

## Research Assessment #5

**Date:** 10/16/2020

**Subject:** 1st Research Interview: Cody Sowell

### **Assessment:**

Cody Sowell, my guitar instructor of 2 and ½ years, is a man that wears many hats. Throughout his 17 year journey as a musician, Cody has been a guitarist, bassist, percussionist, instructor, producer, songwriter and sound engineer, and has played shows all around the state. The guidance that he provided during the interview was extremely helpful and will guide me during my ISM journey this year.

To my first question, which was, “What is your personal definition of music?”, Cody took a long pause and carefully considered his answer, before finally deciding on “Magic!”. This was an interesting answer, which I took a moment to reflect on. Music is something that we can’t see, touch or taste, and as a musician one is tasked with mastering it. What better way is there to describe something such as this than magic? Hopefully, I will become quite the wizard this year! Following this, Cody and I discussed his journey as a musician and what his path looked like. Cody had to work extremely hard to balance music, school and sports, which quite obviously parallels my current situation; his skills and knowledge as a musician today serves as an example of the idea that it is possible to pursue one’s passion despite other obstacles. In the past, I have been pessimistic in my ability to balance school and music, but after talking to Cody I have realized that it is absolutely possible to pursue multiple things with proper time management and a lot of hard work. From now on, I will have a more positive attitude regarding my ability to do well in school and progress in the field of music simultaneously. After this set of questions, I prodded Cody for his best advice to a young musician looking to succeed and develop necessary skills. Cody gave me simple, straightforward responses, advising me to master my basic facilities and follow your heart instead of what is popular at the moment. He also told me that one’s success as a musician should be based on whether they have the

freedom to create music that they are content with. I waited, chewing on this new information for a while. Traditional ideals regarding success tell people to chase money and expensive things, and Cody has blatantly contradicted this. Not all musicians are financially successful, but those who are happy are happy because they are able to create. Cody's advice will be very applicable to my musical endeavors throughout my ISM experience; I must follow my heart and make music that is true to *me*, not anyone else. Considering that the stakes of ISM, in comparison with the real world, are very low, this is the perfect opportunity for me to experiment and do as my heart desires as a musician. ISM will be an amazing learning experience and I cannot wait to see what kind of musician I will be when June comes around.