which the facilitator does this is through active listening, practicing neutrality, and assertively negotiating for the process. Priest and Gass (2005) added assessing needs, constructing change processes, and dealing with resistance. By focusing and guiding group members' communication and decision-making processes in a structured form, the facilitator can reduce the chances of engaging in faulty processes and harness the strengths of the group (Vidal, 2004). Within the group facilitation literature, it is outlined that in actively negotiating for the process, the facilitator may be responsible for confronting possible abuses of the group's ground rules and allowing others equal time in the face of domination by a few (Webne-Behrman).

The skills which exist or are required among group members are behavioural and process based, but may also be technical in nature. As a result, it is another role of the facilitator to facilitate the transfer of knowledge with regard to any technical skills that may be required within the particular group processes. While the above process and communication skills and requirements have been termed "soft-skills" within the

literature, the last skill set and knowledge transfer to be addressed in this section are the specific technical or “hard skills” required of a group facilitator. Priest and Gass (2005) described technical skills as the core competencies necessary to guide the group in the activity itself. Specific certifications and prior experiences will aid the facilitator in reaching a level of technical skill competency required to then transfer this knowledge of technical skills to the group. Depending on the purpose of the group or task to be completed, there may be more or less emphasis on technical skills in comparison with the softer process and communication skills required (Priest & Gass). If the intentions are more oriented toward the completion of a group technical task, then technical skills will be more predominant. If the intentions are more geared toward group processes such as decision-making or social interactions, communication and process skills may take more of a forefront in the group experience as seems to be the case within this study. In any scenario, all skills will need to be considered.

This study again has been designed to explore one particular leisure service provider’s ability to guide groups toward the specific group phenomenon of *communitas*. Below is an outline of the literature, albeit fairly limited, in the facilitation of this particular phenomenon.

Facilitating Communitas

In 1982, Turner stated that, “*Communitas* is something different [than flow], for it does not have to be induced by rules—it can happen anywhere, often in spite of rules” (p. 56). He described it as more of a feeling in the air, and that to act would be to change the nature of the entire experience. He compared it to the Hindu thought of *witness*, in which one could only watch and love, but by deliberately “doing”, would change the nature of

the event. Trammachi (2000) explained that communitas “is not a consequence of a single influence, but arises from the interplay of a constellation of forces” (p.207). By interpretation, it seems that the facilitation of communitas would be unlikely.

Sharpe (2005) completed a study of outdoor wilderness adventure experience and the ability of trip leaders to deliver communitas as an organizational mission. In an ethnographic account, this study examined the role played by the service provider and its employees in the delivery of communitas to its paying customers. In her study, Sharpe acted as both facilitator of the experience in one section and participant during another. Data collection methods in Sharpe’s study included participant observation as well as in-depth interviews with seven of the twelve trip leaders. From her findings Sharpe outlined five important steps to delivering communitas: to establish mission, to select and train trip leaders, to set the tone, to maximize authority, and to guide interpretations.

In establishing the mission, the organization focused on the social integration function, bringing diverse groups of people together through wilderness adventure. As one male trip leader explained of how he saw his role, “I think integration has to do with no matter where you’re at-old, young, male, female, black, white, gay, straight...anything you can think of that would make someone different...When I think of social integration, it’s seeing people as their souls and not their bodies” (Sharpe, 2005, p.265). In the selection and training of these leaders, personality became the most important factor over technical skills. Since the mission of the organization centered on social interaction, they felt that hiring outgoing and social individuals would increase the positive experiences of clients on trip (Sharpe). Staff training seemed limited to a manual describing the importance of social integration while at the same time stressing the importance of

providing enjoyable leisure experience. Staff were left to find the balance between the two, and while these ideas were presented, it does not seem that they were given any type of guidance as to how to facilitate this social integration. This is one of the gaps that this study on the facilitation of rhythm circles associated with feelings of communitas, and the standardized methods employed, will attempt to fill.

In setting the tone early on trip leaders began by purposely easing tensions and anxieties, and attempted to project that the experience was going to be a fun one. Through role modeling and leading by example, trip leaders also remained expressive and open, hoping to encourage participants to do the same. Overall success was determined by the ability of trip leaders to maintain authenticity (or perceived authenticity) while intentionally engaging in setting the tone.

One of the main issues brought forth by Sharpe's (2002) study was the question of authenticity. In order to facilitate occurrences and experience of communitas in the setting, trip leaders had to be very deliberate and intentional about manipulating the variables of the trip. With regard to social integration, leaders had to be weighing, deliberating, and analyzing why things weren't happening. This again raises ethical issues and considerations to be addressed. If variables are constantly being manipulated, and experiences that seem spontaneous have actually been planned, are participants getting an authentic and honest experience of wilderness adventure in a group? Were participants aware of these intentions and if they were, would they be as open to participating? This will be interesting to reflect on while studying drum circle facilitation.

Another important issue that arose within Sharpe's (2002) study was that of facilitator qualification. The study indicated that it was not skills but more importantly

the disposition and personality of the facilitator that was important for facilitating communitas. Trip leaders, as Sharpe (2005) explained, also easily accepted the fact that regardless of their efforts, the conditions of the trip and its participants ultimately limited their ability to provide the unifying synchronicities that can be so powerful. These findings helped shape some of the questioning in this study on rhythm circle facilitation. In maximizing authority, Sharpe described that maintaining a level of authority over a leisure experience can be difficult, as freedom is such an important characteristic of leisure. In guiding an experience however, some authority especially with regard to creating integration and monitoring safety issues is necessary. Again, manipulative strategies to get participants to work with the guides were employed. While participants may have benefited from this authority, the fact that manipulation was involved opens a discussion on ethical practice and transparency. The final step in guiding interpretations, centered around closure talks in which participants reflected on experiences. It was found that guides intentionally lead these conversations depending on the success of social integration. If a group has come together well, closure talks are left in the hands of participants to recount their positive stories. However, if a group has not integrated well, guides used their authority to lead group discussion to center around what went well and the positive ways they had perceived the group throughout the trip. In this way we again see the manipulation of variables to leave participants with a positive experience.

Within Sharpe's study, issues of authenticity were grounds for discussion based on findings. Sharpe reported that a common theme within the data from trip leaders were incongruent interpretations of whether experiences of communitas were genuine and spontaneous, or based on contrived performance. The literature based around authenticity

is very philosophical and would require great depth to cover here. For these reasons, this literature will not be explored here, but these issues will be addressed as they arise within the context of this particular study on rhythm circle facilitation. The findings from Sharpe's study inform the reader and will be interesting to cross-reference with the findings in this study addressing the question, "In what ways does the implementation of the Arthurian method aid in guiding participants to experiences associated with communitas?"

This review of literature has addressed concepts of flow as it applies to communitas, as well as some of the contexts in which communitas has been studied. It has also addressed the literature on facilitation theory and the limited knowledge of the facilitation of communitas in one leisure based setting. While communitas has been found to be a very difficult phenomenon to create and foster within a group of individuals, this study will examine one particular method which seems to create experiences of communitas for participants through group rhythm making. The information and conclusions drawn in this study may then aid other leisure facilitators in understanding this specific system of taking a disconnected group and guiding them through a potentially generalizable framework that leads to a place of self connection and group synergy. The next chapter will describe the methodology of this study, including the research design and methods as they were employed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The design for this study was decided upon after taking into consideration the research question and specific method of facilitation, and the delivery of this method by a specific facilitator experienced in these methods. It was decided that a qualitative case study approach would be the most effective in capturing data necessary to address the research question. As well, as this method of facilitation carries the intention of creating a specific lived experience for participants, a phenomenological approach was taken in understanding the commonalities of these lived experiences. This study design will be described in depth below. From here this section has been organized to address in order: sampling techniques, methods employed including interviews, focus groups, and observation as well as participant-observation, moving into a description of analysis procedures, and ending with a discussion on trustworthiness and authenticity as well as potential ethical issues that may arise.

Qualitative Methods. Qualitative research has many defining characteristics, all which correspond to this specific study on the facilitation of communitas through drumming circles. Qualitative research is very naturalistic and interpretive, as the research subject or object is studied in their natural habitat. The researcher then attempts to make sense or interpret the phenomena in terms of the meanings people attach to them (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998). In other words, the researcher seeks to understand the lived experience of those involved in a phenomenon. The data is collected through words and actions, and the meanings that people attach to those words and actions (Merriam).

In this regard, the researcher and participants are co-creators of the knowledge gained through the study of the lived experience. Qualitative researchers also stress that the nature of reality is socially constructed, and seek answers to questions about how social experience is created and then given meaning.

Another defining characteristic of qualitative research is its flexibility with regard to purpose as well as process. It is a highly responsive and somewhat unstructured method of inquiry, as the researcher may respond to changes and adapt to unforeseen circumstances while collecting data (Creswell, 2003). These adaptations may happen in the moment, and thus provide more flexibility than a rigid or structured quantitative method. Data is collected and discussed through the use of thick descriptions of the experience as described by both the participants and the researcher (Creswell, 1998).

Qualitative research is also inductive with regard to theory generation (Berg, 2002; Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002). While the aim of quantitative research may be to seek out definitive answers, qualitative research starts with a definitive question, and seeks to explore, examine, and come to a variety of new ideas, conceptions, and questions in response to the initial purpose of the research (Creswell, 2003). The purpose is to expand on current knowledge of the topic, and to go beyond what is presently understood about the phenomenon. This opens the doors to further exploration and inquiry, and accepts that there need not be a set “answer” in order to understand a concept or phenomenon more fully. Qualitative research is focused on the generation of new theories as opposed to confirming existing ones, as is the primary focus of quantitative research (Merriam, 1998).

Through qualitative research, we may learn more about the way people reason, rationalize, and legitimize their actions. From here, we may gain a deeper understanding as to the meanings people give to their actions. This type of inquiry allows us to look more closely at the aspects of daily life that are taken for granted, and thus rarely questioned and explored. This leads to a deeper understanding of human behaviour, which then affects and molds the way in which a society functions (Berg, 2002). By understanding more clearly the roles which we play as individuals, the structures we impose, and the way we behave within these roles and structures, we can learn valuable information as to why and how certain aspects of self and society function. Finally, it is valuable that through qualitative research, we are able to better understand the way in which humans use language as a communicator, the meanings that are attached to these words, and the symbols we relate to certain objects (Creswell, 2003). From here, we can better understand how words can be used to control others, and how we form understanding of our world and surroundings.

Case Study. The facilitation of this particular phenomenon of communitas was examined through a case study using a phenomenological approach. Merriam (1998) defined a qualitative case study as, “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (p. 27). It can also be described as the study of a system bounded by time and place, which looks extensively at multiple sources of information and data collection, to provide detailed and rich information of a specific case (Creswell, 1998). As Patton (2002) outlined, “Case data consists of all information one has about the case: interview data, observations, documentary data, impressions and statements of others about the case, and contextual information” (p. 449). Merriam

indicated that case study can be very important when selected due to the uniqueness of a particular phenomenon and when examination under any other design would not allow access to the study of the specific phenomenon. This was one of the central rationales for the choice of case study in this particular study. The exact methods employed by this study will be discussed in depth in the methods section of this document.

A case study was also chosen because as Patton (2002) suggested, this strategy is expected to capture the complexity of a single case. Due to the complex nature of the phenomenon being studied, it was felt that only a multiple method approach focusing on the case could capture the necessary depth of information needed to form conclusions based on the research question. Another reason for selecting this strategy of inquiry was my own natural drive to explore multiple views of a situation before drawing discussion or conclusions. For authenticity purposes, I felt that the case study method was one that would allow for data collection that was rich and in depth. Patton (2002) reasoned that a case is selected because it is “information rich and illuminative” in that this method offers “useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest” (p. 40). The case in this study was one particular facilitator of a specific method in two different groups of varied size, age, gender, race, sexuality, and experience. Within the study of this case, a phenomenological approach was taken and will be described below.

Phenomenological Approach. The purpose of phenomenological research is to delve into the specifics of a phenomenon, and to achieve this by understanding how the phenomena are perceived by the actors in the situation. Understanding the lived experience marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method, and the procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged

engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Creswell, 1998). This study looked at the philosophy and applied it to this particular case study.

From a philosophical standpoint, phenomenologists focus on how we internalize the objective world in our psyches and how we make sense of our experiences and the world in order to make it livable and sharable (Rothe, 1994). Phenomenology is a search for wisdom based on human perception, and supports that an object is only perceived within the meaning of experience of an individual (Creswell, 1998). Phenomenology relies greatly on “intuition, imagination, and universal structures to obtain a picture of the experience” (Creswell). It is up to the researcher then, before embarking, to consider their own beliefs about the nature of reality, about knowledge, and about the production of knowledge, through a process of ‘bracketing’ assumptions that may be taken for granted (Merriam, 1998). This provides an openness to the study, and helps to paint a clear picture overall of the phenomenon so that readers feel they are grasping the commonalities of the lived experience. Within this particular study, bracketing occurred in the design phase and a constantly reflexive approach was fostered throughout the process. The process of bracketing for the researcher in this study will be described in more detail in the section on trustworthiness later in this chapter.

The specific aspects involved in the facilitation of group music making leading to increased likelihood of experiences of *communitas*, were fairly elusive and intangible, and could only be understood from the perspectives of individuals and the collective upon discussion of experiences and through my own experiences and observations. Therefore, studying this phenomenon required extensive depth in each case from multiple perspectives in order to capture the commonalities of the collective experience from both

the participant as well as the facilitator's perspective. The phenomenological report enables the reader to better understand the essential, invariant structure or commonalities of the experience. The reader should come away feeling that they understand better what it is like for someone to experience the particular phenomenon. The data will be adequately described if the "description reawakens or shows us the lived quality and significance of the experience in a fuller and deeper manner" (Patton, 2002, p 106). This is what I have attempted to capture within Chapter Four of this study.

As a reminder to the reader before continuing on into a description of data collection methods, this researcher of this qualitative case study investigated the question "In what ways does the implementation of the Arthurian method aid in guiding participants to experiences associated with communitas?" This was done with a phenomenological lens or approach as described above. The next section then, will describe in detail the methods of data collection that were implemented within this study.

Data Collection Methods

This study was designed as a qualitative case study with a phenomenological approach. Reasoning for these choices will be described in depth in their respective sections below. The particular methods of this study included interviews with the facilitator after each drum circle (which was the same facilitator in each circle studied); participant focus groups that occurred after each drum circle, as well as my own observation and participant-observations. I also familiarized myself with specific Arthurian language by reading texts on Arthur Hull's work prior to data collection. This section will be organized by addressing in order, the study design and specific methods, followed by a description of how analysis was completed. The last part of this chapter

will discuss issues of trustworthiness and authenticity, as well as ethical considerations and how they were addressed.

Target Population and Sampling. In this case, it was felt that purposeful sampling would be the most effective means to gather relevant information about this particular phenomenon. As Merriam (1998) explained, “Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight, and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned (p. 61).” I purposefully chose a specific drum circle facilitator based on her experience, knowledge, and training with the “Arthurian” method of drum circle facilitation.

This particular case was chosen after researching this phenomenon of facilitated group drumming in North America. It was found through this investigation, that Arthur Hull of Village Music Circles seemed to be the most widely recognized and respected as a pioneer in his field. As well, upon reading the organizational mission, it became apparent that overall goals were to create synergistic experiences in an effort to build community through music and spirit sharing (Hull, 2006a). His methods are employed by facilitators all over the world, and seemed to represent the most credible and legitimate case to analyze. The specific facilitator was chosen based upon recommendations by Arthur Hull in a phone conversation regarding this study. I was directed toward Anne as someone who had extensive knowledge and experience with these methods, and was residing and practicing within Canada. Anne is a retired kindergarten teacher with ten years experience facilitating rhythm events using the Arthurian method. She has been a mentor for Village Music circles and helps to train other rhythm event facilitators from across the world at training camps for the organization. The two circles that ran were

organized by Anne prior to my arrival and were facilitated at no charge to participants. Participants in the first circle congregated in Anne's home, and were recruited by email advertisement through the use of a recruitment script which can be found in appendix A. In the first circle, participants congregated at Anne's home, and were women who had heard about the event through an advertisement that Anne had sent out. Participants did not know each other prior to the event and in total there were seven participants, Anne, and I as an observer. None of the participants had close relationships with Anne, however three of the participants had met her prior to the circle. This may have had an effect on group dynamic or personal experience and in future studies participant familiarity to facilitator would be a consideration to take into account with regards to affect on experience. The second circle was comprised of a large group of University students at a large Canadian University. These students were invited by their residence event coordinator who had contacted Anne to come and facilitate a circle. There was a mix of gender and race, and all were around the same age. Upon beginning the event there were 47 students in attendance.

Prior to data collection, I reviewed some of the published materials by Arthur Hull to familiarize myself with some of the language to expect as well as to more clearly picture how the events might look. At this point I had never been to a rhythm circle with an Arthurian facilitator, and had little idea as to what to expect. After reviewing these materials (Hull 1998; Hull 2006a; Hull 2006b), I began data collection.

Interviews. The purpose of interviewing as Patton (2002) stated is "to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective" (p. 340). The quality of the information collected however, is very much dependent on the interviewer. One must learn to listen

very actively, and “a deep and genuine interest in learning about people is insufficient without disciplined and rigorous inquiry based on skill and technique” (Patton, p. 341).

Semi-structured interviews were utilized within this particular study with the drum facilitator in order to gain insight into the facilitation of each event from the facilitator’s perspective, as well as about facilitation and methods in general prior to the first circle. Semi-structured interviews are more or less structured, although questions may be reordered if the interviewer deems this necessary during the interview, and the wording of questions is flexible. As well, the interviewer may answer questions and make clarifications, and may add or delete certain probing questions during each interview and between differing interviews (Berg, 2004). A semi-structured interview guide might include several specific questions, and then be followed by some more open-ended questions that can be followed up with probes. Finally, the interview guide may include a list of other issues, ideas, and topic areas that the researcher is interested in, but may not have been informed enough of during the onset of the study to formulate actual questions around (Merriam, 1998).

There are six different types of questions that can be asked of people during an interview. These are; experience and behaviour questions, opinion and values questions, feeling questions, knowledge questions, sensory questions, and finally, background/demographic questions (Patton, 2002). Experience and behaviour questions typically entail questions that would be asked if the observer themselves had not been around to observe. In other words, “If I was there, what would I have seen you doing? What does a typical day for you look like?” (Patton). Opinion and value questions are more based on the way one perceives and places values and certain things, as opposed to

more physical action and behaviour questions (Patton). Feeling questions lead to answers that express certain emotions such as happy, sad, anxious, etc...this is not the same as an opinion question, and an interviewer must be careful not to confuse the two. Knowledge questions inquire about factual information, and sensory questions ask questions based on the five senses. Finally, it is beneficial to gather some basic background information to identify characteristics of the person being interviewed (Patton). As well, it is important to note that there are certain questions one should try to avoid while conducting an interview. Merriam (1998) included in this category; multiple questions which confuse the interviewee by delivering two questions within one sentence, leading questions which make assumptions as to what an interviewee has already experienced without them sharing this information freely as a result of their actual experience, and finally yes or no questions. Interview questions for this study were formulated based on the above considerations, using the research question and review of literature to guide me. A detailed interview guide for the pre-drum circle interview can be found in Appendix D. It is also very important that the interviewer remain neutral throughout the interview process, and omit any type of sharing of opinion, debating, or arguing (Merriam, 1998).

For this study, an experienced facilitator of the Arthurian method was the subject of three interviews. The first interview included general questions pertaining to the overall goals of the facilitation, the outcomes, and the specific methods and can be found in appendix D. There was then an interview after each of the two drum circles studied, and questions which guided these interviews can be found in appendix E. These interviews were relatively similar each time, however I revised certain questions specific to each circle and added probing questions as the interview progressed. These interviews

allowed me to gauge whether there were differences in technique with regard to different groups, sizes, and situations, and how each different scenario was managed with regard to facilitation. These interviews took place as soon after the drum circle as was possible, and occurred within a three hour period of each circle to ensure that the memories of the experience and techniques employed were as fresh in the facilitator's mind as possible. The interviewee was also asked to read and sign an informed consent letter which outlined the purpose of the study and other important information. This consent form can be found in appendix B.

The data was collected using an audio recorder to ensure that all information was accurately recorded and preserved. This allowed me to be able to take brief but important notes during the interview, in response to certain aspects or elements of the interview that stood out due to their importance. This also allowed me to pay close attention to other nonverbal actions such as facial expression or body movements that highlighted emotions. Once this information was recorded and all data had been collected, I began the task of transcribing interview data to prepare for analysis.

Focus Groups. Focus groups were utilized in the proposed study in order to capture the commonalities in experience of what occurred for the drum circle participants during the group phenomenon. This allowed me to compare and contrast the experiences of others in the circle to that of my own as a participant-observer. This helped to strengthen the overall analysis of the data collection by providing multiple views of the experience, and as well to give a sense of individual experience so that the overall commonalities could also be drawn out.

One of the main distinctions between focus groups and individual interviews is that this gives the researcher an opportunity to study the interaction between group members about the discussion topic (Berg, 2002), and will draw more information about the shared experience with regard to shared and differing opinions, attitudes, and experiences (Berg). Berg also suggested that, “a far larger number of ideas, issues, topics, and even solutions to a problem can be generated through group discussion than through individual conversation” (p. 124). Patton (2002) suggested that it is also very easy to assess whether or not there is a shared view or a great diversity of views on the experience, which is very beneficial with regard to analysis. As well, focus groups tend to be enjoyable to participants, and give them the ability to reflect on an experience and social behaviors of a group to which they in some way belong (Patton).

In order to conduct the focus groups necessary to collect data, I first held a sign up session at the beginning of each drum circle. Those who volunteered signed an informed consent letter which described in detail the purpose of the study as well as other important information including the assurance of confidentiality (Appendix C). Circle One focus group participants included all participants of the rhythm event. Ages of the group seemed to range between 23-60, and all of us were female. This was a predominantly Caucasian, seemingly middle to upper-middle class group, with one participant of an Asian decent, and participants did not know each other prior to the event.

Prior to Circle Two, participants within the circle were asked to volunteer to be in the focus group after the rhythm event took place. The first eight people to volunteer were the participants involved in the focus group. Demographics of this focus group

included eight participants; five males and three females, all assumably although not confirmed, from a fairly privileged social class as they were attending University. One participant was of middle Eastern decent, and all other participants were Caucasian. Most participants knew each other prior to meeting in this rhythm circle setting. In looking back to the critique made of Turner's work, it is not yet understood how the diversity within a group may affect each individual's ability to shed their personal roles, especially cutting through feelings of perceived inequality. While the lack of diversity within this particular study may present limitations on understanding the wide-ranging affects of this facilitator method across gender, class, cultural, sexuality, group comfort level, etc. divides, it provides an account as to how this particular facilitator using these particular methods was able to create experiences for the participants in this study. Future research should look at these facilitation methods in broad contexts of diversity to see if communitas can be facilitated in more diverse groups through drumming. This will be addressed in the final chapter as a suggestion for future research.

Questions for the focus groups were formulated with the intent to first warm the group up and get them use to sharing ideas and opinions. The first questions asked were introductory, and led the group to talk about the experience overall, prior similar experiences, and motivations for attending. The bulk of these focus groups unfolded after asking participants to describe what happened during the event, individual experiences, and what stood out for each participant. When participants began recounting their experiences, I then began recording words that seemed to be reiterated by others within the group, and words that stuck out as themes to me. By taking these words, and asking participants what they meant by these words, I attempted to unpack the meanings behind

specific words chosen to represent experiences. Final questions surrounded the effect of the facilitator in each event on the overall experience. A copy of the informed consent letter can be found in appendix B, and a list of topic areas and open-ended questions which were discussed within each focus group can be found in appendix F.

Observation and Participant-Observation. Patton (2002) stated that the most fundamental difference in observational strategies is the extent to which the observer becomes involved as a participant in the setting being studied. With respect to this study, and based on conversations with Arthur Hull, it was agreed that it would be beneficial to become a non-participant observer for the first drum circle. This allowed me to familiarize myself with the overall picture as to what the phenomenon *looked* and *sounded* like. In this way, I was more able to observe actual interactions between the facilitator and the drum circle participants, and as well was able to focus more directly on how certain people engaged in the experience as a result of the facilitator and her methods. One of the challenges in regard to observing is funneling out the vast amount of information available, and knowing what to focus on specifically in keeping with the research question. In an attempt to focus my observations, I created an observation guide prior to data collection, using the interview question to narrow down specific elements. This guide can be found in appendix G. During the second drum circle, I was then able to become a participant which allowed me to understand the experience from the emic or insiders perspective (Patton). By engaging this way, I was able to understand the phenomenon more fully. Patton and Merriam (1998) agreed that this is a sufficient observational method, and felt that the extent of participation can change over time, where the evaluator begins as an onlooker and gradually becomes a participant as the

field work progresses. It is to be noted however, that I did not become a participant within the focus group setting, but allowed others to share their experience and synergize between themselves.

At the conclusion of each drum circle, I excused myself from the group for a brief period, and jotted down as many thoughts and feelings and perceptions as possible. These became my field notes during the analysis phase. Later on that day I re-read these notes and jottings and revisited my memories of the experience. I then recorded in more depth my experiences of the phenomenon including thoughts, feeling, opinions, reactions, observations and impressions of both facilitator and to some extent other participants, as well as verbal descriptions of the setting, people, and activities (Merriam, 1998). It is important to enter into the role of an observer with a clear sense of what one will be observing specifically. It would be very overwhelming to take in all aspects of a setting and experience, and this amount of breadth could prove to be confusing and not necessarily helpful. As the observer in this study, I focused my observations by considering the research question (Patton, 2002). As I was most intently trying to discern the various techniques of the facilitator which created and fostered the groups' synergy and experiences of *communitas*, I spent most of my time observing the facilitator while remaining aware overall as to how the group was responding. Most of my attention however was on the actions, facial expressions, movements, gestures, and words spoken by the facilitator (Hull, 1998). Merriam also warned that it is difficult but very important that a certain level of detachment be maintained, so that the observer does not become so engrossed and embedded into the experience that one can not be alert and aware of the elements they are suppose to be observing. I kept this in mind and maintained a level of

constant reflexivity to ensure that I did not become engrossed in the group drumming activity for long periods of time.

It is to be noted, that at the time of designing this study, I had no clear idea as to how detailed and abundant information would be as a result of attempting to best address the research question. At the time, these multiple streams of data collection presented the best approach for data collection. In hindsight however, there are a couple ways in which I would have conducted the data collection within this study differently. Firstly, I would have purposely organized focus groups and events to be more diverse in makeup with regard to demographics and characteristics. Secondly, I would have secured permission to video-tape the facilitation of each event to be utilized as a tool for reflection from focus group participants, personal observations, as well as facilitator interviews. With so much occurring at every moment and on so many levels, it was fairly impossible to capture the depth and breadth of potential data. I feel that the methods employed in this study have been sufficient, however with more time and a larger commitment, a more in depth study could be considered. This might be a point of interest for another student to address in the future.

Now that the various methods of data collection within this study have been addressed and described, the next section will provide a detailed account as to how this data was analyzed.

Analysis

As an interpretivist, I believe that the goal of theorizing based on findings and interpretations is to provide an understanding of the direct “lived experience” instead of abstract generalizations. Originating in phenomenology, lived experience emphasizes

that experiences are not just cognitive, but also include emotions (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Interpretive scholars consider that every human situation is novel, emergent, and filled with multiple, often conflicting meanings and interpretations. The interpretivist attempts to capture the core of these meanings and contradictions (Glesne & Peshkin). The data collection and analysis phase of this study was then influenced by my natural attraction to the interpretive approach. This approach also recognizes that there is no one truth, and seeks to find the meanings that different individuals give to their experiences or actions.

As Patton (2002) stated, “content analysis is used to refer to any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings” (p. 453). These core meanings, which were found through the content analysis of this study, are often called patterns or themes. It is important to note that before analysis took place, I was well aware of the confusing nature of the task. The form of analysis that best framed this study was an ad-hoc meaning generation approach described by Kvale (1996). Kvale stated that this is the most frequent form of analysis for meaning generation from interview material, and is a “freestyle interplay of techniques” (p. 203). In my analysis, I read all of the interview and focus group material all the way through to get overall impressions and to see what or if any categories, themes, or patterns were obvious. By sticking closely to the original research question, I was able to focus my analysis and many themes began to emerge. As each theme emerged, I began giving labels to each theme. By going over the data numerous times in this phase of analysis, I reached a point where no new information was emerging, I had reached a point of saturation, and I had some very clear themes to work

with. Each of these themes were then organized into specific categories, which eventually painted a concise picture of how themes compared and contrasted to each other. It is to be noted that the data presented a complex linking of many categories and themes, and this has been addressed within the final three chapters. To reduce confusion, I created a map during my analysis of these categories, and began to cluster data accordingly based on my interpretation of how specific data fit under specific themes in specific categories (Kvale). This clustering was based on how specific data from interviews and focus groups fit within the overall map I had created based on emergent categories. The act of clustering aided me in seeing what went with what, and I cut out each quote as it fit within its respective theme. I made duplicates of those that fit under more than one theme. Each quote was then pasted under its respective theme or sub theme to make for easier interpretation and analysis in the write-up phase.

At this point, the organization of data with regard to addressing the research question had now become fairly clear. In Chapter Four, I provide a descriptive analysis of the experience based on observations and participant observations, utilizing focus group and interview data to refresh my memory as well as I wrote these sections up. From here I was able to create a conceptual diagram to represent findings and allow for a concise way of addressing these findings. This diagram and its explanations can be found in Chapter Five. In the presentation of findings, these themes were organized and presented using data to support analysis and discussion. Each emergent theme was explained for significance and data was further broken down leading to an expansion of text using meaning interpretation throughout Chapters Four, Five (Kvale, 1996). In deciding on a concise way to describe one of the pieces of diagram 5.1 regarding the framework of the

methods employed, I adapted a diagram called “anatomy of a rhythm event” from Hull (2006) as well as the data. From this I came up with a “map” of the framework as I interpreted the system of facilitation to occur within this study. From here, I plotted each subjective facilitator action within both events along this continuum or framework as I interpreted based on descriptions of the anatomy of a rhythm event as well as from the data; observations, focus group, and interviews. With these subjective facilitator actions plotted along the continuum, I then linked each of these actions to data and findings regarding participant experiences in this study as well as observations. From these objective reactions and experiences, I was able to link this information to many of the characteristics of *communitas* as outlined within the literature review. These characteristics were plotted along the continuum in relation to the subjective facilitator action that lead to the experience of each particular characteristic. Again, this map was based on my own interpretations of the data.

In other sections of Chapter Five and Six I also used meaning condensation to summarize certain sections where appropriate in order to provide more concise and practical findings for future facilitators. Chapter Four is a descriptive piece based on findings as they were seen and heard while Chapter Five goes deeper into interpretation and analysis of findings. Throughout the write-up, observation and participant observation material was utilized to highlight participant and facilitator comments which came directly from the data, and were linked to the interpretation of experiences to aid in the descriptions of experience overall.

It is to be noted that as Kvale (1996) postulates, interpretation and analysis of data begins in actuality during the interview itself. Information may be percolating and as

more data was collected, themes and patterns began to appear in my mind during the data collection phase. I took a fair amount of time off between data collection and analysis, and was very careful to stick close to the data to ensure that outside influences or preconceived notions did not affect my analysis. Bracketing was again employed (described below), and many direct quotes have been presented to support findings, analysis and discussion. This will be addressed further in the next section on trustworthiness and authenticity.

Techniques to Increase Trustworthiness

There are a number of methods that can be implemented in a study to ensure that information provided is as trustworthy and authentic as possible. Maxwell (1992) stated that, “all field work done by a single field-worker invites the question, why should we believe you” (p. 282). It is important that the reader feel confident in the conclusions that are drawn from a particular study, and that there is sufficient evidence to support these conclusions. It is always important as a researcher to be as open and honest as possible at every stage of the research process, especially during the data collection and analysis phase as well as in the discussion and conclusion section. When it comes to convincing others, the researcher must show how they reached certain decisions and conclusions on these issues, and by what logic they are connecting the chosen methods with the overall picture and to the research question. Within this study, there were four strategies implemented throughout the research process to ensure trustworthiness. These measures were knowledge bracketing, constant reflexivity through peer and advisor debriefing and visual diagram journaling, triangulation of methods, and member checks. These efforts will be described in detail below.

Bracketing. One way to provide a sense of trustworthiness in a phenomenological study is by bracketing all previous knowledge and experiences relating to the topic and phenomenon (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2000). As the sole researcher in this project, I have had many prior experiences that relate to this study in some way. I have been a musician all of my life, self taught, and have been performing semi-professionally for over eight years. As a musician who has been involved in group music making in a band setting, I have had many experiences that I would compare to

communitas as it is described within the literature. On certain occasions, a type of group flow will occur on stage between my fellow musicians and myself at any given moment. Generally, I find that this feeling overcomes us in moments where we really come together and “click” as a band, and lose ourselves in what we are doing. Many times in these experiences, the music will take on a life of its own, and we will end up “jamming” on our instruments and with random vocal noises, and improvising for a few minutes after the lyrics of a song have ended. It can be noted however, that these experiences have never been facilitated by any particular methods, and appear spontaneously as is one of the main characteristics of communitas. As someone familiar with these experiences, this may have provided strength to this study in discerning and interpreting my own experiences of whether or not I experienced the phenomenon personally within this study. I was constantly aware of any potential biases that these previous experiences may have brought to this separate experience, however I believe prior knowledge and experiences aided as opposed to hindered my ability to interpret the data. As it was not the point of this study to confirm experiences of communitas, but rather to see how participants were led towards them, this also minimized the effect of any biases. As a musician, I was also perhaps more “tuned in” to what was occurring around me musically during the observation phase of the data collection which may have helped to strengthen the trustworthiness of findings. I have stayed close to the data in grounding findings from actual data collected and tying these interpretations to the literature.

While at the conception of this study I had no direct affiliations or experiences with recreational music making or with the Arthurian method in general, I become more involved throughout the research process. As a result of my curiosity and for my own

interest, I became a participant in one of the Arthurian method facilitation trainings approximately five months after the completion of my data collection. At this point, some of my data analysis had already been completed. I feel that these experiences also aided me in interpreting and more clearly understanding these particular methods of rhythm circle facilitation.

Reflexivity. By being conscious and aware, and by checking and rechecking myself in relation to the research process and findings, an overall acknowledgement of reflexivity guided this study in all phases of research. The researcher continuously checked and rechecked methods, findings, discussion, and analyses. By being reflexive and keeping an open minded learner's attitude, I remained aware of the possible external and internal factors that might have been influencing the research.

Throughout the entire process I engaged in very open dialogue with both peers and my advisor with regard to my own experiences in overall research procedures and the effects that these experiences had on me. By being constantly reflexive in this regard, my advisor and I decided when I needed to step away for periods of time to keep this objective view. These short analysis breaks helped me to remain grounded in the analysis and write-up of this study. My potential biases are clearly recognized, and I have been open, alert, and aware of them throughout the entire process. The data presented reflects the actual information provided through the oral depictions of experiences provided by participants and facilitator, as well as my own observations and experiences. As much data from the study as possible has been presented in its original form so as to back up the analysis and interpretation. I also went through a peer debriefing process with my academic advisor. This process involved meetings in which I presented my raw data,

method of analysis, findings, and interpretations during many meetings, and my advisor checked that what I had analyzed was in accordance and had not strayed from the original data. Along with bracketing and reflexivity, triangulation of methods also aided in grounding the research to ensure trustworthiness.

Triangulation. Triangulation takes multiple angles into account, shedding as much as light as possible on different themes and perspectives (Creswell, 1998). Within this study, findings were triangulated through the collection of participant focus groups, researcher observations and participant-observations, as well as multiple facilitator interviews. One of the main reasons why triangulation was chosen as a strategy in this study was to increase the trustworthiness and authenticity of the case, as well as to gain knowledge from varying perspectives of the phenomenon. In this way, as much information as possible is collected on the subject from different viewpoints. This provides a very rich, thick description of the case. The final measure taken to ensure trustworthiness of this study was through the process of member checking.

Member Checks. Member checking with the facilitator within this study was an iterative process that occurred throughout data analysis. When questions arose, we corresponded via e-mail in order to clarify the meanings of particular words, or to address questions as they arose. Upon completion of the data analysis, the facilitator within this study was provided with a rough copy of the results in which her actions (as observed) and words were included. I then asked some further clarification questions, and requested that she share anything else I may have missed based on this copy of findings and questions.

Ethical Considerations

Creswell (2003) outlined a multitude of possible ethical issues that could present themselves within a study. Within this particular design, it was important that all participants in the study be made clearly aware of the purpose of the research, so as not to be surprised after data collection had already started.

In the data collection and analysis phase of the research, confidentiality was extremely important. It was especially important in this study as the researcher facilitated interviews and focus groups that could have potentially involved highly personal information and experiences. Without confidentiality trust may be lacking from participants, and the information collected may not be as in depth as possible. It is important for a researcher to keep the identity of the participants confidential, as some information being shared could be potentially damaging to a career or personal life. Within this particular study, the information obtained from participants was and will not be shared under the actual names of the participants. Aliases were used to protect the confidentiality of the individuals. It is also important to inform the participant of where the data will be stored and under whose supervision. The details of how and when the data will finally be destroyed must also be made known. In this study, data will be kept on file for a one-year period under lock and key in the possession of the sole researcher involved in the collection process (Creswell, 2003). After the one-year period, the information will be destroyed using a paper shredder, and any information stored electronically will be wiped from memory. This information was shared with participants in the signed consent form.

Providing those participating in the study with a detailed consent form which clearly outlined the procedure, what the study entailed, what was and was not expected of them, as well as how the results were handled and shared, was also very important to include. This is where the details of confidentiality were explained. Another point to consider was the potential special needs and marginalization of certain participants (Creswell, 2003). As it turned out, this was not an issue within this particular study.

A final ethical consideration within the data collection phase was gaining permission and access. It is obviously very important that the researcher be invited into an organization in order to begin observations, and as well before conducting interviews and analyzing documents. In this study, contact was made with a highly recommended and accomplished facilitator of the Arthurian method. A close contact between the facilitator and I was set in place and included both e-mail correspondence and telephone conversations on a regular basis with regard to details of the data collection phase. As well, I initially spoke with Arthur Hull who is the founder and creator of Village Drum Circles and its facilitation methods, and he granted me full and enthusiastic permission to study his methods as well as record and present findings. As the sole researcher, I have been and will continue to be open and honest with all points of contact within the organization, and provide any information required as to ensure ongoing access and permission.

It is important to ensure that there have been completely accurate accounts of information. In this write up and final presentation of the results, I have outlined the study design as clearly and in as much detail as possible, so as to allow the reader to make their own decisions about its effectiveness at collecting valuable information for

this particular area of research. It is also very important that the researcher be clear on his or her views and perceptions in the world and more specifically subject matter, and how these could have potentially slanted the research. As a musician, I do believe in the power of music in its ability to unite people in community. I also believe in the power of the expressive arts as a way to let go of a lot of pent up emotion and other issues. In essence, I believe in the power of what the Arthurian method facilitates. As such, my open and constantly reflective nature allowed for constant conversation in staying as grounded to the actual data and literature as possible. As the researcher, I am also aware that there are possible biases that may present themselves unknowingly and unintentionally, and have presented findings and analysis as they truly presented and manifested themselves within the data. I have done this by using many direct quotes from participants and presenting the data directly within the next chapters.

In chapters four, five and six, I have presented the findings of this study, including discussion and analysis while linking these back to the literature and rationale for this study. In doing so, the research question has been addressed and implications, future research suggestions, and conclusions have been drawn.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

The research question in this study was focused on the specific facilitation methods of a particular rhythm circle service provider, and the ways in which these methods led participants toward experiences associated with *communitas*. In order to unpack the findings of this study to extract deeper understanding, the metaphor of an iceberg will be used to aid in the framing of the presentation of findings. It was found that there were many layers to each event regarding the facilitation of these methods. As the facilitator explained in our initial interview, “The whole thing is what we are seeing is as he [Arthur] says, the tip of the iceberg. There’s so much underneath it, that its, that’s what I’m relying on. All that stuff underneath...” Based on this quote, Chapter Four will represent what was found on the tip of the iceberg, while Chapter Five will unpack and extract what was found beneath the surface with regard to specific facilitator methods.

Chapter Four will include descriptions of both facilitated rhythm circles as they were seen, heard, and felt. This chapter is a description piece to aid readers in picturing rhythm events of this study, as well as gaining a sense of participant experiences of these events. Chapter Five will present a conceptual diagram of this method of facilitation as each important piece of the method emerged from the data. This diagram will help frame the organization of Chapter Five, and each of these pieces within the diagram will be unpacked and analyzed for deeper meaning and understanding. Chapter Five will outline some practical implications for facilitators who wish to understand this specific system of guiding group experiences associated with *communitas* and will be linked to the facilitation literature. Finally, in Chapter Six I will present a summary of contributions

from this study as well as address some potential delimitations overall, ending with a discussion of suggested future research and conclusions. Chapter Four will now begin with descriptions of the two facilitated rhythm events within this study to explore what was found on the tip of the iceberg, and will end with descriptions of participant accounts. These descriptions will aid readers in moving toward an understanding of how these experiences manifested as a result of intentional facilitation of the Arthurian method in guiding participants toward experiences associated with communitas.

Describing Facilitated Drum Circles

Young and old alike, they followed their guide precisely. United through a collective rhythm, individual expressions blended into a symphony of souls. Their music transcended all boundaries. Limitation, disability and difference disappeared. They were whole again, individually and as a community. It was more than a drum circle; it was a circle of life... Who are the facilitators? While some have formal music backgrounds, others do not. You're bound to find music therapists and educators along with a myriad of unique representatives and evangelists from various fields. Many are experts in their respective arenas...Recreational Music-Making promotes self-expression, camaraderie, nurturing, exercise and creativity. Years of music instruction and steep learning curves are unnecessary. Participants are simply asked to bring their enthusiasm, love of music and a willingness to share the rhythms of their soul...According to Christine (co-founder of Remo HealthRhythms), "Their rhythms were unique but their expressions were not. The joy of making music together was reflected in our energy and smiles. Seemingly two different worlds came together as one in sound and spirit. Whether in Hong Kong, Tokyo, Taipei or Seoul, drumming proved to be a social elixir, creating a sense of cohesion and excitement despite language differences." (Dr. Barry Bittman, MD, 2001)

The above vignette outlines a description of recreational music making, and provides a starting point for readers in conceptualizing these experiences. This chapter will be description rich, moving the reader toward a visualization of the specific events in this study. For the purposes of this study, it is to be noted that the terms "recreational music making", "music circle", "rhythm circle", and "drum circle" are all used

synonymously, and represent a group of people creating music together in-the- moment. For the purposes of the next chapters, the facilitator within this study will be referred to under the pseudonym “Anne”.

One issue to address is whether or not communitas could have occurred without the facilitator employing these specific methods. One could assume that depending on the make up of the group and various external factors, it would be very possible. As Turner believed, experiences of communitas are very spontaneous and dependent on the sum of the collective as well as various external factors, making these experiences very difficult to facilitate (1969). Even with intentions set, communitas can never be guaranteed as there are multiple factors beyond the control of the facilitator and individuals of the group (Hull, 2006). Facilitation then can be defined as “a making easier”, and as Vidal (2004) furthered is, “a purposeful intervention in a social process, a designed process” which “becomes an art when a synergistic effect is achieved” (p. 394). Specific to this study, the Arthurian method was found to provide a framework for *making easier* or *more likely*, experiences of communitas through group drumming events. In understanding the role of the facilitator within these events, Anne described the differences in facilitated and non-facilitated events:

A facilitated drum circle as opposed to a [non-facilitated] drum circle is one that is kept in motion, its kept going. If you go to the beach and see a bunch of kids all playing, and they're all, you know, playing along, and they play for a while and then it sort of dies down, or you have a train wreck when it gets too fast and nobody can keep up, um, or if somebody else comes in and brings in a new rhythm pattern or a new type of music, those can fall apart and don't hang together for a long time. But a facilitated circle, all facilitate means is to make easy, and all I'm doing is making it easy for first of all people who have never experienced any music making together, never done any kind of group music

making, or even any group things together. I'm making it easy for them to join together, doing something together. (Initial Interview)

As a facilitator then, Anne's intentions were to make easier these musical connections, and in so doing, create group synergy and connection. A more thorough investigation of specific facilitator intentions and how they manifested will be addressed within Chapter Five, but for now I have provided the reader with two descriptive accounts of the two rhythm circles which took place in this study.

Circle One: Living Room Rhythm. People began arriving at the first rhythm circle individually. They took off their shoes at the front door of the facilitator's house, peeked around the corner and some exclaimed, "oooooh, so many instruments!" They were commenting on the large spread of fun looking toys that the facilitator had laid out all around the dining room of her house. On the table were about sixty different bells, shakers, woods, as well as some other instruments I had never seen. On the floor were big floor bass drums with mallets, African djembes, native drums, and many others that I did not recognize. All were of a size that could be set in front of us, or between our knees to play. Some of the drums were accompanied by mallets; others were to be played with our hands. I saw the look of wonder and excitement, as some of the women ran their fingers over some of the instruments on the living room table. I wondered if they knew what was about to happen, because I sure didn't.

On the hour, and after a social snack and tea, we all gathered in the living room where enough chairs for all of us had been set out. Once seated, I counted eight of us including the facilitator. Ages seemed to range between 23-60, and all of us were female. It turned out that only one of the other participants in the room had ever been to anything

like this, and five people had no experience drumming at all. Two of the women were music teachers, one was a choral singer, and everyone else seemed to believe that they were not musically inclined at all. The group had come together through an invite from the facilitator, and all commented that they were intrigued and were interested in what the experience would be like.

I looked around and I could sense that the women in the circle were a bit uncomfortable and stiff; people were shifting in their chairs, quiet and not making eye contact. Some had their hands clasped in their laps; others were fidgeting with their hair or looking at their watches. Based on questioning following the circle, I realized that no one had known each other prior to the event. Luckily our facilitator seemed calm and happy. She was smiling and energetic, and sincerely seemed joyous to be there. Her presence instantly put me at ease.

She began the event by handing out cards to each of the group members. Each card read “body beat” in a certain colour on one side, and there was a specific rhythm pattern explained on the other. It was a simple exercise that allowed the group to get loose and practice simple rhythms using just their bodies to make sounds such as clapping, knee slapping, and snapping. It also got them listening to each other and working together because they were building a rhythm together. When it wasn’t in sync it was very audibly noticeable. People began to smile and laugh when they made mistakes, but also when it came together and sounded like one song. Next they were told to get up and stand shoulder to shoulder in a circle. They were handed a shaker each, and began passing their shakers to the person next to them in the circle to the beat of a rhythm set by the facilitator. As they got going, the facilitator began to speed up the beat, and as it got

faster, they all went from extremely concentrative to laughing and giggling as shakers began to fall on the ground and the rhythm fell apart. By this time everyone in the circle seemed a bit more relaxed and seemed to be having a good time. There were smiles on the women's faces, and as everyone took their seats I noticed that postures weren't so stiff, and smiles were being exchanged across the circle. From there, the group was instructed to grab the drums that had been put in front of them. The facilitator led the group through an introduction to the drum and simple playing techniques, and then had the group play around a bit. Next, they played a game where they said their names, then played them on the drum according to how it sounded. It was a neat way to demonstrate that everything has rhythm, and everything can be played musically. The facilitator then had the group layer three of the names on top of each other by splitting up in smaller groups and having each play one of the three rhythm patterns. When it came together, it sounded like a song! Some people were laughing and smiling, while some were concentrating, eyes focused straight ahead or down at their hands. From here, she instructed people to individually add a note or take one away, but still on beat to the rhythm. It was really neat to hear the different sounds that came together in the song. There was definitely some order to the music in the form of a steady beat, but everyone in the circle was playing a different rhythm pattern to that beat. When played all at once, it sounded much like an orchestra sounds with all of the different parts making the collective song what it was, the difference in this case was that everyone in this circle was playing a drum. Finally once everyone was comfortable, she set everyone free to play whatever they wanted, either to stay in the guidelines of the name patterns, or do and experiment with what they wanted and felt comfortable with. The group jammed like

this for a while, and everyone was really straight faced at some points but smiling at others. The time seemed to fly by. Rhythms changed, grew, got louder, got quieter. Nearing the end, Anne changed things up and introduced the circle to new wood instruments in the shape of crickets and frogs, and empowered the group to play around with these new instruments. Everyone was smiling at the new sounds and song that they were creating. In another transition, the group was introduced to long plastic tubes called “boomwhackers”. These instruments were tuned to the pentatonic scale, so that when played in combination rhythmically, a song with different tones also emerged. The group played around with these new toys for a bit, and then finished with a game involving instruments called chime bars. Each was tuned to a different note in the same scale, and they had a really lovely, relaxing sound to them. They sounded really pretty when played in combination, like differently pitched wind chimes played in an organized rhythm pattern. Finally, the facilitator asked everyone to play individually how they were feeling on the drum head. Many just rubbed the top of their drums softly, showing that they felt peaceful and calm. Some rumbled very lightly, and some played energetically to show their excitement at what had just happened. The group disbanded after about an hour and a half, and after the focus group had ended we all said our good byes. Many new friends hugged, lingered to chat longer and learn more about each other, and some exchanged contact information. The facilitator said thank-you, and we were all happy, calm, and thankful for the experience.

Circle Two: Rhythmical Uni-versity. The second circle was organized for a large group of both male and female students at a Canadian University, and the final count of the group was at 47 once the event began. They came from residence on campus, and

were invited by the event coordinator for the residence staff. Once we had set up our circle in an empty room at the University residence building, the facilitator and I began to lay out all of the woods, bells, and shakers on a big table by the door. Once these were all laid out, we began strategically laying out different types of drums at the foot of every chair. The facilitator explained that for a full sound, it is important to start off by dispersing the different instruments around the room so that two like drums aren't beside each other if it can be helped. It is also important to space out the big bass floor drums with mallets I was told, as these are the foundation of any rhythm circle and keep the steady beat for everyone else to find in the song if they get lost or lose the rhythm of the collective.

As students began coming in, it was instantly obvious that this group was a bit more relaxed and ready to play than the first group. It also appeared that some of these participants were already acquainted. The first students to arrive looked at the facilitator with their instruments in hand, and she assured them happily that they were free to play. Once given permission, they immediately grabbed an instrument that appealed to them, sat down, and just started playing. As the other students continued to filter in, they surveyed the situation, grabbed their own instruments, sat down, and started to play along with the others. The group played like this for about ten minutes before the facilitator said another word or even made herself known. Already the song was coming together. It would get loud, then quiet, then fast and it would change altogether as people played around with different rhythms to the same beat. After ten minutes, the facilitator stepped into the middle of the circle and called everyone to attention by raising one arm and finger in the air and slowly spinning in a circle while making eye-contact with each

person in the group. It was very obvious that we were about to be instructed in some way. Then, with a count of four on her fingers, she motioned a theatrical “stop”, and on a dime the music cut. It was very powerful. Next, she began explaining a metaphor about the different instruments making up a village, and how the bass pulse is the foundation. She picked one student and gave him the job of “rhythm master”. He was to be the pulse of the circle; the one to keep the timing and rhythm together and consistent. He smiled and seemed pretty happy to have been picked for such an important job. She showed him the pulse she wanted by moving her body to a steady rhythm and counting. Once the pulse was going, she led the group in and out of different rhythms, volumes, rumbles, all with body language and a bit of verbal communication.

Throughout the circle she would empower us to make up our own rhythms to the pulse, and listen to each other to fit ourselves in. We spent a lot of time just improvising, but when the music started to lose the beat and become chaotic sounding, she would be right back in the middle using different techniques to bring it back together. A few times she came into the circle and began switching the instruments around to give people a chance to play something else. This was really fun because it kept things new and interesting. People were laughing, smiling, and dancing in their seats along with the facilitator when she was in the circle guiding us. When she was outside of the circle, she made sure that she was no longer the center of attention. The drumming itself took on its own life, and people became seemingly focused; many had their heads down or were staring straight ahead in concentration, while some smiled at others across the circle. It was extremely powerful with all of the different sounds and instruments, but when it really came together it sounded like a song that came together made up of different parts,

and it clicked. When that happened, it seemed like time seemed to disappear, and became lost and absorbed in-the-moment. The facilitator seemed to let these moments draw out and become what the group together decided they would become. I could hear the music change, sometimes speed up, but once it clicked it seemed to flow naturally. Eventually each time, the music would begin to unravel and somehow become disconnected. It was audible, and people would begin looking up from their seats at each other seemingly trying to figure out where they fit within the song. I could tell that people knew it was off, but either didn't know why or didn't know how to fix it. Some people began shifting in their chairs and looking around. My neighbour to the left looked down at my hands, and I felt my self make a face that reflected my saddened and frustrated acknowledgement of an impending musical catastrophe. I knew I had no individual control to reconnect the group. This is when the facilitator would come in and aid in bringing us back together. She would raise her hands in the air, move to a pulse she felt within her body, and as we all centered on her main pulse, guide us back to synchronicity. Instantly I would feel better as the music came back together. The circle ended with an extended period of time in which we were improvising and connecting musically to a song that sounded wonderful. The facilitator came into the middle of the circle and brought us to a rumble using body language; she wanted us to mimic the movements of her hands which were beating fast back and forth at the air. She raised the volume up, then down, and then up again using a thumbs up, thumbs down signal...then faster and faster and faster by setting the pulse with her arms...then, on the count of four, she jumped in the air and did an enthusiastic "STOP" with her body and arms. Instantly the room was silent. Many people giggled, some whispered "Whooooa" and "wow", but all seemed to be reacting to the

power of that moment and the overall experience. The facilitator thanked everyone for coming, and everyone shouted their enthusiasm and clapped to show their appreciation.

It took a while for people to filter out of the room after this experience of group music making which had lasted for over an hour, and many of the students stuck around to help us clean up chairs and instruments. I experienced a feeling of bonding and connection to those in the room, and people lingered to chat about how great a time they had and how thankful they were for the experience.

The Surface Dive

Now that readers have an understanding as to what facilitated group drumming is and what occurred in the circles specific to this study, I have provided some of the descriptions of experience as reported by participants in a focus group setting after each event. By unpacking these various individual points of view characteristic of a phenomenological approach, this lead to an interpretation of the commonalities among participants of the overall group experience of these drumming circles. In looking at these various accounts, it will be addressed whether experiences associated with *communitas* seemed to occur, as well as what affect participants described the facilitator as having on these experiences. It is to be noted that as a facilitator of a particular phenomenon, one can never “make” an experience happen for a particular group or individual, but that certain parameters may be set and negotiated.

To revisit the literature, Turner (1969) described some characteristics of *communitas*. In *communitas*, people fully engage and surrender, express themselves creatively, and connect to their authentic selves, while simultaneously forming unspoken feelings of group cohesion and bonding. Sharpe (2005) added that visually speaking,

there is a reduction in differentiation among group members, an apparent loosening of social conventions, playfulness, an ethic of cooperation, and expressions of emotional attachment. Below are comments on participant experiences found within the data. They have been organized by themes which emerged from the data, and many are similar to those themes described above in regards to characteristics of *communitas*.

Having been defined, described, and studied in various contexts and liminal leisure (liminoid) spaces within Western culture, it is again important to address that these experiences can only be understood and then interpreted from the recollections of participants themselves as characteristic of a truly phenomenological approach. In the literature this was described as “Ideological *Communitas*” and outside of the actual experience itself. It is retrospective account where one seeks language to reiterate that experience; the merging of action and awareness (Turner, 1982). It is a feeling that can only truly be understood once felt, and it is considerably hard to find the most fitting language to describe verbally (Turner, 1982). It is within ideological *communitas* that one attempts to describe this experience given the limitations of verbal language as the forum for expression.

Due to the elusive nature of these experiences, it is not possible nor particularly crucial to state that moments of *communitas* occurred as fact for individuals. Instead, understanding the varied and collective experiences of participants in this particular study as they relate to characteristics of *communitas* will provide an understanding as to the affects of the facilitator in guiding individuals within the group toward these experiences.

Rhythm Circle Reflections: The Experience

Before looking specifically at participant descriptive accounts within this study, Anne offered her observations as a facilitator as well as rhythm circle participant. When asked what the experience is like for her as a facilitator when everything clicks musically and synergistically within the group she described, “It feels um...it feels like a smile. It feels lovely to have; it feels like a sigh, or relaxing...” (Anne, Initial Interview). When asked to summarize the collective observable experience of participants in the events she has facilitated, she shared, “I look at the pictures, people are in, they’re totally relaxed, and they’re just like in this state of bliss, you know they’re just relaxed and feeling at ease” (Anne, Circle One Interview). Finally, when commenting on her own experiences as a participant within facilitated circles, she described, “At ease...I feel like I’m in that yogic state, like I’m in another world. Just very very relaxed, in another world state” (Anne, Circle One Interview). This corresponds with a comment made by a female in Circle One of this study, in which she stated “I think that’s what is so nice about it is that you’re not thinking. You know, what happened happened an hour ago before I came, is gone.” When asked if she had ever felt this phenomenon of *communitas* as she understood it, Anne explained,

I have definitely experienced this *communitas* while facilitating and being facilitated. It is a feeling of togetherness without words, a conversation through the instruments. I have experienced this many times at the large circles at the Seattle Rhythm Festival where there are about 300 to 500 people all playing what they want or can, from their own spirit. I have also experienced it many times facilitating people in schools, elder care facilities and corporate events. (Anne, personal communication)

Overall, these experiences seemed to have positive affects on the participants within the study. One female in Circle One described, “It was lovely. It was relaxing and energizing all at the same time.” After examining the data for emergent themes, this state

of bliss, or other worldly state in which “what happened an hour ago seemed to disappear” will be more deeply unpacked for understanding as to participant experiences below.

Engulfed and Absorbed. Within the data, moments of engagement and absorption in the task at hand became apparent within focus group data as well as through visual observations. As a participant and an observer, I saw and heard that the longer the beat of the music would remain in the same pattern and connected, people would seem more intense and concentrative. I noticed that some of the participant’s eyes would become very focused on one spot, and yet they would seem very distant at the same time. The participants in each circle outlined this as part of their experience as well. One male in Circle Two stated,

I kind of lost track of time for the whole thing, and I was just like wait, it’s over? Like I was totally ready to just keep on going. I was in the zone.

This concept of absorption and timelessness is also indicative of flow and communitas experiences, and are the outcome of the ability to engage and surrender in the task and experience at hand (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). Typical participant comments were:

I was listening to make sure I was on beat. But then once you felt it, it was just like, you had to...you had to fully engulf yourself in the beat I found to like keep yourself on beat. (Male, Circle Two)

The intimidation of actually just playing a drum you know, like sounds would come out of it and you don’t know like, you’ve never played before, you don’t know how it’s going to sound, or what it’s going to be about, but its like you kind of get this feeling where like you can, you just get engulfed in it” (Male, Circle Two).

And then once it becomes sort of automatic, you do kind of lose yourself. (Female, Circle One)

I think the only time for me when I was not absorbed was when I was like changing instruments, because that would kind of take me out of where I was and what I was playing. And then I would come back into something new, and it would kind of like remove me from what was going on just for a second to get familiar with what I was playing, and then I would get re-absorbed. (Female, Circle Two)

“Absorbed, yeah.” (Female, Circle Two)

Participants seemed to become absorbed and lose themselves in the overall sound and experience of the circle and one female in Circle Two explained that “things would sort of drift off...and like, you’re playing or maybe you’re not, or whatever, but you’re just part of the whole beat.” Finally, a male participant in Circle Two stated “Yeah, you’re just fully in it. Yeah.”

In order to fully engage in a particular task, one must focus attention on the task itself (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). In other words, to fully engage means to become absorbed in the task and experience at hand. In order to be completely engaged in the moment, there needs to be a surrendering of the self; a ‘letting go’ of anything else that might distract from the experience. This requires a fairly unwavering level of trust of one’s own inherent capabilities; that one will still be able to complete the task at hand if one is to surrender to an internal ability that seems to come second nature from within the self (Csikszentmihalyi). These elements are characteristic of both flow and communitas experiences. Beyond this apparent surrendering of the self, the data showed that there seemed to be simultaneous connections both felt and heard amongst group members and the music that was being created.

Connection to others: Sound and Soul. This concept of connecting with others was one theme that emerged in regard to experiences in these rhythm circle events. In

looking at descriptions of experience, the data showed that these connections were both tangible as well as intangible, representing the sound of the music coming together as well as individuals connecting to each other on a feeling level. These two concepts have been broken down as sound and soul.

Sound

In these moments of group connection, elements of cooperation became apparent within the data. When there was visually apparent concentration, it appeared that it was because participants were working together, listening, and trying to connect themselves within the collective sound of the music. Participants had their heads cocked to those around them, making eye contact with other participants, and appeared to be listening to each other intently. Some participants confirmed this observation verbally within their respective focus groups. One woman in Circle Two said, “For someone like myself who has never played a drum before, like I was listening to make sure I was on beat”. Without this cooperation with others in the circle, the music would not be able to come together. A woman in Circle Two said, “When you’re playing, you’re um, always listening to other people, and like playing off of that”. In Circle Two, a male commented, “I guess kinda when you’re in a big group, you can kind of feed off everybody else and try to learn something”. Another woman in Circle two explained that,

Although there was the big group, the people actually directly surrounding you would pick up off each other. Like what one person was doing, three people, four people around them would play like this whole little thing that was part of the big group.

Another participant commented:

Or you’d play off each other. There was someone who lives in my house across the circle, so we’d like work with each other in a

sense of like mimicking each other's beats or complimenting them.
(Male, Circle Two)

The music then became a way for participants to connect on a somewhat tangible level with regards to the sound of the music being communally created. In this way, each person was able to contribute their own unique sound to create a collective song. One female in Circle Two explained,

I guess basically it was the feel. Every person like contributes in their own way when they have a certain instrument that makes a certain sound. So, when it all comes together it sounds really nice.

This quote seems to connect the notion of feeling to that of sound. As mentioned above, this was one of the findings with regard to experienced connections amongst group members. The data that emerged under the theme of this intangible yet "felt" connection will be outlined below.

Soul

As one female in Circle Two stated about the context of group drumming, "I think you're connecting to both self and others." One female in Circle One commented on this overlap by stating "I feel like in a group, it's a connection with other people, whereas when you are drumming alone, it's more like you're connecting to yourself more than anything." One female explained, "I use the instrument to connect with people." This connection to self and others happened simultaneously for me as a participant observer, in that I had to turn inward to allow myself to feel the rhythms I was playing before I could let go to and trust these internal rhythms and enter a flow experience. As a participant observer, I experienced a sense that I can only describe as "finding the common denominator" amongst my fellow in-the-moment music makers. I felt connected to these people, and only conscious of the moment in which I was sharing a part of

myself. This was similar to experiences I have had as a musician on stage with other musicians and has been described similarly within the literature on group musical “jamming” or improvisational music making (Eisenberg, 1990). One male in Circle Two commented on this unspoken connection when he described, “You’d make eye contact with some people...and you’d smile at each other and be like this is so cool, and you wouldn’t have to say anything, it was just like you’re both banging and we were like ‘yah!’” This unspoken cognitive or mutual understanding has been suggested as a characteristic of *communitas*, and was discussed in the review of literature (Turner, 1969). As well, some participants commented on a feeling of synergy that arose as a result of these experiences. One male in Circle Two stated, “There was kind of like this synergy. Like all like the different elements at the same time” to which another male in the same circle commented, “Group synergy...when you get into a group.” Within the literature Turner also described *communitas* as a felt connection representative of the “synergy” participants described.

While it is impossible to know whether all participants experienced *communitas*, Turner (1982, p. 47) explained, “When two people believe that they experience unity, all people are felt by those two, even if only for a flash, to be one.” It seems then as if some of the participants within this study may have encountered experiences of this phenomenon. Before beginning to unpack how the facilitation of particular methods may have affected and shaped participant experience, it is important to address some of the extenuating variables that may have affected group experience beyond intentional facilitation techniques. Some of these variables emerged from the data, although many others likely exist.

Extenuating Variables

As mentioned, specific extenuating variables were found to have potential effects on individual and group experience beyond the intentional actions and attributes of the facilitator. These extenuating variables as they emerged from the data will be addressed below.

Size of Group. The first group attribute to emerge as an influence on the collective experience was the size of the group being facilitated. As Anne explained in an interview following Circle One,

With a group this small, you know, I would have been terrified to do a group this small a couple of years ago...when you facilitate a hundred and fifty people and within about three minutes its all connected and they are all playing together, its way easier because there are more people, there are more instruments, and there's less likely for people to feel inhibited or shy because they are not singled out. There, you know with only eight people, "ahhh!" it is quite scary, because their sound and what they are playing does have more of a major influence on the whole song of the group. Whereas when you have 150 people there's people that will be not on or not doing the thing, or you know playing out of synch or whatever, and you know, it's not as apparent to the total song. And the song sounds different. So it's harder...(Anne, Circle One interview)

With regard to the differences in small and large group participation and the feeling that can emerge she explained, "It's hard with a smaller group, but if you have more people its incredible how you can go and you just sort of lose yourself" (Anne, Circle One interview). I noticed what she meant by this with regard to the differences I experienced as an observer and participant within this study. In the first group, it was a lot more obvious when people were off beat as attention was drawn to the individual. In comparison, in the second circle which was significantly larger, people seemed to feel more at ease in sitting down and joining right in with the collective. One female in Circle

Two explained, “There were so many different instruments, it was easy to just kind of blend in”. Another participant described,

I know I got there late, but um...I just grabbed a drum and it was really easy to just join in. It's kind of scary when there's like less instruments, because then everyone can hear your beat and you're like “Crap! I hope I'm on the same beat as everyone”. But in this group, it was fun. It was really easy to just pick it right up.
(Female, Circle Two)

In the second circle, there were three rows of chairs in a fairly large circle, so it was easy to sit down and not be noticed. In the first circle with only eight participants, there was no where to blend in. Everyone seemed to play a large factor in the overall experience which was heightened by the small group size.

Length of Time. The length of time the facilitator had to work with also emerged as an important factor in the overall experience. In the first circle, some of the women had made prior engagements and had to be finished by a certain time. With such a small group, the music would have been very difficult for the facilitator to keep going in the absence of any of the participants. Due to these limitations, Anne had to rush the experience quite a bit and expressed that had time not played a factor, it may have been a different experience. She explained,

I guess challenging was staying within the time limits you know because it was a small amount of time, and that's very hard. The longer time you have the more you can let it go, and the more you can get them into that relaxed state and let them feel that for longer. So having that, I was sad that we didn't have more time to do that. (Anne, Circle One)

In further expanding on the above explanation, she said, “If you have 15-20 people, and there is no time limit you can go into these, you know you're totally relaxed, and you come out of it and you're all on a different plane” (Anne, Circle One). As I observed in

Circle One, there were moments when the group seemed absorbed in the experience; however I did feel the effect of Anne's time restraints. We were all made aware of these time issues from the beginning, and I noticed Anne checking her watch numerous times throughout the event. In comparison with the second circle, the time restraints affected the flow of the overall event, and I could sense more of a rush in Anne's facilitation. As a result, at some points the event felt choppy with the number of transitions occurring at such a fast pace. The second circle however, did not have any time parameters placed on it, and Anne was able to conclude the event when she decided and when the group seemed ready. In contrast to circle one, the overall flow seemed to benefit from an open time parameter.

Willingness of Participants. The level of resistance of participants was another factor that I noticed and Anne commented on as having an effect on the overall experience. Upon reflection on Circle One, she stated,

I was impressed, that they were willing. I always am. I'm always impressed when they're willing. I always go "pew, this is ok."
Because it's nerve racking before you start.

While Anne did acknowledge the willingness of the first circle to let go and engage in the experience, it was apparent that there was less effort on the part of the facilitator within Circle Two to get the group loosened up and ready to participate. Both groups were willing and open to the experience; however the second group participants were so eager that many sat down and began playing without the facilitator's cue. Anne described of Circle Two,

They were fabulous because they were so ready and willing to, and into it. Ready and willing to let go. Whereas, you know I get a lot of people that are really uptight, that it's harder for them to let go and they just won't, they won't. Until the very end... They just all

jumped right in. So I just felt that it was very easy to get people really ready and willing to do anything.

Age of Participants. A final reflection on this level of willingness and the differences in each group was in regard to the ages of participants. As Anne commented about the second group, "It was wonderful to have kids, people that were so enthusiastic and just ready to participate." It seems to be an automatic assumption that younger generations would be more willing to let go and play, however this is not necessarily the truth of the matter. One woman around the age of 40 in Circle One did address this issue in a story that she told of a previous experience she had with Anne as the facilitator;

You can imagine; there were 80 of us, uptight individuals, you know? Adults with instruments...homemade. And we were led in just this very thing, with our instruments and um, you could see in the beginning it took a while for everybody to get into it...but by the end there was not one person in that room that wasn't totally absorbed in playing, using their instrument in the rhythm we were being led by...and didn't want to stop! Didn't want to stop.

Here she seemed to suggest and highlight the assumption that as adults, the participants she described were uptight in these types of situations. While there was not enough data to be completely certain that age did play a factor, it would be something that future studies might consider in their questioning. It is to be noted again, that populations within this study were somewhat lacking in diversity, and this would be an important point to consider in future studies regarding the breaking through of social segregation. While experiences of *communitas* may be positive for some, it is to be noted that this may not be the case in more diverse populations where certain individuals feel marginalized from the rest of the group, and that experiences of *communitas* may potentially be influenced by group makeup and individual inabilities to step out of everyday roles.

Setting. These rhythm events provided a space in which participants physically removed themselves from their everyday structure, and entered into a room set aside from everyday life which was a scenario conducive to liminal moments. Turner used the term liminality to describe the sphere of life existing betwixt and between the structures, roles, and relationships of everyday life (1982). In other words, liminal experiences are set apart from everyday life within Western culture. More specifically, liminal moments within the realm of leisure has been termed “liminoid” activities in modern societies, and seemingly characteristic to the activities in this study, are often “commodities which one selects...one plays with the liminoid” (Turner, 1982, p.55). MacCannel (1976) stated that leisure “exist[s] at a slight remove from the world of work and everyday life” (p.34). It is to be noted that this act of group drumming in a circular setting in a community of people could would be compared with and equated to the sphere of human ritual by Turner (1982). While in modern tribes these human rituals would occur as integration within communal life, in the modern industrialized world, Turner stated that rituals do exist, “but not intrinsic parts of these liturgical systems” (p. 85). Instead they are chosen, and fit in amongst obligation and duty.

With regard to the actual set up of these rhythm events, Anne explained in our initial interview, “I set up my circle the way that it will work the best...in a sound bowl.” In this circular setting, it was possible to see almost all of the participants from my seat. This contributed to my feeling of community within the group, and there was a focal point within the middle of the circle when the facilitator entered. Managing the experience seemed simplified, as “distracters” or people who are “off beat” become very obvious within the collective as the group is in one spot, creating one song. In this liminal

leisure setting, the facilitator was able to stand in one spot and manage all of the elements of facilitation from there.

Beyond the shape of the circle itself, both events occurred in fairly comfortable locations. The first circle was held in the facilitator's living room, which had a warm comfortable feel. Many participants were able to sit on couches and chairs with pillows, and this may have contributed to the experience. In the second circle, the University students were able to participate in an environment that was familiar to them. This circle took place in a large room on campus, and the instruments and experience were brought to them. While this component of setting was not commented on within participant or facilitator data, it seems important to note from an observational perspective. The effect of setting should be addressed further in future settings.

Finally, the setup of each event itself emerged as an influencing factor. As one woman in Circle One described,

One thing I really liked is that she had everything organized. I came here thinking Oh great, I won't have to do anything right? Because she's got everything out. You know so that gives you a sense of being safe because it is so organized, she's got everything together.

The set-up allowed for us to enter the circle and already feel like there was a level of organization. There were instruments already at our feet, and others laying out on a table close by. Right away I got the impression that there was organization, and all I would need to do was follow instructions. Anne commented,

You know because I place the instruments there, I placed them there for a reason. They were different tones, different sounds. So that they would make an interesting song. Um, that is very important in it" (Circle One Interview).

Understanding the different tones of each instrument, and creating a set-up conducive to creating nice sounding music based on this knowledge was again reflective of Anne's own musicality and as she described, had an affect on the event from both an organizational as well as musical standpoint. From an ethical standpoint, most participants were likely unaware of this intentional set-up and the ways in which it could have affected the overall experience. Similar to Sharpe's (2005) findings in her study on the delivery of communitas in a wilderness adventure setting, this could be debated as decreasing the authenticity or organic nature of the experience for participants as drum placement of purposely contrived. This organization did however contribute to my own feelings of ease as the event began, and thus could also be debated as adding positively to the experience. Perhaps transparency on the part of the facilitator in regards to this purposeful placement would settle this issue for participants.

Other issues of contemplation which did not appear within this study but that should be considered in future studies is the affect of having prior relationships with other participants and the affects this would have on experience. While this might increase the level of comfort for some and thus affect willingness or sense of ease, others might also feel more self-conscious around their peers in this setting. Affects of differing race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender and socio-economic status were other issues that were not addressed directly through questioning, however in each focus group there seemed to be (although minimal) a mix of some of these demographics. Future studies should apply more direct inquiry in regards to these variables and their affects on participant experience and the ability to "shed roles" in anti-structure with others of varying backgrounds and demographics. The final point of consideration is the unique

context of group music creation which the literature suggests might make experiences associated with communitas more conducive to this context.

Group music creation. The literature on improvisational group music making, or ‘jamming’ as Eisenberg (1990) termed it, may provide a unique context in which experiences of communitas are more likely. In jamming situations, individuals lose themselves in the moment and freely express themselves as individuals within the collective. Eisenberg stated, “Like Turner’s (1969) social dramas, jamming experiences occur predictably in a personalistic society where they provide some sense of reintegration into a communal life” (p.146). Eisenberg described these experiences as transcendent, leading to feelings of ecstasy, and furthers that “there is a fragile moment, out of time when alienation and self-consciousness disappear, and participants ‘stand in relation’ to one another as total human beings” (p. 147). He listed that the four essential characteristics of jamming are: it is transcendent, embraces diversity, is fragile, and can be risky. This strongly relates to the literature when describing experiences of communitas. In guiding individuals and groups toward the ability to create improvisational rhythmical music together through the Arthurian method, the literature seems to suggest that Anne was also guiding the group toward potential experiences of communitas. This highlights that group drumming was the means by which Anne then guided group to experiences associated with communitas. Other leisure providers might utilize other means (although potentially less conducive to these experience), such as group painting, dancing, or any other group creative experience.

In the next chapter I will begin unpacking experiences from the point of view of facilitation and the practical components of these methods of facilitation as they emerged

from the study. These findings will be linked with the facilitation literature and explained for significance.

CHAPTER FIVE

BELOW THE ICEBERG: THE ARTHURIAN METHOD

Chapter Four provided a description of the events of this study to aid readers in picturing what occurred during each rhythm event in this study. Participant experiences were also unpacked and compared with characteristics associated with *communitas*. It is to be noted here that studying the facilitation of experiences associated with *communitas* was a difficult task. It is felt that studying this within the structured and bounded parameters of a rhythm circle event provided a fairly clear cut way to investigate systems with regard to negotiating group experience. While facilitation of group experience in a more open system presents a challenge in tracking and noting all of the various factors that go into facilitating group experience (as seen in Sharpe's (2005) study on wilderness adventure), this rhythm circle context provided a concentrated depth of information and seems transferable in many ways to those more loosely bound group experience facilitation contexts. All of the data collected happened within the hour time line of each of the two rhythm circles, and thus group processes, actions, reactions, etc...were easier to note as a whole picture. In capturing this overall picture, I have used the metaphor of an iceberg in diving deeper and unpacking some of the depth that was found to exist below the iceberg surface described in Chapter Four. Chapter Five will now dive below the surface of the iceberg of experience to unpack the data as it pertained to the specific methods of facilitation in this study in guiding participants toward experiences associated with *communitas*.

Similar to Sharpe's (2005) study on the delivery of *communitas* in an outdoor adventure setting, the Arthurian method has been found to provide a "collection of

strategies...used to generate communitas that also allowed for the maintenance of the leisure oriented qualities of fun, relaxation, and freedom of choice” (Sharpe, p. 257).

From interpreting the data, it was found that there were a great many intricacies which contributed to group experience and the facilitation of this specific method in moving participants towards experiences associated with communitas. As a beginning snapshot

Anne explained,

...the knowledge of body language, the knowledge musically of different sounds and dynamics of instruments, the abilities...I mean all the stuff I learned from Arthur. The instruments, the use and ability to do something out of a transition, that whole knowing when to go in and not go in and um, I guess its just the experience too. I think the [Arthurian] training and my experience has helped me do that. (Anne, Initial Interview)

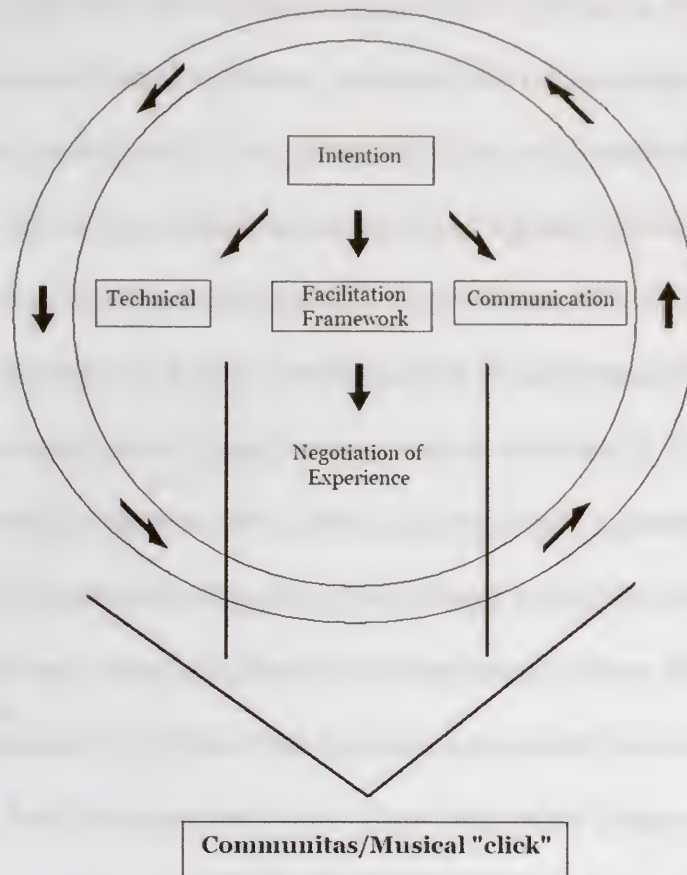
When asked to describe the way in which she facilitates an event, Anne explained,

...basically I use Arthur's method... I have a drum call, I invite people in and I have, um I have somebody playing, begin by having it, there's no real form at the beginning, and then when everybody is sort of assembled, the only form there is I have a main beat, and I introduce instruments to people and I try to keep people going on that underlying beat, and then I'll do a bunch of icebreakers to break the ice, to help people feel relaxed in the situation and make some jokes and do something like that just to make people feel at ease, and then introduce different instruments at different times and different tools and techniques that we've been taught. Very simple, simplistic, but brought in at the right time, it has to be brought in at the right time to be able to work and sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't work...its so changeable. But basically it's following the different tools and techniques...and bringing them in whenever they are needed. Whenever you can see that they are needed. (Anne, Initial Interview)

In this statement Anne described a general overview of the Arthurian method as she applies it in the facilitation of rhythm events. From these quotes, it becomes apparent that

the method in her opinion is made up of not only tools and techniques but also different concepts regarding the system of delivery and the constant negotiation of experiences during each event. The following analysis and discussion of events within this study will be organized and based upon emergent themes found within the data and represented below in diagram 5.1 entitled “System of Facilitating Group Experience”. Each piece of the diagram will be individually unpacked for deeper understanding as it applied to this study, and will also be linked to the literature. Discussion will be generated throughout. By the end of this chapter readers will understand each part of the facilitation method as it emerged from the data, as well as how each of these pieces fits within the greater picture. By the end of this chapter, the reader will also have a greater understanding as to how the facilitator in this study intentionally and continually guided and empowered each individual and the group as a whole toward experiences associated with *communitas*. Upon unpacking, analyzing, and discussing findings as they relate to diagram 5.1, practical implications will be summarized to inform the literature on the facilitation of group experiences associated with *communitas*. These main contributions will be summarized in Chapter Six.

Diagram 5.1 System of Facilitating Group Experience



The above diagram was created based on data and findings from the two rhythm events in this study. This diagram presents a visual depiction of those findings as they emerged as themes within the data. From here, each theme is organized within the diagram as it stands alone, but it is to be noted that each of these pieces existed simultaneously during each event. It was found that there were many facets of the overall facilitation; the importance of intentions and framework, as well as process, technical, and communication competencies all came together to create the experience for participants.

As the review of literature described, facilitation can be defined as “a making easier”, and as Vidal (2004) furthers is, “a purposeful intervention in a social process, a designed process” and “becomes an art when a synergistic effect is achieved” (p. 394).

Specific to this study, the Arthurian method was found to provide a framework for *making easier or more likely*, experiences associated with communitas through group drumming events. As discussed in the rationale for this study, much of the facilitation literature centers on the successful task completion of a group (whether that is a tangible outcome or developmental goal) (Bens, 2000; Priest & Gass, 2005). The focus of these particular methods however, was the system itself of socially integrating a group and creating positive experiences of group synergy. Again, while much of the leisure literature acknowledges these positive effects of group leisure experience, there seems to be a gap in providing understanding of systems through which practitioners may more ably foster group experiences associated with communitas (Sharpe, 2005). Diagram 5.1 provides a comprehensive outline of this framework or system that emerged from the data, and will be briefly summarized below. Each piece of the diagram will be linked to the literature in more depth and will be unpacked individually following the summary below.

As diagram 5.1 suggests, the intention of the facilitator emerged as an important piece of the overall experience. In a personal communication, Anne explained “I think that intention is a huge part of my facilitating, especially the more I do this...It helps keeping you centered and on course with your population and their needs.” The facilitator within this study was clear about her overall intentions of these events: to create an audible, musical synergy, as well as a ‘felt’ synergy at the group level. Without a set intention, the facilitator would have had no guide posts for her actions. In this way, there were simultaneously both tangible and intangible ways in which to measure if intentions

were manifesting (the sound of the music as well as visual cues of participant cooperation and connection).

From these set intentions within this study, Anne utilized a very specific system of facilitation during which she had learned and honed through her training and practice of the Arthurian method. Throughout each rhythm circle, Anne continuously negotiated variables to ensure a fluid experience for the group. Anne used her ability to read the group, make judgments, and act accordingly in-the-moment to encourage people and draw them “out of themselves” in order to surrender to their own internal rhythms, connect with each other, and engulf themselves in the music. The technical competencies crucial to these experiences were Anne’s knowledge of methods, as well as minimal drumming technique by participants and musical ability of the facilitator. The final pieces of the diagram then, were the structured framework of implementation as well as the way in which experiences were negotiated from moment to moment, and finally the communication competencies required by the facilitator in delivering these methods. It was found within the data that these negotiations were intentional in guiding the groups to musical connection in attempts to create optimal synergistic group experiences. This entire method and the ways in which it was employed within this study will be unpacked below. In understanding these methods, facilitators may more clearly understand the ways in which optimal group experiences may be facilitated through specific methods.

The Importance of Intention

With a set intention as a starting point, specific aspects of the method could then be implemented for each event. Anne’s specific intentions in the events of this study were as she described,

What I want is that everybody will be playing together in synchronicity and able to hopefully listen, be able to listen to each other, and make music, just make some beautiful music together. And in fact within that, become a community because you do ...even with people you have never talked to before, you don't know them at all. At the end you've played music with them, you've connected with them by nonverbal means, and you've made a huge connection just by playing music. (Anne, initial interview)

When asked what a successful facilitation would result in, she answered, "Everybody communing, being able to release for themselves" and described that,

I mean of course you can get that when you are drumming individually. But I find it is more powerful when you are in a group of people all in synchronicity...it is just that more much satisfying because you have connected with those people through music...yeah...through a nonverbal way, through a spiritual...it's really spiritual.

In a personal communication she described further;

I certainly see faces relax, eyes close and bodies sink into the chair. I see, hear and feel people connecting with the group as a musical community so I guess that could be on a spiritual level...it certainly is magical when everyone is in synch.

The word spirituality itself has many connotations, negative or positive depending on one's own personal definition or interpretation of the word. In this context, spirituality may be described as the feeling of connection to one's own authentic self, spirit, or soul and in this, connecting to the spirit of others (Diamond, 2007). The word 'spirit' then represents the connection to the place inside all beings that is common, and seems to relate to Turner's concepts of *communitas* or 'oneness' (1969). It is recognized that studying such illusive and intangible experience is difficult and left to the effective interpretation of specific individual descriptions by the researcher and readers. The limitations of language and the different meanings placed on language for each individual

person can make interpretation a tough task (Rothe, 1994). This however, is characteristic of a phenomenological approach and has been acknowledged by the researcher.

From the above descriptions, it appears that Anne's intentions were to have participants connect to each other on an individually felt/group synergistic level by way of musical connection during an in-the-moment music making experience. For the purposes of this study, in-the-moment music making will be defined as a spontaneous individual expression of musical creativity, in this case using drumming as the means through which to do so (Hull, 2006a). In this context, these groups of individuals were at various points within each rhythm event, led to the simultaneous creation of an in-the-moment group song and a resulting group spiritual synergy. It was Anne's specific intention to facilitate this phenomenon.

The group synergy which was born of these communal music making experiences and felt in the moment has also been referred to as *communitas* within the literature. Sawyer (2006) explained, "Communitas is unique in the sense that the magical feeling is both personal as well as shared; it is felt within the individual, as well as in the air" (p. 150). People experiencing *communitas* recognize that they are feeling a shared oneness, often describing the phenomena as spiritual in nature, and so it is an internal as well as an external experience (Sawyer). In sum then, *communitas* is felt by the individual while simultaneously being felt by the group in which "each person fully experiences the being of the other" (Turner, 1969, p. 136). It would seem then that there are many similarities between experiences of *communitas*, and the intentions of the facilitator of these events.

Again, the motivations of these methods differ from much of the literature on facilitation in that intentions seem more experience based as opposed to success being

measured by specific task completion or outcomes. These motivations were intrinsic, in which the enjoyment of the activity is found, lived, and experienced in-the-moment. Intrinsic motivation has been linked to experiences of communitas by Turner (1982) within a liminoid (leisure-based) setting of modern culture. Intrinsic motivation is the enjoyment of an activity in-the-moment, or as Wilson explained “a letting-go of the self, a hospitality to the fullness of a new experience, a generous delight in something encountered for its own sweet sake (p. 292).” Kleiber (1999) supported that when an activity is enjoyed intrinsically for its own sake, this makes the experience more authentic by promoting feelings of self determination or autonomy, self-mastery and competence, communion, affiliation, connectedness, and association. With the facilitator communicated notion that whatever each individual felt like expressing was ‘correct’, this showed participants that it was about the enjoyment of the activity and that the end result essentially was the in-the-moment expression of self and group creation. As one woman in Circle One explained,

In improvisational situations it’s really nice when you feel like everything’s a bonus, and if it doesn’t turn out well nobody cares because we didn’t plan anything. But if it sounds cool, well it’s all a bonus. Rather than being less than, it’s always more than. That’s one of the beauties I think of improvisation. Its, so that’s very freeing, it makes you feel more happy to take risks.

This woman experienced improvisation and her own level of empowerment as a freeing experience in which she felt little pressure as to what was considered right and wrong. In this safe environment then, she felt more inclined to take risks and to explore her own self-expression. Below I have provided a diagram which depicts the intentions of the facilitator within this study.

Diagram 5.2 Facilitator Intentions

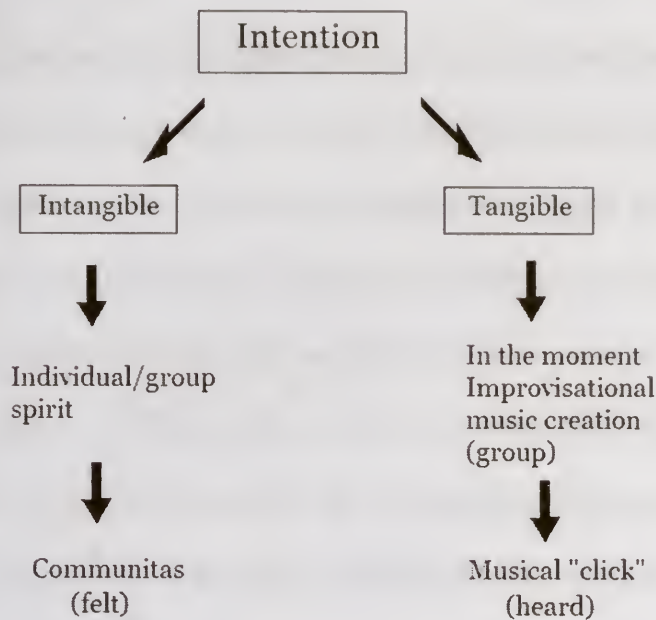


Diagram 5.2 represents both the tangible and intangible intentions set by the facilitator in this study. While guiding groups toward a connection musically in which the song comes together in a satisfying click, the facilitator was simultaneously working with the group to move toward a felt experience of group synergy. Within the data it appeared that these two intentions were linked from the facilitator's perspective. This idea is described in the quote below,

The whole point is to bring out your spirit; your uniqueness and what you have to say through your instrument. And I'm trying to bring that out in you. That's the other thing; I am trying to bring that out in everybody. Bringing out their own special voice to add to the voice of the village. Which is, everybody has a part. If we all sounded exactly the same, it would be very boring. If we all had the same instrument, says Cameron Tummel who is one of Arthur's teachers, he says "you know, what if we all had the same instruments? What would our song be like?" And they go "boring". And he says, "so we all look different, and we all speak differently, and so that's why this is our village, our musical village because everyone has something different to say, and

everybody's allowed to say it. But it comes from your heart. It comes from your spirit. (Anne, Initial Interview)

It becomes apparent through this quote that Anne used the instruments as a means to encourage the expression of spirit that was individual to each person in the group.

Through these individual musical expressions of spirit, her intention was for a group song to emerge through which a village (or community) was born. In this way, Anne intentionally encouraged participants to connect on both a 'felt' or spiritual as well as musical level. While the above quote was not representative of actions specific to this study, it provides an example of how by adding specific metaphors to the delivery of methods, community building and group synergy may also be enhanced. This has been termed "analogous metaphoric transfer" by Priest and Gass (2005), and involves employing discussion to help participants understand the importance and relevance of what they have learned through experience.

These intentions to connect on a spirit level through music guided the actions Anne took throughout each event. With intentions set, she was able to judge in the moment whether or not the group seemed to be connecting through her own intuitions and the sound of the music, and would take action or not based on these judgments. With the intention set, the event now had some element of focus and structure. Next then, the technical components necessary in working with intentions will be addressed as they contributed to the overall experiences in these events.

Technical Competencies

In this particular case of drum circle facilitation, it was found that there were technical competencies required of both participants and facilitator. It was up to the

facilitator then, through her own competencies based on specific trainings and certifications as well as experience, to transfer necessary knowledge to participants (Priest & Gass, 2005). Technical competencies that emerged from this study will be described below.

Drumming was the means through which the Arthurian method was delivered and experienced. From a participant observer perspective, I found that there were many potential reasons as to why this means of group creation was effective in adding to experiences associated with *communitas*. Again, focus was on the experience and not necessarily on specific outcomes of these methods beyond positive experiences alone. Specific characteristics of drumming which supported intentions will be described and linked to the literature below.

Drumming. One of the first actions implemented by the facilitator was an introduction to drumming basics. She kept this introduction very simple and light. She informed us of the names of some of the drums in the room as a background, and then showed us three very straightforward techniques to hit the drum to make sounds. At one point in the second circle, Anne used a metaphor to describe how to hit the drum. As one female participant explained, “When she used her hand and did like the trampoline metaphor...and then started to drum right after that. It was funny and cool.” Using an element of light heartedness and humour, she set the group at ease. This was the extent of the technical skills necessary of participants, and she stressed that it really was an easy thing to do and not to worry about being a professional. As one female in Circle One confirmed this, “Nothing here could sound really bad, really”. Another said, “she [Anne] allowed us to feel comfortable with our instruments, and made us feel comfortable to

try.” In both circles Anne verbally encouraged us to focus on the music and group cohesion, and not our abilities as drummers. From the facilitators’ perspective, technical competencies regarding her own musical abilities as well as her knowledge and training in the Arthurian method emerged and will be discussed below.

Musicality. As one female in Circle One commented, “Musically she just makes us do it...she just makes us hear it and do it...you know, feel it.” To which another female participant added “and the count is easier to play once you feel it.” From my perspective as an observer, I found that Anne’s own sense of rhythm helped me get into the beat. It was quite obvious that she felt the music kinesthetically, which means that she held the beat in her body. I found myself and other participants mimicking her knee bounces and toe taps to a beat and tempo she must have heard in her head. This happened throughout the first circle. Within the second circle, this sense of rhythm came from her exaggerated movements in the middle of the circle. She would use her arms and clapping, as well as stepping back and forth to the beat, and this transferred to me when I was looking to keep time with the rest of the group. In other words, it was as if she acted as a human metronome, both through the sound of her clapping or setting the pulse with whatever percussion instrument she was using (shakers and woods), as well as through connecting to the feeling of the music within her body and transferring that to the group. While perhaps only conducive to this musical setting, this nonverbal ability to transfer knowledge kinesthetically to participants aided participants in finding the overall pulse and added to group ability to reach synergy through music. As a side point of discussion, Sharpe’s (2005) study discussed that one of her findings was the intentional actions of facilitators in setting the tone for participants. In a verbal setting in an open system (i.e.

the outdoors, various tasks, etc.), setting the tone to ensure group connection would not be as seemingly simplistic as in this closed system of the drum circle setting where all eyes could look up to a focal point (the facilitator) if need be. This also shows that participants were very aware of facilitator intentions in bringing the group together, which was another difference between findings in this study and Sharpe's.

In returning to the discussion on Anne's own technical abilities in musicality, in our interviews she did stress that this musical ability was not entirely necessary in the success of a facilitated circle. She described,

There is this one woman here who is a friend of mine who facilitates and she can not hear the beat. And yet she can dance the most...she's an amazingly wild dancer. But she is a very very expressive dancer, and she can dance within the music, and yet when she's stopping the music, when she's facilitating, she'll stop in the middle of the measure. And she doesn't work with a lot of people who are aware of it which is fortunate (haha)... She's a fantastic facilitator! If you were to take her to a facilitator's conference, musically they would go "Oh my God."...And there's another woman she has Parkinson's disease, and she was at the facilitators conference just recently, and she doesn't really facilitate the music, musically at all either, but my God she's one of the best facilitators you've ever seen. (Anne, Initial Interview)

Again, this highlights that there are other factors which contribute to the ability of a facilitator to connect a group beyond one's own musical abilities as a facilitator. While Anne's personal musicality did seem to aid in the facilitation of the particular experiences of this study, the above comments suggest that the level of musicality a facilitator possesses may not be a crucial element. The next section will look at the communication competencies as they emerged.

Communication Competencies

Within the data, it became clear that there was a high importance for clarity and

precision of communication in negotiating these group experiences. Below are the specific communication competencies which emerged from the data and were pertinent to negotiating experiences.

Verbal Language. At the beginning of each circle, Anne took a few moments to explain the very simple basics of drumming that we would need to know within the group. She was very clear in articulating the fact that we needed no prior musical skill or drumming abilities to participate, and was very encouraging in this regard. As one participant described,

Well she didn't use any technical language for one thing, so it doesn't seem like you actually have to know anything. Most people know what she means when she says "hit that" (laughter). Yeah I think any technical terms she used were very much...if you didn't know what they were you probably wouldn't have even noticed. So she really doesn't use any technical language. (Female, Circle One)

This clarity and use of simple language contributed to my sense of ease as a participant, as I did not feel intimidated by my lack of experience in drumming at the time of data collection.

Body Language. The majority of communication used by the facilitator in these rhythm events was non-verbal. With the drumming being fairly loud, it was much easier to communicate with the group using very clear signals with her body language and actions. Anne began with a group rumble signal: legs crouched, arms straight in front of her, waving her hands wildly and excitedly back and forth, up and down. We all seemed to understand what she was trying to convey, as this resulted in everyone rumbling quickly on their drum in a drum roll. I saw that within the group, individuals started to look around at each other and smile at the sounds they were creating together; the

rumbling created intensity to the experience. At another point, with a count of four, arms high in the air counting down on her fingers and making eye contact and smiling at the group, she used exaggerated arm signals to stop the group simultaneously by bringing her arms down on the last beat in an obvious “X” stop motion called a Stop Cut.

In order to sculpt out sections, Anne would use her arms to create imaginary boundaries between specific sections in the group and motioning these boundaries to participants. She was also sure to make eye contact to ensure that individuals were paying attention to her cues. Once these lines had been drawn, she would work with specific sections or sometimes just specific individuals within the overall song being created. She would sculpt out specific sections within the group to ‘stop’, and then began guiding these sections to play deliberate specific parts by demonstrating the beat she had in her head. She demonstrated this beat by clapping, and slowly section by section a very deliberate, well connected song would emerge. I observed as the group smiled and laughed at the sounds and song they were creating, and after a short while, Anne re-empowered the group to move back into creative, individual improvisation by singing “One, two, make up your own!” In this way, she was able to demonstrate to us more of what the group was capable of with regard to musical dynamics, and then set us free to make up our own parts once again. This re-empowerment of the group is also characteristic of true facilitation in that once a facilitator’s job is done, they will fade into the background and only resurface again as needed (Greenberg, 2002).

Another tool Anne used was a body language cue for accent notes. These were implemented in various ways. On specific notes, Anne would use exaggerated arm movements and signal the group to play loudly on the first beat of a measure. Sometimes

she would guide us to do multiple accent notes in a measure. With regard to Anne's use of accent notes to bring the group together, one female in Circle Two described,

And when she would like count us in, and she'd be like ok, one beat this time. And like, on like one we'd all hit one and then it would be quiet, and then she'd go one, two. And it was like completely unison. It was really cool. It was really powerful. There was kind of like this synergy.

Anne ended the second event with a group rumble, in which everyone played quick little back and forth beats on their drum as fast as they could. She raised the volume of this group rumble up by using her body to stand really tall and signaling to her ear to represent volume, while at the same time using her hand as a platform to motion 'up'. Then she would do the same thing to lower the volume, by crouching low and again using her hand as a platform to signal "down". She would raise the volume up then down, up, then down. With one last extended volume up, she gave a count of three with her right arm in the air, and using her fingers to do the counting, she stopped the group dead with a stop cut as described above. It was a very powerful ending, and the participants showed visible signs of excitement in response by laughing, smiling, and some shouting "Yah!" or saying "Whoa".

It is to be noted that the techniques described above were specific to the Arthurian method and as interpreted from the data, were honed through different training programs as well as the practice of these competencies. In other words, Anne implemented these technical competencies through specific means of communication. Through the use of verbal and nonverbal language Anne was able to communicate and guide the group. It also becomes apparent through the descriptions within the above section, that Anne's

personality contributed to the way in which she communicated technical competencies. This finding will be unpacked and described below.

Purposeful Use of Self. On the surface it became apparent that Anne's demeanor or the manner in which she facilitated had an affect on participant experiences. Participants in both circles were asked to describe what was influential about Anne as a facilitator of these events. One woman in Circle One said, "She had the most positive attitude in the room...she was enjoying herself." Another female in Circle One commented, "Well she smiles a lot, so there is a lot of positive reinforcement. Like in her body language and things she does." One male in Circle two felt that,

It also was funny. It was also the element of humour of like jumping up and down, like bringing in the different areas. I think it was more enjoyable as like a activity, like rather than just...rather than getting deep, and being like "Yeah, we are playing drums and we are one." She was like "Yeah! We're playing drums! Let's have a good time!"

As an observer and a participant, I took note of Anne's positivity and enthusiasm as well. She had a boundless energy and a constant smile on her face. In Circle One, it felt like there was a combination of ease as well as energy. She seemed very comfortable and happy to be there, and was excited to share the experience with everyone in the room. She had an endearing quality of overall excitement which manifested as bouncing in her chair at certain points of enthusiasm in Circle One, making jokes, and speaking with excitement in her voice. While she had high energy, she was also able to be very calm and relaxed, speaking in more soothing tones at certain points when the mood was changing in the room. She was engaging, and I noticed that she made direct eye contact with the participants in the room coupled with a reassuring smile quite often.

In Circle Two, she was highly energetic. She spent most of her time facilitating from the middle of the circle. She used quite a lot of body language and big body movements coupled with exaggerated facial expressions to convey to the group what she wanted us to do. As a participant, I found myself mimicking her facial expressions often, and when she would jump or dance I felt the energy she was transmitting to the group which made me more enthusiastic in what I was playing through my instrument.

In Sharpe's (2005) study it was found that hiring of staff was done almost solely on personality over technical ability. This was also reflected in Anne's comments on the different types of facilitators she has seen and lack of musicality, although still creating wonderful experiences for participants. This again highlights the importance of demeanor and personality when facilitating an experience. When asked what she felt about her own attributes as a facilitator, she had the following comments to add about her personality and its effect on experiences:

I like to be positive and encouraging and enthusiastic and I think that really helps. Although sometimes people who are enthusiastic turn people off. They'd rather the person be calm. And so when I go say into the cancer agency, I'm, I don't come across as a great enthusiastic person as much because it's a different situation.
(Anne, Circle One)

The above quote shows that Anne had a very specific intention with regard to the manner in which she facilitated. This manner or demeanor in which Anne facilitated both events in this study did affect the overall experience of the participants as became apparent in Chapter Four. The above quote also suggests that the facilitator based this decision as to an appropriate demeanor on her understanding of the needs of the specific population. This was also a finding in Sharpe's (2005) study as outlined in Chapter Two of this study. With regard to facilitating events in general, Anne further explained,

If you have a smile on your face, and you're engaging with people, and you're interested in them, a major part, most of the time they'll, you know you put it out there and they'll respond. If you go out there and you're timid and shy and not very sure of yourself, they're going to react to that.
(Anne, Initial Interview)

This quote highlights the importance of displaying confidence and the ability to express one's genuine interest and care when working with individuals and groups. Anne described this to be a major part of engaging a group in the activity. As an observer, I noticed that when Anne was smiling, participants tended to smile back as they focused on her nonverbal instructions and encouragement.

Within the literature, mimicry or the act of mimicking others in human behaviour has been reported to be an automatic response to both physical facial expression, as well as the emotions projected and sensed through this expression on varying levels (Sonnby-Borgström, 2002). Within human nature, the literature suggests that there are certain individuals who are very susceptible to the feelings and emotions and the expression of feelings and emotions of others. This characteristic of empathy leads individuals to tune in, sense, and even have their own experience and reactions to and of others. While certain individuals may be more susceptible to the affects of others, this supports the importance in paying attention to such matters in a facilitation setting. Along with this theme of care, confidence, and expression, Anne also mentioned the importance of "sharing herself" as a facilitator, by sharing her spirit and her joy. When asked what makes a good facilitator specifically, she described:

Um, there are so many types of facilitators and you know, at the beginning I thought ok, like being a teacher, this is what a good teacher is, and then I'd see somebody else and go "(Gasp) that person isn't doing what they're supposed to be doing!" And I mean, the same with facilitating. There is this one woman here who is a friend of mine who facilitates and she can

not hear the beat. And yet...she has a wonderfully heartfelt connection with all those people. She works with mentally handicapped people, with well-elderly, with little tiny kids. She's a fantastic facilitator!...she's giving her whole spirit out, letting her whole spirit out there. You know, she's an amazing person, it's her spirit that is out there and I think for me as well, you know I'm not a fantastic drummer, I've just started doing this in the last little while, but I really put myself out there. And I put my joy, people say to me all the time "I see how much joy you get out of doing this". And I guess that's it, I mean I may not be any good, but I give my joy (haha)! (Anne, Initial Interview)

Having a heartfelt and genuine connection with participants again is something that Anne intentionally sets out to do and asserts its importance above. Within the participant comments in Chapter Four, it was found that this sharing of joy as well as taking a genuine interest had positive effects on the participants within this study. As a participant in Circle Two, I personally found myself encouraged and inspired by the positive energy and genuine heartfelt way in which Anne guided us in our music making.

It seems then, that while the connection with participants is truly heartfelt, the facilitator is also very aware of the ways in which her overall demeanor may affect the group. Arnould and Price (1993) also noted this ability of facilitators to "expressively cue" participants to actions, feelings, and interactions in their study on white water rafting. From the quote above, we see that Anne considers that there is a distinction between that heartfelt connection, and the way in which that heartfelt connection is delivered (via her specific manner or demeanor). This brings up a similar debate on authenticity that was also found in Sharpe's (2005) study on delivering communitas in wilderness settings. Authenticity itself is a very elusive concept that is difficult to summarize.

On an individual level, the concept of being conscious of one's own authenticity includes acting in accordance to one's values and beliefs and being true to oneself. Kleiber (1999) discussed the notion of identity congruence, which is similar to authenticity. He suggested that identity congruence occurs when an individual experiences and expresses self consistently across a variety of contexts. This concept of consistency of identity is another way to understand authenticity from an individual perspective. Authenticity, in the context of facilitation, may also involve adjusting behaviours in accordance to the purpose of the interaction or to the needs of each relationship. This purposeful use of self does not necessarily constitute "false-self" behaviour if the self is not being compromised and one intends and perceives their interactions as genuine and heartfelt (Harter, 2002). Trip leaders within Sharpe's (2005) study reported that they had a "home self" and "trail self" with regards to roles they played. Some commented on the resolution of these differences in 'self' in reaching a state where they were able to meet the expectations of their role as a facilitator as well as being authentic and sincere in their actions. This was, as some reported, the way leaders interpreted their own level of genuineness and authenticity.

From a critical standpoint however, changing specific behaviours consciously to evoke a particular outcome or experience for others, could be considered a form of manipulation. This concept of social engineering, or the introduction of planned intervention intended to change specific structures or process, is one of significant ethical debate (Weisband, 2008). Is an experience truly authentic if specific variables have been consciously manipulated in the 'creation' of a social experience? Regardless of the good intentions of the facilitator, an ethical debate could arise with regard to this consciousness

and intention of behaviours, as participants are not aware of this intentional demeanor. Further, participants may attend these events with different intentions for their experience than the facilitator. Much like Arnould and Price (1993) suggested in their study on the group magic created during river rafting adventure, participants may have had vague expectations of the event as they are not equipped to construct images of their experience prior to participating. Some for example, some participants may just be there to bang on a drum and release stress individually and have no idea what they would encounter with regard to the overall group experience. In guiding the group toward a specific intention that is not made clear to participants, there arises an ethical debate in engineering experiences for participants who are unaware of potential outcomes. Any sort of manipulation in which those involved are being led unclearly could be viewed as unethical and inauthentic. With regards to her own concept of personal authenticity in this study, Anne commented,

I wouldn't call it acting at all. I adjust my facilitating to what the group wants. If I arrive in a room of cancer patients I won't jump into a full on energetic fast paced musical piece. I'd see where they're at and facilitate accordingly. When I go into a group of dementia patients I won't ask them to follow a group of difficult call and response routines but guide them into something they can handle. I think of facilitating as being able to turn on a dime to whatever the group is in need of...sort of like my life as a Kindergarten teacher.

From this facilitator's perspective then, it is not a question of authenticity, but a question of reading a group, "meeting them where they are", and responding appropriately to satisfy the needs of individuals and the group. In Sharpe's (2005) study, she spoke of leaders "setting the tone" for trips in the sense that if leaders projected the fact that the trip was going to be a great time, others might feed off of this energy. Findings from this

study highlighted that some trip leaders felt that the staging of the trip made the communitas generated seem hollow and inauthentic. Based on facilitator opinion within this study, authenticity does not seem to be a question from her perspective however it would be interesting to hear reports from participants in regards to perceived authenticity of their experiences upon better understanding the depth of intention and method employed by the facilitator. This would be something that a future study might address.

Regardless of one's particular opinion on the issue of authenticity, Anne makes very clear the importance of demeanor and heartfelt connection with regard to how a group will respond to the facilitator of an event. In another example she described,

I have one friend that um, is very calm...and she's a very large woman, very tall and very calm. And she walks into the middle of the circle and boy, the whole place; everybody just sinks down into the ground. They just go "ahhh this is really nice", because she keeps everything low key and really lovely, and she's fantastic too, but she doesn't ever play the drum. She plays a little tiny shaker. That's all she ever does...The whole point is to bring out your spirit; your uniqueness and what you have to say through your instrument. And I'm trying to bring it out in you. That's the other thing; I am trying to bring that out in everybody.

Within this data, the concept of the group feeding off of the facilitator's energy and overall disposition is an important finding. It seems that Anne understands intuitively how to draw the spirit of others out by reading the population and sharing her own spirit in an intentional fashion. This concept of understanding the needs of the group and adapting one's manner to meet these needs is one that would be beneficial to every facilitator to take into consideration when attempting to bring groups together in experiences of bonding and group cohesion.

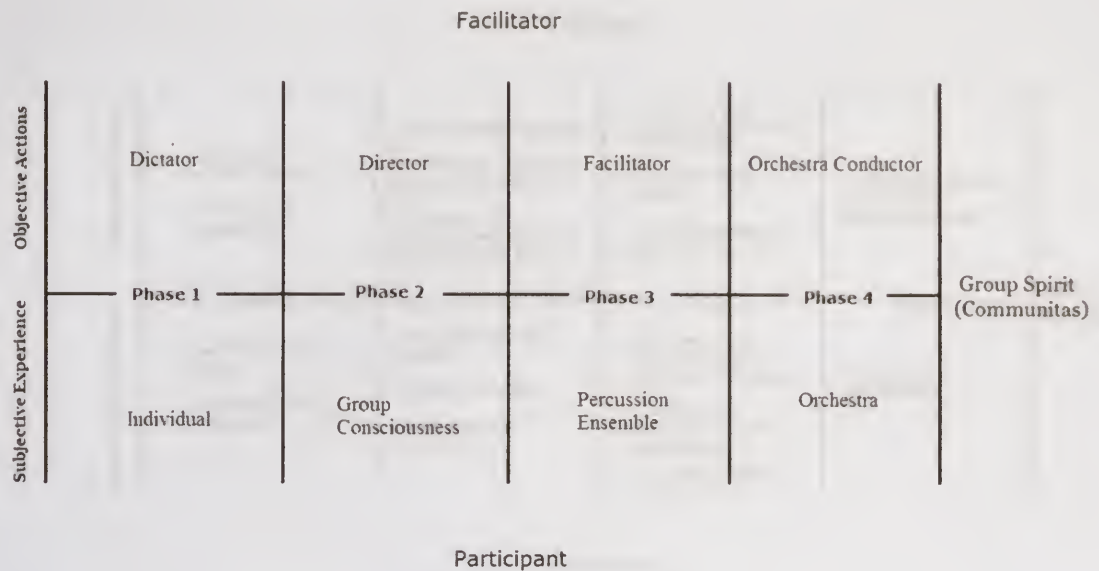
The above three sections have represented some of the concepts and theories involved in and contributing to the overall experience of group drumming. In the next

two sections, I will outline the communication of specific technical and process skills which emerged from the data in the implementation of the Arthurian method in this study.

Facilitation Framework

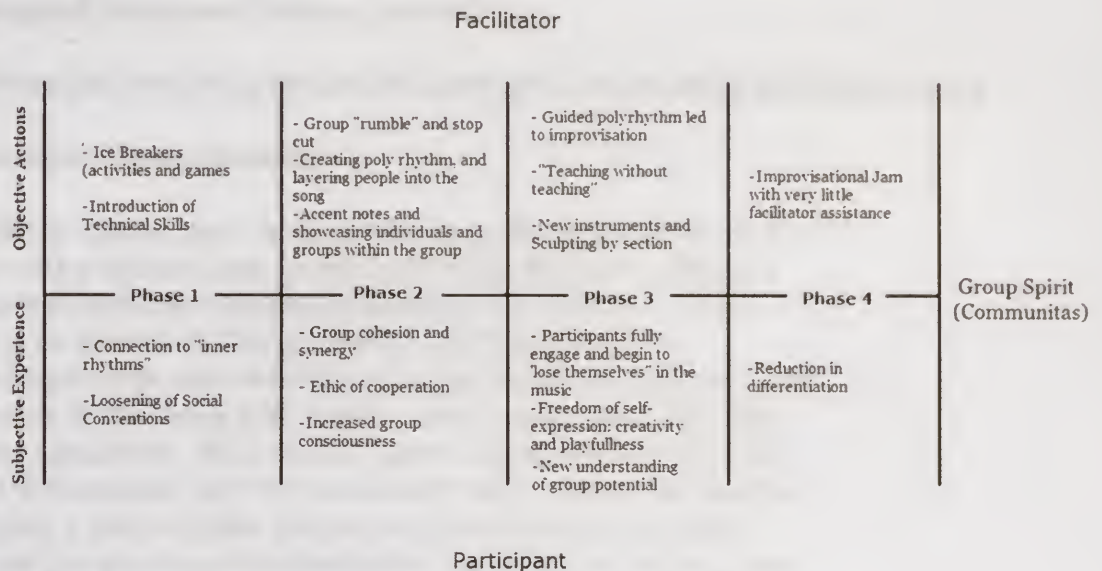
From the data, a systematic framework involving specific technical, communication, and process skills emerged within each event (Bens, 2000; Priest & Gass, 2005, Vidal, 2004). These technical and communication skills have been described above. It was found that there was an intentional framework that Anne implemented in facilitating these experiences. As she explained, “I would say I definitely use Arthur’s anatomy of a circle in every event I do. It is a process from chaos or uncertainty to musical synchronicity” (personal communication). For the purposes of this section then, “framework” will be used to describe the overall anatomy of the event, and “system” will be used to describe the purposeful implementation of subjective facilitator actions along a continuum. This relates to Ringer’s (1999) concept of “containment” in that this framework provided boundaries or a sense of structure during the facilitation of each rhythm event. Diagram 5.3 provides a visual representation of the “Anatomy of a Rhythm Circle” which Anne has mentioned above (Hull, 2006). As the data showed, this anatomy of a circle provided a framework based on which Anne guided each group. This framework will be used to compare with the data in efforts to understand the system of guiding groups toward experiences associated with *communitas* which Anne employed.

Diagram 5.3 Anatomy of a Rhythm Circle (adapted from Hull, 2006)



This diagram, adapted from the data and from literature on the Arthurian method, outlines the skeleton of structure of an Arthurian rhythm event. By going through objective actions of the facilitator within this study as they emerged from the data and linking them to the effects each had on participants, this will provide a map of how experiences associated with *communitas* were intentionally facilitated within this study along a continuum within a framework. This map can be found in diagram 5.4 below. The plotting and interpretation of this information was then confirmed by the facilitator in this study in a member check. In understanding this system of facilitating experience more clearly, future facilitators may gain clearer insight into how these group experiences are facilitated; guiding group participants from chaos to connection.

Diagram 5.4 Map of Objective/Subjective Interactions Toward Communitas



Phase #1 Dictator → Individual. At this stage, the facilitator had almost complete control over individuals within the group as most did not know what to expect of the event or what was about to occur. As part of phase one, Anne decided to start with some ice breakers in the first circle. In an interview following Circle One she explained that this was "just to make sure, just to get everyone feeling ok about being there...some of them were a little apprehensive and didn't know what they were doing there." One participant stated, "You do have a sense of having to warm-up, I think if you're not use to it. You know, that then the body um, was good and it just got you into the mood and got your muscles reacting in a rhythmic way I found" (Female, Circle One). From here there was a quick transition into the next ice-breaker activity which was a game that got everyone up and moving around, passing shakers in a circle to a beat. As the game progressed, Anne added new elements; she told the group to close their eyes, and then sped up the tempo. That game got silly at the end as the shakers were passed around at

faster speeds until they were falling on the floor, landing all over the place. The group was laughing and yelling and having a good time.

When asked how she approaches the concept of pre-planning and implementing these ice-breakers, Anne explained,

Different games, yeah, make games up, make up songs, do, so if I'm with a bunch of um, people in an office that are you know a bunch of lawyers or something like that, I'll bring in... I did a thing for dentists at Christmas time, and before I went I investigated, he was one of those people that put in implants... I did a whole rhythm song with dental words, and we made up a song, and I asked them "Well what do you do in the office", "Oh well I'm the hygienist, and I'm the duh duh duh"... and so we ended up making a whole rhythm pattern, or I'd say "what's your name ... can you play it on the drum? Don't say it. If you can say it you can play it!" So, you know say and then play it. And I'll get people sort of relaxed and into it and saying I can actually do this, and then by making them feel at ease with whatever area they come from. (Anne, Initial Interview)

Through these sometimes group specific games and activities, Anne intentionally sets out to loosen individuals up, put them at ease, and guide individuals to a sense of their own inner rhythm. As Anne intentionally set out to loosen individuals in the group within the events of this study, she was also fulfilling one of the first important elements of making a group connection of *communitas* possible which is individual "letting go" and a loosening of social conventions (Sharpe, 2005; Turner, 1969). When anxiety subsides to play, one's consciousness may also switch from a negative experience of self-consciousness, to a more positive experience of self-expression (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991; Kleiber, 1999).

In his article *The Courage to be Leisured*, Wilson (1982) generated discussion around the fears that some hold of this 'letting go of the self'. This concept of letting go

has been outlined as a crucial element in both experiences of communitas and improvisational music making, and was found to be an important element to recreational music making within this study. At some point along the journey of “growing up” in Western society, the freedom associated with play, creativity, and wonder may be cast aside as childish things, and thus discredited and dismissed in most of adulthood. Roles and structure begin to shape and order our lives, and conventionality and conformity is commonplace (Wilson). As such, many adults seemingly lose their ability to let go to the creative impulses of play (Turner, 1982, Wilson). Within Circle One, as participants were all adults, fears of letting go may have been addressed through ice-breaking initiatives.

Another finding was as one participant described of her experience, “I tried something and we all sort of exposed a little bit of ourselves. So I think that builds connections between people. You know, even though we’ve never met before, you feel more connected just because you’ve done this together” (Female, Circle One). One woman in Circle Two commented,

I think that if you are playing an instrument that is not something that you feel like you are a master at, to some extent there’s always risk taking because we talk about feeling self-conscious or embarrassed or something. So whenever you take risks with other people, then there is sort of that bond that builds if they don’t laugh at you. Then you feel like, oh ok they accepted me.

This concept of risk taking as contributing to bonding is another point to take into consideration by future facilitators in fostering group synergy and has been discussed within the facilitation literature. Martin and colleagues (2006) explained that while any type of extreme risk “should never be sought for its own sake...finding the proper

balance between safety and risk is one of the primary tasks of any outdoor leader” (p. 251). It is suggested that this can be transferred to any group facilitation setting.

The role of the facilitator in this group music making experience then, was creating a place that was safe and somewhat structured, and by encouraging participation through genuine heartfelt connection as well as through specific games and activities, participants were put at ease and gently guided toward the ability to let go, loosen up, and take risks as a group. The controlled setting of the rhythm circle format, as well as the facilitator herself contributed to this sense of safety in exploration.

One seeming paradox found within this rhythm circle context was that to intentionally set the parameters for experiences of liminal, anti-structural communitas, a fairly structured atmosphere was first created. This imposed structure however, was found to set the parameters for a perceived safe, comfortable, and relaxing environment and experience for participants who may have been apprehensive initially. Throughout the phases of each event, this structure eventually dissolved itself into spontaneous moments of ‘anti-structure’ as the group came together in musical connection and were left to create without the assistance of the facilitator. It is within these spaces of anti-structure that communitas may occur (Turner, 1969). As each phase of this event framework is described, this will become more apparent to the reader.

These specific ice-breaker activities mentioned above also got “people listening and feeling in their body, feeling rhythm in their body” (Interview One). Phase One of these events then seemed to guide participants to acknowledging their inner rhythms and created a situation in which individuals were led to ‘tune in’ to what was happening inside of them. As one participant described,

I feel like at first you had to concentrate more on what you were doing, like um and then after you can just, you just kept going. Like first it was like, start, think this way in your head, like say your name, to get like a pattern going, but then once you got going you could just keep doing it like you didn't need to say the name. You could actually like step out of the name and just listen. That was absorbing. (Female, Circle Two)

With this new acknowledgement of inner rhythms, individuals were now prepared to engage in the task at hand. Within Phase One, Anne led the group through a very simple explanation of the technical skills involved. In both circles, Anne was very clear and exaggerative with regards to the simplicity involved in the task we were about to commence. Within the literature on flow and communitas, an initial awareness of the self and participating in a task in which challenge matches ability are necessary elements described (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991; Turner 1969). In these moments of flow experience, time seems to disappear as the actor becomes completely absorbed in the task at hand. One woman in Circle One commented, "You're into your rhythm, you're into your music. You're not aware; you're just concentrating on your beat." This quote from the data describes this engulfed in the moment feeling.

While putting participants at ease through encouragement and trying to loosen the group up through games and humour was the aim of the facilitator in this study, it is not always possible nor is it the case. This self-conscious, anxious state may inhibit the ability to let go to creative impulse, and thus act as an inhibitor to experiences of flow and communitas (Kleiber, 1999). Another female in Circle Two commented,

I don't know. Me, I kept looking around for direction because I don't really know how to play the drum. I guess kind of when you're in a big group, you can kind of feed off everybody else and try to learn something? But no matter what, I still felt like I wasn't doing it right. I kept hitting it too hard...when people play the

drums all the time I'm sure that doesn't happen. I mean I could have used more direction.

This shows that despite facilitator efforts to ensure a positive experience for all participants, it is not always possible to be able to read the needs of every individual as well as the overall group needs all of the time. As a result, this participant may never have entered into flow or *communitas* states, and overall may not have enjoyed her experience as much as the facilitator intended. While some participants may have experienced that sense of flow and community in-the-moment, it was not possible to know when each participant experienced this phenomenon, or if it occurred at the same time as other participants. The intention of the facilitator was to use her talents, training, and intuition in bringing individuals as close to these communal experiences as possible.

In the next phase of these events as outlined within the Arthurian method and as understood from the data in this study, relationships between facilitator and participants shifted, and a new set of actions were taken in moving participants closer to experiences of synergy and musical connection. Moving along the continuum, individuals seemed to become more comfortable and acutely aware of themselves; not in a reserved apprehensive way, but seemingly more in tune and at ease with their inner rhythms. This shift is again represented in Diagram 5.3 above.

Phase #2 Director → Group Consciousness. In this next phase of each event, Diagram 5.3 outlines the use of group rumble and stop cuts, creating a polyrhythm as a group, as well as using accent notes and showcasing individuals within the collective. By utilizing these techniques, Anne sought to bring awareness to the group song, encourage listening by showcasing particular individuals, and connecting the group. Anne again worked to connect individuals to their own sense of inner rhythm, as well as getting them

to loosen up and let go. In this phase, the aim was to move beyond this new sense of individual consciousness, and guide individuals to recognize that connected group improvisational music creation was possible, even for a group that has never made music together before (Anne, personal communication).

As an example of how Anne went about shifting individuals to a new group consciousness, Anne described:

I'll look around and I'll see if there is something interesting, like there was one guy that came in...and he was playing the triangle. And he was like this going "hahaha", and I went oh ok, so I got him to keep playing. And then I decided well I don't want him to feel all by himself. You know, he'll probably feel freaked out if he's all by himself. So I got a couple other bells, and a couple other percussion instruments to play along with him so that he wasn't alone, and then I stopped everybody else. (Circle Two)

In regards to how the group responded to this, she stated in an interview following the second event,

You know there was a loud sound and all of a sudden they were listening to this "ding ding ding", this little tiny sound, and they were going, wow...they didn't even know that was in the song that they were playing. So that's how you know, that's how I did it. So I sculpted out something that would be interesting for them, everybody to listen to.

In the beginning phases of the second circle, as a participant I found that sometimes I would lose myself in the moment and in my own rhythms, and at some points even forget where I was. Upon reflection in my field notes, I recorded this experience in which I 'lost myself'. By sculpting out different sections or individuals, stopping some participants, and then adding in others, it brought each of our individual awareness as participants back to recognize the group and other individuals in it. In one scenario in Circle Two Anne explained, "Another time, I just sculpted out the guy playing the main, the pulse on

the big drum and then I got everybody else to do that accent stomp, to create an accent. And that was sort of just to get the focus back to the pulse.” In this way, Anne encouraged each participant within the group to listen to each other and recognize that they were a contributor to something greater than that which they were playing as an individual. Showcasing the overall pulse also guided the group back into synchronicity as we all attempted to play at this pulse. Implications to other facilitators working with group experience would be to adapt these findings to showcase individuals within the group while simultaneously encouraging the rest of the group to show their support and recognition.

Beyond this recognition of each other as individuals, Anne began directing Group One toward being able to connect musically as a group. At one point, Anne directed the group in what she called ‘the name game’. The first part of this game was helpful in connecting individuals with their own inner rhythms as described in Phase One. This second part of the activity led participants to connect with each other rhythmically, by creating a polyrhythm and layering three of the name rhythm patterns together. As Anne described,

I let them go and some people had a rhythm that was easy for everybody to play. And I let everybody play a little bit longer so that they could listen a little bit and connect, and there was starting to be a little connection and I could see that, ok, this is starting, people are starting to get connected to each other, that people are listening to each other, and that people are relaxing a lot more.

Again, the data supported the effectiveness of the facilitator in bringing the group together and having them listen to the different sounds within the circle to begin connecting and cooperating with the rest of the group musically.

Within this Second Phase of the Arthurian method, the facilitator took more of a director role than a dictator role in moving progressively toward empowering the group. In working toward empowering the group, characteristics of effective facilitation were shown (Lambert & Glacken, 2005; Peel, 2000). These elements of acknowledging and listening to each other and connecting is very important with regards to moving toward group synergy, and within the communitas literature is referred to as an 'ethic of cooperation' (Sharpe, 2006; Turner, 1969). This ethic of cooperation was created through Anne's implementation of specific Arthurian tools and techniques which lead to a cooperative group consciousness.

It was interesting to note that Circle Two came together musically quite quickly on its own, and as a result Phase one and parts of Phase two in the case of Circle Two were almost bypassed entirely. Most participants seemed loose as they entered, and the group simply sat down and began to play without initial direction. Again, the Arthurian method is a resource that was shown to be very beneficial as the overall approach to facilitation, however external variables often come into play that increase or decrease the ease at which a group may come together. Some of these variables have been acknowledged in chapter four. This was another interesting finding with regard to the use of these methods; that not every phase may need to be implemented in every case, depending on each situation. It would be up to the facilitator to read each specific group for its own particular needs.

In summary then and in regards to the system of delivery, it was within this phase of the facilitation that Anne began bringing the group together to listen and connect. Specific Arthurian techniques were used to bring the group together to become connected

and conscious of the whole. This phase also led the group to a more competent level of recreational music making as both individuals and as a collective. The elements of *communitas* as outlined in the literature which had become apparent in the first two phases were; a loosening of social conventions, an ethic of cooperation within the group, as well as a higher level of cohesion through the synergy that had been created (Sharpe, 2005; Turner, 1969). As well, with new technical skills and the ability to feel rhythm within their own bodies, it had seemingly become easier to engage and surrender in the task at hand. This became apparent through observation; people looking more relaxed, not staring down at their hands as frequently but at each other, looking at the drum head of the person beside them and watching to see what they were doing. In the next phase, the facilitator began empowering the group to take more control over their own in-the-moment music creation as new levels of confidence and connection emerged.

Phase #3 Facilitator → Percussion Ensemble. Moving into the next phase of facilitation, there was now a fairly musically connected group to work with in both circles of this study. At this point in both circles, there was now a song that each circle was playing on its own due to the system and structure that Anne had guided the group through in the previous two phases. In other words, both groups were able to create music together on a basic level that connected and sounded like a song. There was cohesion and cooperation, and group members were connected by the music Anne had led them to create. In this phase, Anne then used this song as a platform to move the group into a new phase of empowered music creation called improvisation or 'jamming' (Eisenberg, 1990). In an interview following Group One Anne described one way in which she began empowering the group to begin improvising and creating collaborative music on their

own. Continuing on in the “name game” as described in the previous phase, she used the three part rhythm the group had created as a platform or jumping off point from which to slowly ease participants into their own improvisations. As she encouraged the group to do so by slowly encouraging participants in Circle One to add a note, take one away, or even do whatever we wanted, I observed that people began playing around with different rhythm patterns that fit with the overall beat of the song. In this, they began creating their own music and song as a collective. One woman in Circle One explained of her experience:

She has a nice balance of just enough structure to make it easy to get in so that you have some idea, and its not like ok, “be creative”, which can be horribly scary, but more like she gives you structure; she works you in with structure, so that there is some simple task that you’re like, “oh, I can do that; I know my name I think”. But then lets you, gives you enough freedom to go beyond that beat if you feel comfortable, but you don’t have to. There is no intimidation; she doesn’t make you feel uncomfortable

Working with the group as a percussion ensemble, the group was connected and had now developed the confidence to create in-the-moment music together. Within this phase of group music creation, Anne also used a few Arthurian tools and techniques to demonstrate to the group what it was capable of. In one instance she used sculpting by section in the second circle. She would sculpt out specific sections within the group to ‘stop’, and then began guiding these sections to play deliberate specific parts by demonstrating the beat she had in her head by clapping. The others would continue playing what they had made up on their own, and slowly, section by section a very deliberate, well connected song would emerge. I observed as the group smiled and laughed at the sounds and song they were creating, and after a short while, Anne re-empowered the group to move back into creative, individual improvisation by singing

along to the beat, "One, two, make up your own!" In this way, she was able to demonstrate more of what the group was capable of with regard to musical dynamics, and then set the group free to make up their own parts once again. This, as Arthur Hull explains, is intended to get the group thinking even more creatively in expressing themselves and to give them more confidence to do so (2006a). As Hull defined,

A percussion ensemble is a group of people who play music together with various percussion instruments. They consciously adhere to basic music making principals, including listening to each other and creating a musical dialogue with space in their playing for each other's contributions. In their playing, they express dynamics in volume and intensity while creating musical harmony and rhythmical relationships (p. 151).

As one female in Circle Two described,

She also kind of moved the music, or like the sounds around the room. Because we'd all just be playing all the time, and then she would like, mediate or control by like cutting out certain parts, or like it would totally change the dynamics of like how the sound was in the room. And even when she would do like a wave around the circle, you could just feel how the sound was moving through the room instead of all at once.

The above quote reiterates that the musical connection was something that was heard as well as felt. In this phase then, while the music was connected and the group was more empowered, the facilitator was still present quite a bit in introducing the group to some of its potential both in sound and emotive power, as well as guiding the group back into synchronicity when it began to falter musically. Each time the facilitator entered the circle in the Second Group, she would make adjustments or show us some new potential, and then would re-empower us to create music on our own again. This empowerment of the group and encouragement of playing around with new dynamics is important with regard to guiding group participants to a confidence that they have the abilities necessary

to create as individuals and as a group and share their own unique voice (Lambert & Glacken, 2005; Peel, 2000). Guiding the group to collective empowerment is also characteristic of true facilitation, and when practiced adds to group cohesion and confidence as well (Greenberg, 2002; Lambert & Glacken; Peel). Individuals had now become more than just conscious of each other, they began cooperating and working together to create something as a collective. Each individual seemed to be melding and finding their unique fit within the overall group song. Within this individual empowerment, participants also expressed a simultaneous merging with group creation in this phase. One female in the Second Circle described,

You could really feel the group changing as a whole. And then when it would build and build and build you'd feel like all submersed, and then it was like "shhh..." and she like stopped it, and there was this big feeling of all togetherness.

This would also indicate that an ethic of cooperation was strong, and the group was working as a cohesive unit. When I reflect on the experience with regards to the statement about feeling the group "changing as a whole", I am brought back to the experience and how it felt as a participant. The comparison I would make and what I picture when I am brought back to the memory of the experience, is a large flock of birds who seem to instinctively change shape and form as a group as they are flying. This feeling of submersed 'altogetherness' that this particular participant felt and expressed in this quote could be interpreted as an experience of the communal 'oneness' defined as *communitas*. While again this can not be known with complete assurance, the language used does seem consistent with descriptions of *communitas* within the literature. Finally, it is within this phase that participants began expressing themselves uniquely and creatively, which is another element that has been said to appear during experiences of

communitas (Turner, 1969). People seemed more loose, open, and free to play around with new sounds and experiment with new rhythms and toys. The intention of these rhythm circles again was to set the parameters and guide the group toward an experience of self-expression and group synergy through this ability to let go and create music in the moment. Thus it was important that individuals were guided toward feeling confident and free to do so. As one participant described,

She [Anne] is really good about letting you choose what you want...What you can sometimes do as a music teacher is get a bit too controlling, rather than just letting people pick what they like, and then everybody just picks what they like and she sort of just goes with whatever happens. I think that's really important, makes a positive experience. And you make your own choices. And then you think, hmm, maybe I'd like to switch, then you try something else. (Female, Circle One)

A talented facilitator then does not claim such expertise that would make anyone feel subordinate, nor would the group ever learn to depend on the facilitator. A good facilitator empowers the group and individuals within it to rise to their own potential, and have the confidence to be an equal player on the team so that no one becomes dependent on a 'teacher' (Lambert & Glacken, 2005; Peel, 2000). Everyone is shown to be their own leader, and the strengths of each individual within the collective can be drawn out and their benefits maximized within the overall process (Peel).

It was found that a constant balancing act between control and empowerment existed in the implementation of the Arthurian method. While the purpose of the event itself was to guide individuals toward empowered individual expression and simultaneous group music making, many times the facilitator was needed throughout the event to tweak, change, or implement new activities in order to bring the music and group back to synergy where they were re-empowered and able to let go and create music and express

themselves once again. The point then was not to dominate and create a musical masterpiece at the hand of a conductor, but to let the group lead and follow itself on its own musical journey, fully empowered yet confident that if needed, the facilitator would be there to help bring the music to the satisfying 'click' of connection.

In the beginning phases, control over what was occurring (the music being created, how it was being created, and in which direction it went) heavily resided in the hands of the facilitator. Progressively throughout the events, the control over music making moved along a continuum to where it was fairly evenly shared between facilitator and group. Finally, the events ended with the almost complete autonomy of the participants. As one woman in Circle One described Anne and the experience, there was an "equal, or sliding in once in a while to make things easier, but no one is really in charge." As Anne moved progressively from a dictator role to that of facilitator to a role where she was barely present, this trust was built and instilled within group participants. As Anne explained,

So there are people like, very much in the circle all the time. And [another facilitator] he's very much more of a teacher because he's a drummer and he's a drumming teacher, and that's where he's coming from. It's hard; it's very difficult to go from a teacher to a facilitator because you have to give up that directing thing. It is very hard. I suffer from that too. You know, I don't want to tell you what to do; I don't want to go "you are going to do what I tell you what to do". (Initial Interview)

From the musicians around me, I heard constant changes with regard to the rhythms they were playing. Each time one of my closest neighbours would change their rhythm; I would listen, and then 'refit' my rhythm to compliment theirs. By listening to those around me, I was able to create a personal expression of my own rhythm that seemed to connect to the overall sound of the group. Some of these 'voices' or individual

expressions were loud, some quiet, some intricate and complex, others were simple and steady, and many had different tones, sounds, and pitches. Under one common pulse, the group learned that all had a place within the collective song, especially within the second circle, in a satisfying connection that was born naturally and changed as the group flowed together.

Dr. John Diamond, M.D. and author of *The Way of the Pulse: Drumming with Spirit*, described the difference between control and empowerment as a group as “Beat vs. Pulse.” He described,

As in life, so in music. We can play on the pulse, truly, effortlessly, lovingly. Or on the beat- the metronome being the mother who must be obeyed. And it is not play for there is no enjoyment-it is work, and hard work, for there is no love. We have a choice to be coldly accurate, like a machine, or to be human. To submit to the domination of the beat, or to flow with the pulse of love and life (1999).

The Arthurian method provided the framework through which to guide participants from following the beat (facilitator control) to finding the pulse (group empowerment); the common ground that united each individual through the music being created. An interesting finding was that in absence of imposed facilitator structure, a new type of order took shape in the form of the overall pulse and music being created. These periods of improvisational music making appeared as a type of ordered chaos, in which individuals were set free to create and express themselves in-the-moment, while simultaneously being governed by the overall pulse created by the group song. In this way, there were elements of freedom of expression while at the same time a sense of safety and order in which to explore this expression. In this sense, both structure and anti-structure seemed to exist in the same moment. This setting provided a very unique way in

which the facilitator was able to guide individuals to express their own creative voices through rhythmical expression, while simultaneously connecting as a group. With regard to observable elements, I saw participants in both circles sporadically changing instruments, changing the beat or rhythm they were playing, smiling at each other within the circle, and generally just playing around musically. One woman in the Second Circle explained,

I think it was cool, like sometimes I would just pick up a new instrument and I wouldn't really know what it sounds like. And I would start playing and I still wouldn't really know what it sounds like, but I would know that it is part of the whole big beat...and it was just cool." (Female, Circle Two)

This indicates that the facilitator was successful in creating an atmosphere in which participants felt empowered and in control to play and share their own expression.

Elements of play, individual empowerment, self expression, and creation were found to be important elements that the facilitator was able to encourage in these group rhythm making events. Play, self-expression, and creation have been linked to the *communitas* literature specifically in Turner's (1982) book entitled *From Ritual to Theatre: The human seriousness of play*. He stated, "Liminality is peculiarly conducive to play" referring to these spaces set apart from "everyday life" (p. 85).

Within this study, it was during the last phase found within the framework that the groups had become a cohesive unit with little reliance on the facilitator. While again, Circle One did not reach points of complete flow and synchronicity for any long periods of time, Circle Two consisted almost entirely of this fluid music making experience. It was found that within the last phase of this Second Circle, the facilitator contributed the last elements to empower the potential of the group's music making dynamic. These

dynamics added to the intensity of the bonding and connection between group members through the music, and will be addressed in the next and final phase.

Phase #4 Orchestra Conductor → Orchestra. In the last stage of facilitation, the group became an orchestra, and the facilitator a conductor. As Hull (2006a) described, “When you add musical and emotional dynamics to a drum circle song it turns into music” (p 177). He referred to this as the orchestration phase, and explained,

The orchestration phase of an event typically occurs during the last third of a community drum circle, with players self-facilitating much of their own music and conscious that it is, in fact, their music. Transition points appear less often as each new groove is more solid, has more continuity, and lasts longer than the last groove. By this time, you and your players have a positive, supportive relationship that leads to a musically and emotionally rewarding event (p. 173).

It was within this fourth phase of the Arthurian method, especially in the second circle, where the music had clicked and the group was improvisationally jamming (Eisenberg, 1990). One female in Circle One commented, “That’s one of the beauties I think of improvisation; it’s very freeing.” Another female in Circle One commented “In this, you can do whatever you want which gives you a more relaxed feeling of music. So I liked it.” To this another woman in Circle Two added, “There’s no right or wrong.” Freedom of choice allowed the participants to explore their own inner rhythms as these rhythms emerged in the moment, and as a result they were able to express themselves creatively while still contributing to the connected sound of overall group song. Here we see more signs of creative play and freedom of expression characteristic of *communitas*, but at the same time a merging of this individuality into something that connected on a group level. Within these experiences of improvisation one woman in Circle One described of her experience,

It's really interdependent. I mean you know that if it was just you, you'd be like ok, that was fun, now what? And try something else. But it's only neat if you guys keep playing, if we all keep doing stuff and coming in, so you really feel like nobody is in charge, but everybody is needed.

As Turner described, "communitas does not merge identities, it liberates them from conformity to general norms" (1974, p. 277). This concept became apparent in these moments of improvisational jamming and musical connection, liberating individual expression. As a paradox then, there seems to be a new level of conformity when humans connect on a common or group level, in this case musically; while each individual is playing their own song, they are simultaneously connecting on a higher level to something bigger than themselves as individuals. Within the communitas literature, this is referred to as a 'reduction in differentiation', that is as people begin to express themselves uniquely, a common denominator is experienced (Turner, 1969). Referring back to the village metaphor, it is as if each person plays a unique role within that village, but that feeling of community and being a part of that cohesive unit is the commonness that all share. The manifestation of this element was fairly difficult to discern through observation as it is so intangible, however feelings of connection and togetherness as described by participants were outlined in Chapter Four. Future studies may lead to a better understanding of this simultaneous individual/commonness in the context of drumming specifically, which is characteristic of communitas experiences.

During Phase four within this First Circle, external factors began to limit the potential for where the group could go. Time did begin to play a factor with regards to the levels of creativity and improvisation that could be achieved. As described in chapter four, working within a structured time line limited the freedom to see where the group

could go, as it is impossible to know how long it will take any given group to connect. As Anne commented, it was “Quick, I mean it was fast! But it was...you know I think it wasn’t long enough to get people into that state...but you could see that it was there” (Interview, Circle One).

The last third or so of the second event was primarily made up of empowered improvisation by the group with very little facilitator involvement. In this last section, Anne used a few Arthurian techniques and tools to make the music a bit more interesting. First, she started by marking the pulse with her body so the group could have a marker to begin playing in unison. Then with a ‘call to groove’ signal, she empowered the group to make up their own rhythms keeping in time to the pulse, and the group started one last improvisational jam.

Along the journey of this system of facilitator delivery, it was found that Anne intentionally facilitated specific phases in moving individuals toward musical and communal empowerment and connection. Within each of these phases, elements of *communitas* seemed to appear and manifested along a continuum within this framework. This progression of facilitator actions resulted in participant experiences of loosened social conventions, technical ability and connection to inner rhythms, engagement and ‘letting go’, a consciousness of the group, cooperation and cohesion, individual creative expression, as well as an increasing reduction in individual differentiation; all associated with experiences of *communitas* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991; Turner, 1969). These interpretations form the beginning understandings as to the systematic facilitation of specific elements of *communitas* as they manifest along a continuum in moving participants toward experiences associated with *communitas*.

Within these phases, varying levels of facilitator control and group empowerment shifted, and the group was guided from individual to group consciousness. From the findings in this study, I plotted an interpretation as to how each of the Arthurian techniques was applied by the facilitator and then the subsequent effects on participants as linked with the literature on communitas. Future studies should look at this important piece within the findings more exclusively. Within the design of this study, I was not aware of the intricacies that would result in the depth of information within these events. In strengthening this understanding of facilitating group experience with a focus on a specific framework and system, future research design could include video footage of the event, and participants could be asked to reflect on each action within a focus group setting. These actions and reactions could be plotted along the same framework, and a better understanding as to the sequencing and system by which both flow and communitas may be facilitated may be found. These findings could then be applied to other settings, and even further studies might address their compatibility as a standard means through which to guide groups toward experiences of communitas.

The final finding to be addressed within the diagram 5.1 regarding this system of facilitating group experience is the data that emerged outlining the negotiation of all of the pieces described thus far by the facilitator in-the-moment. Through her ability to recognize specific transition points and act accordingly, it was found that the facilitator was able to negotiate specific transitions in avoiding “train wrecks” and fostering a fluid experience of group drumming overall.

Negotiating Experiences

The final important piece to this method was found to be the constant and continual negotiation of experiences required to keep a rhythm event 'flowing' as seamlessly as possible. It was found that there were different types of transitions within the music being created by the group which the facilitator was constantly negotiating in efforts to keep the event flowing, interesting, and connected. These negotiations required specific abilities of the facilitator, and will also be described in this section. In each event, one of the most important aspects of facilitation was the way in which the facilitator was able to keep the overall flow of each event moving in a forward motion toward arriving at set intentions. A transition point will be defined then as any point at which the facilitator was needed by the group to take action in order to keep the flow of the event moving in a forward motion as seamlessly as possible. Anne explained,

So a facilitator goes in and my job as a facilitator is to go in at the beginning, more of a teacher or dominator and telling people what to do. At the beginning I introduce the ideas of playing, I give them games and get people use to the body language I'm gonna use so they know, so I won't have to speak...um, they can listen instead of having someone yelling at them and telling them what to do like a teacher. So at the beginning I'm sort of there doing a little bit of that...quite a bit of that. And then as people get to know quite quickly what the body signals are for 'stop', 'lets go', 'keep going', 'slowly', 'soft', 'bring your volume down', 'bring your volume up', and as they become more comfortable within their group and hopefully listening to the person across the circle from them, then I can step back and become less of a dominating person. and more a of a person that is only coming in when necessary, and that means I am facilitating the music continuing to play...I go in and I tweak it a little bit. I'll either bring the volume up or I'll get, I'll change the music in some way because I can feel that there is a transition going to happen in the music. There's a lot to do that, there...but anyways...if you can see that people are either not listening to each other or they're playing with their head down, that they are only listening to themselves, or they are playing themselves, they are not bringing in the group then it is my job to

go in there and sort of get that person's attention, or get the groups attention and get them to start to listen to each other. (Anne, Initial Interview)

The above quote highlights many important points in understanding the negotiation of transitions. First, it explains that the 'flow' of the event must first be created to then move into the necessity of maintaining this flow. That is, the first two phases of the facilitation system which led the group toward creating a platform of group music creation, or a 'percussion ensemble' were first necessary. From this newly emergent self-sustaining group song, the dominator role decreased and she was then able to negotiate experience by demonstrating group potential in dynamics, as well as managing individuals to ensure that they are listening and cooperating. This was again to ensure the continuous and seamless flow of the music. It is in these flowing periods of group music creation, that the musical 'click' or connection occurred within each event. One difference between this study and that of facilitation in an outdoor wilderness adventure setting was that facilitator actions in response to these negotiations of experiences seemed fairly transparent. It was obvious when the facilitator entered the middle of the circle that she was about to negotiate or manipulate the experience. While participants may not have known right away how this negotiation would affect the group or why Anne was implementing it, the change itself soon became obvious based on changes in music. The next question to address then, is what types of transitions appeared within the data, and how were they negotiated? These findings as well as a discussion on each will be presented below, and a summary of these transition types as they may apply in other facilitation contexts will be provided in Table 5.1.

Group Parameter Influenced Transitions. These types of transitions appeared within the first, smaller circle, and emerged as inhibitors of the overall flow of the event. Anne addressed these transitions by reading the group's needs and acting accordingly in the moment to move the event forward. As Anne described of the First Circle,

Well there are quite a few times, in a smaller circle there are more transitions than in a large group. It's just the way it is because it's a small group. Um, that's why I did the transitions from the, at the beginning when I did the body beat, well I realized that that had a limitation, and that's why I changed into the shakers. And then I realized that the shakers were ok, we were time limited so I had to change again and get onto the drums. So um, oh yeah and the boomwhackers I forgot we did the boom whackers. And they were limiting too, because, I had to change out of that too because um, having so few people.

As Anne has outlined in this quote, many of the activities that the group was involved in presented limitations. Interpreting from this quote as well as my observations, this had much to do with the size and makeup of the group. Through my observations I had the opportunity to compare the first smaller group to the second larger group. In regards to limitations on the activities and games played by the group, any type of drawn out activity became awkward and repetitive after awhile. Participant attention and enthusiasm level in the task at hand would change very quickly, and was very obvious in a group this small. At these moments when Anne could sense the limitation, she would step in and change the dynamic. Time also began playing a limiting factor, as by the time the group had reached a point in which they were able to create connected music in the moment, the event was nearing its end due to prior engagements by participants. As a result, this first event was fairly choppy, although the group was able to come to sporadic points of flowing group music creation, and a fairly connected song had emerged by the end.

Individual/Group Mood Transitions. Another reason for necessary musical ‘tweaking’ which became evident from the data was the negotiation of individual and group mood during the event. As Anne explained,

It’s based on the music...if people are getting bored, you know its getting boring and they are starting to look around, and that’s when you go ok, my turn to go in and just do a little tweak and change it around again. (Anne, Circle One)

Overall, Anne commented on the ways in which she consciously managed the mood of the events she facilitated:

Once again I would go in and um, if I can hear that the music is slowing down, or going up then I’ll go in and I’ll say “Oh they are getting tired out, maybe they need a break”. Or I’ll go in...or maybe they need to be revved up a little bit, so I’ll go in and I’ll up the pace, and if they continue to slide back down maybe they need a break so I’ll go in and say ok everybody lets you know, I’ll slow it down and Ill it bring it to a stop, and I’ll change it and bring out bells and just do a, or percussion toys and just change the whole direction of the music. Which will give, it’s like having a pause or doing, you know, doing tai chi...I do a thing called Tai Chi sunrise when people are really exhausted and I get them to go, “ok everybody stop and take a deep breath (acts it out), and put your arms in the air like this (breaths out)” like this, and we’ll do that a couple times, and go ok now pick up the percussion instrument and just make that same sound or breath with your, you know breath in and play, and then breath out and play and listen to your breathing, and bring it all, and bring a lot of yoga stuff into it to, to just change the mood if it needs to be done. (Anne, Initial Interview)

This shows that by tuning into the overall sound and energy or vibe of the group and reading the overall needs of the circle, Anne is able to then implement tweaks and changes to the music with the intention of altering the overall mood of the event. For any facilitator wishing to guide a group to synergy, this attention to group mood appears as an important one in the overall facilitation implementation. If a group is tired or bored, it is

the responsibility of the facilitator in this role to try to read and understand what the mood of the group is, and how to facilitate changes in moving the group to a place of connection.

Distracters. Another finding, although not specific to the events in this study, were the existence of ‘distracters’ as a common inhibitor to group musical flow within facilitated rhythm events. Upon recollecting some of her previous experiences with facilitation, Anne described;

You may get someone who is coming into a circle of well elderlies that is an ADD adult that just wants your attention and wants to take over, or you may as one thing happened to me at an event at transient drum circle in Seattle which is transient is when people are coming and going all the time and they can just get up and leave and come and go, and there are about 250 people and there was this one guy on a drum that had two mallets and he was just wailing with his head down and he was just, he wasn’t listening to anybody, and I went in there and was like, ok, so I had to be able to adapt and to that thing, to what was happening, and so I went over to him and I played a bell right beside his ear, then I asked, I got one of the mallets away from him by, you know, playing a game with him, then he only had one mallet, well then he reached over and got someone else’s mallet and started again, and then what I did was, I went “well this isn’t gong to work”, and nobody else could hear anything, so I just stopped everybody else, and I went like this, I went “this guy, he’s really hot”, and I let him play, and that’s what he wanted...he wanted to be heard, and he wanted to be the star, so I let him be the star. Did that for a little while, and then he started to go slower and slower and then he started to really get slow cause he got tired and more and more tired and then all of a sudden I brought everyone else back into his beat, and then he played for a while. And then about half an hour later he started again. (Anne, Initial Interview)

During another recollection, she described,

I mean you can go into a group of um, little tiny kids and not get much, and have about 5, we call them ‘distracters’...you could have 5 or 6 distracters, and you’ve got to figure out something, you’ve got to see how they are...Like one time I was at a place and the kids were all swinging and playing back and forth and they

were clapping at the back, and I thought “oh that’s really good” and so I stopped everybody else and got everybody else clapping, and I got everybody else playing, and then we started to sing! So it’s just working with what you see. I don’t know how it happens, it just happens. I’m sure it doesn’t just happen. It probably has a lot to do with all of Arthur’s training that I’ve had. (Anne, Initial Interview)

Again, the ability to read a population on both an individual level as well as group level becomes apparent as one necessary facilitator ability. In the case of individual distracters, Anne was challenged to draw on her problem solving abilities on the spot, and using specific Arthurian tools and techniques, reunite the individual distracter with the overall group song. Knowledge of this type of negotiation would be beneficial to all facilitators in understanding that although some individuals may have more or different needs than others, a facilitator should always work with the group and not resist. By reacting in a positive and proactive way, and by meeting the individual in congruence to their specific needs, this minor distraction may be managed with both the individual as well as group needs met.

Individual/Group Musical Transitions. In each event, particularly within the second larger group, there were times in which the music would audibly connect and sound like one fluid song made up of many different parts. In these moments, we were improvising and creating music together as a group in-the-moment. In these moments it was very important that we were listening and cooperating with each other and keeping with the overall pulse. During this time I would lose myself, and the music I was personally creating seemed to flow out of me of its own accord. Moments such as these have been described by other participants as well in Chapter four, and seem to resemble “flow” experiences as described by Csikszentmihalyi (1991). At certain points however,

the music would begin to falter and become disconnected. Throughout each event, these musical falters and transition became apparent to me as both an observer and a participant. When asked how these transitions became apparent to her as a facilitator, Anne described,

You know, you can hear it. You can feel it and you can hear it. Well I, you can hear it first, but you can feel it a little bit before that. Because you can feel the...and you can see it too! You can see people looking around, looking up, or they sort of look uneasy. They don't even know it, but they...so you can see it, you can definitely see it because people look around. Sometimes people don't look around, they look at their instruments. They think oh am I doing something wrong? And then you can feel it in the music, and in their body...you can feel it! I don't know, I can just feel it. And then you can definitely hear it when it gets to be really bad, and it sounds like it's like, it's gonna be a train wreck! So I would say that the feeling comes first, then the seeing, and then the listening then you can hear it...and then you go in. (Anne, Circle Two)

In responding to these falters in group music, specific to Circle Two Anne described,

You know there were definitely, definite transition points. And I left them so that you could feel them, so that you could feel them and everybody else could feel it. And I left it long enough so that it was really evident that there was, that something happened. So you know, after they had been playing for a, at the very beginning I let them play, and I let everybody and then more people were coming in and I was giving out instruments, and I could hear that the music was going a little bit wobbly and a little bit slower, and you know it went a little funny. And that's when I went in. You know, I waited as long as I could and then I went in because I wanted you, first of all I wanted you to be able to distinguish that there was that transition. And it was interesting because they picked up on it right away, you know...they picked up right away. But there were quite a few...There maybe were, I'd say there were in the hour there were only, there were maybe four transitions, not even that. Three definitely wobbly times. And then I went in a couple, that's cause I realized "oh things are gonna change". (Anne, Circle Two)

This concept of leaving the transition for a moment until participants have taken notice and allowing the group to at least attempt to bring it back together as a collective are

referred to as “teaching without teaching” within the Arthurian method (Hull, 2006a). In these moments, Anne left the music alone long enough for us to hear and recognize what it felt like for the music to fall apart and the connection to be broken. In understanding this, it became even more recognizable as to the importance of the group in working together and finding that collective pulse. This concept of teaching without teaching is another point that is important for all types of facilitators to acknowledge in working toward group synergy; a recognition of the group falling apart and at least an empowered attempt to work it out as a group before the facilitator steps in may lead to overall group confidence in their own abilities, while at the same time recognizing that if needed, the facilitator is there. This may prove to the group that the facilitator really is just there to make things easier, and not to control the experience entirely.

As a participant, the moment when the music began to falter was frustrating and disappointing, and I, as well as my fellow group members, would begin cocking our heads to the side to listen. I strained to focus and listen and try to understand where I could fit my own rhythm back into the overall sound and pulse. Just before the music was about to fall apart entirely into something that would have broken the flow completely, Anne would step back into the middle of the circle and instantly my confidence would boost, knowing that by watching and following her guidance the music would come back together. As one participant commented, “Like in her body language and things she does that just, like she’ll be stronger if she feels like it might be flagging a bit, and you might not notice she’s keeping it going, and then when it grows more by itself, and she sort of backs off” (Female, Circle One).

While music faltered as a collective, the data also showed that there were particular times in which individual participants faltered musically. While in a large group it may not have been of much importance, in a small circle this can stand out and embarrass the individual as well as throw off the rest of the group with regards to connection. In one particular instance in Circle One Anne described,

There was one time when [Anika] was playing her name but wasn't actually hearing it, which is very interesting because she is a singer. But she was not able to play her name, say her name and play it because she wasn't connecting. She wasn't connecting or listening to her rhythm inside of herself. So when she started to play yah, I had to change it quickly and I had to play for her and then I got everybody playing her name.

And at another point,

When [Stephanie] was playing, we were all playing together and she was, got sort of out of synch, and she was out of synch a little bit, so I ended that by getting everybody to do a rumble. I think it was when I was, I sculpted out a group and then the 3, I think that was when it happened and then I got everyone to rumble And so I just got everybody to rumble, and brought it up and brought it down and did something, just changed it a little bit.

Again, the simultaneous negotiation of both individual and group experiences is found here. During each drum circle then, in working with the intention of helping the group function as a cohesive unit, the event took on a continuous flow in which Anne was consistently monitoring and serving both individual needs in order to connect individuals back to the overall group, as well as facilitating the collective group song.

The various types of transitions found within this study have been summarized in Table 5.1 "Points of Consideration in Negotiating Group Experiences" below. It is suggested that similar types of transitions may occur in other settings involving the facilitation of group experiences, and prior knowledge of these may aid future facilitators

in knowing what to expect in certain group situations. As outlined within the outdoor leadership literature, seeing patterns within group behaviour and recognizing certain extenuating variables with regard to group makeup and setting can inform a facilitator in knowing what to expect. This may aid in both pre-planning and risk-management initiatives as well as contribute to better decision-making and judgment (Martin, et al., 2006; Priest & Gass, 2005).

Table 5.1 Points of Consideration in Negotiating Group Experiences

- Individual/Group Falters→ Overall when either individuals fall out of sync from the group, or the group falls out of sync with each other. These falters can arise as a result of any number of factors including those listed below, and facilitators should remain alert and tuned in to negotiate these falters to bring the group and individuals back into sync through decisions and judgment in-the-moment.
- Extenuating Variables→ particular setting, willingness of participants, degree of task challenge, time lines, size of group, demographics of population.
- Individual/Group Mood→ getting bored, distracted, losing interest, happy, relaxed, etc...
- Distracters→ Individuals who demand attention and may affect group synergy negatively.

Throughout this discussion of different types of transitions, it has become apparent that one of the main capabilities of the facilitator is to be able to read a group and act in-the-moment to guide the group. The following section will address this finding and a discussion on this particular ability will be generated.

Essential Facilitator Negotiation Abilities

One predominant aspect of facilitation discovered throughout each rhythm circle was the ability of the facilitator to monitor and manage changes and situations as they

arose in the moment. When asked what it took to be a good facilitator, Anne commented, “being able to adapt, I think that’s the biggest thing. The fundamental thing. Reading your population” (Anne, Initial Interview). This element of the event required Anne to constantly be alert and aware as a facilitator as to when a transition was happening, about to happen, or in need of happening, and to take action when the group was in need of facilitator assistance.

The attribute of possessing a finely tuned radar allowed Anne to be very adaptable during implementation. Anne explained,

You have to just keep on your radar, which is just like, you just have to have radar out there all the time to see what is happening, who is entering what they are like, if they are shy about having an instrument or if they are a loud mouth that wants to, you know get their ya yas out, then you just have to watch. So radar is a big deal. (Anne, Initial Interview)

This internal radar then was utilized in listening to the group, watching the group, and understanding what was happening at all times overall. Utilizing this ability was described as crucial to being adaptable as a facilitator, and was important in managing the overall transition and flow of each event from one moment to the next. She explained,

So once again you’ve got your radar out, your feelers are out, seeing and feeling how people are...and its hard...it takes just doing it a lot. It’s hard to attach words to it. But basically when things are starting to falter, you just have to go in and use all of the tools that you know of to change the direction and try and get it back to that state. (Anne, Initial Interview)

The ‘state’ she spoke of is one of group synergy. When asked how she came to possess these abilities to use her radar to be adaptable, she explained:

A lot of time you learn when it is right...really in your face. And the more you are doing it, the more you see the subtleties of the circle. So it’s I guess just the experience of doing more and more circles and more and more facilitating. But it’s when you get the

ones that are right in your face, that's when you...that's when you begin learning how to adapt, and learning how to listen, and learning how to read the crowd. (Anne, Initial Interview)

By honing her abilities, and by exposing herself to these facilitation experiences repeatedly, she explained that her senses become more and more acute, and her abilities to act in the moment to meet the needs of the group are strengthened. This concept of learning by doing is one that is important for facilitators of all kinds to acknowledge; that one of the only ways to truly become a better facilitator is by doing it often and putting oneself in tough situations to gain confidence in making decisions in-the-moment based on individual and group needs (Martin et al., 2006).

This chapter has provided findings with regard to the overall system of rhythm circle facilitation as it emerged from the data. In unpacking each piece of diagram 5.1, a deeper understanding of what occurred below the surface of facilitator actions has been generated. By unpacking this diagram, specific contributions can now be offered to the literature including the importance of intention, a framework and system for guiding participants toward experiences associated with *communitas*, as well as some points of consideration for specific facilitator delivery and descriptions of potential group transitions which may apply to other contexts. Finally, a discussion on main threads found within findings will be addressed in the final chapter. These contributions will be summarized within Chapter Six, followed by some suggestions for future research as well and ending with conclusions.

CHAPTER SIX

IMPLICATIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH, AND CONCLUSIONS

In previous chapters, it was found that the Arthurian method provides a system for facilitators that is utilized to guide a group from chaos and uncertainty to musical synchronicity and potential moments of *communitas*. Chapter Five provided a conceptual diagram of findings and a discussion of this diagram linking it to the facilitation literature. This allowed for a clearer understanding as to the practical lessons from this study to inform facilitators in guiding groups toward experiences associated with *communitas*. This chapter will present a review and summary of recommendations and implications which highlight the main contributions of this study, and will close with suggestions for future research and a summary of conclusions.

Implications

Prior to addressing implications and conclusions, there were a few delimitations for this study. The first was that data was collected from one facilitator utilizing one method in two rhythm circle experiences. As well, the groups studied were fairly homogenous in composition and this may have had some effect on group experience. Future studies might look at different facilitators in more diverse settings to look at this method at a deeper level. The research methods employed here however, were congruent for the size and scope of this study. As mentioned, in hindsight I would also have taken video footage of these events. This would have aided in the analysis phase of understanding the ways in which specific facilitator actions affected participant experience along a continuum within a framework.

By investigating the Arthurian method, this study has provided information that fills gaps within the literature with regard to understanding how the facilitation of group experiences associated with *communitas* may be implemented. First, it has highlighted the differences between overall intention of experience vs. focus on task completion that is characteristic of most facilitation literature. A focus on the journey over the destination may increase the positivity of group participants through focusing on the enjoyment of each moment within the group experience. This study has also begun a discussion on the importance of gradually shifting control to participant empowerment within the facilitation context. While this is addressed within the literature, to my knowledge it has not been investigated as a systematic framework of delivery for the use and understanding of practitioners. The summary of findings below may aid future facilitators in this regard. Similarly, emergent themes of structure, control, and consciousness have presented themselves throughout this study and contribute a greater knowledge to the literature with regard to understanding the manifestation of *communitas*. These emergent themes will be further addressed in the section below. This study has also contributed Diagram 5.1 in providing a visual depiction as to how the facilitation of group experiences occurred within this study. This may aid facilitators in conceptualizing their own systems of delivery. Table 5.1 has provided a summary of some points to consider overall prior to negotiating group experiences.

Finally, there are some specific theoretical implications with regard to the *communitas* literature. Previously, it has been accepted that *communitas* is a highly spontaneous occurrence, and thus extremely elusive in nature. By extension, experiences of *communitas* seemed in the past very hard to create due to this elusive nature. This

study offers an in depth look at how facilitators with specific intentions may be able to set parameters and better understand how their own role may increase the likelihood of experiences of communitas through the methods they employ. While some discussion has been generated as to the authenticity and ethical issues involved with socially engineered experiences, this study has contributed a better understanding as to how specific parameters may be intentionally set in guiding groups toward experiences of communitas. As well, discussion as to how experiences of communitas were broken down and manifested in a progression from individual to collective experience provides the literature with a more clear understanding as to how communitas may come to be. Further discussion on issues of structure, control, and consciousness as found to be root threads in the manifestation of these experiences of communitas will be further explored below.

Chapter Five has broken down this particular system of facilitation, and below I have generated a more in depth discussion on three main threads which emerged from the data and linked these to the literature. These threads were: structure and anti-structure, control and empowerment, and shifting consciousness. This may aid future researchers in clarifying the most important points of this particular facilitation process.

Main Threads

As mentioned above, there were three very distinct threads or concepts which emerged many times throughout the analysis of data in this study. These threads, when explored in more depth, seem to present the core concepts underlying the manifestation of communitas in this group music making context. Future studies may look for similar

threads in various contexts in which communitas occurs either spontaneously or intentionally pursued.

Structure/ Anti-structure. This first theme of structure is one that emerged numerous times throughout this study both in the literature pertaining to communitas, as well as the data collected throughout the group drumming experiences. Again, by definition communitas is “a spontaneously generated relationship between leveled and equal total and individuated human beings stripped of structural attributes” (Turner, 1974, p. 202). Turner did not discredit the importance of roles and structure within modern society, but focused his research on those spaces where the spontaneous dissolution of these roles and structures occurred ‘outside’ of everyday life. Looking back to the literature, it is within the realm of leisure and the arts that Turner described these liminal experiences of communitas, where people could shed these roles and structures, let go, surrender to creative impulse and thus bond communally on a basic human level (1969).

One paradox identified was that to *intentionally* set the parameters for experiences of communitas to occur within a group of individuals, a high element of structure was involved. Thus, in Turner’s terms, a high degree of structure was required to create moments of anti-structure (1969). One example from the literature that supports this premise is Eisenberg’s (1990) study that described, “jamming experiences are highly rule-governed, structured activities, in which little or no personal information is exchanged, yet important goals may be accomplished, and a strong, ecstatic bond is formed among participants” (p. 146). Within this definition, there seems to exist a paradox of its own. While there are rules and structures present (i.e. everyone must listen

to each other, the music must keep in time), the word “improvise” suggests a level of freedom from structure.

In this study of drum circles, the events themselves had a very set structure that led to improvisational jamming. The Arthurian method provided a structure through which to move participants along a continuum toward the desired outcome of *communitas*. The intention of this structure then was that it would serve its organizational purpose but eventually dissolve itself into spontaneous moments of anti-structure as the group came together of its own accord and were able to connect and create together synergistically. It is only within these spaces of anti-structure that Turner suggested *communitas* may occur (1969).

The paradox found within this study again, is that throughout each rhythm event from beginning to end, there was always some element of structure. Even without facilitator involvement, the structure of the circle as well as the overall pulse of the music itself served as a type of boundary in within which to engage in these moments of perceived freedom in a ‘safe’ environment. This relates to Ringer’s (1999) concept of containment described in chapter two which summarized the concept of a facilitator creating boundaries in efforts to enable the group to function within this perception of safety. Ringer again commented on the utility of this tactic to decrease outside stresses or uncertainties for participants. Throughout the rhythm events in this study, the facilitator would step in and out of the circle to impose structure and order when it was deemed necessary. Once this structure was imposed and the group was reconnected musically, she would re-empower the group and this element of structure would dissolve itself once again.

This is an important concept for any facilitator attempting to lead groups to *communitas*. The idea of going into a facilitation with the structure of the event in mind is important; however as important is understanding that at some point this *imposed* structure used to funnel and contain the experience should begin to dissolve as the group comes together. Not knowing when to step back and allow the event to take on its own life could present problems with allowing the group to reach moments of *communitas*. This theme of structure seemed to overlap with another theme regarding control that emerged within this study and will be addressed below.

Control/ Empowerment. This theme manifested itself within the context of who was controlling and empowered in the music creation process. The phases of an Arthurian event are titled to represent this relationship of control between facilitator and participants, and as a reminder are: Phase 1- Dictator/Individual, Phase 2- Director/Group Consciousness, Phase 3- Facilitator/ Percussion Ensemble, and Phase 4- Orchestra Conductor/ Orchestra. In the beginning phases, control over what was occurring (the music being created, how it was being created, and direction the music went) heavily resided in the hands of the facilitator. Progressively throughout the events, the control over music making moved along a continuum to where it was fairly evenly shared between facilitator and group. Finally, the events ended with the almost complete autonomy of the participants. As one woman in Circle One described, "Equal, or sliding in once in a while to make things easier, but no one is really 'in charge.'" This progression of control has been outlined in the previous chapter and links to the facilitation literature in highlighting the importance of empowering individuals and the

collective (Lambert & Glacken, 2005; Peel, 2000). Upon deeper analysis, there was another important context in which control was important.

As within experiences of communitas, participants must be led to 'let go' and surrender to their inner rhythms. In essence, Anne's goal was to facilitate a personal 'loss of control' amongst participants, and in this loss of control, trust that the skill and ability of participants would come naturally upon letting go and engaging (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). In this she had to trust that by letting go of her control over the group, the group would be able to take over on their own, and in this all control would dissipate. This relates to Pieper's (1963) description of leisure in which he stated "Leisure is not the attitude of mind of those who actively intervene, but of those who are open to everything; not of those who grab and grab hold, but of those who leave the reins loose and who are free and easy themselves-almost like a man falling asleep, for one can only fall asleep by "letting oneself go" (p.41). Again as mentioned in the previous chapter, many may experience fear in these moments of loss of control (Wilson, 1982). In this study some participants may need to feel confident in themselves as well as know that the facilitator has the confidence in them that this transfer of power will result in an empowered and cohesive group experience. By sensing the facilitator's strong belief in their capabilities, the group is encouraged to trust itself as a collective in creation. In considering specific communication competencies, a facilitator should pay attention to what they may be projecting nonverbally to the group as well. For the group to be encouraged to let go, it is helpful for participants to sense that the facilitator has the confidence in them to do. In this regard, paying close attention to body language and purposeful use of self in conveying this "I believe in you" message would be an important communication skill

for facilitators to consider. As human beings, relinquishing control can be a difficult task. In the role of facilitator as well as participant, this concept and ability was found to be very important in the facilitation and experience of *communitas*.

In speaking of this shift to group empowerment, there was first a very important step of leading individuals to *recognize* this group connection in order to function as a group in the moment. In this regard, the facilitator played a very important role in leading groups from potentially negative experiences of individual self-consciousness to positive experiences of group consciousness and connection. This concept of consciousness will be addressed below.

Consciousness. This final thread which emerged was the specific level of consciousness and awareness participants experienced at each level within the event process. Within the structure of these events, the facilitator used a certain level of control in her decision making with regard to music making. Within this structure or containment of the event, the slow shift of control from facilitator to participants through empowerment was deliberately fashioned to lead individuals through progressive stages of consciousness. In the beginning phases of these events, an overall climate of self-consciousness seemed apparent amongst many individuals. When people are able to let go, loosen up, and play, they are drawn to an inner awareness that is often forgotten when focused on the externals of day to day living (Kleiber, 1999). When anxiety subsides to play, one's consciousness also switches from a negative experience of self-consciousness, to a more positive experience of self-awareness (Kleiber). In this new state of consciousness, participants were able to let go, play, and begin to connect to their own inner rhythms. Moving along the continuum, individuals seemed to become more

comfortable and acutely aware of themselves, not in a reserved apprehensive way, but seemingly more in tune and at ease with themselves and their inner rhythms.

Simultaneously, the facilitator began empowering the group to control their own music-making as new levels of confidence and awareness emerged. From here, individuals were guided into a new awareness of the collective that created an overall group consciousness, and became more empowered and in control of what they were creating as a group. In this final stage of event consciousness in which self awareness seemed to dissolve into collective group consciousness, individuals within the collective possessed almost complete control over the music being created and some of the structural attributes had dissolved. It also seems then, that in this state, moments of *communitas* may have been experienced; what Csikszentmihalyi (1991) referred to as a merging of action and awareness in which participants seemed to simultaneously lose themselves in the moment while still maintaining a musical connection that sounded like a song. In theory, group members were able to experience a loss of self while simultaneously experiencing a shared group experience, and a loss of consciousness as a group where participants were just “in it” (Turner, 1969). This loss of consciousness as a phenomenon in these experiences has been described as ‘flow’ on the individual level, and ‘*communitas*’ at the group level (Csikszentmihalyi; Turner). Perhaps specific to this context, Sarbanes (2006) stated that “In certain contexts, music has a distinctive ability to connect the ‘we’ and the ‘I’ without subordinating one to the other (p. 17). This seems to correspond with the notion that both flow and *communitas* may occur simultaneously or that they are inextricably linked within experiences of *communitas*.”

Whether *communitas* is experienced by one person, a few, or all does not seem to be the important issue as outlined by Turner (1969). In personal experiences within facilitated rhythm events upon undertaking this research, the commonly uttered question by veterans of these events to one another is “were you there?” This seems to signify that individuals within these experiences are accustomed to a level of consciousness that is perceived as shared. This concept of collective consciousness also seems to relate to the idea of transcendence, which Eisenberg (1990) outlined as a characteristic of ‘jamming’ or improvisational music making experiences. In transcendent states, individuals are said to rise above the ego state of mind in the moment (Eisenberg). When this occurs in a group setting, these transcendent experiences have been linked by Eisenberg to Turner’s concept of *communitas*. Future studies might look at this relationship between transcendence and *communitas* in this group music making setting, and perhaps focus on the effects of such experiences.

The fluidity of each event was also found to be an important element with regards to leading participants toward experiences of *communitas*. In the pursuit of understanding how fluidity may be attained within a facilitated event, the above threads of structure/anti-structure, control/empowerment, and consciousness have been merged as they were found to interrelate and overlap in the implementation of the Arthurian method and have been summarized. This is to assist facilitators in visualizing important elements which require attention in maintaining this fluidity, and can be found below.

Summary of Framework Implications

Phase #1 Dictator → Individual. The facilitator will possess a high level of control over group activities, and adhere to a general structure to start. There is a general

loosening of conventions and facilitating “letting go” through ice breakers; teaching technical skills which lead to individual empowerment and instill a level of individual confidence; teaching without teaching by empowering individuals to look within themselves for their own “inner rhythms” and knowledge and trust that they already have the answers within. This leads individuals to a higher level of self-awareness.

Phase #2 Director → Group Consciousness. In this phase, the facilitator slowly begins to empower the group as control shifts slightly. A facilitator should encourage individuals to listen and communicate with each other; encourage individuals to recognize that they are part of something greater than what they are doing/creating as a single unit; and guide individuals to an understanding that they are in fact one piece to an overall puzzle. Participants within this phase are now taking responsibility for their own doing/creation and are self-facilitating their actions, while at the same time recognizing how those individual actions fit into the overall group experience and dynamic. This phase will encourage cooperation.

Phase #3 Facilitator → Percussion Ensemble. In this phase, using a musical metaphor, the group now has their own “song”. This means that they are connected beyond the self, and recognize that they are creating or participating in one collective experience that everyone is mutually responsible for. Consciousness should now deeply reside at the group level, and the group should be making decisions together in a cooperative manner, aided by the bonds they have formed as a group. In this phase, the facilitator now has some level of group synergy to work with. They may then help to deepen this synergy and connection by guiding the group to see its potential in dynamics and emotion.

Using these concepts, individual leisure providers may create experiences in which this deepening of relationship and group emotion might occur depending on differing situations. In this phase, the group will begin to self-organize and the facilitator is able to step back more than in the first stages and really let the group lead itself for the most part. Group members are listening and communicating to others within the group due to understanding their individual responsibility, and also form new levels of emotional and dynamic connection. Group members should now have the confidence and empowerment to express themselves uniquely and creatively. Facilitators should step back and allow for this freedom of play and creativity to occur, and should only step in when absolutely necessary. The group must be empowered and be confident that on their own without facilitator assistance they will be able to do whatever is necessary to keep the group connected. Only when the group starts to fall apart, does the facilitator first teach without teaching by allowing the group time to try and figure it out themselves, and then just before the 'train wreck', moves in to help bring the group synergy back together.

Phase #4 Orchestra Conductor → Orchestra. In this final phase, transition points appear less frequently, and the group is now the closest it has been to its potential with regard to connection, emotion, and dynamics. In other words, the group has learned to work together to make things "click" and needs very little help from the facilitator. The group is fully empowered, the facilitator has let go of control almost completely unless they are absolutely needed, and the initial structure of the event has dissolved and evolved to hold a life of its own. In this phase, the facilitator may be needed on occasion to help the group work through a certain scenario, but for the most part the group is functioning at a highly

cohesive level in which they are self-sustaining. There is a positive, supportive relationship that leads to an emotionally satisfying experience. Again as Hull (2006a) has described it, the facilitator “frees them to focus less on maintaining their rhythm, and more on the musical harmonies evolving from those rhythms (p. 173).” Taken as a metaphor for all group leisure experiences, the group has to think very little about the skills themselves, which frees participants to focus on arriving at deeper levels of synergy and connection, and potential experiences of *communitas*.

Findings from this study as they inform the literature have been summarized above. In the final sections I will outline two suggestions for research pertaining to the short and long term effects of facilitated recreational music making, as well as whether experiences of *communitas* can break down barriers between people of varying demographics including marginalized groups, and create an atmosphere of social leveling. These suggestions will be addressed in depth below.

Suggestions for Future Research

Social Integration in Diverse Populations

By definition, *communitas* is “a spontaneously generated relationship between leveled and equal total and individuated human beings, stripped of structural attributes” (Turner, 1974, p.202). As described in the literature, these relationships of *communitas* occur within the realm of anti-structure. Anti-structure as Turner (1974) defined it is “the dissolution of normative social structure, with its role sets, statuses, jural rights and duties, etc...” (p.28). The realm of anti-structure has been suggested to provide places within organized modern society where people may momentarily let go of the roles they play on a day to day basis in order to perhaps reconnect with what it was to truly “be

human". In other words, these moments of *communitas* within anti-structural settings break down barriers, let go of imposed social structures, and create experiences of just "being" (Turner, 1982).

If this is the case, these theories if understood with regard to facilitation could have important social implications with regard to social integration, peace making and keeping, dispute resolution, or any other scenario in which a leveling and understanding of commonness might be beneficial. While Turner theorizes about these relations of *communitas* within Nonmodern tribes as well as breaking down structures and order, he does not seem to address this issue with regards to mixed populations including the integration of marginalized or minority groups with majority and non-marginalized groups nor does he address breaking down the barriers between various differing demographics in groups of people.

It would be an important study to see the effects of relationships of *communitas* in a mixed setting of varying ages, genders, sexuality, socio-economic, race, ethnicity, etc. backgrounds. More specifically, it would be worthwhile to investigate whether participants would be able to step outside of these marginalized statuses and feel "at one" with their oppressors. While theory suggests that there is a spirit of humanness we all share, it is not understood whether one can ever truly step outside of feelings of marginalization. If this was possible through experiences of *communitas*, this would have great implications with regard to being able to facilitate these experiences.

Implementing some of the findings from this study on the facilitation of experiences associated with *communitas* is one proposed way in which this issue could be addressed, and might be implemented through a variety of contexts. A future case

study taking a phenomenological approach could take a similar methodological approach in utilizing interviews, focus groups, observations and participant observations in collecting data. Groups could be purposely sampled to create as much diversity and feelings of marginalization by using intensity sampling for fairly extreme cases (Patton, 2002). Participants could be asked to reflect on their feelings of others and life situation prior to events, and then asked to reflect on their experiences and feelings toward group members and self after the event. This leads into a conversation and suggestion for future research looking at potential personal and transformative effects of facilitated group drumming.

Personal and Social Transformation

One final suggestion for future research seems to be very timely within today's world, and addresses the call and necessity for both personal and social transformation. One specific area of interest would be the transformative or long-term affects these experiences of *communitas* have on individuals self-learning and growth, their own particular ways of being in and relating to their world, as well as the overall transformative affect that group drumming experiences may have on communities and cultures that these individuals are part of. Another study might investigate if the connections experienced have any long-term affects in the form of changed perspectives of self and others beyond each isolated event. This may have implications with regards to the literature on personal and social transformation, especially in a Western world that critically needs to rise above or 'transcend' current individual and social conditions imposed in part by a fast-paced, meaning lacking culture.

Within the growing field of positive psychology, including research on human potential, self-determination theory, personal motivation, personal and social well-being, and overall life satisfaction and quality of life research, there are many new ways to study phenomenon within these contexts. While previous, more traditional research in the field of psychology and social psychology has been primarily based around traditional quantitative measures, I would like to suggest the potential benefits and importance of studying the human experience from a humanistic psychology approach. Humanistic psychology recognizes the importance of the lived experience as we attach meanings and interpret these meanings and their affects on our lives. In moving toward a climate of personal and social change and transformation and healthy growth, this approach would be very conducive to understanding potential agents and tools for these changes (Krippner, 1999). Quite simply, if we want to understand how the human experience can be optimized, we need to find optimal life experiences as interpreted by humans, and study them (Csikszentmihalyi & Seligman, 2000).

One suggestion would be the qualitative study of phenomenology. Taking a heuristic approach specifically, one future study might create a team of co-researchers who have experienced personal and social transformation through facilitated drumming within their lives. Within heuristics, the researcher also becomes imbedded in research in reporting their own experience of the phenomenon and the meanings they attach to these experiences (Patton, 2002). Intensity sampling may be implemented with a focus on finding co-researchers who have also experienced the phenomenon in an intensely transformative way (Patton). Through understanding the lived experiences of a group of co-researchers, and distinguishing the commonalities and similarities between them along

with the researcher's own, a deeper understanding of the lived human experience of a phenomenon may be drawn. It is only through understanding the lived experience of humans, that we may find the patterns and themes that seem to unite us in our experiences. In essence, we live in a social world of shared experience, despite the fact that we often times feel disconnected and unrelated to those around us.

As outlined in the review of literature, both Turner (1969) and Hearn (1980) felt that liminal settings such as group drumming provided spaces for socially dominant ideas and structures could be addressed and challenged due to the unique aspect of social leveling and a step outside of societal and personal roles could be experienced. This context where freedom, play, and creativity are experienced may remind individuals of what may be lacking in day to day life, and could potentially be explored as spaces for future personal and social transformation. As mentioned above, future studies may also look at the concepts of transcendence as related to communitas and experienced within this applied setting of group in the moment music creation. This may have some links to experiences of potential reported transformation.

Conclusion

This study has provided a thorough dive "beneath the surface of the iceberg" in the exploration of one particular method of facilitating group experiences in recreational music making. Research was conducted in an effort to investigate the ability of a facilitator through specific methods, to guide participants within a group setting toward experiences associated with communitas. I have presented findings, analysis, and discussion regarding the ways in which the facilitator in this study was able to guide these group experiences. As outlined within the introduction to this study, much of the

focus within the facilitation literature focuses on the purpose of manifesting specific lessons or successful task completion, and lacks in the provision of guidance on specific methods and structured frameworks which foster optimal group experiences of synergy. This study has highlighted a system of facilitation that focuses intentions on the experience itself as the reward, or group experience for it's "own sweet sake"; the journey over the destination (Wilson, 1981).

Within the leisure literature, many researchers have studied and theorized about the many positive experiences involved in engagement in leisure. Knowledge regarding play, flow, group cohesion, perceived freedom, intrinsic motivation, etc. suggests that leisure does provide participants with desirable experiences by way of these specific mechanisms. There is minimal literature however, on the ways in which leisure practitioners may increase the chances of the manifestation of these mechanisms through the specific methods they may intentionally employ. This study, which investigated the ways in which one particular leisure service provider was able to manifest certain positive experiences associated with *communitas*, has contributed a better understanding as to how specifically optimal group experiences may be facilitated intentionally.

The Arthurian method at its essence was found to be the facilitation of letting go, connection to inner rhythms, discovering the authentic self and authentic self of others, cooperation, common ground and synergy, and the perceived freedom for self and group expression in a safe and comfortable environment. Main threads throughout these findings related to concepts of structure, control, and consciousness. Rhythmical music making was the means through which the Arthurian method could be implemented. The heartfelt connection of the facilitator and her abilities to read and respond to individual

and group needs, in combination with knowledge of the Arthurian method through the use of drumming as a tool for expression and unity, provided a unique experience of synergy for the participants within this study. A summary of specific contributions regarding the ways in which the facilitator of these particular methods guided group experiences has been provided at the beginning of this chapter. This is to inform future facilitators in the pursuit of manifesting optimal group experiences associated with *communitas*. It is to be noted again, that these findings have not yet been studied with groups involving diverse populations or marginalized groups specifically with regard to social leveling and integration. These findings may aid in better understanding whether experiences of *communitas* may be intentionally manifest within diverse populations in future studies.

This study also introduces the concept of facilitated recreational music making and specifically the Arthurian method to the literature, which may open new directions and areas of study within the leisure literature specifically. These findings outlined may have many potential implications and applications for various fields and populations. In better understanding the ways in which this facilitation method contributed to the manifestation of optimal group experiences, other facilitators in various contexts may take from this study valuable insights when attempting to facilitate their own synergistic experiences. Those wishing to understand how *communitas* may manifest as a progression and balance of structure, control, and consciousness may also find value in the results and discussion of this study.

Appendix A: Recruitment Script for Facilitator

Hi there,

My name is Anne, and I am a certified drum circle facilitator. I am inviting you to take part in a drum circle at my home, on (insert specific date here). At this circle, a study will be taking place by a Masters student named Amy Cunningham from Brock University in the department of Recreation and Leisure Studies.

In this study, Amy will primarily be observing my facilitation methods, and secondarily their affect on the overall group. You will not be judged on your drumming abilities, and there is no pressure to perform whatsoever. Secondly, you may be invited to participate in a focus group following the drum circle. In this focus group, you will be discussing your experience of the drum circle as well as your experience of my facilitation. All data collected will be kept confidential, and your name will not be attached to the published thesis. If you have any questions which warrant clarification before or after the study, you can direct them to Amy at amy_cunningham11@yahoo.ca. I hope you will join us in this exciting study!

Thank-you!

Appendix B

Letter of Information and Consent Form – Interview/Observation Participant

March 2007

Dear participant,

The research project that you are being invited to participate in is entitled, "Leisure and Communitas: A case study of drum circle facilitation." My name is Amy Cunningham, and I am an M.A. student in the faculty of Applied Health Sciences at Brock University. I am mainly interested in the area of the specific benefits of leisure, and the mechanisms through which they are attained. The purpose of this research is to study specific "Arthurian" facilitations methods with regard to their ability to create group synergy, unity, and experiences of communion and by extension foster personal and social benefit. Your involvement and feedback are greatly appreciated and will help to further my understanding as to how and if this group synergy can be facilitated in this particular leisure setting.

You will be asked to participate in an **interview prior to the first drum circle** which will involve some general questions about facilitation. You will also be **interviewed at the conclusion of each of three drum circle facilitations**, and each interview will take approximately forty-five to sixty minutes to complete. The questions will focus on topics surrounding your personal experience of facilitating drum circles, and the methods you employ to create group cohesion and unity. During each of the facilitations I will be **observing you with regard to your facilitation techniques**, as well as how the participants respond to these techniques. The observations are not meant to put pressure on you, and will be used so that I may better understand the interaction between facilitator and participant, and how the participants are affected by your facilitation. Interviews will be audio-recorded, and all original audiotapes will be destroyed following completion of the study. Upon completion of the data analysis phase, you will be contacted to verify the recorded information with regard to your words and actions, to ensure the trustworthiness of the results.

The study that you are being asked to participate in will involve you and the participants in your drum circle. However, you are the only facilitator who will be studied. Participants from each of the three drum circles which you will facilitate will also be providing me with feedback through focus-group scenarios upon completion of each circle. Results from this study will be used to enhance my understanding of one potential mechanism through which leisure may benefit individuals and society, as well as whether group synergy can be facilitated through the methods that you employ.

If you wish to view the results of this data collection, the information can be requested at the e-mail listed below, or we can arrange a data sharing method prior to commencing data collection. While the data collected will be used in the presentation in the written thesis and conference presentations of this study, the specific identity of the participants in the study will not be disclosed. Any information that arises from participants will be treated with confidentiality, and access to information that might identify participants will be limited to the principle investigator, advisory committee, and supervisor.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may decline answering any question(s) within the interview that you find uncomfortable. You may withdraw from the study at any stage in the process. Of course, you may also choose not to participate and will not experience negative consequences as a result. Should you have any further questions concerning the interview, observations, or the study in general, please feel free to contact **Amy Cunningham** by e-mail at amy_cunningham11@yahoo.ca. Additionally, concerns about your involvement in the study may also be directed to **Research Ethics Officer** in the **Office of Research Services** at 905-688-5550, extension 3035, reb@brocku.ca or the **Faculty Supervisor** Colleen Hood, Department Chair and Associate Professor of Recreation and Leisure Studies (905) 688-5550 ext. 5120, colleen.hood@brocku.ca.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the REB (file# _____)

Thank you for your interest and involvement in this study!

Sincerely,

Amy Cunningham
M.A. Applied Health Science candidate
Brock University, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences

Informed Consent- Interview

Date:

Project Title: **Leisure and Communitas: A case study of drum circle facilitation**

Principal Investigator: Amy Cunningham, M.A. candidate
Applied Health Science
Department of: Recreation and Leisure Studies
Brock University
(905) 227-9721

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Colleen Hood, Associate
Professor and Department Chair
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
Brock University
(905) 688-5550 Ext. 5120, colleen.hood@brocku.ca

INVITATION

You are invited to participate in a study that involves research. The purpose of this study is to study specific "Arthurian" facilitation methods with regard to their ability to create group synergy, unity, and experiences of communion and by extension foster personal and social benefit.

WHAT'S INVOLVED

You will be asked to participate in an interview prior to the first drum circle which will involve some general questions about facilitation. You will also be interviewed at the conclusion of each of three drum circle facilitations, and each interview will take approximately forty-five to sixty minutes to complete. The questions will focus on topics surrounding your personal experience of facilitating drum circles, and the methods you employ to create group cohesion and unity. During each of the facilitations I will be observing you with regard to your facilitation techniques, as well as how the participants respond to these techniques. The observations are not meant to put pressure on you, and will be used so that I may better understand the interaction between facilitator and participant, and how the participants are affected by your facilitation.

Participation will take approximately 10 hours of your time spread out over the course of 8 days. The study that you are being asked to participate in will involve you and the participants in your drum circle. However, you are the only facilitator who will be studied. Participants from each of the three drum circles which you will facilitate will also be providing me with feedback through focus-group scenarios upon completion of each circle. Results from this study will be used to enhance my understanding of one potential mechanism through which leisure may benefit individuals and society, as well as whether group synergy can be facilitated through the methods that you employ.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS

Possible benefits of participation include adding to the current research as to the potential benefits of leisure and the arts to individuals and society. As well, it will be a contribution toward the knowledge of the benefits of group drumming on community building and group cohesion, and the ability of drum circle facilitators to foster this. There are no known or anticipated risks associated with participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Interviews will be audio-recorded, and all original audiotapes will be destroyed following completion of the study. The information you provide will be kept confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study; however, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish.

Data collected during this study will be stored in a filing cabinet at my home, and will be kept for 1 year, after which time all electronic data will be deleted, and all paper data will be shredded. Access to this data will be restricted to myself, my advisory committee; Dr. Cathy van Ingen and Dr. Martha Barnes, and my supervisor, Dr. Colleen Hood.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may decline to answer any questions or participate in any component of the study. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time and may do so without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

Results of this study may be published in professional journals and presented at conferences. Feedback about this study will be available upon completion of the thesis defense, which will occur in the summer of 2007. I will contact you at this time, and if any further information is required, I can be reached at amy_cunningham11@yahoo.ca

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE

If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact the Principal Investigator or the Faculty Supervisor (where applicable) using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University (insert file #). If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 Ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca.

Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Thank you for your participation!

Sincere Regards,

Amy Cunningham
M.A. Candidate, Faculty of Applies Health Science
Brock University

Appendix C

Letter of Information and Consent Form – Observation and Focus Group Participant

March 2007

Dear participant,

The research project that you are being invited to participate in is entitled, "Leisure and Communitas: A case study of drum circle facilitation." My name is Amy Cunningham, and I am an M.A. student in the faculty of Applied Health Sciences at Brock University. I am mainly interested in the area of the specific benefits of leisure, and the mechanisms through which they are attained. The purpose of this research is to study specific "Arthurian" facilitations methods with regard to their ability to create group synergy, unity, and experiences of communion and by extension foster personal and social benefit. Your involvement and feedback are greatly appreciated and will help to further my understanding as to how and if group synergy can be facilitated in this particular leisure setting.

During the drum circle, I will be observing the facilitator as well as the participants as part of the data collection procedure. The majority of the observing will be focused on the facilitator and her particular facilitation methods, however some of the observations will be focused on a general overview of how participants are responding to the facilitation. It is to be noted that the primary purpose of this observation is to watch the facilitator's actions and role within the experience. I will in no way be judging individuals on their drumming abilities, and as the majority of the observing will be of the facilitator, the minor observations of the group I will be making will be with the intention of gauging the affect that the facilitator is having on the group through her methods.

The study that you are being asked to participate in will also involve the collection of focus group data which you may be invited to participate in at the conclusion of the drum circle. Results from this study will be used to enhance my understanding of one potential mechanism through which leisure may benefit individuals and society, as well as whether group synergy can be facilitated through the methods that are employed by the facilitator. All original audiotapes will be destroyed following completion of the study.

If you wish to view the results of this data collection, the information can be requested at the e-mail listed below, or we can arrange a data sharing method prior to commencing data collection. While the data collected will be used in the presentation of my study, the specific identity of the participants in the study will not be disclosed. Any information that arises from participants will be treated with confidentiality, and access to information that might identify participants will be limited to the principle investigator, advisory committee, and supervisor.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may decline answering any question(s) within the interview that you find uncomfortable. You may withdraw from the study at any stage in the process. Of course, you may choose not to participate and will not experience negative consequences as a result. Should you have any further questions concerning the focus groups, the interview or the study in general, please feel free to contact **Amy Cunningham** by e-mail at amy_cunningham11@yahoo.ca. Additionally, concerns about your involvement in the study may also be directed to **Research Ethics Officer** in the **Office of Research Services** at 905-688-5550, extension 3035, reb@brocku.ca or the **Faculty Supervisor** Colleen Hood, Department Chair and Associate Professor of Recreation and Leisure Studies (905) 688-5550 ext. 5120, colleen.hood@brocku.ca.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the REB (file# _____)

Thank you for your interest and involvement in this study!

Sincerely,

Amy Cunningham

M.A. Applied Health Science candidate

Brock University, Faculty of Applied Health Science

Informed Consent- Observations and Focus Group Participant

Date:

Project Title: **Leisure and Communitas: A case study of drum circle facilitation**

Principal Investigator: Amy Cunningham, M.A. candidate
Applied Health Science
Department of: Recreation and Leisure Studies
Brock University
(905) 227-9721

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Colleen Hood, Associate
Professor and Department Chair
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
Brock University
(905) 688-5550 Ext. 5120, colleen.hood@brocku.ca

INVITATION

You are invited to participate in a study that involves research. The purpose of this study is to study specific "Arthurian" facilitation methods with regard to their ability to create group synergy, unity, and experiences of communion and by extension foster personal and social benefit.

WHAT'S INVOLVED

You will be participating in a drum circle that will last approximately forty-five minutes, in which there will be a participant observer. It is to be noted and stressed that this observation is primarily of the facilitator and her facilitation methods, and in no way is a judgment of group or individual drumming ability. You may as well be asked to participate in a focus group at the conclusion of your involvement. This focus group will take approximately forty-five to sixty minutes to complete. The questions will focus on topics surrounding your personal experience of participating in this specific drum circle. For example, some of the typical questions that you may be asked during this focus group will include: Describe your overall experience in this circle. The focus group interview will be audio-recorded for research purposes.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS

Possible benefits of participation include adding to the current research as to the potential benefits of leisure and the arts to individuals and society. As well, it will be a contribution toward the knowledge of the benefits of group drumming on community building and group cohesion, and the ability of drum circle facilitators to foster this. There are no known or anticipated risks associated with participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Focus groups will be audio-recorded, and all original audiotapes will be destroyed following completion of the study. The information you provide will be kept confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study; however, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. All information you provide will be considered confidential and grouped with responses from other participants. Given the format of this session, we ask you to respect your fellow participants by keeping all information that identifies or could potentially identify a participant and/or his/her comments confidential.

Once the analysis phase of the data has been completed, I will send you a copy my analysis to ensure that the essence which I have captured and described accurately depicts your experience of the event and the focus group. Any point of clarification may be offered and will be highly appreciated at this time!

Data collected during this study will be stored in a filing cabinet at my home, and will be kept for 1 year, after which time all electronic data will be deleted, and all paper data will be

shredded. Access to this data will be restricted to myself, my advisory committee; Dr. Cathy van Ingen and Dr. Martha Barnes, and my supervisor, Dr. Colleen Hood.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may decline to answer any questions or participate in any component of the study. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time and may do so without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

Results of this study may be published in professional journals and presented at conferences. Feedback about this study will be available upon completion of the thesis defense, which will occur in the summer of 2007. I will contact you at this time, and if any further information is required, I can be reached at amy_cunningham11@yahoo.ca.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE

If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact the Principal Investigator or the Faculty Supervisor (where applicable) using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University (insert file #). If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 Ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca.

Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

Name: _____

I consent to being observed during my participation in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I give my consent should I be invited to participate in the focus group session following this drum circle.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Thank you for your participation!

Sincere Regards,

Amy Cunningham
M.A. Candidate, Faculty of Applied Health Science
Brock University

Appendix D: Interview Guide

Initial Interview- Anne

- 1) What is the purpose of facilitating a drum circle? What defines a “successful” circle?
- 2) What are the factors that influence how to facilitate differing populations?
- 3) Describe the methods through which you facilitate a drum circle.
- 4) How do you go about guiding the group into and back into synchronicity?
- 5) What makes a good facilitator?
- 6) Is there any important information that you feel I missed in my questioning?

Appendix E: Interview guide post Drum Circle

Interview to follow each drum circle- Anne

- 1) Describe what happened in the group today.
- 2) What is the comparison to other groups you have facilitated?
- 3) What went well? What was challenging?
- 4) What were the moments during the facilitation that caused you to think about/change how you were facilitating?
 - b) How did you know?
 - c) How did you respond (what did you do?)
- 5) Which of your own capabilities did you draw on in today's group?

Appendix F: Focus Group Guide

1) I will first ask some introductory questions such as:

- a) Is this your first time at a drum circle?
- b) Did you enjoy yourselves?
- c) What brings you here?

The purposes of these questions are to begin to involve participants in discussion and start things off by putting participants at ease.

2) Describe what happened in the group today? What stood out for you?

-From here, I will ask further questions based on the responses I receive by choosing key words that are mentioned by participants, and then unpacking their meaning.

Some examples might be:

- a) Someone mentioned that they 'lost themselves' during the experience. What does this mean? Did anyone else experience this? Can you describe it?
- b) The word "flow" was mentioned. Can you describe this experience in other words? Did anyone else experience this? Who did not?
- c) I've noticed the word 'connection' has been used a lot. Can you give me details as to what that connection was in your experience today?

3) What did the facilitator do to create the experience?

Appendix G: Observation Framework

What I observed: Facilitator

<u>Individual Personality Factors</u>	<u>Verbal Cues</u>	<u>Body Language</u>	<u>Involvement in Experience</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the facilitator like? i.e. outgoing, positive, energetic, encouraging, unapproachable, engaging? - Does the facilitator create a safe environment? (i.e. welcoming and open) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tone of voice - Enthusiasm in voice - How often are verbal cues needed? - How are questions from participants handled? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facial expressions - Movement and positioning of body and use of non-verbal cues with body - Where is facilitator positioned? Does this change? - Is there movement around the room? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is facilitator involved throughout the whole experience? - Does she ever step back and become a part of the group? - If so when, and what seems to decide this?

What I observed: Participants

<u>Reaction to Personality Factors</u>	<u>Reaction to Verbal Cues</u>	<u>Reaction to Body Language</u>	<u>Involvement</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do participants seem to respond to the facilitator's personality? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do participants seem to be responding to verbal cues by the facilitator? - Is there confusion as to what is expected of them? - Are there questions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do participants respond to the facilitator's body language? Do they seem confused as to what is expected of them? - From an observational standpoint, do participants seem to be experiencing communitas? If so, from an observers perspective, does it seem that one aspect of the facilitation was the most important? Is it the sum of all parts which seemed to lead to this experience? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do participants get to the point where they no longer need the facilitator? - If so, are there any noticeable changes once the facilitator leaves? - Does she need to take the lead on and off throughout the facilitation?

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