

Dear Participant,

My name is Catherine Schmidt-Jones. I am the author of the module you have just been reading. I am also currently a graduate student in education at the University of Illinois. My adviser, Dr. Marilyn Johnston-Parsons, and I would like to invite you to participate in a study that involves research investigating how free, online, educational resources affect the ability of people to pursue their own learning goals and interests.

If you decide to take part in this study, I would act as your online tutor, helping you design and carry out an inquiry based on your own questions about music. There are many types of inquiry that could benefit from online music-education resources. You might, for example, want to learn about an unfamiliar type of music, improve your music-composition skills, or prepare for a music-related project at school or work.

The goal of the study is to better understand what happens when people are motivated by their own questions, problems, and goals to try to educate themselves using Internet-based resources. For example, how useful is this approach to learning, and what kinds of support do you need? When online resources are not helpful, what is causing the problem? The answers may depend a lot on you: your favorite ways to learn, what you already know, your local music scene, and so on. So I would be asking you questions about yourself, too, and about what you think of the resources, activities, and assignments that we use to help you learn. Since it is so difficult to imagine what things are like at the other end of an Internet connection, I am hoping that you will also consider yourself a co-researcher in this project, and that you will feel free to tell me why you think something is or is not working for you.

During the course of your inquiry, I would help you find useful information, answer your questions, suggest assignments that will help you reach your learning goal, and offer constructive comments about any work you send in. Your inquiry will be designed so that you can finish it within one month if you have a few hours to devote to it each week. However, you would work at your own pace and can take longer to finish if you wish. The study site will be active for one year, until January 2014.

Your participation in this project would be completely voluntary, and you may drop out of the study at any time. We anticipate no risk from participating in this research other than what might be experienced in normal life. Your participation may help you learn more about music and about how to use the Internet as an educational resource. It may also help researchers, educators, and designers of online resources better understand the needs of self-directed online learners. The results of this study may be used for a dissertation, scholarly report, journal article, book, and/or conference presentation. In order to protect your privacy, your name and any other identifying information would be altered in any publications. If you wish to protect your anonymity during the study, you may sign up using a nickname or alias.

During the study, you and I would communicate (questions, answers, assignments, and so forth) through a secure Moodle discussion site. All information that is obtained about study participants will be kept on a secure computer and will be accessible only to project personnel. If you choose to respond to suggested assignments by submitting an audio recording of your work, such recordings would be analyzed for research purposes and in order to provide you with helpful feedback. Recordings would not be published or disseminated in any way. If you share similar interests with other study participants, you may choose to join a group forum at the study site. Group participation will not be required, however, and information about your project and your progress would be accessible to other

participants only to the extent that you choose to share it yourself.

If you have questions about this project, you may contact Dr. Marilyn Johnston-Parsons at 217-244-3577 or via email at [marilynj@illinois.edu](mailto:marilynj@illinois.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study or any concerns or complaints, please contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board at 217-333-2670 (collect calls will be accepted if you identify yourself as a research participant) or via email at [irb@illinois.edu](mailto:irb@illinois.edu).

Please print a copy of this consent form for your records, if you so desire.

By beginning the sign-up process, you indicate that you have read and understand the above consent form; you affirm that you are between the ages of 18 and 65; and you indicate your willingness to voluntarily take part in the study. To begin the sign-up process, send an email to [cschmid5@illinois.edu](mailto:cschmid5@illinois.edu) with "Research study sign-up" on the subject line.

Sincerely,

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