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## **From the Editor**

We appreciate our subscribers' and readers' continued patience as we do our best to catch up from our significant pandemic-related publication delays. We anticipate being back on track by the third quarter of 2024.

Please assist the journal by submitting manuscripts for consideration for publication and/or by spreading the word to colleagues and students that the journal has an ongoing open call for submissions. We publish research representing all paradigms, as well as literature reviews. The journal is found in libraries across this country and several others, indexed in the Music Index, and available on the Missouri Music Education Association website. Instructions for Contributors may be found at the end of this journal.

Wendy L. Sims, Editor

## **FEATURE ARTICLES**

## Diverse Student Subgroups' Representation in Music Courses in a Large Suburban School District<sup>1</sup>

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Rockwood School District

*The purpose of this study was to determine if diverse groups of students were underrepresented in elective music courses and if so, which subgroups of students were underrepresented. The secondary purpose was to identify opportunities to make elective music courses more accessible to all learners. The results indicated that students with Individualized Education Programs were significantly underrepresented in music classes in nearly all grades, and that Black students were significantly underrepresented in music courses during the students' tenth- and eleventh-grade years. Archival data from a music program survey given to eleventh-grade students who were not currently enrolled in a music course informed the secondary purpose of the study. Five themes emerged in students' recommendations for increasing enrollment in the music program: (a) course offerings, (b) teachers, (c) music selection, (d) expectations and time commitment, and (e) financial aid. School and district leaders should regularly review enrollment data to identify groups of students who are not accessing the music program equitably. Music educators must be responsive to the needs and interests of students who are not enrolled in music courses in order for programs to grow.*

**Keywords:** music classes, electives, enrollment, representation, diversity

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Although music courses are available to most students in public schools in the United States, they do not appear to be widely and equitably accessed (Alegrado & Winsler, 2020; Elpus, 2013, 2014, 2015; Elpus & Abril, 2011, 2019; Kinney, 2008, 2009, 2019; Wheelhouse, 2009). Access is the extent to which policies, structures, and schedules ensure all students have equitable opportunities to take full advantage of their education (Great Schools Partnership, 2014). Many students are passionate about music, but they may not relate to school music programs (Culp & Clauhs, 2020). When the students who do not participate in school music programs have commonalities (e.g., race or ethnicity, disability status, or socioeconomic status) barriers to access for these subgroups need to be

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<sup>1</sup> This article is based on the author's doctoral dissertation, entitled, *Representation in Elective Music Courses: A Quantitative Study* completed at Missouri Baptist University in 2021.

considered and addressed. Elpus and Abril (2019) stated, “The problem may not be in increasing the number of students in music courses (which is commonly heard in professional rhetoric) so much as ensuring music courses are attracting a representative and wide cross-section of the general student population” (p. 334).

### **Equity, Access, and Opportunity in Public Education in the United States**

Government leaders have attempted to improve educational opportunities for diverse learners in public schools in the United States for many years. *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) was a landmark case in which the justices of the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racially segregated schools were inherently unequal and in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution. While this decision led to the physical desegregation of public schools, many inequities still existed. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed with the goal of ending discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origin, and Title IV prohibited discrimination in public schools. School district leaders were first required to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education to children with disabilities because of The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, which established the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process. This act was reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990 and included students with traumatic brain injuries and autism. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibited discrimination against individuals with disabilities in public schools (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 2020). The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (1993) is a law that protects Americans with disabilities from discrimination. Employers must provide reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities, and public accommodations must be accessible (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 1993).

President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 to provide federal funding for public education in order to increase equitable access. No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 [NCLB], 2002) was the 2001 reauthorization of ESEA. Every Student Succeeds Act, the current reauthorization of ESSA, specifically includes music and the arts in its definition of a well-rounded education (National Association for Music Education [NAfME], 2015).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Federal legislation in the United States has historically reflected a value of educational equity, and billions of dollars have been spent in its pursuit (Muhammad, 2015). Dr. Anthony Muhammad (2019) suggested that while public educational policy and rhetoric are heavily influenced by egalitarianism, many schools function as meritocracies. Egalitarianism is the belief that human equality is the ultimate goal and that barriers to equality should be identified and removed



(Muhammad, 2019). A meritocracy is a system that focuses on identifying talent and intelligence. It assumes that a level playing field exists and that the rules which determine who succeeds are fair for all (Muhammad, 2019). Muhammad (2015) suggested the inequities that still exist in public education are the result of a disconnect between educators stated beliefs and values and their actions. Educators must critically consider the mindsets and actions that act as barriers to equality.

### **Demographic Trends in Enrollment in Elective Music Courses**

A common advocacy claim among music educators is that music education positively impacts academic performance (Kinney, 2008); however, researchers have suggested the differences between music and nonmusic students' academic performance is heavily impacted by the demographic characteristics of the students who choose to enroll in music ensembles (Alegrado & Winsler, 2020; Elpus, 2013; Kinney, 2008, 2019). Kinney (2008) found students' test scores did not generally increase while they were participating in the band program. Rather, their test scores were high before they entered the program and remained stable while participating in band. Student groups who typically underperform academically also tended to be underrepresented in instrumental music ensemble classes (Kinney, 2008). Elpus (2013) found when co-varying factors, such as race and socioeconomic status, were controlled for, music students did not outperform nonmusic students on the SAT. Choir courses, however, tend to be more representative of the overall student population in academic achievement (Kinney, 2008, 2019).

Researchers have reported that students enrolled in music classes tended to come from families with higher socioeconomic status than students who are not enrolled in music classes (Elpus and Abril, 2011). Kinney (2008; 2019) determined that students whose families had low socioeconomic status were less likely to participate in band. This may be because of costs associated with participating in an instrumental music ensemble and the outside of school expectations that necessitate transportation (Culp & Clauhs, 2020; Kinney, 2019; Wheelhouse, 2009). In contrast, Alegrado and Winsler's (2020) longitudinal study on enrollment in music courses in public middle schools in Miami indicated that students who qualified for free or reduced lunch (FRL) were more likely to enroll in band than students who did not qualify for FRL but they were less likely to enroll in orchestra and guitar. FRL status indicates whether a student qualified for free lunch or a reduced rate for lunch based on the state's criteria for household income and size (Eligibility Criteria for Free and Reduced Meal Prices, 2019). With regard to enrolling in orchestra, however, Kinney (2019) found that sixth grade students in an midwestern, urban school district who qualified for FRL were as likely to enroll as were students who did not qualify for FRL.

Researchers have investigated music enrollment of students from various ethnicities. Students who are Black and Hispanic<sup>i</sup> were found to be

underrepresented in music classes (Kinney, 2019). Alegrado and Winsler (2020) found that Black students were less likely than White students to enroll in music courses in middle school. Elpus (2014) and Elpus and Abril (2011) discovered that Hispanic students were underrepresented among students in the United States who enrolled in at least one music class in high school. Multiple authors have concluded that English Language Learners were also underrepresented in music courses (Alegrado & Winsler, 2020; Elpus, 2014; Elpus & Abril, 2011). Elpus (2014) found that while the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002) did not impact overall enrollment in music ensembles, it did impact minority representation. Elpus speculated that in a time of heightened focus on testing, struggling students were required or strongly encouraged to forgo elective classes in order to receive interventions for tested subjects. In contrast, Asian students were found to be overrepresented in orchestra classes (Elpus & Abril, 2019). Asian ethnicity was a significant predictor of band and orchestra enrollment in sixth grade (Kinney, 2019), while Asian students were most likely to take a music class in middle school, with White students second most likely (Alegrado & Winsler, 2020).

Elpus and Abril (2019) found that choral music course enrollment was racially and ethnically representative of the overall student body, and students who were learning English as a Second Language were equitably represented. This may be because there is a good opportunity to perform music that is culturally relevant in choirs. Also, unlike bands and orchestras, choirs tend to allow students to enter the program in high school, even if they did not participate in earlier grades. Finally, choirs may require less of a financial and time commitment from students (Elpus & Abril, 2019).

Students with disabilities have been reported to be underrepresented in music ensemble classes (Alegrado & Winsler, 2020; Fuelberth & Todd, 2017; Hammel & Hourigan, 2017). Alegrado and Winsler (2020) found that students with disabilities were 32% less likely to enroll in band and 45% less likely to enroll in guitar during middle school. This may be because many instrumental music programs have a single entry point, often around fifth grade (Hammel & Hourigan, 2017). Some students may not be developmentally ready to be in a music ensemble at this young age. Also, many ensemble teachers have a practice of asking students to play by themselves in front of the ensemble; this can be very intimidating to students whose skills are more limited. Some students may prefer not participating in the ensemble over the fear of embarrassment (Hammel & Hourigan, 2017).

Students who enroll in music ensemble courses in the United States are not representative of the overall student population (Alegrado & Winsler, 2020; Elpus, 2013, 2014, 2015; Elpus & Abril, 2011, 2019; Kinney, 2008, 2009, 2019; Wheelhouse, 2009). Groups identified as underrepresented include males, students with low academic achievement, students whose families have low socioeconomic status, students who are Black or African American, students who

are Hispanic, and students who have Limited English Proficiency (Alegrado & Winseler, 2020; Elpus & Abril, 2011, 2019; Elpus, 2013, 2014, 2015; Kinney, 2008, 2009, 2019). The National Association for Music Education (2017, 2019) currently has position statements in support of access, equity, inclusivity and diversity. In 2019 the National Association for Music Education commissioned a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access Current State Study to better understand the culture of music education and develop strategies to address needs and challenges (Cook Ross, 2019).

### **Increasing Equity, Access, and Opportunity in Elective Music Courses**

Several scholarly resources document best practices for increasing equity and access in music courses (Chaleroy et al., 2012; Hammel & Hourigan, 2017; Lind & McCoy, 2016). Culturally responsive teaching is an approach that can be used throughout the school to better serve minority students (Gay, 2018). Culturally responsive teachers validate and affirm the knowledge and experiences of ethnically diverse students instead of focusing on perceived deficits that are often cultural in nature (Gay, 2018). For example, some African American music students have strong aural and improvisational skills. A culturally responsive music teacher would affirm these skills and use them as a pathway into developing other musical skills, such as reading traditional notation (Lind & McCoy, 2016).

Culturally responsive teaching is particularly important in music programs because of the strong connection between music and culture. Music teachers can make their programs more culturally responsive by surveying parents and students to better understand students' cultural identities and their musical preferences. Students and parents can be invited to share their expertise in various music genres with the class, and music teachers can engage in their own learning about the music with which their students connect (Lind & McCoy, 2016).

Inclusive teaching practices are recommended to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Challenging learning goals should be in place for all students, but the materials, instructional methods, and assessment strategies should be flexible to meet the needs of individual learners (Hitchcock et al., 2002). Many music teachers do not receive specialized training for working with students who have disabilities (Gerrity et al., 2013), and the structure of large music ensemble courses may be inherently problematic for some students (Hammel & Hourigan, 2017). Some music education scholars have suggested new courses need to be considered in order to increase the accessibility of music programs (Bledsoe, 2015; Kratus, 2007; Williams, 2011). Specific suggestions include small ensemble courses, more culturally relevant musical instruments, and courses that focus on creating new music (Williams, 2011).

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to determine if diverse groups of students were underrepresented in elective music courses and if so, which subgroups of students

were underrepresented. The secondary purpose was to identify opportunities to make elective music courses more accessible to all learners. The following research questions were explored:

1. Are students who have IEPs proportionally represented among students who enrolled in music courses in sixth through eleventh grade?
2. Are students who qualify for FRL proportionally represented among students who enrolled in music courses in sixth through eleventh grade?
3. Are Black students proportionally represented among students who enrolled in music courses in sixth through eleventh grade?
4. Are Asian students proportionally represented among students who enrolled in music courses in sixth through eleventh grade?
5. Are Hispanic students proportionally represented among students who enrolled in music courses in sixth through eleventh grade?
6. Are Multiracial students proportionally represented among students who enrolled in music courses in sixth through eleventh grade?
7. Are White students proportionally represented among students who enrolled in music courses in sixth through eleventh grade?
8. Are there common changes eleventh-grade students who are not currently enrolled in a music course would recommend to increase participation in the district's music program?

### **Method**

In this study a quantitative, causal-comparative research design was utilized to explore representation and access in sixth- through eleventh-grade music courses. This method was selected because it allowed the researcher to compare two groups (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Representation of various subgroups in the general student population and representation in elective music courses was also compared. Archival data from a music program survey was analyzed to help identify factors impacting access to music courses. Seven of the eight research questions were quantitative in nature. The final research question was qualitative and allowed the researcher to make greater meaning of the quantitative data and address the secondary purpose of the study.

The research was conducted in a large, suburban school district in the Midwest. All elementary students in the district received general music instruction from a certified music teacher as a part of the required curriculum. Third-grade students receive 60 minutes of violin instruction during the school day from a certified instrumental music teacher. In fourth grade, students may elect to study violin, viola, or cello, and in fifth grade string bass is added as an instrument choice. Middle school students can enroll in band, orchestra, and/or choir as full-year elective courses. In high school, elective music courses in band, choir, guitar, orchestra, and Advanced Placement (AP) music theory are offered.

The research participants were approximately 2,000 students in the school district who belonged to the graduating class of 2022 cohort, during their enrollment in any school year from 2015-2016 through 2020-2021. Additionally, students in the graduating class of 2022 who were not enrolled in a music course in the 2020-2021 school year were surveyed; responses were studied to learn about factors influencing students' music course enrollment decisions.

Independent variables studied were race or ethnicity, IEP status, and FRL status. Race or ethnicity was defined as the descriptors listed for the student in the student information system and used for state reporting (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE], 2022). Race or ethnicity categories included by DESE were: Black, Asian, Hispanic, Multiracial, and White. American Indian/Alaska Native and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander were excluded because the total number of students belonging to these categories in the selected population was too low. IEP status was defined as whether a student had a disability under IDEA and received special education services (U.S. Department of Education, 2019).

The school district's director of research evaluation and assessment gave the researcher access to a password-protected website that contained the demographic information needed. The researcher conducted a series of two proportion z-tests to determine whether there was a significant statistical difference between the representation of the selected subgroups in the general population and in the music student population (students enrolled in music classes) in each grade. Minitab® Statistical Software was used to conduct the statistical tests.

The researcher was also granted permission to access the responses to a music program survey that the district had recently conducted. The survey was designed and deployed by members of the district's learning and support services department in the fall of 2020. The original purpose of the survey was to inform the district's band and guitar program review; program reviews are regularly conducted in the school district for all curricular areas every six to eight years. The survey was sent to all eleventh-grade students who were not enrolled in a music course for the 2020-2021 school year. The survey was distributed to non-music students through email because there was not a common class for these students. Two reminder emails to complete the survey were sent. There were no incentives offered to complete the survey and no penalties for nonresponse.

Responses to an open-ended survey question that asked students to offer recommendations for increasing participation in the music program were collected, segmented, and coded. The researcher identified common themes among the students' responses. The researcher's coding was checked by an expert in qualitative research and some modifications were made based on feedback received.

## Results

Data collection began in January of 2021. After obtaining all proper permissions, the researcher accessed an Enrollment Demographic report and a Secondary Course Enrollment report from the research site's virtual data warehouse. Longitudinal information was collected from the Enrollment Demographic report; data were gathered on the graduating class of 2022 from the time the cohort was in sixth grade through eleventh grade. For each year of the study, the researcher was able to determine the total number of students enrolled in the cohort, the number of students with IEPs, the number of students who qualified for FRL, and the number of students who were Asian, Black, Hispanic, Multiracial, and White. Total annual enrollment in the grade level cohort ranged from 1717 to 1853 in the six years included in the report and is detailed in Table 1. It is assumed the graduating class of 2022 was comprised of mainly the same students from sixth through eleventh grade although a small percentage of students left or joined the class each year.

**Table 1.** Enrollment in the General Population and in the Music Population

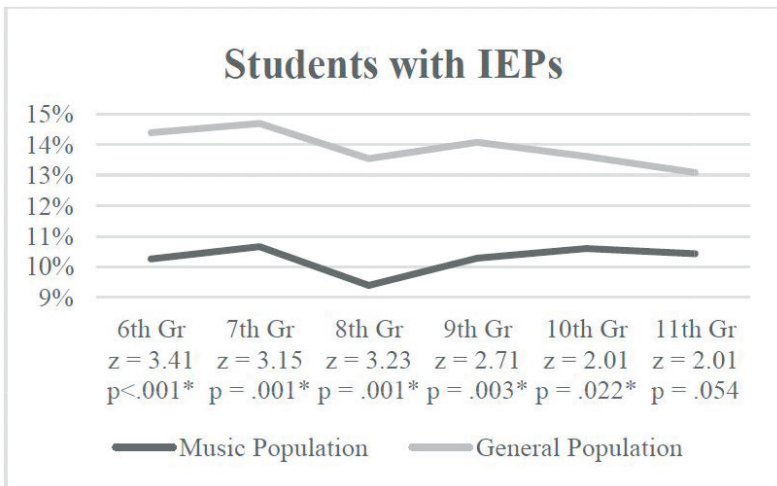
Class of 2022	General Population	Music Population
6th Grade (2015-2016)	1717	1229
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade (2016-2017)	1721	1032
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade (2017-2018)	1727	873
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade (2018-2019)	1853	700
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade (2019-2020)	1837	603
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade (2020-2021)	1788	450

Two-tailed, two-proportion z-tests were used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the proportion of students who belonged to each of seven subgroups in the general student population and students enrolled in a music course each year of the study. Representation of some subgroups of the population in elective music in the Midwest varied by grade. While the number of students who took a music course decreased each year from sixth through eleventh grade, several subgroups saw significant changes in the proportion of students enrolled in music from sixth through eleventh grades.

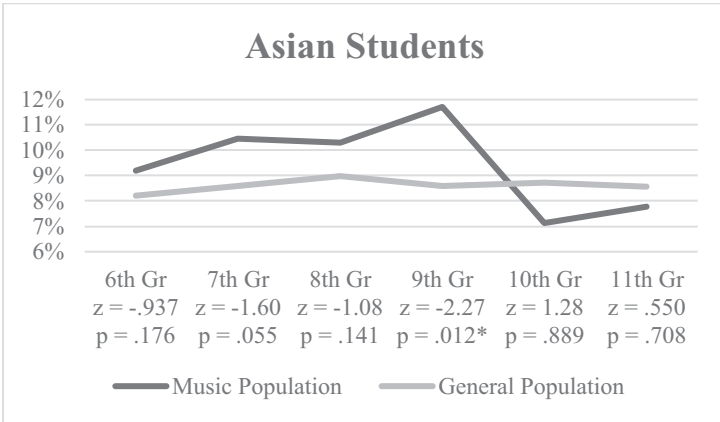
The only subgroup underrepresented in a statistically significant way in sixth grade was students who had IEPs. There was a lower proportion of students with IEPs than the general population in every subsequent year of the study. In the eleventh grade, there was a lower proportion of students enrolled in music, but this was not statistically significant (see Figure 1). Asian students were overrepresented in music courses in sixth through ninth grade, however, ninth grade was the only year the difference was statistically significant. Asian students were slightly underrepresented among students enrolled in music courses in tenth and eleventh grades. Black students were underrepresented in every grade, but the difference did not become statistically significant until tenth and eleventh grade (see Figure 1).

White students were slightly overrepresented in sixth and seventh grades and slightly underrepresented in eighth and ninth grades (see Figure 1). The higher proportion of white students was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) in tenth and eleventh grade. This indicates White students were more likely to continue in music than students who belonged to other subgroups. Students who qualified for FRL were overrepresented among students enrolled in music courses in every grade and in eighth, ninth, and eleventh grades the discrepancy was statistically significant. The underrepresentation of Multiracial students and Hispanic students in music classes was not found to be statistically significant in any grade

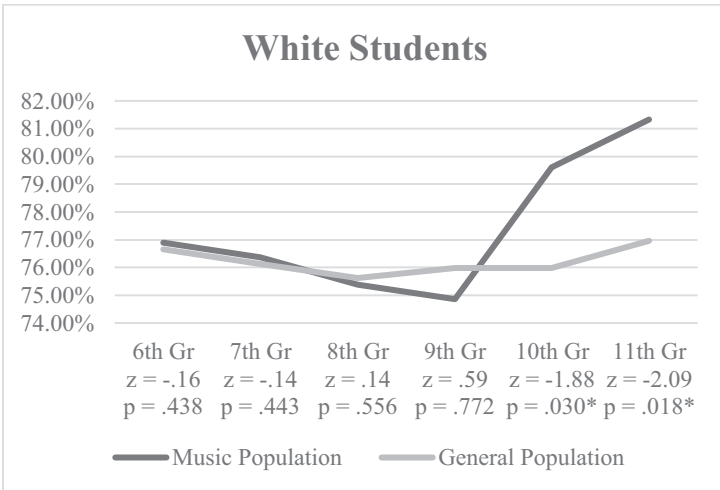
**Figure 1.** Longitudinal Representation



\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

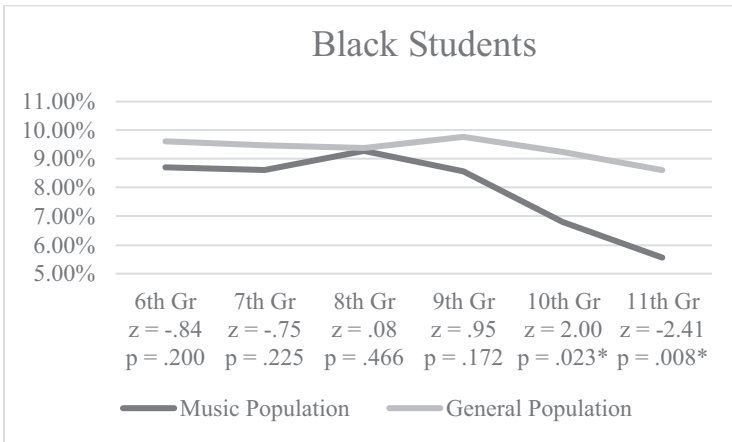


\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )



\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )





\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

Representation of some subgroups of the population included in the study varied by music program type (see Table 2). In band courses, students with IEPs were statistically significantly underrepresented in sixth ( $z = 2.19, p = .028$ ), seventh ( $z = 2.51, p = .012$ ), eighth ( $z = 3.43, p = .001$ ), and ninth ( $z = 2.12, p = .034$ ) grades. Hispanic students were underrepresented in band in ninth ( $z = 2.01, p = .045$ ) and tenth ( $z = 1.87, p = .031$ ) grades only.

In choir courses, students with IEPs were underrepresented at a statistically significant level in sixth grade ( $z = 2.62, p < .001$ ), tenth grade ( $z = 2.13, p = .033$ ), and eleventh ( $z = 2.66, p < .001$ ) grade. The lower proportion of Asian students in choir was statistically significant in sixth ( $z = 2.40, p = .016$ ), eighth ( $z = 2.30, p = .021$ ), tenth ( $z = 3.12, p < .001$ ), and eleventh ( $z = 3.85, p < .001$ ) grades. Students whose families qualified for FRL were overrepresented in choir classes in seventh ( $z = -2.94, p < .001$ ), eighth ( $z = -4.25, p < .001$ ), and ninth ( $z = -2.57, p = .010$ ) grades.

In guitar courses, multiracial students were underrepresented ( $z = 6.56, p < .001$ ) and students who qualified for FRL were overrepresented ( $z = -3.44, p = .001$ ) in ninth grade only. Asian students were statistically significantly underrepresented in guitar classes in tenth grade ( $z = 3.68, p < .001$ ). Black students were significantly underrepresented in guitar classes in eleventh grade ( $z = 4.55, p < .001$ ). In orchestra classes, students with IEPs were statistically significantly underrepresented in sixth ( $z = 2.37, p = .014$ ), seventh ( $z = 2.89, p = .004$ ), eighth ( $z = 2.21, p = .027$ ), and ninth ( $z = 2.00, p = .045$ ) grades. Black students were underrepresented in sixth ( $z = 2.47, p = .014$ ), ninth ( $z = 2.36, p = .019$ ), and tenth ( $z = 1.99, p = .047$ ) grades. Students who qualified for FRL were underrepresented in orchestra classes in sixth grade only ( $z = 2.14, p = .032$ ).

**Table 2.** Proportion of Students Belonging to Subgroups by Grade and Program Type

		FRL	IEP	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multi	White
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Gen Pop	15.96%	14.39%	8.21%	9.61%	2.91%	2.33%	76.65%
	All Music	16.84%	<b>10.25%</b> (U)	9.20%	8.71%	2.77%	2.12%	76.89%
	Band	17.72%	<b>10.79%</b> (U)	10.38%	9.57%	1.82%	3.05%	75.15%
	Choir	18.99%	<b>10.13%</b> (U)	<b>5.27%</b> (U)	9.49%	2.95%	1.48%	80.59%
	Orchestra	<b>11.36%</b> (U)	<b>9.47%</b> (U)	<b>14.02%</b> (O)	<b>5.68%</b> (U)	4.17%	1.51%	72.48%
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Gen Pop	14.88%	14.70%	8.60%	9.47%	3.14%	2.38%	76.12%
	All Music	17.64%	<b>10.66%</b> (U)	10.47%	8.62%	2.33%	1.94%	76.36
	Band	16.45%	<b>10.28%</b> (U)	<b>12.34%</b> (O)	7.97%	2.06%	2.57%	75.06%
	Choir	<b>21.23%</b> (O)	12.03%	6.13%	10.38%	1.89%	1.65%	79.72%
	Orchestra	12.76%	<b>8.68%</b> (U)	<b>15.53%</b> (O)	6.39%	3.65%	1.37%	72.15%
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Gen Pop	13.72%	13.55%	8.98%	9.38%	3.18%	2.49%	75.62%
	All Music	<b>18.79%</b> (O)	<b>9.39%</b> (U)	10.31%	9.28%	2.41%	2.18%	75.37%
	Band	15.97%	<b>7.67%</b> (U)	<b>13.42%</b> (O)	7.03%	2.24%	2.88%	74.40%
	Choir	<b>23.84%</b> (O)	11.23%	<b>5.75%</b> (U)	12.33%	1.92%	1.64%	78.08%
	Orchestra	13.85%	<b>8.72%</b> (U)	13.85%	7.18%	3.59%	2.05%	71.79%
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Gen Pop	12.90%	14.09%	8.58%	9.77%	3.13%	2.27%	75.98%
	All Music	<b>19.00%</b> (O)	<b>10.29%</b> (U)	<b>11.71%</b> (O)	8.57%	2.43%	2.00%	74.86%
	Band	17.27%	<b>9.55%</b> (U)	<b>15.91%</b> (O)	8.18%	<b>1.36%</b> (U)	2.73%	71.36%
	Choir	<b>20.62%</b> (O)	10.31%	6.19%	12.89%	2.06%	2.06%	76.29%
	Orchestra	13.07%	<b>9.15%</b> (U)	<b>16.99%</b> (O)	<b>5.23%</b> (U)	4.58%	2.61%	69.93%
	Guitar	<b>26.32%</b> (O)	12.78%	6.77%	6.77%	2.26%	<b>0% (U)</b>	<b>84.21%</b> (O)
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Gen Pop	12.96%	13.61%	8.71%	9.25%	3.54%	2.23%	75.99%
	All Music	14.93%	<b>10.61%</b> (U)	7.13%	<b>6.80%</b> (U)	3.48%	1.99%	<b>79.60%</b> (O)
	Band	18.24%	10.95%	12.41%	7.30%	<b>1.46%</b> (U)	1.46%	77.37%
	Choir	15.38%	<b>8.39%</b> (U)	<b>3.50%</b> (U)	6.29%	3.50%	2.10%	<b>83.92%</b> (O)
	Orchestra	10.92%	10.92%	11.76%	<b>5.04%</b> (U)	4.20%	73.95%	10.92%
	Guitar	14.71%	11.76%	<b>3.43%</b> (U)	7.84%	4.41%	1.47%	81.37%

*table continues on next page*

		FRL	IEP	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multi	White
	Gen Pop	9.34%	13.09%	8.56%	8.61%	3.36%	2.24%	76.96%
	All Music	<b>14.44%</b> (O)	10.44%	7.78%	<b>5.56%</b> (U)	2.89%	2.00%	<b>81.33%</b> (O)
	Band	<b>19.83%</b> (O)	11.21%	10.34%	8.62%	1.72%	0.86%	78.45%
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Choir	12.50%	<b>6.67%</b> (U)	<b>2.50%</b> (U)	5.83%	1.67%	1.67%	<b>87.50%</b> (O)
	Orchestra	9.26%	9.26%	12.96%	5.56%	4.63%	3.70%	72.22%
	Guitar	16.04%	15.09%	5.66%	<b>1.89%</b> (U)	3.77%	1.89%	<b>86.79%</b> (O)

O – Significantly overrepresented at  $p < .05$

U – Significantly underrepresented at  $p < .05$ .

In the fall of 2020 the school district’s learning and support services department conducted a music program survey as a part of the curriculum review cycle. The survey was sent to all 1,398 eleventh-grade students who were not enrolled in a music course for the 2020-2021 school year. The researcher obtained the survey results from a district-employed data analyst with permission from the director of research evaluation and assessment. Of the 127 students who responded to the survey, 70 students responded to the open-ended question: “What changes would you recommend to increase participation in [school district’s] music program?” Thirteen codes were identified from the students’ responses: course offerings, curriculum, diversity and inclusion, expectations, financial aid, instruction, music selection, none, other, scheduling, teachers, time commitment, and unclear. From the codes, five common themes were identified: (a) course offerings, (b) teachers, (c) music selection, (d) expectations and time commitment, and (e) financial aid.

Eighteen responses recommended the school district consider offering different music courses. Six of the respondents made a general recommendation to add more or a greater variety of music courses. Respondent 68 recommended a course that required less work outside of school; while other respondents recommended piano, additional guitar courses, beginning orchestra, music history, songwriting, and Advanced Placement or college credit courses. Three students suggested a course that focused on music composition. Respondent 45 said, “Maybe offer more of a variety of classes besides just playing an instrument where students can work on a project (such as a yearlong goal of composing a final piece of music).”

Recommendations related to teachers’ instructional approaches and relationships with students appeared in 11 responses. Three responses were non-specific; they referred to hiring different or better teachers. Four of the eleven responses related to criticism and pressure to meet high expectations. Respondent 13 said, “Also, the teachers shouldn’t criticize kids so hard. Music can be hard for some people.” Three respondents recommended that teachers should be more fun

and enthusiastic. Two students recommended that music teachers focus on relationships with their students. Two students identified instructional strategies they recommended music teachers incorporate more often, specifically, hands-on instruction and more frequent check-ins with students. Respondent 33 mentioned a specific concern about racism, saying, “Let more black girls have the opportunity to be in the [redacted] show choir. Our hair shouldn’t determine how good we are.” The comment is significant because of its content, not because it was a recurring theme in the study.

Ten responses referenced music selection. Five students recommended performing music that was current and popular. Several students indicated this change would make music classes more fun. Two students recommended selecting a greater variety of music. Three students recommended allowing students to select more of the music that is performed. Participant 61 said, “Take the students recommendations for music to preform [*sic*] rather than choosing older outdated songs. Kids are more likely to feel passionately and sing/ play better for songs they choose.” Three students indicated that music selection is something that impacts whether or not they consider the class to be fun.

Concerns about expectations and time commitment were mentioned in 11 responses. Four students recommended reducing the outside of school time commitment. In order to improve the situation, respondent 37 recommended making outside of school practices optional, and respondent 41 recommended scheduling concerts during the school day. Respondent 38 recommended making it easier for students to join music programs in different grades.

Three responses included a specific recommendation to offer financial aid. Of note, all three of the students were persons of color. Respondent 25 said, “I would change the price of stuff so more people can join in and have fun because you don't know if somebody likes it and they can't afford it and have t [*sic*] take a class they didn't like.”

Students with IEPs were underrepresented among students who enrolled in music classes in all grades, and Black students were underrepresented in tenth and eleventh grades. Asian students, White students, and students who qualified for FRL were overrepresented in music classes in multiple grades. Multiracial and Hispanic students were not underrepresented among in music class enrollment at a level considered statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). Five common themes were identified in students’ recommendations to increase enrollment in the music program: course offerings, teachers, music selection, expectations and time commitment, and financial aid. It was determined that there were common changes students recommended to increase enrollment in the music program.

## Discussion

The researcher was able draw multiple conclusions through holistic examination of the study findings. The purpose of the study was to identify groups

of students who were underrepresented in the school district's elective music courses. The secondary purpose was to identify opportunities to make music courses more accessible to all learners. The discussion will include reference to the findings of this study and reference to relevant previous research.

Students with IEPs were the most widely underrepresented subgroup included in this study. This is consistent with previous research on the representation of students with disabilities in music programs (Alegrado & Winsler, 2020; Fuelberth & Todd, 2017; Hammel & Hourigan, 2017). Music educators often have limited training in working with students who have special needs (Gerrity et al., 2013) and low self-efficacy regarding their ability to meet the needs of students with disabilities (VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014). Professional and pre-professional music educators should receive training in working with students who have disabilities. This could increase teacher effectiveness and confidence as well as lead to increased enrollment in music programs.

Students with IEPs may have fewer opportunities to take elective courses due to required special education courses. Programs like band and orchestra often have a single-entry point and require continuous enrollment. In the current structure, students with IEPs who do not take band or orchestra in sixth grade have limited access to music programs in seventh grade and beyond. Choir is the only music course these students could take in seventh and eighth grade, but in high school they could take choir or guitar. Students with IEPs need more opportunities to try music courses beyond sixth grade. This is particularly important as students with IEPs were the only subgroup in the study that was underrepresented in sixth grade. Principals and special education leaders should explore ways that special education services could be delivered without taking an elective class period. Students with special needs should be able to explore their interests during middle and high school in the same way as their peers. Building an intervention time into the master schedule for all students or providing push-in services during core classes could allow students with IEPs to take the same number of electives as other students.

Previous research has suggested Black and Hispanic students are often underrepresented among students enrolled in music programs (Kinney, 2019). In this study, there was a greater proportion of Black students in the general population than in the music student population in every grade. Black students were significantly underrepresented in tenth and eleventh grades. The enrollment of Black students in the orchestra program was particularly low. While 9.25% of tenth-grade students in the general population were Black, only 6.80% of tenth-grade students enrolled in music courses were Black, and only 5.04% of tenth-grade students enrolled in orchestra were Black. The percentage of Multiracial students and Hispanic students enrolled in music courses in each grade was slightly lower than the percentage of these students in the general population, but the difference was not statistically significant. Hispanic students were

significantly underrepresented in band classes in multiple grades. Hispanic students accounted for 3.54% of the general population and only 1.46% of students enrolled in band. This finding is somewhat consistent with Elpus (2014) and Elpus and Abril (2011) who found that Hispanic students were underrepresented among students in the United States who enrolled in at least one music class in high school.

Structural and policy explanations for the underrepresentation of Black and Hispanic students are limited. Some of the students in the district who are Black participate in a desegregation program and do not live within the district boundaries. Non-residential Black students might find it more challenging to commit to attending co-curricular activities associated with music ensemble courses; however, no evidence to support that potential association was collected in this study. With this lack of evidence in mind, other barriers to access, such as a cultural disconnect and or disinterest, must be considered. Music educators should have access to job-embedded professional learning on equity and access as it applies to music education settings. Teachers who are resistant or indifferent to professional learning on equity topics may be less likely to attend when it is offered outside of required contract time. Learning that focuses on shifting mindsets is particularly important because some of the necessary behavioral changes may require significant self-reflection on how values, beliefs, and biases impact the effective implementation of equity practices (Muhammad, 2015). Cultural competency training could be imperative for music educators because music and culture are so closely related (Lind & McKoy, 2016). Music education has not always respected diverse cultures in the past; this potential for conflict can cause issues with other teachers, students, parents, and communities.

The music population was the most representative of the general population in the first year students had the opportunity to take elective music courses (see Figure 2). Kinney (2019) had a similar finding which he referred to as “somewhat troubling” (p. 39) and suggested that “Music ensemble electives may not be resonating with certain minority groups” (p. 39). Students from this study recommended offering a greater variety of music courses; music production and music composition were mentioned the most often. Many of these students stated they wanted to be involved in music without having such high expectations and such a large time commitment outside of school. Elpus (2022) compared students enrolled in general music courses to music ensemble courses and found that general music students are less likely to be White, more likely to be eligible for FRL, and more likely to receive special education services. Curriculum leaders and music teachers should consider offering new courses that align with the interests of students who do not participate in music ensembles.

While adding new music courses is one strategy that could be effective in improving diverse students’ access to the music program, there are ways music ensemble courses can be made more accessible. Survey respondents recommended allowing students to have more voice in selecting the music and

suggested that students would be more interested in performing music they considered relevant or popular. Additional emphasis on creating within current course offerings should also be considered as survey respondents indicated they would like to write their own music. Teachers looking for a place to start might consider having students compose new warm-ups or sightreading exercises for the ensemble or taking the week after the concert for a composition mini-unit.

Students whose families qualified for FRL were overrepresented among students enrolled in music courses in eighth, ninth, and eleventh grades. This finding is surprising because Elpus & Abril (2011) found that students enrolled in music classes tended to come from families with higher socioeconomic status. When looking at the enrollment by music program type, the overrepresentation of students whose families qualified for FRL was primarily in the choir program in middle school and the guitar program in ninth grade. There were many students who qualified for FRL in the band program every year, but the overrepresentation was only statistically significant in eleventh grade. Orchestra was the only music program that consistently had a lower proportion of students who qualified for FRL than the general population.

The representation of students who qualified for FRL in music courses increased each year from sixth through ninth grades. While financial aid was identified as a theme in the open-response section of the music program survey, none of the respondents indicated this was a factor that impacted their involvement. Researchers should consider investigating the policies and practices in place that may be increasing accessibility for students with low socioeconomic status; this information could be of particular value to music programs struggling to reach this demographic.

While multiple studies have addressed representation using a quantitative approach, more qualitative research is needed. Studies that involve interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires may help music educators understand the context of the quantitative data as well as identify effective strategies to increase representation in elective music courses. The current study only considered the perspectives of eleventh-grade non-music students and had a low response rate of nine percent. Research about the perspectives of music teachers, school principals, counselors, music students, and parents could provide great insight into both the barriers to access and equity, and the potential solutions for music programs. While research that describes representation is important, it is time for future researchers to help schools and music educators make this information actionable. Additional research that measures the impact of certain strategies and gives voice to various perspectives in the school community is needed to help music educators increase access and equity in their programs. For example, if a school district offers a new course, they should look at enrollment data and also get feedback from students, teachers, and administrators in order to evaluate its effectiveness.

While music teachers cannot be experts at everything, they should be willing to step out of their comfort zones and preferred styles to make music courses

relevant and engaging for their students. Educators should actively work to identify and remove barriers to music participation for the underrepresented populations throughout their careers.

### **Limitations**

All schools in the study were in the same school district, county, and state; therefore, findings may not be generalized to a larger population. While district policies, staffing, resources, curriculum, facilities, course offerings, geographic location, schedules, and professional development may all impact access and representation in elective music courses, it was not possible to study or control for these variables. This research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some observed enrollment trends and responses to the music program survey may have been influenced by factors related to the pandemic, such as experiences with virtual learning, economic hardship, and mental health. It may not be possible to generalize the findings of the study to other grade level cohorts of students, even within the same district.

The survey utilized for research question eight had a low response rate of nine percent. The survey was sent to 1,398 students but only 127 responded. Students who chose to respond to the survey may or may not have representative perspectives of the entire target population (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The researcher was not able to identify specific barriers to music participation for student subgroups in this study due to a low survey response rate. Interviews and focus groups with Black and Hispanic students who do not participate in music programs are recommended to learn how the music program could better meet the needs of these students.

### **Conclusion**

The world of music outside school is rich and diverse. Nearly every individual has a style or genre of music they engage with through listening, singing, dancing, or playing. The diversity of music and musicians in our communities should be reflected in our school music departments. Every student deserves a relevant and joyful music experience. It is the responsibility of music educators to actively work to ensure their programs are accessible to all the young musicians in their school communities in order to help them develop into the musicians they aspire to be.



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<sup>i</sup> For the purposes of this study, the terminology used to describe members of racial subgroups are either those used by the author(s) of the study being discussed, or else the specific categories as defined by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Capitalization of these terms is based on how the terms appeared in the original source.

# Teaching for Musical Understanding: Teacher Needs in National Core Music Standards Implementation

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*This descriptive study examined the implementation, assessment, and instructional needs of elementary music educators in teaching for musical understanding through the artistic process of creating, performing, and responding of the 2014 National Core Music Standards (NCMS). Participants in this study were music educators from the First District of the Kentucky Music Educators Association (KMEA), representing significant diversity in educational backgrounds, teaching experience, and classroom situations. The methodology included the use of surveys sent out to music educators in the First District of KMEA and personal interviews with volunteers gleaned from the survey responses. The researchers found various needs of the participants related to implementation, assessment, and instruction, but the primary needs related to additional professional development opportunities specific to the NCMS and collaboration with other music educators. Participants in this study stated that few opportunities were available through KMEA for professional development related to NCMS, and that the geographic location of the First District acts as an impediment to collaboration with educators elsewhere in the state. Implications for this study centered on improving collaborations between music educators and providing meaningful professional development opportunities that are acutely focused on NCMS and its implications in the classroom.*

**Keywords:** National Core Music Standards, artistic processes, professional development, collaboration

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## Contextual Overview

Music education has been part of the public schools in the United States since 1837 (Music Educators National Conference [MENC], 1994). Since then, the challenge for music educators has been to create a balanced, sequential, and

comprehensive music curriculum (Pautz, 1989). The purpose of music education has evolved from aesthetic goals of enjoying or participating in music (Pautz, 1989) to a focus on specific competencies in music (MENC, 1994). Finally, with the release of the National Core Music Standards (NCMS), the music component of the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS), the goal of music education transitioned to developing musically literate and independent musicians (National Association for Music Education, 2015). The purpose of NCMS was to provide students experiences based on the artistic processes of music, creating, performing, and responding to music, to develop the musical understanding and literacy of students (Nierman, 2016).

Understanding learning, from a scientific approach, includes learning processes, learning environments, teaching strategies, cultural perspective, and other factors that can contribute to learning (Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning [CDSL], 2000). In the education field, many curricula have placed an emphasis on memorization of facts instead of understanding (CDSL, 2000). The goal of education must be to transition students from obtaining factual knowledge to usable knowledge that can be transferred, which deepens their understanding of a subject matter (CDSL, 2000). Piaget (1973) stated, “To understand is to discover, or reconstruct by rediscovery, and such conditions must be complied with if in the future individuals are to be formed who are capable of production and creativity and not simply repetition” (p. 20). Piaget believed that learning is constructed understanding, and those understandings are constructed through experiences (Wiggins, 2015).

## Literature Review

Teachers are responsible for creating a learning environment that fosters student learning and self-discovery (Wiggins, 2015; Anagün, 2018). Research has shown that learning is enhanced when teachers have an awareness of the knowledge and beliefs that learners bring into a classroom, use this knowledge to develop instruction, and then closely monitor students’ changing conceptions throughout the learning process (CDSL, 2000). Children have prior knowledge of many experiences but may require prompting to be able to apply what they know in a new situation (CDSL, 2000). Bruner (1960) stated:

Limiting instruction to a steady diet of classroom recitation supported only by traditional and middling textbooks can make lively subjects dull for the student. The objectives of the curriculum and the balances means for attaining it should be the guide. (p. 88)

*Knowledge* is comprised of facts and concepts, while *skills* are techniques, procedures, and methods. Understanding requires inquiry, development, and reflection. When students understand, they can explain, interpret, apply, develop metacognition, and synthesize their learning. The challenge for educators is to learn to move from knowledge attainment to developing students’ understanding (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Wiggins (2015) asserted that music was one of the least concrete concepts due to its complex and nonliteral nature. Due to the

abstract nature of music, determining appropriate methods for developing musical understanding can be difficult (Wiggins, 2015).

Transitioning to teaching for musical understanding based on the artistic processes of creating, performing, and responding as outlined in the NCMS has been easy for some and more difficult for others. Throughout history, some music educators have felt that the standards are unattainable (Norris, 2010), difficult to understand (Zaffini, 2018), or they do not agree with the theoretical underpinning of the standards (Kasser, 2014). Other implementation challenges music educators face is a lack of time and a lack of professional development (Kasser, 2014). Teaching to the artistic processes of creating, performing, and responding takes a significant amount of time which can lead to a lack of implementation (Norris, 2010) and some educators might not feel equipped to teach the creative processes due to lack of training (Kasser, 2014).

### **Teaching for Musical Understanding**

The National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS) oversaw the creation of the 2014 National Core Arts Standards (NCAS) for music, visual art, theatre, dance, and media arts (Shuler et al., 2014). The NCCAS included professional organizations from all art forms in the creation of these standards. The standards were developed to be adopted or adapted by state and local school districts. The NCMS were developed through a transparent, research-based method with feedback from practicing educators at every level and in every specialty across the music education field. The NAFME standards writing committees' and subcommittees' members had more than 1,800 years of experience teaching pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade music and 540 years of experience in general music. A two-year review process was utilized along with focus groups to provide feedback from practicing teachers on areas for refinement. All this work was completed without federal government funding, aside from a small grant provided through the National Endowment for the Arts, which provided feedback on the NCMS from some professional artists (Shuler et al., 2014).

The first goal in the development of the NCMS was specificity, which is met through the outlining of grade level specific knowledge, skills, and standards (Zaffini, 2018). In previous standards, the goals were stated in terms of what students should know by the end of lower or upper primary, middle school, or high school instead of specific grade-level goals (Zaffini, 2018). The second goal of the NCMS was authenticity. To meet this goal, the NCMS focus on teaching students to become musically literate through the artistic processes that musicians use every day; create, perform, and respond (Zaffini, 2018). The focus on artistic processes is not a completely new addition to the NCMS, as MENC stated in their publication, *The School Music Program: A New Vision*, which outlined the foundation for the standards, that creating, performing, and responding were fundamental music processes (MENC, 1994).

The NCMS reversed the theoretical underpinning of the previous standards to focus on the artistic processes as a supporting structure for the standards, then embedded the nine previous standards of the NSAE within the artistic process framework (Beegle, 2016). While the other art forms identify a fourth process, connecting, NAFME views this process as integrated into all three of the other artistic processes, as music educators should connect what is taught in music to other disciplines (Zaffini, 2018). Shown in Figure 1 are the eleven anchor standards which support the three artistic processes. These standards are consistent across all arts disciplines, which are connected to the enduring understandings and essential questions linked to the overarching artistic process (Payne & Ward, 2018). There are two or three anchor standards per artistic process, with each anchor standard having several performance standards per grade-level (Beegle, 2016). Each artistic process is broken down into several parts, which are termed process components, as these are specific to the artistic process (Zaffini, 2018).

**Figure 1.** Core Music Standards

Artistic Processes	Anchor Standards
Creating	1. Generate musical ideas for various purposes and contexts. 2. Select and develop musical ideas for defined purposes and contexts. 3. Evaluate and refine selected musical ideas to create musical work(s) that meet appropriate criteria.
Performing	4. Select varied musical works to present based on interest, knowledge, technical skill, and context. 5. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation. 6. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
Responding	7. Perceive and analyze artistic work. 8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. 9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.
Connecting	10. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. 11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Teachers should design new experiences with the artistic processes based on students’ previous background. One method for constructing experiences is through the teaching of the musical elements. In utilizing a holistic approach,



music instruction comprises elements such as rhythm, melody, form, timbre, dynamics, and tempo. Through experiences with the musical elements, students can construct deeper understanding of music as a whole by exploring how the individual elements interact with each other. For example, meter and rhythm are related because they both deal with timing of sounds and strong versus weak characteristics. During the process of creating different rhythms to match a given meter, students feel the strong and weak beats by how well their created rhythms work with the rest of the group. Once learners construct musical understandings, they learn to act as musicians through the artistic processes (Wiggins, 2015).

Through their participation in the artistic processes, students' understanding of musical concepts grows deeper and more connections are constructed (Wiggins, 2015). With each experience in creating, performing, and responding, students can construct new conceptual knowledge. To promote learning of musical concepts, all musical teaching should occur through the artistic processes and utilize whole musical works instead of implementing exercises to incorporate the processes (Wiggins, 2015; MENC: NAFME, 1973). Additionally, the incorporation of the artistic processes can assist students in improving their metacognition if teachers design and implement musical experiences to encourage its development (Pogonowski, 1989).

### **The Role of Assessments**

Assessment is a key component in determining if the overarching goal of music education, to develop independent musicians, has been achieved (Boardman, 1989). Assessment is the process used to inform educators and students regarding who has mastered skills or developed understandings, who still requires support, and which content areas students need to be retaught (Wiggins, 2015). Historically, assessments were designed to test student knowledge by asking questions designed to determine if students had acquired facts pertaining to a content area (MENC, 1994). When NSAE was implemented in 1994, MENC stated that music educators must exceed the goal of knowledge attainment toward a goal of knowledge synthesis through the implementation of higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills (MENC, 1994). Additionally, the NSAE called for school districts to develop and implement reliable, valid, and suitable tools for assessing students learning of music (MENC, 1994).

With the implementation of the NSAE and the push for authentic assessments across the field of education, music educators felt the demands for accountability in meeting the Standards (MENC, 2001). Authentic assessments require demonstration of a skill or specific behavior outlined in the objective instead of a written representation through paper and pencil test (MENC, 1994). While generating paper and pencil tests covering musical terms is easier than developing an authentic assessment based on music processes or behaviors, they are not authentic assessments that evaluate student understanding (Fiese & Fiese, 2001). Even though music is a performance-based content area, music educators should be careful that their assessments are not solely based on students' performances



in playing and singing (Foley, 2001). Instead, music educators are tasked with assessing all aspects of the standards (Foley, 2001), which can be difficult with the complexity and subjective nature of music (MENC, 2001).

Throughout the implementation of the NSAE, teachers struggled to design and utilize assessments in the music education classroom (MENC, 2001). Major factors hindering the use of authentic assessments were lack of time, the number of students to assess (MENC, 2001), and teacher perception (Lopez, 2001). Music educators typically have limited instructional time with numerous students which means implementing assessments consumes valuable instructional time and scoring assessments for so many students can be a daunting task (MENC, 2001). Additionally, music educators are typically responsible for school performances throughout the year which deters educators from taking the time to complete assessments (Hamann, 2001). Lastly, music educators can become rigid in their methods of teaching and assessing, feeling that it is unnecessary to change what has worked in the past instead of adopting the position that there is always room for improvement (Lopez, 2001).

### **Implementation Challenges**

Throughout history, some music educators have felt that the standards are unattainable (Norris, 2010). For this reason, there are music educators across the United States who have chosen to not implement the NCMS (Zaffini, 2018). Some teachers have stated that they, themselves, do not understand them (Zaffini, 2018). Other teachers have mentioned that they feel the NCMS focus too much on artistic processes and self-reflection, and not enough on student acquisition of concrete musical skills and knowledge that they can apply to perform musically (Kasser, 2014).

Kasser (2014), states that the NSAE provided expected outcomes and allowed the teachers to determine how to achieve the goals, while the NCMS tell teachers what to do without expected musical outcomes. For teachers whose focus was on preparing students for performance, the emphasis on processes instead of product is difficult to understand and implement (Nierman, 2016). Another difference that teachers might notice between the two sets of standards is that the NCMS do not reference singing, playing, or other fundamentals of music-making (Kasser, 2014). The main challenges to the implementation of the NCMS are the need for applicable resources, lack of instructional time to teach through the processes, and a need for professional development opportunities to assist teachers in implementing the NCMS.

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this descriptive study was to explore how music educators approached teaching and assessing for musical understanding through the implementation of the National Core Music Standards (NCMS) and their corresponding artistic processes of create, perform, and respond (Zaffini, 2018).

Participants completed an online survey and interviews were conducted with volunteers to gather further information. Through the responses of the online survey and subsequent interviews, the researchers endeavored to develop a comprehensive picture of the implementation, assessment, and needs of elementary music educators in the First District of the KMEA. Thus, this study was conducted to address the following overarching research questions:

1. How are the artistic processes of create, perform, and respond being implemented in elementary music classrooms?
2. How do elementary music educators assess student learning through the artistic processes?
3. What are the barriers faced by elementary general music educators in teaching for musical understanding?

## **Participants**

The study focused on elementary general music educators within the First District of the KMEA. This group of music educators, located in far western Kentucky, is the furthest from the KMEA home in Richmond, Kentucky. The annual KMEA Conference is held in Louisville, Kentucky. With all the established associations and the largest professional development workshops located on the other side of the state, approximately 225-300 miles away, music educators from the First District were selected for study to determine their implementation, assessment, and needs moving forward in teaching for musical understanding. A description of the study and an online survey request was emailed to every elementary music educator in the First District through the KMEA listserv, requesting participation in the research study on teaching for musical understanding based on the NCMS.

## **Instrumentation, Data Collection, and Data Analysis**

### ***Online Survey***

The online survey, adapted from the thesis, *Teaching for Musical Understanding in North Dakota through Standards 3, 4, and 7* (Eckroth-Riley, 2005), asked participants questions regarding their demographics, implementation, assessments, and needs regarding the NCMS. The survey contained 22 questions (see Appendix) related to demographic information, implementation of standards, assessment, instructional needs, and a request for participation in an interview. The survey was altered to align the questions with the NCMS as the original version was developed for the NSAE. The demographic portion of the survey included information such as educational history and type of teaching certification, additional pedagogical certifications, teaching experience, and additional training in NCMS. A portion of the survey included a 4-point Likert-style scale (1 being Strongly Agree and 4 being Strongly Disagree) for participants to indicate their strength of agreement with a series of statements related to implementation of creating, performing, and responding in pedagogical

planning. Additional questions were developed to ascertain the perceived comfort level with teaching artistic processes, incorporating assessments, and assistance in implementation.

### ***Interviews***

Virtual or phone interviews were conducted with survey respondents that volunteered to move forward with the one-on-one interviews. The interview protocol included a series of 20 open-ended questions about the participants' perceptions of teaching to the NCMS in their classroom. The protocol questions were based on the three overarching research questions related to implementation, assessment, and support needed in teaching for musical understanding through the NCMS. The interview protocol for the first research question of implementation was developed to gain an understanding of how each participant included the artistic processes of creating, performing, and responding in their classroom as well as any methods that they use that assist them in implementing the processes. For the second research question related to assessment, interview participants were asked open-ended questions regarding how assessment is conducted in their classrooms. Lastly, for the final research question, the interview protocol asked participants about their individual needs or barriers they face to implementing and assessing the NCMS as it relates to their classroom.

### ***Data Analysis Procedures***

Following the collection of the surveys and conducting interviews, quantitative data was analyzed and interview responses were coded to look for trends in years of teaching elementary music, educational history, additional pedagogical certification, amount of time each grade level has in music class each week, teacher's perceived implementation of the artistic processes and assessments, and the needs of teachers to continue teaching for musical understanding. The audio recordings from the individual interviews were transcribed into a computer document and responses from each participant were assigned a text color. After all interviews were transcribed and color coded, the responses were organized by research question to discover themes among participant responses. Each participant's responses were color coded to retain the integrity of the participant's statements across the research topics and to allow the researchers to uncover similarities and differences among statements made by the eight participants. The researchers utilized these data as well as the survey data to help determine the causes for implementation or lack thereof, the methods of assessments utilized in the elementary music classrooms, needs of the participants, or hindrances to teaching for musical understanding through the artistic processes outlined in the NCMS.

## Results

### Survey Findings

Of the roughly 40 elementary music educators in the District, 16 completed the online survey (40 % response rate). Additionally, eight of those participants were later interviewed to obtain more detailed information on their needs in teaching and assessing the Standards. All survey participants had music certification or a music performance background. The years of experience teaching music of the participants ranged from 1 to 25 years. Seven survey participants had experience between 1 to 10 years and nine participants had 11 to 25 years of teaching experience. Five participants stated that they had received no training on the NCMS, while others stated that they were trained in undergraduate or graduate courses, conferences, or music workshops. Most participants, 15, taught kindergarten through third grade, and 11 participants responded that they taught students up to the fifth grade. Five participants also stated they taught grades outside of the K-5 range, which included pre-school and middle school grades. The most common amount of instructional time that participants stated was 46 to 60 minutes a week, regardless of grade level.

### Implementation

The survey results showed that the establishment of the NCMS have affected the teaching of half of the participants. Seven of the participants agreed that the NCMS affected their teaching, with another participant strongly agreeing. Eight participants disagreed or strongly disagreed about the affects the NCMS had on their teaching, and eight participants agreed and strongly agreed on this same item. Almost the same responses were shown when participants were asked if they had changed their teaching to reflect the NCMS. All participants agreed that their classrooms were student-centered, with seven indicating a strong agreement with the statement “My classroom is student-centered.”

**Create.** Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement to survey statements regarding including creating activities in the classroom. A 4-point Likert-style scale was utilized, with 1 = *Strongly Agree* and 4 = *Strongly Disagree*. Additionally, a list of creating activities was given for respondents to choose their level of agreement to the statement “I provide creating activities through:” on a 4-point Likert-style scale (1 = *Strongly Agree* to 4 = *Strongly Disagree*) with several creating activity options listed. “Small/large group” activities received the highest number of participants who strongly agreed followed by “individual” and “improvisation” activities. “Stories,” “composition with notation,” and “composition without notation” were the next highest activities where participants strongly agreed to utilizing them in creating activities. “Arranging” was the least popular with participants, who had still strongly agreed on using them in their classroom. “Technology and the use of computers” was the highest-rated activity where participants indicated disparity of use, with four disagreeing on their use and two strongly disagreeing. Aside from “technology and computers,”

“arranging” was the only other activity where a participant strongly disagreed with the incorporation of the activity in their classroom. Table 1 shows breakdown of responses to the survey questions related to creating activities implemented in the classroom.

**Table 1.** Types of creating activities implemented in the classroom

Activity	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Small/ Large Group	9	6	1	0
Individual	6	7	3	0
Improvisation	5	10	1	0
Stories	4	10	2	0
Composition (with notation)	4	8	4	0
Composition (without notation)	4	11	1	0
Iconic Composition (younger students)	3	8	5	0
Problem-solving	3	9	4	0
Technology/ Computers	3	7	4	2
Arranging	2	7	6	1

**Perform.** Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement to survey statements regarding including performing activities in the classroom. A 4-point Likert-style scale was utilized, with 1 = *Strongly Agree* to 4 = *Strongly Disagree*. Additionally, a list of performing activities was given for respondents to choose their level of agreement to the statement “I provide performing activities through:” on a 4-point Likert-style scale (1 = *Strongly Agree* to 4 = *Strongly Disagree*). All music educators surveyed agreed that they incorporate performing activities on their monthly lesson plans, with nine strongly agreeing and seven agreeing. The participants were asked to indicate what performing activities they incorporate into their classrooms. All participants agreed on using “movement and dance” as performing activities. The only performance activity where participants disagreed in its incorporation was “individual performance” with six strongly agreeing, eight agreeing, and two disagreeing. Table 2 details the types of performing activities and the participants’ strength of agreement or disagreement in their incorporation into their classrooms.

**Table 2.** Types of performing activities implemented in the classroom

Activity	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Singing	11	5	0	0
Performing on Instruments	11	5	0	0
Small/ Large Group	10	6	0	0
Movement/ Dance	7	9	0	0
Individual	6	8	2	0

**Respond.** Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement to survey statements regarding including responding activities in the classroom. A 4-point Likert-style scale was utilized, with 1 = *Strongly Agree* to 4 = *Strongly Disagree*. Additionally, a list of responding activities was given for respondents to choose their level of agreement to the statement “I provide responding activities through:” on a 4-point Likert-style scale (1 = *Strongly Agree* to 4 = *Strongly Disagree*). All participants agreed that they provide responding activities through “verbal” and “question/answer” activities; with stronger agreement in verbal response activities ( $n = 9$ ) compared to conducting question and answer activities ( $n = 5$ ). The replies for both “individual” and “written” responses were more varied. For “individual” response activities, three “strongly agreed,” nine “agreed,” three “disagreed,” and one “strongly disagreed” that they provided these activities for students. One participant also “strongly disagreed” with incorporating “written” responses and there were more participants who “disagreed” with including “individual” responses than “written” responses. Overall, “written” responses received the lowest number of agreement reactions with only 10 and the most disagreement with their incorporation with six. Table 3 details the participants’ agreement to the incorporation of different responding activities into their classrooms.

**Table 3. Types of responding activities implemented in the classroom**

Activity	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Verbal	9	7	0	0
Question/Answer	5	11	0	0
Small/ Large Group	5	10	1	0
Individual	3	9	3	1
Written	2	8	5	1

### *Assessment*

Survey participants responded to a series of questions regarding their assessment practices. Table 4 provides a base count of the types of assessments that were utilized by the participants. Thirteen of the participants agreed that assessments are embedded as part of their lesson plans with three strongly agreeing and three disagreeing. All but one participant agreed that they provide self-reflection opportunities for their students, with six of those strong agreements. When asked about the use of performance assessments with rubrics for recording purposes, 10 participants responded in agreement and six responded that they disagreed, both with one strong marking. There were 10 responses in agreement, four strong, that the participants provided opportunities for their students to set their own growth goals, while only six disagreed. When asked if they utilized student portfolios to demonstrate student growth, only two responded in agreement, one strongly, and 14 disagreed, three strongly. Only two

participants responded that they utilize the Model Cornerstone Assessments (MCAs) in their classrooms, one strongly while 14 responded in disagreement with four strongly disagreeing to their use. According to the NAFME (n.d.), the MCAs “provide an instructional and assessment framework to which teachers integrate their curriculum to help measure student learning.”

**Table 4.** Types of assessment

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Count</b>
Performance	15
Rubrics	12
Checklist	11
Paper and Pencil	9
Journaling	3
Portfolios	1
Other	1

### *Implementation Challenges*

The last main topic participants were asked to respond to on the survey was the possible implementation challenges that they face in teaching the artistic processes of the NCMS: creating, performing, and responding. Participants were given a list of potential barriers they could face in teaching the artistic processes of the NCMS and asked to select all that may apply. The largest portion of the responses was a lack of instructional time with 13 responses. The next largest barrier was a “lack of collaboration” with other music educators in teaching the NCMS with 11 responses. The third largest implementation challenge indicated was a “lack of professional development” with seven responses. Other factors that were identified as barriers to teaching the artistic processes were “lack of understanding of the NCMS” (two responses), “lack of comfort in teaching responding” (three responses), and “lack of comfort in teaching creating” (two responses). None of the participants indicated a lack of comfort in teaching the performing process. Table 5 represents a base count of the barriers to teaching the NCMS, as indicated by the participants.

**Table 5.** Barriers to teaching the NCMS

<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Count</b>
Lack of time	13
Lack of collaboration	11
Lack of professional development	7
Lack of comfort teaching responding	3
Lack of comfort teaching creating	2
Lack of understanding the NCMS	2
Lack of comfort teaching performing	0

### **Interview Findings**

Based on survey responses, nine participants were willing to participate in an interview. An email was sent out to these nine participants to schedule phone or virtual interviews, with eight responses. Four of the participants had between one- and five-years teaching experience. There was one each with 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and 20-25 years of experience. Four of the participants have Bachelor of Arts or Science in Music Education, one has a Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance, and three hold a Master of Arts in Education or Music Education. Most interviewees taught at least kindergarten through fifth grade (6 participants), and 2 participants only taught through the third grade, with one of these also teaching preschool. Three participants also stated that they taught middle school students. The average weekly instructional time for interviewed teachers was 46-60 minutes with only one having more than 60 minutes. Participants were asked a series of questions during phone or virtual interviews regarding their specific challenges or needs in teaching for musical understanding through the artistic processes of the NCMS.

### **Implementation**

Participants were asked a series of open-ended questions regarding their implementation practices for the three artistic processes and how the NCMS have affected their planning and instruction. Additionally, participants were asked to describe how they encouraged a student-centered classroom and how they implemented the processes of creating, performing, and responding in the classroom.

Some participants stated they struggled implementing the NCMS due to lack of understanding or training. A couple of participants mentioned that while they have read through and try to follow the NCMS, some of the language makes implementation difficult. One participant stated that the jargon used in the standards made them difficult to interpret. Another participant shared that they are not a certified music educator, although they explained that they have a Music Performance degree and certification in Elementary Education; this participant lacked the pedagogical training learned in music education courses, which made



teaching through the processes more difficult. They stated that they rely on their musical background and educational training in elementary education to support them as they have tried to understand and teach to the NCMS.

**Create.** One participant explained, “My goals for creating are that they use a part of their brain that they are not necessarily accustomed to using in the core academic classroom.” The participant continued, explaining that:

I want them to come into my classroom, have mallets in their hands or an instrument in their hand and feel confident in creating on the spot, and have the confidence to do that [be]cause improvisation and creating is one thing, but I know there are students that can do it but lack confidence. So, that is my goal, to give them the confidence to be vulnerable enough to put it out there in front of the class...

Another participant explained that they assess students while walking around the room by monitoring student progress in their creating or composing activities and by asking questions to help guide students’ processes. They stated that writing the learning target for the day on the board for reference helps students remain focused and provides them with a method for self-assessment. One participant explained that creating in their classroom is directed through questions about how to arrange or build upon a song asking, “How can we make it different? Could we add our own words? Who would like to change? Who had an idea for this rhythm right here? What could we add under it?”

**Perform.** One participant shared their goal for performing by stating, “I want every kid to perform in some way before they leave my classroom...whether it be a small group...or individually.” Another participant explained that through performance, another level of assessment is possible. They stated that they were able to see if students could rhythmically perform their compositions utilizing musical behaviors or if they were simply reading the text. The participant explained that through student performance and assessment, the teacher can provide feedback to the student guiding them to meeting their overarching musical learning target. Another participant explained that performing assessments are often linked to written assessments in their classroom, stating:

I want my students to feel like the things that I give them to perform, whether they’ve created it or whether I have chosen something for them, I want them to feel proud of it. I want them to feel like it’s quality. I want them, and if it’s for public performance, I want them to feel like they have a desire to show it to the public, to their parents, to the community to their teachers.

**Respond.** While most participants explained that their students responded musically in some way, not many detailed their goals for students in this artistic process as they did for creating and performing. One participant stated that they use centers as a method for student responses because creating smaller groups of students assisted in the students’ abilities to respond to musical questions. Another participant stated they were not positive that they reached the goals of the artistic process for responding. They stated that their goal was for students to “not just listen to a piece of music, but to be able to critically listen...can they understand

what they are hearing, why they like it, why they don't." The participant stated that they were not positive they achieved this goal, as they were unsure of the ability of their students to understand, articulate, and express their thoughts through responses to music.

### **Assessment**

**Planning.** One participant explained that with their younger students, they planned to have assessments at the end of each nine-week grading period and knew the general topic of assessment for each period. They explained that with their older students, they plan more assessments and utilize a daily checkmark grade as they are required to submit grades through an online grading system for their older students. Another participant explained that they typically do not plan assessments for the first lesson in a unit as concepts are being introduced, but plan on utilizing questioning techniques in subsequent lessons to assess what students remember and know. Only one participant stated that assessment was purposefully built into their lesson planning. They stated that intentional assessments were the only method for them to know if students were grasping the concepts and to have proof of student learning. Other participants stated that they are constantly assessing but do not have time to plan formal assessments since they only see their students once a week. Instead, these participants utilize observations and track student progress using notes in their lesson plans to indicate classes that are behind.

**Use of Assessments.** One participant stated that they use assessments of the artistic processes to create their curriculum and to ensure that students are learning and "becoming better musicians...even if they don't pursue being a musician [that] giving them those basic abilities to perform, or to read music, or whatever it may be...help build and create my curriculum to achieve that goal." Another participant explained that while performance assessments can take a long time, that they view them as important because they allow the teacher to know how each student is progressing. To help students, some participants stated that they utilize games to conduct assessments. They stated that most students do not know that they are being assessed when they utilize games.

**Formative Assessments.** In regards to formative assessments, most participants indicated that they utilized checklists, rosters, or a notepad for performance assessments, looking for larger musical skills and behaviors. One participant explained they had previously struggled with assessment for their younger students, but now utilized assessment charts that allowed students the opportunity to answer musical questions throughout the year. Some participants also mentioned using questioning techniques with verbal feedback as formative assessments or simply asking the students to self-assess by indicating their understanding with a "thumbs up," "thumbs to the side," or "thumbs down."

Multiple participants stated that they use rubrics as formative assessments, a few participants utilized small groups as formative assessments, and most responded that they did not use traditional paper and pencil assessments. One

participant stated that the type of formative assessment depended on the lesson and that not all activities or lessons were assessed. One participant stated that formative assessment in music changes into a rehearsal assessment structure when the classes are preparing for a performance, where feedback and formative assessments occur almost constantly throughout the lesson. Another participant described formative assessments as having “your finger on the pulse of what, [students] know and don’t know, and then that tells me what to go back the next week and hit again.”

**Summative Assessments.** When asked about the summative assessments utilized in their classrooms, many of the participants stated that they were the same as the formative assessments, that they used rubrics, checklist, or performance-based assessments, while others stated that they utilize more written assessments. One participant stated that summative assessments were vital to them as they provide an overview of the instruction for the year and can indicate areas for professional growth.

Many of the participants shared that they do not give grades for music, some give a rating such as satisfactory or needs improvement, while others do not have anything on the report card. One participant stated that a positive of not assigning grades was the ability for them to control the types of assessments utilized in the classroom. This participant stated that this practice allowed for more authentic assessments, but also that some students felt they did not have to participate since a formal grade was not received. Another participant stated that some of their assessments, like those of students playing recorder, are not included in their grade calculation, so in one manner, summative assessments for their classroom are scarcely there. Lastly, one participant had another view on summative assessment by stating that while they do not give grades, the music program is assessed every time the students perform for the school and community.

### ***Implementation Challenges***

**Teaching Through the Artistic Processes.** Participants were asked about their specific challenges or needs in teaching the artistic processes of the NCMS. Specifically, participants were asked about their opportunities to collaborate with fellow elementary music educators or to attend professional development sessions based on the NCMS. A concern shared by multiple participants was classroom management. One participant shared that students in their classroom can tend to be lazy or unengaged in activities while another shared concerns about teaching creatively in their larger class sizes which has led to teacher and student frustrations.

Time was a concern mentioned by almost all participants as a barrier to teaching through the artistic processes. One participant stated that time was a large concern since they are also responsible for other jobs within their school, causing a split in focus and a lack of time. Due to their certification in other areas, more responsibilities are often placed upon them, making teaching music through the processes harder. One mentioned that if given more time, they would be able to

accomplish more but they expressed that they did believe that their amount of time was typical of most elementary music educators in the area. Another stated, "I'm blessed to have 60 minutes and not 50 minutes or 40 minutes, that would totally change how I have to do things because I wouldn't have as much time."

**Lack of Professional Development Opportunities.** Most participants shared that they have received no professional development on the NCMS. Multiple participants explained that they have attended the Share Day that is annually presented by the elementary teachers of the First District of the KMEA. Geographic issues were indicated as a potential barrier to professional development and collaboration, given that the First District is in the far western portion of the state and most state-level opportunities are in central and eastern Kentucky. Some participants stated that the NCMS were covered while others stated that they were not. One participant stated that they may have had some training while still in college, but they did not receive formal training, just information on where to find the standards.

One participant explained that they attended the KMEA conference annually and that there is usually at least one quality session that they can take back information, skills, or techniques from and implement in their classroom. They also stated that they, personally, seek out professional development such as their previous Orff-Schulwerk Level I certification that they feel was "influential in changing [their] philosophy of music education [because it] does a lot with creating, performing, and responding" and the World Music Drumming clinic being held this summer at a local university. Another participant also typically attended the KMEA conference and has been able to obtain professional development from this conference. Similarly, they also attended additional professional development held by elementary music educators across their district, which they stated was helpful to their teaching through the artistic processes.

One participant stated that they had self-doubt in their ability to teach through the processes while another stated that they needed help understanding the NCMS. One stated that if they understood the standards better, then they would be better equipped to teach. Another participant explained how balance of the artistic processes was their largest concern, explaining:

My biggest concern [is to] make sure that all three of [the processes] are present in my classroom. I don't want an unbalanced classroom, so to speak, and sometimes, I feel like it can get that way easily, if you are good at one of them. If you find what you are good at, what your students respond to really well, then it's easy to fall into, well, that's what I'm going to do every week. So, you just have to push yourself and make sure your planning is careful enough that you are hitting all three. So, I really try to always make sure that [I teach] all three and I reflect, I am making them perform, they are creating here, and they are responding. So, I try to mentally check through while I am planning with that to make sure they are all there, but it is a struggle sometimes.

## **Limitations and Further Study**

Of the roughly 40 elementary music educators with the First District of the KMEA, only 16 participated in the online survey portion and only eight of those participated in the interview process. While the participants of the study were from counties around the First District and had diverse backgrounds and years of experience, the overall participation in this study was not high enough for the results of this research to be generalizable to the entire First District population or to other districts across the state. Additionally, the diversity of the participants and the multiple variables that affect each participant's individual teaching situation make any results difficult to generalize across the members of the First District, let alone the region or state.

The first recommendation for future research would be to conduct a mirror study on members of the far eastern KMEA districts, Eight and Nine, to determine similarities and differences in their implementation, assessment, and needs in teaching the artistic processes of the NCMS as many counties in this area are also rural and over 200 miles from KMEA events (KMEA, 2019). Secondly, a study could be conducted to examine the relationship between attending state or national music conferences and teaching practices in implementation and assessment of the NCMS. The next recommendation would be to enlarge this study to include the entire state of Kentucky to obtain a deeper understanding on how music educators across the state are teaching and assessing the NCMS. Through these findings, a more elaborate network could be built to share and support music educators from areas with fewer collaborative or professional development opportunities. Lastly, the researchers recommend repeating this study of the First District in five to 10 years to determine the effects of the formation of the Quad-State Orff Chapter on the implementation, assessment, and needs of the elementary music educators of the First District of the KMEA.

This study did not measure the participants' perceived value of NCMS. Additional research in this area could be beneficial to inform those planning for professional development programs, as well as for future research related to implementation of these Standards.

## **Discussion**

The purpose of this research was to determine the needs of the elementary music educators in the First District of the KMEA in teaching for musical understanding through the artistic processes of creating, performing, and responding as specified in the NCMS. Previous research has revealed that time (Kasser, 2014) and a lack of resources (NAfME, 2015) are two main barriers to teaching through the artistic processes, and the findings of this study were consistent with these areas of concern. While time was mentioned as a barrier to the implementation of the artistic processes by most survey participants, it was not the greatest concern for those participants interviewed. Their strongest concerns were lack of collaboration and professional development opportunities.

Collaboration opportunities among the First District elementary music educators is limited. Some communicate within their school district while others are the only music educator in their district, making collaboration more difficult. Even within a district, educators may teach different grade levels, which also can make it more difficult to communicate. The annual Share Day was the most common source mentioned for collaboration. Although there was limited collaboration in the First District, many participants mentioned a desire to collaborate. If these music educators could get together and share their understandings and implementation practices, it could cause a deeper understanding for others on the NCMS.

While collaboration might be one way to overcoming implementation challenges, professional development is another component necessary to support these music educators in increasing their knowledge and application of the Standards. Consistent with previous research, results of this study indicated that participants had issues with understanding the NCMS and other standards. Kasser (2014) stated that many music educators were not trained to address the outcomes outlined by NCMS, which emphasize reflection over musical skills. Zaffini (2018) indicated that lack of understanding the NCMS has caused some music educators to opt out of implementing the standards at all, and Norris (2010) found that many music educators found the standards unattainable. Having a quality professional development session on understanding and implementing the Standards by someone who helped develop the Standards, or someone very knowledgeable, could help guide the teachers of the First District in their collaboration efforts. After the educators develop a deeper understanding of the Standards, their professional development could be more focused on pedagogy. Two participants stated that they attend the KMEA conference each year and typically find a session or two that are valuable, but again, these sessions are not generally based on the NCMS but rather pedagogy or activity based.

A few other challenges were identified by several participants. Some mentioned the challenges of classroom management in teaching through the artistic processes with large class sizes, or students with behavior problems or special needs. Only one participant stated that funding was an issue for them, and two expressed the desire for more space for students to use for movement or creative activities.

Teaching for musical understanding through the artistic processes of creating, performing, and responding of the NCMS is a difficult task. With proper training on the standards, professional development on methodology to guide implementation, and the support of a collaborative network, music educators can encourage students to create, perform, and respond to music enabling and encouraging them to become independent and literate makers of music.

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## Appendix

### Teaching for Musical Understanding Survey

#### KMEA First District Elementary Music Teachers

#### I. Demographics

1. Including this year, how many years have you been a general music educator?
  - 1-5 years
  - 6-10 years
  - 11-15 years
  - 16-20 years
  - 20-25 years
  - More than 25 years
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
2. What type of teaching certificate do you hold?
  - Provisional
  - K-12 Instrumental Emphasis
  - K-12 Vocal Emphasis
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your highest level of training in the music education field?
  - BA/BS in Music Education
  - MA in Music Education
  - Ph.D. in Music Education
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
4. Please mark any further training you have received. (Select all that apply)
  - Orff Level I
  - Orff Level II
  - Orff Level III
  - Kodály Level I
  - Kodály Level II
  - Kodály Level III
  - Dalcroze
  - Early Childhood training (Kindermusik)
  - First Steps in Music Education
  - Conversational Solfege
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you own a copy, or have access to the Core Music Standards document?
  - Yes
  - No

6. Where did you receive information/training about the Core Music Standards?
  - Undergraduate Course
  - Graduate Course
  - District Inservice
  - State Conference
  - National Conference
  - Music Workshop
  - Journal or Newsletter
  - No training on the Standards
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
7. Please mark all grade levels that you currently teach in elementary music. (Select all that apply)
  - Kindergarten
  - First Grade
  - Second Grade
  - Third Grade
  - Fourth Grade
  - Fifth Grade
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
8. On average, how many minutes of instructional time do you have weekly with each Kindergarten class?
  - I do not teach Kindergarten
  - under 30 minutes
  - 30-45 minutes
  - 46-60 minutes
  - more than 60 minutes
9. On average, how many minutes of instructional time do you have weekly with each First-Grade class?
  - I do not teach First Grade
  - under 30 minutes
  - 30-45 minutes
  - 46-60 minutes
  - more than 60 minutes
10. On average, how many minutes of instructional time do you have weekly with each Second-Grade class?
  - I do not teach Second Grade
  - under 30 minutes
  - 30-45 minutes
  - 46-60 minutes
  - more than 60 minutes

11. On average, how many minutes of instructional time do you have weekly with each Third-Grade class?
  - I do not teach Third Grade
  - under 30 minutes
  - 30-45 minutes
  - 46-60 minutes
  - more than 60 minutes
12. On average, how many minutes of instructional time do you have weekly with each Fourth-Grade class?
  - I do not teach Fourth Grade
  - under 30 minutes
  - 30-45 minutes
  - 46-60 minutes
  - more than 60 minutes
13. On average, how many minutes of instructional time do you have weekly with each Fifth-Grade class?
  - I do not teach Fifth Grade
  - under 30 minutes
  - 30-45 minutes
  - 46-60 minutes
  - more than 60 minutes

## II. Standards Implementation

14. Please indicate the strength of agreement or disagreement with the following statements. (1 = Strongly Agree to 4 = Strongly Disagree)
  - The Core Music Standards have not affected my teaching.
  - I have changed my teaching to reflect the Core Music Standards
  - I include the artistic process of CREATING in my MONTHLY lesson plans.
  - I include the artistic process of PERFORMING in my MONTHLY lesson plans.
  - I include the artistic process of RESPONDING in my MONTHLY lesson plans.
  - I include the artistic process of CREATING in my weekly lesson plans.
  - I include the artistic process of PERFORMING in my weekly lesson plans.
  - I include the artistic process of RESPONDING in my weekly lesson plans.
  - My classroom is student-centered.
  - I am comfortable teaching the artistic process of CREATING in my classroom.

- I am comfortable teaching the artistic process of PERFORMING in my classroom.
  - I am comfortable with teaching the artistic process of RESPONDING in my classroom.
15. I provide performing activities through: (1 = Strongly Agree to 4 = Strongly Disagree)
- Movement/Dance
  - Singing
  - Performing on instruments
  - Small/large group activities
  - Individual activities
16. I provide creating activities through: (1 = Strongly Agree to 4 = Strongly Disagree)
- Stories
  - Small/large group activities
  - Individual activities
  - Composition with notation
  - Composition without notation
  - Iconic composition for younger students
  - Problem-solving activities
  - Technology/computers
  - Improvisation activities
  - Arranging activities
17. I provide responding activities through: (1 = Strongly Agree to 4 = Strongly Disagree)
- Verbal response
  - Written response
  - Question/answer
  - Small/large group activities
  - Individual activities

### III. Assessment

18. What types of assessment do you regularly use in your classroom?  
(Select all that apply)
- Checklists
  - Rubrics
  - Portfolios
  - Journaling
  - Paper and pencil assessments
  - Performance assessments
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

IV. Instructional Needs

19. Please indicate the barriers you face in teaching the artistic processes of the Core Music Standards (Select all that apply)
  - Lack of time
  - Lack of comfort teaching the creating process
  - Lack of comfort teaching the performing process
  - Lack of comfort teaching the responding process
  - Lack of professional development
  - Lack of understanding of the Core Music Standards
  - Lack of collaboration with other music educators in teaching the Core Music Standards
20. Would you be willing to participate in a small focus group or interview regarding your implementation, assessment, and instructional needs in teaching the artistic processes of the Core Music Standards?
  - Yes
  - No
21. Thank you for your interest in participating in a small focus group or interview regarding the Core Music Standards. Please provide your email below and you will be contacted by the researcher to set up a time and place at your convenience.

## Text Readability of Introductory Band and Strings Method Books

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*This study examined readability of the first volume of 12 common introductory band ( $n = 6$ ) and string ( $n = 6$ ) method books. Text pertaining to instrument assembly and care, posture, carriage, and tone production was scanned into a Word document and normalized for consistency. We then uploaded these materials into an online readability calculator for analysis. This process resulted in indices for five common readability formulas and allowed us to calculate an average grade level score for each book. Reading levels for individual texts averaged between grades four and six. As a result, some methods included in this study might not be appropriate for beginning instrumentalists in fourth or fifth grade, or for students reading below grade level. This study will provide band and orchestra teachers with valuable information on selecting a method book most appropriate for their students. Implications for educators, authors, and publishers are discussed.*

**Keywords:** method book, readability, band, strings, beginners

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The ease with which a reader can comprehend a written text is defined as readability and depends on several variables related to content and presentation. Factors connected with content include the number of syllables per word and words per sentence, word difficulty, and language complexity (McClure, 1987). Variables associated with presentation involve typographic elements that affect legibility such as font size, line height, character spacing, and line spacing (Tarasov et al., 2015).

Readability is one factor associated with reading comprehension, defined as “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language” (Snow, 2002, p. xiii). Reading comprehension affects an individual’s ability to engage in the reading process, apply textual information, and reflect on its meaning to acquire new knowledge and understand new concepts. Therefore, presenting learners with text at the appropriate reading level is an important consideration in selecting materials for classroom use.

Several studies have investigated the readability of texts since the nineteenth century (DuBay, 2007). Recent research includes examinations of textbooks for

6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade social studies (Robison et al., 2015), 4<sup>th</sup> (Sibanda, 2014) and 7<sup>th</sup> (Cardak, et al., 2016) grade science, 9<sup>th</sup> grade history (Rottensteiner, 2010), 10<sup>th</sup> grade reading (Rahmawati & Lestari, 2012), 12<sup>th</sup> grade English (Miftaahurrahmi et al., 2017), and others (e.g., Hu et al., 2021). Authors have also analyzed the readability of text for public consumption such as healthcare information (Ricci, 2015), surveys (Lenzner, 2014), newspapers (Wasike, 2018), and political rhetoric (Kayam, 2018).

Measuring readability involves numeric formulas to analyze various aspects of the text. These metrics typically incorporate factors related to word length (by letter or syllable), sentence length, and sometimes word frequency within a given text. Common tools used to measure readability include the Flesch Reading Ease Formula, the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Formula, the Gunning-Fog Scale, the SMOG (Simple Measure of Goggedybook) Index, and the Automated Readability Index. These and similar calculations estimate the number of years of education required to understand a particular text easily on the first reading and the age of a person capable of coping with the material (Kasule, 2011; Robison et al., 2015).

Readability formulas apply unique theoretical frameworks and analyze different textual elements. As a result, estimated grade level and reading age can vary widely from one measure to the next. Several studies found that the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level formula consistently scored health education materials two to three grades lower than the SMOG Index (D'Alessandro, et al., 2001; Freda, 2005; Grabeel, et al., 2018; Walsh & Volsko, 2008). Some authors (Alfonso et al., 2019; Kiwanuka et al., 2017; Ricci et al., 2015; Robinson et. al., 2015; Vargas et al., 2014) have controlled for this variable by averaging grade level scores from multiple readability indices.

Computer applications that measure readability can also produce inconsistent findings. Mailloux et al. (1995) obtained significantly different readability scores between four programs used to analyze the same text, even though authors of each program reported using the same Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level formula. A more recent study determined that the same Microsoft Word document scanned on two separate computers yielded significantly different readability results (Benjamin, 2012).

Discrepancies between readability scores calculated by different computer applications result from variations in how each program analyzes text. These programs rely on punctuation to delineate sentence length, which is not always accurate. The presence or absence of periods in abbreviations and lists can falsely increase the sentence count (Coke & Rothkopf, 1970). In addition, software that follows the general rule of one vowel per syllable might overestimate the number of syllables in a word (Fang, 1968). Neuhoff et al. (2016) found that one computer application determined significantly higher reading levels compared to calculations by hand for standardized tests and a state certified nursing assistant's exam. Subsequent analyses indicated that removing identifying values (e.g., list numbers and letters) led to more consistency between the two methods.

Textbook publishers rely on reading formulas to ensure that their materials are appropriate for students at the targeted grade level. However, critics state that these metrics do not capture every aspect of readability (Kasule, 2011) and that simplifying language by using shorter words and sentences to lower difficulty might also reduce readers' ability to comprehend the material (Armbruster, et al., 1985). Furthermore, writing didactic materials around measures of grade level proficiency does not guarantee that all students will understand the text. Recent data indicated that 65% of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students performed below the proficient level for reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Hussar, 2020).

## **Purpose**

Beginning instrumental music instruction in the United States typically begins between grades 4 and 6 (Delzell & Doerksen, 1998; Hartley & Porter, 2009) and often involves a method book that serves as the primary medium for work in class and practice at home. These books contain instructions, illustrations, and music that provide materials for study (Byo, 1988). Limited instruction time along with large class sizes and heterogeneous instrumentation often create challenges for band and string teachers attempting to provide individualized attention. As a result, they rely on students to practice independently at home to supplement classroom instruction and develop their skills. Under these conditions, limitations and shortcomings in instrumental method books including text written above students reading abilities might impede progress.

The purpose of this study was to examine the readability of common introductory band and string method books to determine if the complexity of the text is appropriate for beginners as young as fourth grade. The following question guided this research: What is the readability level of each instrumental method book as determined by various readability formulas and their combined average? Findings from this study will provide information to help instrumental music educators select materials appropriate for first-year students. Although authors (Brittin & Sheldon, 2004; Byo, 1988) have examined musical content, we found no studies focused on the readability of text found in beginning band and string method books.

## **Method**

### **Sample**

We selected a convenience sample consisting of three regional and one national vendor and asked them to identify their five top selling method books for band and for orchestral strings. Books submitted appeared on either one (band:  $n = 1$ ; strings:  $n = 0$ ), two (band:  $n = 2$ ; strings:  $n = 3$ ), three (band:  $n = 1$ ; strings:  $n = 0$ ), or four (band:  $n = 3$ ; strings:  $n = 3$ ) lists. Although vendors demonstrated moderate agreement, only one book from the full list of submissions failed to appear multiple times. Therefore, we included all titles on at least two lists



resulting in six band and six string method series. We believe this process resulted in a sample representative of books currently in common use. Band methods included *Accent on Achievement* (O'Reilly & Williams, 1997), *Essential Elements for Band* (Lautzenheiser et al., 1999), *Measures of Success: A Comprehensive Musicianship Band Method* (Sheldon et al., 2009), *Sound Innovations for Band* (Sheldon et al., 2010), *Standard of Excellence: Comprehensive Band Method* (Pearson, 1993), and *Tradition of Excellence: Comprehensive Band Method* (Pearson & Nowlin, 2016). String books in the sample consisted of *All for Strings: Comprehensive String Method* (Anderson & Frost, 1985), *Essential Elements for Strings* (Gillespie et al., 2002), *Measures of Success for String Orchestra* (Barnes et al., 2013), *New Directions for Strings: A Comprehensive String Method* (Erwin et al., 2013), *Sound Innovations for String Orchestra: A Revolutionary Method for Beginning Musicians* (Phillips et al., 2010), and *String Basics: Steps to Success for String Orchestra* (Shade & Woolstenhulme, 2016).

We analyzed preliminary pages from the clarinet (band) or violin (strings) book for each method. Publishers typically provide these books as samples, so they were readily available to the authors. Examining the same volume from each series allowed us to control for variations in language based on instrument. Pages selected for analysis included initial information and instructions related to instrument care and assembly, posture, hand and instrument position, and sound production. We scanned pages into a Word document and normalized the text (Duque, 2020) to insure accurate reading by an online application (Grabeel, et al., 2018). This process involved standardizing spacing, adding periods to bullet point sentences, and removing listing numbers and letters, lists consisting of incomplete sentences (Coke & Rothkopf, 1970), and non-text symbols (i.e., bullets). We also corrected errors resulting from the scanning process. Word counts for each book varied due to the limited amount of narrative available and our desire to use as much text as possible to insure accurate readability calculations.

## Data Analysis

Determining readability involved five formulas as measured by the readability calculator at WebFx.com (2022) including the (a) Flesch Reading Ease Formula, (b) Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Index, (c) Gunning-Fog Score, (d) SMOG Index, and (e) Automated Readability Index. We selected these metrics based on their suitability for the material, availability through online applications, and use in similar analyses of textbook readability (Hu et al., 2021; Kasule, 2011; Robison et al., 2015).

The Flesch Reading Ease Formula [ $206.835 - 1.015 \times (\text{words/sentences}) - 84.6 \times (\text{syllables/words})$ ] measures readability of text targeted at or above grade 4. This calculation results in a number from 0 to 100 with higher scores indicating easier reading. Flesch (1979) provided a chart for converting numerical scores into grade level equivalents. An average fifth grader can understand a text scoring at 90–100. Each decreasing ten-point range equates to an increase in reading level

by one grade. The Flesch Kincaid Grade Level Index [ $0.39 \times (\text{words/sentences}) + 11.8 \times (\text{syllables/words}) - 15.59$ ], the Gunning-Fog Score [ $0.4 \times [(\text{words/sentences}) + 100 \times (\text{complex words/words})]$ ], the SMOG Index [ $1.0430 \times \sqrt{30 \times \text{complex words/sentences}} + 3.1291$ ], and the Automated Readability Index [ $4.71 \times (\text{characters/words}) + 0.5 \times (\text{words/sentences}) - 21.43$ ] indicate the American school grade at which an average student can comprehend the text (Batini & Scannapieco, 2016; Grabeel, et al., 2018; Mesmer, 2008; WebFx.com, 2022). The average grade level represents the mean for all these measures and likely provides a truer score (Robison et al., 2015) due to the tendency for results to vary among readability formulas (Freda, 2005; Grabeel et al., 2018).

Readability calculations using the same formula can vary among software programs (Mailloux et al., 1995). Therefore, we compared results from WebFx.com with another calculator, the Automatic Readability Checker (ReadabilityFormulas.com, n.d.), to determine correlation and approximate agreement between these two applications. Both calculators delivered almost exact results. Grade level indices varied by an average of .04 ( $SD = .05$ ) and correlations ranged from  $r = .99$ – $1.0$  for each formula.

## Results

The Flesch Reading Ease Score for 10 of the methods ranged from 80.0–90.0, indicating a sixth grade reading level. Two of the books—*String Basics* and *New Directions for Strings*—attained a Reading Ease score between 70.0 and 80.0, which equates to text appropriate for seventh grade (Flesch, 1979).

Readability by grade level varied from 3.6 to 7.9 among the band books and between 3.1 and 9.1 for the string books, depending on the formula. Ranges for individual texts fluctuated from 2.3 to 2.9 grade levels for band books and 2.8 to 3.3 for string books (see Table 1). Nonetheless, readability calculators on WebFx.com (2022) demonstrated excellent reliability with correlations ranging from  $r = .77$ – $.99$  ( $M = .91$ ,  $SD = .06$ ,  $Md = .92$ ,  $p < .001$ ) among metrics used in this study. Only one correlation fell slightly below the .80 level generally considered excellent in social science research (Abu-Bader, 2016) and occurred between the SMOG and the Automated Readability indices (see Table 2).

All but one of the band books attained a mean readability score within the fourth ( $n = 2$ ) or fifth ( $n = 3$ ) grade level. Based on this measure, texts readable by students in grade 4 included *Measures of Success* (Sheldon, et al., 2009) and *Tradition of Excellence* (Pearson & Nowlin, 2016). Books at the fifth grade level included *Essential Elements* (Lautzenheiser, et al., 1999), *Sound Innovations* (Sheldon, et al., 2010), and *Standard of Excellence* (Pearson, 1993). Data indicated that text in *Accent on Achievement* (O'Reilly & Williams, 1997) is appropriate for readers in grade 6.

Average readability of the string books fell between grades four ( $n = 1$ ), five ( $n = 2$ ), and six ( $n = 3$ ) (see Table 1). *All for Strings* (Anderson & Frost, 1985) scored within the grade 4 level, while *Essential Elements for Strings* (Gillespie et

al, 2002) and *Sound Innovation for Strings* (Phillips et al., 2010) attained reading levels appropriate for learners in grade 5. Data suggested that *Measures of Success for String Orchestra* (Barnes et al., 2013), *New Directions for Strings* (Erwin et al., 2008) and *String Basics* (Shade & Woolstenhulme, 2016) are appropriate for students in sixth grade (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Method Books Readability

Method Book	Word Count	FRE <sup>a</sup>	F-KGL <sup>b</sup>	G-F <sup>c</sup>	SMOG <sup>d</sup>	ARI <sup>e</sup>	Range <sup>f</sup>	Avg GL <sup>g</sup>
BAND								
<i>Measures of Success</i>	550	86.4, 6	3.7	5.9	4.3	4.0	2.3	4.78
<i>Tradition of Excellence</i>	478	87.6, 6	3.6	6.0	4.4	4.1	2.4	4.82
<i>Standard of Excellence</i>	451	89.2, 6	3.8	6.5	4.5	4.2	2.7	5.00
<i>Sound Innovations</i>	597	85.8, 6	4.1	7.0	5.1	5.4	2.9	5.52
<i>Essential Elements</i>	745	83.8, 6	4.6	7.0	4.9	5.3	2.4	5.56
<i>Accent on Achievement</i>	715	81.1, 6	5.4	7.9	5.6	6.1	2.5	6.20
STRINGS								
<i>All for Strings</i>	706	87.4, 6	3.3	6.1	4.7	3.1	3.0	4.64
<i>Essential Elements</i>	495	84.3, 6	4.3	7.6	5.8	4.4	3.3	5.62
<i>Sound Innovations</i>	514	84.6, 6	4.9	7.7	5.2	5.6	2.8	5.88
<i>Measures of Success</i>	649	81.7, 6	5.0	8.1	6.2	5.3	3.1	6.12
<i>String Basics</i>	307	79.0, 7	5.9	9.1	6.6	6.9	3.2	6.90
<i>New Directions</i>	369	75.1, 7	5.7	8.9	6.7	6.4	3.2	6.94

*Note:* Sorted by lowest to highest average grade level.

<sup>a</sup> FRE = Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease (score, grade level equivalent). <sup>b</sup> F-KGL = Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level. <sup>c</sup> Gunning-Fog Score. <sup>d</sup> SMOG Index. <sup>e</sup>ARI = Automated Readability Index. Range = difference between highest and lowest grade level score. <sup>g</sup> Avg GL = Average Grade Level (mean of all grade level scores).

**Table 2.** Readability Correlations

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. FRE <sup>a</sup>	-					
2. F-KGL <sup>b</sup>	-0.91	-				
3. G-F <sup>c</sup>	-0.90	0.96	-			
4. SMOG <sup>d</sup>	-0.91	0.88	0.96	-		
5. ARI <sup>e</sup>	-0.83	0.95	0.89	0.77	-	
6. Avg GL <sup>f</sup>	-0.92	0.98	0.99	0.93	0.94	-

*Note:* <sup>a</sup> FRE = Flesch Reading Ease. <sup>b</sup> F-KGL = Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level. <sup>c</sup> Gunning-Fog Score. <sup>d</sup> SMOG Index. <sup>e</sup>ARI = Automated Readability Index. <sup>f</sup> Avg GL = Average Grade Level (mean of all grade-level scores).

### Discussion

In this study, we examined the text readability of introductory band and string method books commonly used in beginning instrumental music programs. Data indicated that readability coefficients varied widely depending on the formula applied to the text. Readers should interpret these data with caution due to (a) limitations of the sample, (b) the possibility that text normalization affected results, (c) potential inconsistencies in the computer algorithms used to calculate each formula (Fang, 1968; Neuhoff et al., 2016), and (d) the inadequacies of quantitative readability indices in general (Kasule, 2011). For example, these measures do not account for many factors that might affect reading comprehension such as content difficulty and familiarity, organization of ideas, and visual presentation of the text. They also do not consider the motivation, interest, and perseverance of the reader (Armbruster et al., 1985; Fry, 2002; Tarasov et al., 2015) or intervention by the teacher (Robison, et al., 2015; Snow, 2002). In addition, our choice of readability formulas could have affected outcomes, despite our efforts to control for this variable by averaging grade level scores.

Data indicate that certain method books examined in this study might be too difficult for beginning instrumentalists in grades 4, 5, or 6. The Flesch Reading Ease formula determined a grade 6 or 7 reading level for all the books. In addition, 11 texts attained a Gunning-Fog coefficient of grade 6 or above and four books demonstrated average reading levels within the sixth grade range. However, some individual measures support the use of these materials for younger students. The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Index, for example, assessed the reading level for all texts between grades 3 and 5. The SMOG and Automated Readability indices each resulted in reading levels of grade 5 or below for nine of the books. Teachers using this information when selecting a beginning instrumental method book should consider all data points as well as the readers in their classrooms before they decide. Despite inconsistencies, high correlations between the formulas applied

here support the validity of using an average grade level score to determine initial readability.

Even when a teacher selects a book at the appropriate level, students who read below their grade might have difficulties using these materials in home practice without additional supports. Teachers may need to supplement method books with explanations, illustrations, or simplified instructions they create for students. They should also be aware of unfamiliar terms and pre-teach definitions in class rather than expecting students to learn vocabulary solely through the book (Westwood, 2015).

Method book authors should be aware of grade level reading standards and strive to make band and string instructional materials accessible to all students. This process might include (a) simplifying text, (b) adding illustrations, and (c) creating supplemental video instructions that demonstrate instrument care, assembly, posture, hand position, and initial sound production. Several of the books examined in this study include access to video demonstrations of these skills including *Essential Elements*, *Measure of Success*, and *Sound Innovations* for both band and strings, and *Tradition of Excellence* for band.

Methods books analyzed in this study are targeted at learners in grades 4–6, when most students begin instrumental music (Delzell & Doerksen, 1998). As publishers continue to refine readability of these materials, they might also consider the need for method books produced for beginners in high school and beyond including older adults learning in bands or orchestras affiliated with the New Horizons International Music Association (2022) or similar groups. In addition to age-appropriate text and narrative, these books could contain illustrations and music appealing to adult musicians.

Future research should continue to examine readability of texts for beginning and advancing instrumental students as well as instructional materials for elementary and secondary general music. Ideally, publishers would be transparent in how they calculated readability of their products and their efforts to make them accessible to a variety of learners. Nonetheless, teachers selecting materials can easily determine readability by utilizing online tools (e.g., ReadabilityFormulas.com,n.d.; WebFx.com, 2022) and the procedures outlined in this study.

Additional research is also needed to examine methods for calculating the readability of instruction materials beyond the formulas utilized in this study. *Leveling*, for example, is less objective than traditional readability formulas and cannot be calculated by computer. This method considers (a) appropriateness of content for the reader; (b) use of illustrations to convey meaning; (c) length of material; (d) relationship between the text and teaching methods; (e) language structure; (f) readers' background; and (g) format as related to font size, layout, and spacing (Fry, 2002). Likewise, the Vocabulary Size Test and the RANGE Program can be used together to assess learner vocabulary size and to identify words which are likely to be unknown in a given text (Webb & Nation, 2008). Using these and other methods to improve the readability of instructional

materials for the music classroom will lead to more effective instruction at every level. Increased readability will expand access and reduced frustration for English language learners and individuals with disabilities, as well as facilitate independent use of these texts for all students.

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# Literature Review: Non-Music Majors' Decisions to Enroll in Music Lessons and Ensembles in College<sup>1</sup>

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*The purpose of this literature review was to investigate the decisions of undergraduate non-music majors who enroll in music lessons and/or ensembles in college. These students are not required to take music classes but are interested in prolonging and deepening their engagement throughout higher education. The college years comprise a crucial stage for continued music participation. Between high school and a professional career life, the young adult student will face for the first time an independent choice about whether to stay musically engaged. Different variables have been found to be influential in this transition; however, there is still a gap in understanding who the non-music major is as a musician and what motivates their choices. This review of literature will be specifically related to and summarize (a) the main factors reported as influential to students' decision-making, (b) the non-music major as an amateur musician according to the serious leisure theory (Stebbins, 1992, 2014), and (c) motivation behind students' decision making through the lens of self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Learning about these students' choices can contribute to our understanding of how to implement lifelong engagement in music education for those who do not wish to pursue music as professionals, beginning with undergraduate students. Recommendations for further discussion and future research are provided.*

**Keywords:** Non-music major, lifelong music engagement, amateur musician, self-determination theory

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Music participation at college can occur with different types of involvement. Students who chose music as their major or have a double major in music and a different field may be fully committed to seeking music as a profession. There are those students who decide to minor in music, and they will have a broadening experience with less concentration on specialization (Stache et al., 1994). There are also non-major students who do not have music as an academic requirement but decide to enroll in music lessons to deepen their knowledge and music

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<sup>1</sup> This article is based on the author's master's degree thesis, entitled, *Decision-Making Processes of Non-Music Major Undergraduate Students to Enroll in String Instrument and Orchestra Lessons*, completed at the University of Missouri–Columbia in 2023.

appreciation (Asmus & Harrison, 1990; Enz, 2013; Silveira, 2014) or to continue a previous engagement parallel to their primary career focus (Bowles, et al., 2014; Moder, 2013; Nichols & Liu, 2022). Learning about the possible basis for these non-music major students' choices can contribute to our understanding of how to implement lifelong engagement in music for those who do not wish to pursue music as a degree or profession.

Students who are deeply involved in music participation prior to college do not necessarily seek music professionally in higher education. Elpus (2022) found that although students who took music classes in secondary school were more likely to major in visual or performing arts in higher education than those who didn't, both music and non-music students majored in STEM fields in college at similar statistical rates. This means that non-arts fields will be enrolling majors who are also musicians with a strong experience/background and a propensity to not abandon their passion for music (Asmus & Harrison, 1990). When non-music major students enroll in music classes, they are building an effective strategy to prevent the interruption of lifelong music engagement during their postsecondary education. This transition is a preliminary model of adult music participation. For many musicians, this is the first time they will decide on their own to continue music participation in addition to their professional career choice. This resembles the decisions of musicians who participate in community ensembles. They have jobs (professional careers) in fields different from the life of a professional ensemble performer, yet they still devote their time to rehearsals, sectionals, and concerts (Goodrich, 2019). Their devotion also includes rearrangements in their work schedule, individual practice, and financial commitments such as instrument purchases (Goodrich, 2019).

Authors of the Housewright Symposium of the Future of Music Education (1999) speculated about what music education would look like in 2020 and what should be done to achieve the objectives they identified. Among the idealized goals was lifelong music participation for all people of all ages. Based on the role of music education in promoting lifelong music engagement, researchers have investigated the factors that influence non-music major students' decision-making of being active with making music (Bowles et al., 2014; Bures, 2009; Faber, 2010; Jones, 2018; Moder, 2013).

Although researchers have examined the influential factors, I found a gap in understanding the role of the non-music major student involved in music activities in college. Likewise, investigation that underlines the motivation behind the influential factors has not been extensively documented. Therefore, in this review of literature I will (a) summarize the main factors reported as influential to the student's decision-making, (b) introduce the non-music major as an amateur musician according to the serious leisure theory (Stebbins, 1992, 2014), and (c) provide a psychological perspective of the motivation behind the students' decision making through the lens of self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

## **Influences on Non-Music Majors' Continuing Music Participation**

Understanding aspects that inspire the non-music major's choice to continue music participation in college will help inform the profession about how to encourage students to participate and achieve their aims. Being aware of the routes into lifelong engagement is foundational to understanding how to establish this goal in music education (Pitts, 2017). Researchers have investigated the influential aspects of being engaged with music through the student's perspective (Bowles et al., 2014; Bures, 2009; Enz, 2013; Jones, 2018; Moder, 2013; Pitts, 2009; Pitts, 2017; Yoo, 2020). Previous influence on non-music major undergraduate students' music participation can be related to music experience at high school, parents' and director's encouragement, and self-influences (Bowles et al., 2014; Moder, 2013). Specific to college, influences were related to musical, personal, and social aspects (Boswell, 2022; Bure, 2009; Jones, 2018; Moder, 2013). Consistent with findings of non-music major undergraduate music participation studies, community music engagement was found to be influenced by the same musical, personal, and social motivational categories (Boswell, 2022). In the following sections, I will summarize the influential factors for the non-music major undergraduate student decision-making to be engaged in music making in the university.

### **Positive High School Band Experience**

Positive experience with high school band was demonstrated to have a significant role on students' decision-making to continue ensemble participation in college. Moder (2013) found that among ten possible categories that emerged from open-ended responses, the overall high school band experience was rated as the third highest influence. In response to a seven-point Likert-type scale, as well, the overall high school band experience was rated as a strong influence (7) by 50% of the participants (Moder, 2013). Similarly, Bowles et al. (2014) found that 74% of their participants ( $N = 476$ ) choose positive high school experience as a second top factor that motivated their initial enrollment in a university ensemble. These findings were consonant with those of Farber (2010), who evaluated the relationship between students' attitudes toward high school experience and their participation in college ensembles. Out of nine variables, seven demonstrated that students who participated in a college ensemble enjoyed their high school experience more than the students who did not participate.

### **Music Directors' Influence**

Music teachers and high school band directors play a prominent role in students' decisions to continue engaging with music. Students who reported that their music experience at high school encouraged them to continue to remain engaged with playing in ensembles also emphasized the strong influence of their music director on their decision making (Bowles et al., 2014; Moder, 2013).

Bowles et al. (2014) found that 68% of their participants recalled their high school director introducing the possibility of postgraduate ensemble participation. Students recalled their music directors introducing information about various music schools, participation in a non-major ensemble, and participation in community ensembles. Arranging activities that involved interaction with community and university ensembles, including hearing college students and directors talking about continuing, watching their performance, and performing with them were also ways their directors' works influenced the students' decision-making process. Similarly, Moder (2013) discussed the importance of high school band directors promoting activities involving college ensembles, stating:

Actively promoting college participation by taking students to college concerts, attending contests at local colleges/universities, and bringing college students into their programs to teach sectionals, lessons, etc., are just some of the many potential aspects that could promote enthusiasm and interest for continued playing in college. (p. 83)

### **Personal Influences**

Among the primary factors that influenced students' decisions are the personal influences such as parents, family members, and peers (Bowles et al., 2014; Moder, 2013; Pitts, 2009; Yoo, 2020). Yoo (2020) found that the influences of those who are significant to a person—parents, teacher, and peers—are determinant to student continued music engagement. Similarly, in an investigation of home and school influence on adult musical participation, the author found that almost all participants recognized “the presence of an affirming adult in home, school or instrumental lessons – while sometimes lamenting the absence of such a person in one or other of those arenas” (Pitts, 2009, p. 249). The influences on decision-making for future music engagement, including parents, band directors and peers, occur more often in stages before college level (Bowles et al., 2014; Moder, 2013; Pitts, 2009; Yoo, 2020). Bowles et al. (2014) found that high school students listed self-motivation, parent, and peer influence as factors that affected their initial decision to enroll in music classes and ensembles. Conversely, college students listed the importance of enrolling in music classes, positive high school experience, and the maintenance of their music skills as influential. These findings suggest that there is a nuance between high school and college students; that college students tend to be more guided by their own interest of making music.

### **Self-Influence**

Self-influence such as setting personal goals and identifying priorities is another determinant factor in students' decisions (Bowles et al., 2014; Herb, 2022; Yoo, 2020; Young, 2001). Bowles et al. (2014) reported that 59% of their participants said that they were not prepared to continue playing with only their

self-capability, that they would need a teacher after high school. Yoo (2020) found that self-efficacy such as students' music skills and capability reinforced future music engagement. Herb (2022) assessed how music education and non-music education students who participated in college ensembles perceived themselves as musicians. Results revealed that there was no significant difference between music education majors' and non-music majors' self-esteem. The correlation between their self-esteem and music experiences, such as instrument played or past and current music involvement, revealed that students who had more years of participating in ensembles had a higher music self-esteem.

Self-influences or preferences can also be interpreted by understanding the personality of the non-music major student. Young (2001) has investigated the demographic characteristics and personality types of non-music majors who persist in college marching bands. Analysis of the personality types of participants showed that non-music majors had a tendency for a *sensing type* of personality on the Myers-Briggs personality scale, which refers to a person's perception of experiences. A sensing type is characterized by demonstrating "common sense, practicality, preference for concrete rather than the abstract, and pleasure in the current moment" (Young, 2001, p. 75). This characteristic justified why over 50% of the participants reported interest in returning to band because it is "fun and exciting" (Young, 2001).

### **Aligning Research on College Students with Community Music Participation**

Researchers have identified several benefits for non-music major undergraduate students to be engaged with music activities in their universities (Boswell, 2022; Bures, 2009; Jones, 2018; Moder, 2013). Based on research of non-music major participants in choral ensembles, Jones (2018) identified that strong influences on these students came from musical and non-musical benefits. The musical benefits were the enjoyment that came from their love of singing, acquisition of new and better musical skills, and the challenges around the practice of performing (Jones, 2018). Non-musical benefits were related to the balance between more logical and artistic/emotional academic studies, and physical and emotional impacts (Jones, 2018). Likewise, Bures (2009) found three values from the non-music major students' perception of the benefits of music learning: musical, personal, and social. Musical value is related to benefits such as flow (full immersion in an experience), stress reduction, emotional expression and music emotion as defined by the aesthetic vision of arts (Bures, 2009). Personal value regards the sense of accomplishment, increase of self-esteem, and resilience (Bures, 2009). The social aspect encompasses benefits such as meeting a variety of people, developing trust and teamwork, and sense of belonging (Bures, 2009). Boswell (2022) conducted a review of literature on adult participation in large community music ensembles. The university-level ensemble was identified as the first transition between high school and community music participation, having

as primary motivation for engagement the love of performance, followed by simple enjoyment, and social elements.

### **Love and Enjoyment**

Emotional responses are an evaluation of someone's personal significance of an object or event (Kuhl, 1986). Research has revealed that love and enjoyment, which are the highest intensities of emotions, predominate as reasons for college music involvement. Moder (2013) found that among 14 different influences related to a non-music major's decision to participate in college band, love/enjoyment for playing music displayed the highest amount of influence. Additionally, affective influence has been identified to occur independently of school level, gender, or instrument that students choose. Yoo (2020) noted that positive attitude toward music—love, pleasure, or enjoyment in making music—regardless of “elementary/junior high school/high school students, females/males, or instrumental/choir students” (p. 20), is a critical predictor for early and middle adolescents' continued music participation. Similarly, Mantie (2012), who surveyed community band participants, found no significant relationship between “love band” (p.31) and demographic variables such as age, education, marital status, getting regular exercise, etc. In the same study a significant relationship was found between “love band” and responses to the question “My enjoyment of making music is affected by the pieces we play.” Consistent with this finding, enjoyment of music making was also identified to be a result of how the repertoire affected participants in a study by Goodrich (2019). They reported that their band enjoyment came from experiencing “overwhelming feelings, emotional feeling” (Goodrich, 2019, p.178) while playing both in rehearsals and performances, as well as the wide variety of music, and the challenges in the repertoire. Enjoyment has also been aligned with having fun. Cavitt (2008) found that together, enjoyment and having fun were reported to be the most important reasons for participation in community band by 70% of the respondents.

### **Socialization**

Social aspects have been consistently reported among the influential factors for music participation, however with lower rates than love and fun. In a descriptive study, Major and Dakon (2016) investigated factors that influenced chorister's dedication to mid-level collegiate choirs. In this study, 57.9% of participants identified as non-music majors. Even though a small proportion of participants, 18% (n = 451), reported social factors as influential to their dedication it was still regarded as important. Participants reported to enjoy the nonmusical socialization; however, it did not seem to affect their choir dedication and reenrollment. Through the lens of social identity theory and its implication for developing social identity, Major and Dakon (2016) suggested that rehearsal and performances promote a sense of team and opportunities for building relationships. Although social aspects have not been highly rated, their recurring



presence becomes an evident influential factor (Boswell, 2022; Bowles et al., 2014; Goodrich, 2019; Major & Dakon, 2016; Moder, 2013).

Goodrich (2019) labeled the social influences as camaraderie. He found that music making was not only about music, but also about people. Participants of a community band reported that the ensemble was their common interest and a way of bringing them together. The conductor reported that, independent of their different expectations and perspectives, participants were there for music reasons as well as for social reasons. He also emphasized the importance of the rehearsal breaks as time that participants enjoyed as an opportunity to talk to each other. Neil (2005) has investigated motivating factors for students participating in high school orchestra. Responses related to “orchestra enrollment” revealed opportunities to play and perform as the two top motivational factors. However, responses related to “orchestra experience” rated trips and being with friends respectively as the highest motivational factors. These findings revealed that once students begin to experience the program, social motivational factors achieve more significance. This finding reinforces the contribution of ensemble participation on a student’s quality of life regarding social aspects.

### **Lifelong Music Engagement**

Researchers have emphasized the importance of understanding the reasons for non-music major students to continue their music participation to promote future music engagement (Boswell, 2022; Bowles et al., 2014; Bures, 2009; Moder, 2013). However, so much still must be learned related to continued music participation among these students. Music teachers need to embrace lifelong music engagement as part of the teaching process through all grades of school, preparing the student to explore a new music environment. Mantie and Tucker (2008) investigated people who discontinued music participation after school graduation through the lens of situated learning theory. In this theory, Lave and Wenger dove into the sociocultural nature of learning (Mantie & Tucker, 2008). They explained the concept “legitimate peripheral participation,” in which learners participating in a community of practice need to engage with in-the-world social practices to develop skills (Mantie & Tucker, 2008). Findings suggested that students did not see themselves as co-participants in an activity that leads toward an in-the-world social practice. Similarly, teachers did not see their teaching promoting lifelong participation. In college a gap is also found in student’s expectations to engage in music activity after graduation. Non-music major students’ intentionality to keep their music engagement is still lower when compared with the music major students’ (Herb, 2022). These findings imply that although research has shown strong influential factors of continued music participation for the non-music major student in college, this engagement still needs more incentive to continue after graduation.



## **The Non-Music Major Student as an Amateur Musician**

At the primary and secondary levels of education, both the general and specialized music programs must enhance students' musical abilities to be actively engaged with music (Reimer, 2003). Reimer (2003) described three ways in which students will be involved during adulthood: most as aficionados, some as amateurs, and few as professionals. After secondary school, the non-music major undergraduate student engaged with making music can be identified as an amateur. The amateur is defined as "the person who engages in a musical role for the sheer delight and satisfaction it affords rather than as professional career" (Reimer, 2003, p. 253-254). In addition, Enz (2013) discussed the right of the non-music major undergraduate student to have access to arts and, in this situation to music, as an important aspect of liberal education. As a result of promoting music participation to the amateur in the higher levels of education, Enz (2013) stated that in the future, these students will support music in both advocacy and economy, contributing to the enduring value of music. Thus, investigating the non-music major as an amateur musician will enrich both a specific and general aspect of making music: respectively promoting the enjoyment that an amateur has in their music making and the support that their passion will bring for the world of music.

This section will briefly examine Robert A. Stebbins' concepts of *serious leisure* and its explanations of the amateur. Along with this, some aspects of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's theory of *flow*, the psychology of optimal experience, will be shown to create an understanding of the role of the non-music major student as an amateur musician. The concept of the amateur musician will help to explain the non-music major decision-making process through the perspective of their personal experiences with making music.

### **The Serious Leisure Theory and the Amateur Musician**

The concept of serious leisure emerged from the perspective that a postindustrial society would introduce changes in the way people work (Stebbins, 1982; 1992). Reduction in the amount of work hours, for instance, provided more leisure time and society began to seek a type of leisure that goes beyond recreation. Individuals desired to develop as people through personal expression, enhancement of self-identity, and self-fulfillment (Stebbins, 1982; 1992). Stebbins (1992, p.3) defined serious leisure as "the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that is sufficiently substantial and interesting for the participant to find a career there in the acquisition and expression of its special skills and knowledge."

#### **Amateur: Who Loves What They Do**

The word amateur commonly carries with it a derogative meaning of someone who is not taken too seriously. The amateur is found in fields where they

cooperate with their professional counterparts such as “art, science, sport, and entertainment” (Stebbins, 2004; 2014) and within this environment a mindset of comparing their skills’ efficacy is what promotes this negative perception (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). This misconception can be avoided by an etymological analysis of the word amateur, which comes from the Latin verb *amare*, to love; thus, amateur is someone who loves what they do (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Stebbins, 1992, 1996, 2014). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) also aligned the word amateur with the word dilettante that comes from the Latin *delectare*, to find delight. He stated that “the earliest meaning of these words therefore drew attention to experiences rather than accomplishments; they described the subjective rewards individuals gained from doing things, instead of focusing on how well they were achieving” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 140).

The essence of the love and enjoyment that the amateurs have with their activity reveals more about the peoples’ characteristics. Stebbins (2014), explaining why serious participants fall in love with their core activity, claimed that *taste* and *talent* comprise the love of a serious leisure activity. The taste refers to the attractiveness of doing the activity and the talent refers to the ability to conquer more advanced levels. Through the psychology of optimal experiences, or flow, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) explained what makes experiences enjoyable. In his studies, initially, participants were “people who spent a great amount of time and effort in activities that were difficult, yet provided no obvious rewards, such as money or prestige” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 48). This description can be easily associated with the definition of *amateur*; being seriously engaged in instrumental lessons and ensembles without obvious rewards such as obtaining a major in college. Through analyzing enjoyable activities, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) found elements that when randomly combined produce enjoyment: (a) it is a challenging activity that requires skills; (b) it provides the merging of action and awareness; (c) and (d) it has clear goals and feedback; (e) it requires concentration on the task at hand; (f) it allows the paradox of control; (g) it brings forth the loss of self-consciousness; and (h) it causes the transformation of time. Considering the ability of playing a musical instrument, for instance, the elements related to “requires skills” and “concentration” explain why the non-music major student, an amateur, loves and enjoys their musical engagements. Most aspects of optimal experiences are related to activities that “requires the investment of psychic energy, and that could not be done without the appropriate skills” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p.49), such as attending instrumental private lessons at college level. Activities that require concentration on the task at hand, such as playing in an ensemble, do not allow room in mind for irrelevant information, consequently the *flow* of playing helps people to forget unpleasant aspects of life, imposing order in consciousness, and improving the quality of life (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Stebbins (2014, p. 12) stated that “viewed through the prism of the serious pursuits, psychological flow tends to be associated with the rewards of self-enrichment and, to a lesser extent, those of self-actualization and self-expression.” The intrinsic aspects of serious leisure—attending instrumental

lessons and ensembles as a non-music major student—justifies the participants’ passion for this activity.

### **The Educational Perspective of Pursuing a Serious Leisure**

Stebbins (2007) introduced leisure education as connected to adult education in which its participants recognize their activity as serious leisure. Arts, science, and sports are potentially evaluated as adult education by their participants (Stebbins, 2007). Jones and Symon (2001) addressed lifelong learning through the serious leisure approach and argued that individuals, groups, and society as whole could benefit from this interaction.

A distinguishing perspective of the relation between education and serious leisure is the education for unemployment. Stebbins stated that,

Unemployment is now seen as a natural and permanent part of capitalism, for which people must be prepared. People should learn, for example, to participate in serious leisure through courses in the arts and humanities, training in sport, or recruitment for volunteer roles (Stebbins, 1992, p.132)

The amateur musician as a cooperator with his professional counterpart can have a second financial option and an activity that fills the free time resulting from unemployment (Stebbins, 1992; Jones & Symon, 2001). Consequently, they are prepared to not be extremely financially and emotionally affected by unemployment.

### **Perspectives on Lifelong Learning**

Due to its characteristics of developing skills in the long term, the combination of education and serious leisure also brings the perspective of lifelong learning (Jones & Symon, 2001). The serious pursuit and its lifelong engagement can also be supported by the theory of flow. Csikszentmihalyi stated that “the purpose of the flow is to keep on flowing, not looking for a peak or utopia but staying in the flow. It is not a moving up but a continuous flowing; you move up to keep the flow going” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 54). The non-music major student participating in music lessons is keeping the flow of their amateur activity and achieving a more meaningful life. That is consistent with this perspective:

Millions more have surrendered everything for the sake of their religion, their country, or their art. For those who have done so consistently, despite pain and failure, life as a whole had a chance to become like an extended episode of flow: a focused, concentrated, internally coherent, logically ordered set of experiences, which, because of its inner order, was felt to be meaningful and enjoyable. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 224)

### **What Motivates the Non-Music Major Student, an Amateur Musician**

The reasons for the non-music major students to be engaged in their music activities may be explained by the motivations that inspire an amateur in their serious activity. Stebbins (2004, p. 63), stated that “the drive to gain fulfillment

in serious activity is the drive to experience the rewards of a given leisure activity, such that its costs are seen by the participants as more or less insignificant by comparison.” Consequently, the rewards of an activity are the motivational roots of amateur’s engagement. The theory of serious leisure proposes ten rewards divided in two categories: personal and social (Stebbins, 2004, p.64):

#### Personal Rewards

- personal enrichments (e.g., cherished experiences)
- self-actualization, or self-development (i.e., developing skills, abilities, knowledge, acquiring experience)
- self-expression (i.e., expressing skills, abilities, knowledge already developed)
- self-image (i.e., known to others as a particular enjoyment of serious leisure participant)
- self-gratification (i.e., combination of superficial enjoyment and deep fulfillment)
- re-creation, or regeneration, of oneself through serious leisure after a day’s work
- financial return from a serious leisure activity

#### Social Rewards

- social attraction (e.g., associating with other serious leisure participants, with clients as a volunteer; participating in the social world of the activity)
- group accomplishment (e.g., group effort in accomplishing a serious leisure project; senses of helping, being needed, being altruistic)
- contribution to the maintenance and development of the group (e.g., senses of helping, of being needed, of being altruistic in making the contribution)

Social rewards were identified in music making activities, such as singing in concerts (Liu & Stebbins, 2014). Regarding the benefits and rewards, participants reported improving their singing skills and satisfaction with performing in public, self-actualization, and self-expression. Rewards related to group accomplishment, such as the beauty of the choral sound and successful performance, were also emphasized. Participants mentioned having enriched their social circles by meeting different people in the chorus, exemplifying the reward of social attraction. When asked about how she could sing in a chorus although she had a busy life, the participant answered that “singing relieves pressure and makes me psychologically balanced” (Liu and Stebbins, 2014, p. 543) which the researchers categorized as a re-creation or regeneration reward.

The motivation to be engaged in music activities beyond its cost was also examined in a study about barbershop singing (Stebbins, 1992a). Participants ranked the nine rewards of serious leisure. Among them, personal enrichment (performing), enjoyable/fun, and self-actualization (developing skills) were the most prevalent rewards on the ranked list. Personal enrichment was related to the experience of performing; a participant reported that the freedom of performing

and interaction with the audience that barbershop singing provides was the most important part to them (Stebbins, 1992a). Participants found it to be enjoyable and fun to sing well—to competently contribute when singing in a quartet. Self-actualization was represented by the accessible opportunity of engaging in barbershop singing while using one’s singing skills.

Social rewards can also be identified in aspects such as lifestyle and organizational ties (Stebbins, 1996; 2005). Stebbins (1996, p.100) defined the musical lifestyle of a popular or classical musician as their “special way of living that gives each one of them a sense of communion with others, however different the music they play.” According to Stebbins (2005), “People find optimal leisure lifestyle when partaking of leisure activities that individually and in combination realize human potential, lead to self-fulfillment, and in the process, enhance quality of life and well-being” (p. 189). The organizational ties bring the “sense of belonging to a distinctive and identifiable part of a large human world in which they live” (Stebbins, 2004, p. 67). He found that membership and participation were two powerful social reasons for pursuing art engagement (Stebbins, 2014). The social world around music making—the space of rehearsing and performing, interacting, and identifying with other musicians and the audience—may be a strong motivation for participants’ pursuits.

Rewards also promote the development of a career in serious leisure. The sense of career comes from the longevity of being engaged with an activity (Stebbins, 2004). An experienced and skilled musician perceives rewards such as personal enrichment and self-expression (Stebbins, 2014). Consequently, these rewards promote continued participation and artistic development: a career.

### **Self-Determination Theory Applied in Music Activities**

In *self-determination theory* (SDT) the human being is claimed to possess an inherent and universal set of basic psychological needs (Chen et al., 2015; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan, 2016; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Thus, *basic psychological needs* (BPN) are necessarily independent of the human’s awareness of these needs and cultural context they live in. The basic psychological needs related to one’s behavior or activity are comprised of autonomy (feelings of free will and volition), competence (feelings of confidence and effectiveness), and relatedness (sense of belonging to a group) (Evans, 2015; Ryan & Deci, 2017; Deci & Ryan, 2020; Vannsteenkiste et al., 2020).

An early attempt to build a theoretical concept of motivation in music education through the lens of SDT was proposed by Evans (2015). The concepts of competence, relatedness, and autonomy were aligned to previous research on motivation in music education. Competence was associated with research about beliefs of abilities, a fixed or mastery orientation. Those who believe that their ability is fixed will avoid challenges and not pursue learning, whereas those with a mastery orientation believe that their ability can be improved and will seek to persist in learning. Relatedness was compared to research in relationships between

students and parents, students and teacher, and social connectedness. Music teaching settings in which instructors use prescriptive or perfectionistic approaches can be detrimental to students' development of autonomy. The theoretical structure proposed by Evans (2015) is important to understanding how research findings correlate self-determination theory to music activity at college.

### **Sources of Regulation**

Different from theories that explore the amount of people's motivation, SDT works with types of motivation, either autonomous (intrinsic) or controlled (extrinsic) (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017). In SDT, motivation will be regulated through a continuum from relatively controlled regulations to relatively autonomous regulations (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Researchers have evaluated the core motivational process of SDT within a musical context (Dale, 2018; MacIntyre et al., 2018; MacIntyre & Potter, 2014). The SDT elements of the continuum (extrinsic, introjected, identified, and intrinsic) have been found to be consistently correlated throughout music participation (MacIntyre et al., 2018; MacIntyre & Potter, 2014). MacIntyre et al. (2018) found that between SDT elements of the continuum and music related factors, larger correlations occur relating to more autonomous forms of regulation: desire to learn, motivational intensity, perceived competence, musical self-esteem, and willingness to play were more strongly correlated to intrinsic and identified regulation. Extrinsic motivation had a significant effect only on perceived competence. Examining college students' motivation to practice, Liu (2021) found a mix of intrinsic regulation (enjoyment of making music) and extrinsic regulation (preparation for lessons). MacIntyre et al. (2018) replicated a previous study (MacIntyre & Potter, 2014), however with a greater variety of instruments, amplifying the range of the connection between the SDT sources of regulation and motivation in music. Dale (2018) investigated the sources of regulation in musicians' choice to participate in community band, expanding SDT to motivation in amateurism. Dale (2018) found that participants' motivation was primarily determined by intrinsic and identified regulation styles: a sense of enjoyment or desire to maintain their music skills.

### **Psychological Needs Satisfaction**

Research has investigated the importance of *psychological needs satisfaction* (PNS) in the domain of music (Freer & Evans, 2018; Evans & Bonneville-Roussy, 2016; Kingsford-Smith & Evans, 2021). PNS (satisfying human needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence) has been found to predict motivation for different aspects of music engagement: value of music and intention to continue participation (Freer & Evans, 2018), practice at college (Evans & Bonneville-Roussy, 2016), and instrument choice (MacIntyre & Potter, 2014).

Intention to continue music participation can be influenced by PNS. Freer & Evans (2018) have investigated the intentionality of continuing music

participation from the point that it becomes an elective subject, when students go to high school. Results showed that students with higher PNS were more likely to value music, and consequently more likely to choose music as an elective subject. These findings were based on the concepts of internalization as a process in which values of the environment are accepted by individuals and consequently become their own (Freer & Evans, 2018; Ryan & Deci, 2017). For instance, as needs become more satisfied the individual internalizes more the values of that environment and consequently moves along the continuum of regulation: from external to internal regulation. Based on these ideas, the non-music major student's decision to continue their music participation as an elective choice at the level of higher education may be underlined by effects of PNS.

Evans and Bonneville-Roussy (2016) investigated how PNS promotes autonomous motivation towards practicing for students at the university level. Results revealed that students who were more autonomously motivated practiced more and with more productivity. An important result of this study is the finding that the psychological need of autonomy strongly predicted autonomous motivation. This result is important to educate the professionals involved in formal music teaching and learning in which practice is a crucial strategy, because previous research has claimed that formal environments to learn music foster the psychological need of autonomy (MacIntyre & Potter, 2014).

Research has revealed that BPN can be satisfied differently depending on the instrument choice (Deci & Ryan, 2000; MacIntyre and Potter, 2014; Philippe, R. A. et al (2019). MacIntyre and Potter (2014) have compared pianists' and guitarists' music motivation and intentionality to write music outside a school environment. Pianists scored significantly higher in introjected regulation, motivational intensity, and desire to learn, but significantly lower on perceived competence and willingness to play. The authors aligned these results to the formal culture of piano instruction and informal learning that predominates guitar instruction. Similarly, responses to the open-ended questions revealed aspects of the formal learning environment of piano and the attraction of guitarists to informal learning. Pianists' reports regarded concerns such as with prizes in competitions, having a regular schedule of practicing, and improvements with technique. In contrast, guitarists reported interest in fitting into a group and being accepted by other musicians. Guitarists also scored higher in willingness to play than pianists; however, even their concerns with playing could be aligned to the social interest: "[I hope to be] able to play informally with other musicians (and good enough that they will want to invite me to play again)" (p. 414). Culturally evaluating the motivation needs, MacIntyre and Potter (2014) concluded that a focus is evident on competence for pianists and on autonomy and relatedness for guitarists. Although this study revealed a high level of intrinsic motivation for both pianists and guitarists, the difference found between these groups showed that underlying their autonomous motivation is a need of balancing PNS in making music.



According to SDT, satisfying an individual's basic psychological needs (BPN) will relate to well-being, while their frustration leads to ill-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The definition of wellness for SDT relates to Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia*: pursuing goals that are worthy. Eudaimonia is also understood as flourishing, the state in which humans live up to their best potential and pleasantly experience it. Thus, SDT regards wellness as "thriving or being fully functioning rather than merely by the presence of positive and absence of negative feelings" (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 240).

Music education has been proposed to embrace eudaimonia in the sense of promoting an ethically guided education. An ethically guided music education consists in teaching not only in music (i.e., to do music) or about music, but also through music (Elliot 2012; Elliot, 2020; Elliot & Silverman 2014). It is essential to consider the many types of music students in their varied music learning environments as important as the musical abilities they are acquiring (Elliot and Silverman, 2014). By teaching through music "we empower people to pursue what many philosophers throughout history consider to be the highest human values: a virtuous life well lived, a life of well-being, flourishing, fulfillment, and constructive happiness for the benefit of oneself and others" (Elliot, 2012, p.22).

An ethically guided music education has been related to the etymological concept of the word amateur, as noted previously, from the Latin *amare*/to love (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Elliot, 2020). The amateur engages in an activity because they love it, seeking intrinsic rewards (i.e., flow experience) rather than extrinsic rewards (money), choosing by free choice, and being ethically committed to group music making in respect to their audience as well as having a mutual respect and care for the other musicians (Elliot, 2020). This view of intrinsic and collaborative amateur participation in music turns to be an example of ethically guided behavior which is understood to be "centrally related to personal and/or interpersonal projects and related social groups that children and young people engage in and with which they may decide to identify" (Elliot, 2020, p. 109).

## **Well-being of Music Involvement in Higher Education**

The non-music major undergraduate students being considered to seek an amateur involvement can be regarded as having their own decision-making processes underlined by the desire of flourishing and seeking wellness in their lives. To understand the well-being of the undergraduate non-music major student this section will present research from a general view of well-being within higher education students, a comparison on performance-oriented students in sports and music, and an evaluation between performance-focused and amateur music students.

Non-music major students may benefit in enhancing their well-being starting from the general perspective of undergraduate students. Lozano-Jimenez et al. (2021), investigated contextual and personal factors that generate greater well-being in higher education. Results revealed that autonomy support and grit



predicted BPN. BPN predicted intrinsic motivation which in turn predicted group cohesion and satisfaction with life, or well-being. A particular fact of this study is that the greatest correlation with intrinsic motivation was the relationship with others. These facts can become reasons the undergraduate student, without majoring in music, will freely decide to enroll in ensembles and instrumental lessons because they have the need to find environments that will promote their well-being.

Narrowing the focus of BPN and well-being in college, researchers have compared the well-being, physical and mental health of performance-oriented students in sports and music, other students who attended general university courses, and the general population (Alessandri et al, 2020). Results revealed that the groups of performance-oriented students scored significantly below the general population in health and well-being. The three BPN were identified through data analyses mainly for musicians. Comparison between music and sports groups revealed that music students scored higher in the TIPI (Ten Item Personality Inventory) personality factor of openness to experience (Alessandri et al 2020), meaning that music students have greater tendency to be creative and openminded (Gjermunds et al., 2020; Kuckelkorn et al., 2021) which underlies the satisfaction of autonomy. Comparison within groups revealed differences of course and performance types only for musicians. Performers scored significantly higher than composers regarding environmental mastery and self-acceptance. The social interaction of group music making and its development of group identity, different from the isolated process of composition, tended to promote relatedness. Regarding performance type, soloists scored significantly higher than ensemble players in openness to experience implying a greater tendency towards autonomy among soloists. Among the three groups (sports, music, and general education) only the musicians included perceived competence as a predictor of health and well-being, highlighting the importance of satisfying the BPN of competence for musicians. This study reveals the need of enhancing well-being for students seeking music as a career and highlights how music involvement can be improved by PNS. The fact that the music students scored below the general population together with the evidence of BPN for these students emphasizes the importance of promoting PNS to achieve their well-being. These findings illuminate the path of understanding the well-being for non-music majors as an amateur involvement in college. The next research shows how amateur involvement can promote more well-being than professional involvement.

A more direct observation comes from research that compared the well-being between college music students and amateur musicians. Phillipe et al. (2019) assessed well-being through two general measures, quality of life and general health, and four specific dimensions: physical health, psychological health, social relationships, and environment. Comparisons revealed that amateur musicians scored higher than music students for quality of life, general health, and the dimensions of physical health. The author suggested that stressors such as uncertainty about future, employment, professional auditions, and irregular

working hours could have influenced the lower scores of college students (p.6). In contrast, college music students scored higher on social relationships. This can be explained by the fact that a student majoring in performance will have as their main classes the private lessons and ensemble rehearsals that provide them identity in belonging to a studio and a variety of social connections that the ensemble provides, as previous research has stated (Alessandri et al., 2020). These findings suggest that the non-music major student as an amateur student has a higher propensity to develop wellness through their music involvement. They already benefit from better well-being than the music major student. Besides that, previous research (Lozano-Jimenez et al., 2021) has shown that relationships with others have strong correlations with intrinsic motivation. The non-music major who participates in music classes such as ensembles and private lessons will be able to develop strong relationships outside their major, being intrinsically motivated for their amateur involvement and consequently benefit through wellness. The lack of stressors and pressure that surround a more professional music involvement may be influential in promoting a better level of well-being for the amateur, or the non-music major student. They enjoy music more exclusively by itself than for the outcomes of a profession.

This section emphasized that the non-music major student's decision-making process is shown to be underlined by the need to flourish while in college. In other words, they are looking to live to their best potential and pleasantly experience it through their music experience (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Analyzing this process makes evident how rich promoting PNS in pursuing an amateur involvement at college can be to enhance the students' well-being. This will also open an opportunity to increase the level of well-being of performance-oriented students to more closely match that of the general population (Alessandri et al., 2020). According to the field of psychology, by understanding people's choices we will be able to predict their behavior (Kuhl, 1986). Looking from a future perspective, evaluating non-music major choices from the lens of PNS may help to influence people's behavior regarding having a lifelong music participation. Evans (2015) claimed that teachers should work to guarantee that BPN are fulfilled in their lessons, stating:

The more these needs are fulfilled, the more a music student is able to integrate the values of the social environment and of the task of learning music—practicing, performing, developing musical skills—into their identity and sense of self (p. 77).

## **Conclusion**

Researchers have investigated factors influencing non-music major music participation through different perspectives such as high school and college levels, choral, band, marching band, or ensembles in a general view (Bowles, et al., 2014; Bures, 2008; Farber, 2010; Jones, 2018; Moder, 2013; Young, 2001). Different factors influenced these students' decision-making process. Prior to college, these

factors included high school music experience, parental and music director's support, and self-influences (Bowles et al., 2014; Moder, 2013). At college, music, personal, and social aspects were demonstrated to be more influential (Boswell, 2022; Bure, 2009; Jones, 2018; Moder, 2013).

Aspects of serious leisure theory are consistent with factors that influenced the non-music major student's decision to enroll in university music classes. For instance, influential aspects of music, personal, and social values at the college level (Bures, 2009) were consistent with SLT rewards of self-development (developing skills), self-enrichment and self-expression, and social interaction and contribution (Stebbins, 2014). Connections such as these, turn SLT into a potential resource to explain the role of the non-music major student as a musician who does not expect to seek a career in music: an amateur participant or someone who loves what they do.

Self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017) offers a psychological perspective that supports the trichotomy of music, personal, and social factors. Competence (feeling of effectiveness) relates to the development of skills in music making. Autonomy (feeling of free volition) regards seeking someone's own choice and preference to engage in music activities. Relatedness (sense of belonging to a group) considers the socialization in music making, mainly in ensembles. The non-music major student demonstrates autonomous motivation when deciding to enroll in music classes at college.

Analyzing music making through the lens of non-professional players by employing serious leisure theory (Stebbins, 2014) and self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017) may help provide insights to promote more varied music engagement by individual musicians while bringing returns to the professional community. The non-music major student who plays an instrument for personal enjoyment may also contribute artistically within their community and support music education and the profession (Enz, 2013).

Further investigations could consider how these students manage their time and/or priorities to be musically active while majoring in other areas. Research could also examine how music educators, instrument professors, and conductors can contribute to promoting learning that supports the interest of an amateur musician and that may reinforce the students' decision to continue music participation after college.

Preparing individuals for lifelong musical engagement is one of the goals of music education. With this literature review, I aim to inspire discussions and studies that will promote passionate and autonomous music engagement for all musicians, including those who do not pursue music as a profession.

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# **RESEARCH TO PRACTICE ARTICLES**

## **Examining our Beliefs about Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice: The Importance of Reflection and Critical Thinking Processes**

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Reflection on how our decisions and beliefs impact the students in our classrooms is a significant part of effective teaching. Throughout our careers, we make decisions at surface, pedagogical, and critical levels. These decisions include teaching functions/skills and applications of theory to practice. Critically reflective thinking takes into consideration ethical, moral, and political consequences of our teaching practices. Educators move from asking, 'Am I doing this right?' to, 'Is this the right thing to do?' (Larrivee, 2008, p. 344). When it comes to matters of examining our beliefs about equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice, why are critical thinking processes important?

Critically reflective thinking examines the validity of long-held beliefs and assumptions (Brookfield, 1995, 2017; Larrivee, 2008). Why should a teacher engage in the process of reflective practice? Brookfield (2017) offered that "Every good teacher wants to change the world for the better. At a minimum we want to leave students more curious, smarter, more knowledgeable, and more skillful than before we taught them" (p. 1). Critically reflective teachers are concerned about "issues of equity and social justice that arise in and outside the classroom and seek to connect practice to democratic ideals" (Larrivee, 2008, p. 343).

Examining our long-held beliefs may begin with identifying our positionality, or understanding our roles, identities, and perceptions as teachers, BIPOC and white people, male and female, and choral, instrumental, and general music educators (Salvador et al., 2020, p. 196). As the "school-aged population in the United States continues to diversify," the need for critically reflective thinking is important to engage action to "increase inclusivity, equity, and justice in school music instruction" (Salvador et al., 2020, p. 196). Salvador et al. (2020) explored the experiences of music educators in a graduate course as they examined their beliefs about social justice and made plans to change in their classroom practices. The music educators engaged in a transformative learning process (TLP) which included building community and "grappling with difficult material" (Salvador et al., 2020, p. 198). The music educators presented "This I Believe" essays that told the stories of their beliefs about music and music education. These presentations served as "individual testimony, including stories of successes, failures, fears, joys, inadequacy, and strength" (Salvador et al., 2020, p. 205). As a result of this learning process, the music educators created plans for change in their teaching

approaches “that specifically addressed being more inclusive, equitable, and just regarding multiple aspects of human difference” (Salvador et al., 2020, p. 210). The authors suggested that this type of transformative learning might serve well in a professional development setting, as well as throughout the school year so that impact on students could be observed.

Critically reflective thinking may include gaining an understanding of access, intersectionality, and misconceptions about music education in specific demographic areas. Robinson (2017) described a professional development session that was designed “to increase a degree of critical consciousness for diversity and equity among preservice music teachers” (p. 16). In the first section, Robinson (2017) introduced “social structures of power” and how these power structures either granted or denied “access” to specific resources (p. 16). Intersectionality, which is “based on the notion that cultural categories such as gender, race, social class, ability, sexual orientation, geographic location, and religion interact or intersect among categories and reinforce one another rather than function independently” was explored as well (Robinson, 2017, p. 17). Finally, misconceptions about urban education were explored through topics such as “socioeconomic factors related to school readiness, massive school dropout and push-out populations, cultural testing bias, and contributing factors to the academic achievement gap between white and non-white students in the United States” (Robinson, 2017, pp. 20-21). Robinson (2017) acknowledged that the three-day session did not allow the preservice music teachers adequate time to explore all prior beliefs based on “their own socialized cultural identities, past experiences, knowledge base, and learned value beliefs” (p. 23) but suggested that the experience was beneficial for providing an opportunity to engage in critical conversations. Professional learning communities, teacher workshops, and virtual professional conferences might offer deeper dive opportunities for music educators to explore issues of access and intersectionality.

How do personal perspectives influence our approach to integrating social justice and music education? Salvador and Kelly-McHale (2017) studied the perspectives of music teacher educators, exploring how educators defined social justice, their perception of the relevance of including social justice and possible limitations to including social justice frameworks in their teaching. Respondents in the study recommended that “readings, modeling, film/documentary, and sharing personal experiences can all be effective in communicating about social justice,” as well as readings “regarding current events, the role of music in social justice, ethnographies, critical theory, and the concept that ‘actions speak louder than words’” (Salvador & Kelly-McHale, 2017, p. 15). Additionally, respondents suggested “more fieldwork, in more diverse placements, and with better preparation, reflection, and debriefing regarding differences in race, ethnicity, primary language, ability, and SES” for preservice music educators (Salvador & Kelly-McHale, 2017, p. 17).

Ultimately, the work of critically reflective thinking should lead to a shift in teaching philosophies and techniques, as demonstrated by four elementary music educators who worked to “challenge dominant paradigms of music education” (Hess, 2018, p. 128). These music educators adopted a global music approach to teaching music and notation, as opposed to a Eurocentric focus on Western musics and notation (Hess, 2018). By doing so, they were able to explore a wide range of music and methods for engaging students in music making. The teachers placed all musics in social, historical, and cultural contexts, connected relationships between musics, and found accessible resources (Hess, 2018, p. 134). Situating the music in social and historical contexts enabled the teachers to engage the students in anti-racist dialogues. The teachers wanted students to be aware of the “richness of the music and the extreme oppression, violence, and racism embedded in the history behind the music” (Hess, 2018, p. 134). Hess (2018) concluded that “equity work evolves continually, as does education. These teachers challenged themselves to continually be mindful and to challenge their own assumptions in ways that were profound. . . These insights provide us with tools to help us educate musically for social justice” (pp. 140-141).

A critically reflective music educator is a music practitioner who engages in self-reflection, situates and resolves musical challenges within cultural, traditional, and stylistic contexts, promotes a reflective teaching and learning community, and engages students in continuous active reflection (Phelps, 2020, p. 7). Our own critically reflective thinking might include writing a positionality statement, exploring our understanding of access and equity, and identifying areas where we can take action in our classroom teaching practices. When it comes to matters of examining our beliefs about equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice, critical thinking processes are important because they enable us to progress from “Am I doing this right?” to “This is the right thing to do.”

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## **Engaging with Social Justice in Large Ensembles: Lessons from Recent Research**

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Notions of social justice—such as representation and visibility of historically underrepresented or marginalized groups of people—are prevalent in American society, perhaps more so now than ever before. More recently, those notions have gained momentum in American music education as teachers and students alike have begun navigating the injustices and inequities that have been highlighted by the social justice movement. Although it is important to note that issues of social justice are often contextual and typically unique to each individual school or community, I would imagine that conversations about social justice have begun to take place in many of our schools and music programs. Such conversations may leave large ensemble directors wondering how or even *if* they should address social justice issues in their classrooms. Fortunately, researchers in music education have been exploring the various interactions between student musicians and social justice. Many of their findings and recommendations can be adapted for large ensemble directors, beginning with how we choose music for our ensembles.

### **It Starts with the Repertoire ...**

As ensemble directors, much of our curricular planning revolves around the repertoire we choose for our students to study and perform. There has been an ongoing discussion in the field about how to choose appropriate repertoire for our ensembles. Recently, however, researchers (myself included) have started to investigate the impact that the diversity—or lack thereof—of the composers whose music we study has on students in our ensembles. Gretchen Peters (2016) detailed a project at a university in which the students made a commitment to seek and perform works for their instrument written by underrepresented composers. She explained the positive and lasting impact the project had on students; not only did some students feel more connected to those pieces and composers, but they were also empowered to identify and challenge some of the exclusionary practices that exist in concert programming. My own research yielded similar findings (Noon, 2020). I investigated the influence that studying and performing music by underrepresented composers had on preservice music teachers' beliefs about concert programming. Participants in my study expressed both a strong belief that students in ensembles should be able to identify with the composers whose works they study and a firm commitment to seeking out such repertoire and composers for their future students.

Although both of those projects took place at universities, we can infer that music students at any age might experience similar connections to music written by underrepresented and diverse composers. Ensemble directors may benefit from seeking age- and ability-appropriate repertoire by those composers for their students to study and perform. A number of resources exist to assist directors in locating that repertoire. Perhaps most notable is the Institute for Composer Diversity ([www.composerdiversity.com](http://www.composerdiversity.com)). Ensemble directors can utilize their Works Diversity Database to locate music for just about any type of ensemble, at any grade level, written by underrepresented composers. Another important resource is Australian composer Jodie Blackshaw ([www.jodieblackshaw.com](http://www.jodieblackshaw.com)), who frequently promotes works by female composers on her website. She has also created ColourFULL Music ([www.colourfullmusic.com](http://www.colourfullmusic.com)), an organization that provides ensemble directors examples of entire concert programs at a variety of grade levels that are inclusive and diverse. Those resources are great tools for directors to expand their repertoire selections to be more inclusive and representative of the students in their ensembles.

### **... But It's More than *Just* Repertoire**

Choosing diverse repertoire for our students is just one way that ensemble directors can begin to address social justice issues in their classrooms and curricula. As we are adopting more inclusive teaching practices, it is also important that we take time to (a) engage in discussions on social justice issues with our students (b) properly contextualize and open a dialogue about the music we perform. Understandably, engaging in such discussions can be daunting and even scary. There are, however, methods by which we might mitigate those fears. One example comes from Escalante (2020), who examined undergraduate music education majors' attitudes toward sensitive social justice issues. He found that interactive activities (e.g., games that address such issues) and forms of expression such as journaling allowed students to engage with social justice issues in ways that made them feel safe. Ensemble directors might consider constructing activities similar to those implemented in his study that would allow their students to identify and talk about social justice issues safely. An example of such an activity might be a written reflection or journaling assignment on a specific composer or piece of music from a recent concert. Further, Salvador et al. (2020) examined the various changes that practicing teachers underwent as they worked to become more inclusive teachers. Their participants (in-service teachers) expressed a commitment to being more vulnerable, open, and engaging with their students about issues of social justice. Ensemble directors would likely benefit from making similar commitments to their students—especially when studying music by underrepresented composers or music that addresses other issues of social justice.

As a Ph.D. student at the University of South Carolina, I had the privilege of working with the wind ensemble. One semester, the director programmed a

concert-length work by composer David Kirkland Garner entitled *red hot sun turning over*. The piece reflected upon America's sordid racial history and its tumultuous relationship with confederate monuments. Garner explicitly stated in both the content of the piece and its accompanying program note that those monuments should be removed from public spaces or accurately contextualized. There were members of the ensemble that disagreed with this message; however, instead of ignoring or avoiding those students' feelings because he was uncomfortable, the director engaged them in dialogue. He also created spaces within rehearsals for students to speak about the work and its message. Ultimately, those conversations allowed students to negotiate their perspectives and better understand the harm that such monuments and their history can inflict on Black Americans. In the end, an open and vulnerable commitment, on the part of the director, to engage with issues of social justice allowed students in the ensemble to better understand one another and come together in the name of social change. Such experiences are what Allsup and Shieh (2012) were referring to when they reminded us that "the big questions of our time *do* belong to us, and to our students as well" (p. 51). For ensemble directors, a good first step in grappling with those big questions is by making a commitment to high-quality programming by diverse composers. That repertoire may serve as an effective catalyst for discussions, curricular projects, and performances that are diverse, inclusive, deeply educational, and socially just.

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## **Multicultural Music in the General Music Classroom**

**Grace LaRose**  
**University of Missouri–Columbia**

For many music educators, including multicultural music in our elementary general curriculum is something we know is important to do. We most likely try our best to squeeze it in amongst the concert preparations, assessments, and other national music education standards. But if you're like many music teachers, you may feel as if you aren't doing as much as you could in this regard, and the question arises: Why not? We know learning multicultural music is incredibly beneficial to students on a musical and human level. According to the findings of a 1998 study by Edwards, students who received instruction in American Indian music over an 8-week period displayed significantly greater depth in understanding of cultural awareness, value, and sensitivity than those that did not receive the instruction. We also have fine arts standards that emphasize the importance of expansive cultural experiences for students. Anchor Standard 11 of the "Connect" standard states students should "relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding" (State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education, 2014).

Our duty as music teachers is to prepare our students for a life full of music outside of our school music world. As our society becomes increasingly global, teaching our students a wide variety of world music will better prepare them for greater and more varied experiences without us to guide them. Music Educator Julia Koza stated that the purpose of learning multicultural music was to "help forge closer cultural connections between school music and the musical worlds students experience outside of the classroom." (Koza, 2006, p. 28). And yet, we may find ourselves hesitant to explore the music of cultures other than those with which we are familiar and timid in attempting to teach this.

The answer to the question, "Why aren't we making our music classrooms more multicultural and culturally relevant?" can be partially answered in looking at research studies of music teacher preparation. In many education programs at universities and colleges, undergraduate music education courses touch on multicultural music but do not result in students feeling especially confident in exploring it and using it. A study by Wang and Humphreys (2009) reported that at a large southwestern university in the United States, preservice music education majors spent 92% of their time studying Western style music, less than 7% studying non-western music, and .5% of their time was spent studying popular music. This isn't an unusual experience. Colleges have, for decades, focused on a "classical music" education, resulting in musicians emerging from high level education programs unprepared to navigate a less classical musical world (Larson, 2019).

The importance of preparing music educators to understand the value of multicultural music study is not an issue going unnoticed. For a 2020 study by Joseph, Nethsinghe, and Cabedo-Mas, students from three universities (two in Australia and one in Spain) participated in workshops taught by the three authors in which they learned a song from a different culture, then provided feedback through a survey about their experiences and thoughts on the workshop. The participants found that “The experience helped to confirm how as a teacher we can use music to teach multiculturalism” (p. 185), as well as emphasized the importance of teaching multicultural music in general. One student stated, “We are surrounded by diversity, whether linguistic, cultural, physical, so it is important to teach children to value and respect others from an early age.” (p. 186). Music educators may not feel completely at ease teaching music from cultures with which they are not familiar, but the importance of doing so remains.

Teacher preparation isn’t the only issue influencing inclusion of multicultural music in the general music classroom. Lee (2018) interviewed three music educators regarding their musical and cultural backgrounds and their approach to including multicultural music in their classrooms. The study found that the music the teachers included in their repertoire was heavily influenced by their familiarity with the music. The educators taught music that they felt comfortable with, which was often music they grew up with or studied in college, and not necessarily multicultural music. The study also suggested that while many educators may have a positive attitude regarding multicultural music, the feeling of unfamiliarity with a musical genre is what holds them back from including it in their lessons. The issue then is not just educating educators about multicultural music but educating them about coping with unfamiliarity.

Not only is expanding our students’ experiences through multicultural music important, keeping our classrooms relevant to our students’ current outside-of-school lives is incredibly vital as well. The significance of connecting school music with student culture outside of the classroom is a tier in the multicultural music continuum that bears weight in making general music classrooms more effective. A case study of a Canadian rural music program done by Julia Brook (2013) used observation and interviews to find what connections there were between music education and the community surrounding the students. She found that “The incorporation of singing in this music programme correlated with the prominence of singing in the community, thus deepening the inter-applicability between school learning and out-of-school activity” (Brook, 2013, p. 297) This showed an important connection between “real life” music making and school music, suggesting that the success of the music programs depended greatly on active student participation in music making and using their ideas in the classroom. As educators we need to be not only aware of our students’ extra-curricular musical and social lives but active in incorporating those lives into our classroom community, hence making our classrooms culturally relevant and more multicultural.

Our students need multicultural experiences in the music classroom as well as experiences that are relevant to their current culture outside of the classroom. As music educators we are giving them tools to expand their minds and connect with others in an increasingly connected world. Our jobs are to push beyond our personal backgrounds in both music and culture, embrace the unfamiliar, and be examples to our students in exploration and appreciation. Our world is ever changing, and the way we prepare new generations of teachers must continue to adapt and change with the global culture growing around us. We have the ability to teach beautiful human skills through a joyful, community-based experience with a diversity of music in our classrooms, and we must not let the opportunity go to waste.

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## **“Repertoire is our Curriculum:” Helping Students Find Inspiration through the Repertoire Selection Process**

**Allison Davis**  
**University of Missouri–Columbia**

Repertoire selection has become an important issue for ensemble directors. The inequality of composer representation within music education has been magnified during recent social justice movements. With regard to composer diversity, researchers have found that wind bands mostly perform works by white, male composers (Brewer, 2018; Hash, 2005; Oliver, 2012; Powell, 2009; Paul, 2011, 2012; Wacker & Silvey, 2016; Wiltshire et al., 2010; Wiggins, 2013). Researchers have also suggested that students retain knowledge better and feel a sense of unifying energy when they “see” themselves in the curriculum (Peters, 2016), and that repertoire is the curriculum (Reynolds, 2000; Thomson, 1998). The music we program sends a message to our students about what we value in the music that is performed (Budiansky, 2009; Jensen, 2014; Legette, 2003). This begs the question: How can we transform our teaching practices to further inspire students and better include them in the various stages of repertoire selection?

### **Student Autonomy in the Ensemble Setting**

Including students in decision-making has become a more common practice within the K-12 ensemble setting (Allsup, 2007; DeLorenzo, 2003; McNamara, 2019, Scherer, 2021). By implementing democratic practices in the classroom, we are automatically increasing student participation due to the nature of democracy, which at its core depends on participation (Draper, 2019). High school directors tend to believe it is important for students to experience democratic rehearsal procedures; however, these procedures are most often limited to students identifying and describing opportunities for individual and ensemble performance improvement or student-led sectionals (Scherer, 2021). The barrier cited most frequently by music educators as preventing the application of more democratic practices is time (McNamara, 2019; Scherer, 2021). Middle school music teachers have found that one way to combat challenges, such as time constraints or differences in ability levels, is to offer different music courses containing varying degrees of flexibility and autonomy for students (Draper, 2019). It is important, regardless of the democratic procedures we have implemented in our classroom, that we as teachers enter a lesson with an open mind and the ability to learn from our students, as well as teach them. (Allsup, 2007). Although providing any opportunity for students to have autonomy in the rehearsal experience may lead to more active engagement, it is also possible to innovate further by including students in the process of selecting repertoire.

## Resources for Choosing Repertoire

As we begin to include students in our programming process, it is important to be intentional with what music we are presenting to them. There are many available resources to help aid in the selection of repertoire that represents greater diversity. For example, The Institute for Composer Diversity (<https://www.composerdiversity.com/>) “works to encourage the discovery, study, and performance of music written by composers from underrepresented groups” by compiling databases of repertoire, analyzing performance practices, and providing sample ideas toward more diverse and inclusive repertoire decisions (Institute for Composer Diversity, n.d.). Music educator Christian Folk created a database of wind instrument repertoire that includes multiple types of chamber and large ensembles with music ranging in difficulty from grade 0.5 to grade 6 (<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1i4mcvDo3j6P9MiXKDbgyZ6enIGPcDhY2NTG278ReOal/edit#gid=0>). ColourFULL Music is a resource compiled by composer Jodi Blackshaw that provides band directors with music alternatives to our canon of traditionally white male composers (<https://www.colourfullmusic.com/>). GIA Publications collaborated with underrepresented composers and educators to release *The Horizon Leans Forward* (2020), which includes both individual testimonies about the musicians’ experiences within our field as well as an anthology of existing works by diverse composers. Aside from that book, all of the aforementioned resources are free to use—including for our students, who are more likely to be inspired if they see themselves and their choices reflected in the music they are playing.

## Choosing Repertoire: Strategies for Classroom Implementation

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented students and educators with unprecedented school-related challenges; the main solution to those difficulties has been rapidly modernizing technology. With the transition back to in-person learning, technology has the potential to enhance the musical experience for our students, and it is possible to use technology in a way that includes our students in the repertoire selection process.

*Example 1 – Concert Ensemble:* Introduce your students to the Institute for Composer Diversity website by exploring the repertoire database in class and showing them how to search for concert band pieces. This can include descriptors such as grade level, durations, or technical difficulties to consider. Have your students select a piece they feel would be enjoyable to learn, ask them to provide a sample recording of the piece, then ask them to use musical terms to describe why the piece would be a good fit for the ensemble. This can be done on a personal computer, on a cell phone, or on a school-owned electronic device. You can take

it further by selecting 3-5 pieces from the final list, present them to the group, and have them vote on their favorite to be included in a future program.

*Example 2 – Marching Band or Show Choir:* Introduce your ensemble to websites such as JWPepper (<http://www.jwpepper.com/>) or Arrangers Publishing Company (<http://arrangerspublishingcompany.com/>) and provide them with considerations for a sample show selection process (i.e., theme development, difficulty level, time constraints, budget). Give your students an imaginary budget, time limit, and number of pieces to select, and have them design their own competition show. Not only will you learn more about what is meaningful to your students, but it is possible to select one of the students' shows and work with the ensemble to adapt it for the next performance cycle.

### Conclusion

Creating a classroom environment where students feel safe, validated, and loved is a priority for teachers of all subjects. The most common way for teachers to do this is by building individual relationships with students, regardless of the content that is being taught. As music educators, we are in a unique position that allows us to enhance our classroom environment by the control we possess over our curriculum. Our students are diverse and find inspiration in different places; our programming and teaching practices should represent that. Not only are we able to best connect to our students by selecting repertoire that represents their interests and individuality, we can move forward by giving them some autonomy and including them in the repertoire selection process.

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**MISSOURI STUDENT ABSTRACTS**

## **Effects of Chair Testing in Orchestra on Student Motivation: Student Perspectives and Applications from Motivational Theories**

**Rosanna Christine Honeycutt, MM**  
**Missouri State University**

**Spring 2020**

**Committee Chairperson: Dr. Daniel Hellman**

### **Abstract:**

The purpose of this descriptive study was to examine how string students perceive achievement on chair testing through the lens of attribution and achievement goal motivational self-theories. A teacher survey was administered to identify the goals of chair testing in two high school and seven middle school orchestra classrooms. A student survey was used to collect data in those same classrooms on (a) the reasons why students do and do not do well on chair tests, (b) the perceived goals of chair testing and (c) the ratings of motivation and self-achievement. Qualitative techniques were used to analyze attributions within both motivational frameworks, and frequencies were used to make comparisons within the categories of those frameworks. The most frequent responses were identified as effort-related attributions at 79% and performance goal orientations at 86% within their respective categories. Additionally, 66% of teacher responses about their goals revealed a competitive motivational orientation. Based on the results, I recommend that future research on motivation distinguish between self-effort and other-effort attributional causes and provide suggestions for performance testing, ensemble seating alternatives and restructuring ensemble music curricula as a means to promote intrinsic motivation.

## **K-8 General Music Educators and Technology: Beliefs, Application and Motivation**

**Nicole A. Loudis, MM**

**Missouri State University**

**Spring 2020**

**Committee Chairperson: Dr. Daniel Hellman**

### **Abstract:**

Technology is constantly evolving in the classroom, and some educators choose to embrace that technology more than others. This study investigates the uses and motivations of educators who integrate technology frequently in their K-8 general music classrooms in Missouri. Three music educators were identified with 10 years of experience who had established reputations for teaching with technology effectively. A single semi-structured interview with each participant was used to explore the participant's motivations and beliefs and the specific technology applications that were frequently used in their classrooms. The analysis of the interviews revealed that the participants believed that integrating technology motivated a broad spectrum of students and engaged them in relevant content for their lives outside of the school building. Participants also indicated that a variety of software, applications and web tools were used for listening/watching, assessing/responding, and creating/performing. The results were consistent with existing research on technology-related uses and motivations in music classes. Limitations of COVID-19 and time hindered a more meaningful analysis of self-efficacy and socialization by numerous interviews and observation of participants' teaching methods, which is suggested for further research.

## **Motivational Factors Affecting Recruitment and Retention in the Clever Band Program**

**Haley Morgan Adams, MM**

**Missouri State University**

**Summer 2021**

**Committee Chairperson: Dr. Daniel Hellman**

### **Abstract:**

Student participation in band has many educational, social, and life benefits for students; however, high attrition rates reflect that many students are not motivated to join and continue in band. This study surveyed sixth, eighth, and tenth grade students in the Clever R-V School District to examine the factors that the students self-identify when deciding to enroll in and persist with band in school. The survey data were analyzed to identify key factors that affect students' recruitment and retention in school band. Students answered forty multiple choice questions that addressed areas of motivation including parental support, teacher-student relationship, intrinsic motivation, peer involvement, extrinsic motivation, financial aspects, competition versus ego, and the approach success/avoid failure component of goal orientation theory. The participants also answered seven or eight short answer questions that examined each student's specific perception and experience regarding band recruitment and retention. The survey results indicated that some of the motivational factors that affect students' decisions the most are peer involvement, teacher-student relationships, intrinsic motivation, and extrinsic motivation. Two larger motivational themes that the students identified through their short answer responses were band being fun and band offering social opportunities. This survey could help music educators in any school to recognize how some students perceive the band experience and could also help teachers to better inform their recruiting processes and teaching practices in order to make participation in band accessible for as many students as possible.

## **Effects of Musical Content on Student Practice Judgments, Decisions, and Improvement**

**Molly N. Batchelor, MM**  
**Missouri State University**  
**Spring 2021**

**Committee Chairperson: Dr. Daniel Hellman**

### **Abstract:**

The purpose of this study was to observe and compare the differences in practice behaviors among middle school band students who are presented with etudes of varying stylistic, technical, or expressive qualities. Existing literature has covered practice methodology extensively, but this study was intended to help understand how students vary strategies when presented with different musical challenges. Participants were individually observed in a pre-test, practice period, and post-test for each of two musical examples to examine the strategies used and improvement from pre-test to post-test. Results showed that participants who varied their strategy-use in lyrical and technical etudes increased performance achievement from pre-test to post-test more than those who did not, suggesting that musical context is an important component for effective practice. Implications arising from the study include the teaching of explicit practice strategies, error detection, and musical context during regular ensemble rehearsal time as strategies for improving the effectiveness of individual practice time.

## **An Exploration of Team Teaching in the School Band Setting**

**Aaron Zane Thomas, MM**  
**Missouri State University**  
**Fall 2021**

**Committee Chairperson: Dr. Daniel Hellman**

### **Abstract:**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the goals, structure, and director perceptions of team-teaching practices within a vertically-aligned band program. Previous research has indicated that “team teaching” can provide many benefits to both students and teachers. Since not all school districts apply such a system, the objective of this study was to explore a school band program that has implemented vertically-aligned team teaching. I wanted to understand how the directors perceived its benefits, drawbacks, and difficulties. I selected a band program with an established vertically-aligned program that used team-teaching as a pedagogical strategy. I interviewed and observed band directors and analyzed, categorized, and interpreted the findings. The overarching theme that emerged from this study was using team teaching to build continuity throughout the band program. Additional themes that I found were scheduling, teacher roles, team-teaching strategies, teacher autonomy, professional growth, staff relationships, and collaboration. I observed complexity in the implementation of team teaching and found it difficult to define in precise terms. I discuss four implications arising from the case study: (a) valuable benefits for teachers and students, (b) challenges of implementation, (c) sustaining intended educational goals, and (d) navigating context.

## **Secondary Music Educators' Curiosity Dimensions and Perceptions of Curiosity in the Classroom**

**Kendra Franks, Ph.D.**

**University of Missouri–Columbia**

**Summer 2021**

**Committee Chairperson: Dr. Wendy Sims**

### **Abstract:**

This descriptive study examined the curiosity dimensions of secondary music educators (SME) and their perceptions of how curiosity relates to creativity in learning through a three-part survey. Participants responded to a curiosity measure, the Five Dimensions of Curiosity Revised scale (Kashdan, et al., 2020), which explains curiosity as functioning within five dimensions: Joyous Exploration, Deprivation Sensitivity, Stress Tolerance, Thrill Seeking and Social Curiosity (overt and covert). The results indicated that the curious music educator may be a joyful explorer who enjoys learning new things with others. They may have an ability to tolerate the stress that comes from the uncertainty of encountering novel ideas and work diligently to solve problems. Problem-solving and innovation are not only goals of music education for music students but are also important 21st century skills that mark creativity. Creativity occurs from a base of knowledge and culminates not only in an artistic work or product but involves a process. The SME in this study indicated that they observe enhanced creativity when students were involved in projects where the students lead through curious inquiry. Students who are encouraged to be curious in their own way may increase their creative output. The teacher influences student curiosity by exhibiting a demeanor of openness and designing of lesson plans that are welcoming of student leadership. Gaining understanding into curiosity dimensions may assist music educators in the planning and designing of lessons, connecting with student interests, and the furthering of student engagement with creativity.

## **Successful Urban Elementary Music Educators: A Phenomenological Investigation**

**George Preston Wilson, Ph.D.**  
**University of Missouri–Columbia**  
**Summer 2021**

**Committee Chairperson: Dr. Wendy Sims**

### **Abstract:**

The purpose of this study was to explore the characteristics and experiences of teachers who have been successful in urban elementary music classrooms. I aimed to garner an authentic picture and capture the essence of what it means to be a successful urban elementary music educator. This hermeneutic phenomenology was guided by two research questions: (1) what are the lived experiences of urban music educators who have been successful in teaching music at the elementary level? (2) What are the pedagogical approaches used by elementary music educators in urban contexts? The related sub-questions were as follows: (1) What characterizes success in the elementary urban music classroom? (2) What are characteristics of these teachers (e.g., personal, educational, interpersonal)?

Data collection included approximately 60-minute semi-structured interviews from eight participants. A constant comparative method was utilized to examine the coded transcripts. Trustworthiness was established through data triangulation, participant checking, and peer checking.

Through the three-part analysis, six themes emerged: (a) relationships are key; (b) understanding how music functions for students; (c) willingness to perform unofficial job duties; (d) concerns about urban teacher preparation; (e) curricular and pedagogical decisions; and (f) urban music teacher characteristics.

The findings of this study, as well as that of other scholars in music education, suggest that being a successful urban elementary music educator is the result of a composite set of skills. The teachers who participated in this study use creativity when making curricular and pedagogical decisions, possess a complex knowledge and understanding of their students, their students' families, and their students' community, and have a deep affection for what they do and whom they serve. Successful urban music educators can serve as valuable resources to provide understanding and offer suggestions for improving urban music education including ways to nurture and develop the next wave of music educators.



## **An Examination of Musical Instrument Practice Among Collegiate Musicians**

**Yue Liu, Ph.D.**

**University of Missouri–Columbia**

**Spring 2021**

**Committee Chairperson: Dr. Brian Silvey**

### **Abstract:**

This dissertation consists of three projects that were designed to investigate collegiate instrumentalists' practice habits and motivation orientations. The first investigation was a review of the literature about instrumental practice strategies, motivation orientations, and social factors influencing music practice. The second investigation was a qualitative descriptive study of four graduate instrumentalists' practice organization, application of practice strategies, and motivation orientations. Emergent themes included (a) task-oriented practice routines, (b) solution-oriented approaches, (c) mixed motivations, and (d) external challenges. The third investigation was a survey study of collegiate instrumentalists' application of practice strategies and their motivation orientations to practice. Results indicated that pianists spent more time in practice than percussionists, brass, other instrumentalists (e.g., organ), woodwind, and string players, respectively. Collegiate instrumentalists used systematic practice strategies most frequently, followed by error correction techniques, using a metronome and listening to recordings, concentration control, analytic strategies, and the organization of practice sessions. In addition, collegiate instrumentalists were more motivated by intrinsic factors than extrinsic factors. Weekly practice hours were negatively correlated with Extrinsic Motivation: Avoid Failure, but positively correlated with Intrinsic Motivation: Growth. Taken together, results from these projects indicated that collegiate instrumentalists should (a) develop and strengthen self-regulation skills, (b) arrange practice time based on individual schedules, and (c) cope with challenges through discussing potential solutions with peers and instrumental instructors.

## **A Multiple Case Study of The Ensemble Experiences of Three Collegiate Brass Instrumentalists with Physical Disabilities**

**Carlot Dorvé**

**University of Missouri–Columbia**

**Fall 2022**

**Committee Chairperson: Dr. Brian Silvey**

### **Abstract:**

This qualitative multiple case study was designed to investigate the experiences and the perceptions of three different collegiate brass instrumentalists with physical disabilities. I sought to discern the meaning of inclusion to students with disabilities and the state of current inclusive practices. I also sought to understand their challenges as collegiate brass instrumentalists with disabilities, their experiences and perceived reality in an educational setting with ensemble directors and other students, and the source of their motivation to persist in instrumental ensembles. This study was guided by two main research questions. The first main question was: (1) What are the perceptions of collegiate brass instrumentalists with physical disabilities regarding participation in instrumental large ensembles? The related sub-questions were: (a) What challenges do these students encounter? (b) What characterizes their interactions with peers, teachers, and family? The second main question was: (2) What influences collegiate brass instrumentalist students with physical disabilities to persist in instrumental ensembles? Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with eight participants which included three collegiate brass instrumentalists, three ensemble directors, and two parents. Participants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling procedures. Through the analysis of the narratives of the participants, the key themes that emerged across all three cases included: (a) open communication is key, (b) the importance of a sense of belonging in the ensemble, and (c) motivation comes from music-making through equal opportunity and personal connection.

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## **CALLS FOR RESEARCH**

## **Call for Papers 2024 MMEA State Conference Research Poster Presentation**

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Those who wish to submit a report for consideration should comply with the following guidelines for a) completed master's theses or doctoral dissertations; b) reports of original research studies, and c) student non-degree research projects:

*Master's or doctoral research:* Submit a copy of the abstract, a copy of the document's title page, and a copy of the scanned signature page which indicates that the paper was accepted in partial fulfillment of degree requirements. The name of the degree-granting institution should appear on one of these pages, or must be included with the submission, as well as the author's full name and e-mail. If all the abovementioned items are included, the completed thesis or dissertation will be guaranteed acceptance for presentation.

*Report of an original research project:* E-mail a copy of the paper, including an abstract, in Word or RTF format. The project should demonstrate sound research practices and writing style, and should be completed. Small-scale studies, including action research, are appropriate for this forum. The author's name, address, e-mail, and current school affiliation should appear only on a separate page from the abstract and/or manuscript.

*Student non-degree research projects:* Projects must be submitted by college or university faculty. Faculty members should contact Wendy Sims at the address below for further information.

Note that posters presented at conferences other than previous MMEA state conferences are permitted (and encouraged) as long as this is clearly indicated in a statement included with the submission.

Submissions must arrive at the address below by December 15, 2023. Authors will be apprised of the results of the selection process via e-mail, by the end of December. Address submissions (or questions) to: Wendy L. Sims, MMEA Research Chair, at [simsw@missouri.edu](mailto:simsw@missouri.edu).

# ***Missouri Journal of Research in Music Education***

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## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONTRIBUTORS**

The *Missouri Journal of Music Education* is a publication devoted to the needs and interests of the school and college music teachers of Missouri and of the nation. The editorial committee of the journal encourages submissions of original research pertinent to instruction in music of a philosophical, historical, quantitative, or qualitative nature. In addition, reviews of literature that include a rationale/purpose, as well as conclusions and/or implications for research and/or practice, and suggestions for future research, will be considered.

***Submission Procedures.*** Authors are invited to submit an abstract of 150–200 words and complete manuscript in a single .doc or .docx attachment to the editor, Wendy Sims, at [simsw@missouri.edu](mailto:simsw@missouri.edu). Please submit the cover page attached to the same email message but as a separate document. Authors are requested to remove all identifying personal data from submitted articles and include that information in their email submission message. Manuscripts submitted for review must not be previously published or under consideration for publication elsewhere.

***Style.*** Manuscripts should conform to the most recent style requirements set forth in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, seventh edition). Authors of non-quantitative papers may alternatively choose to adhere to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, or *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (K. L. Turabian). Styles should not be mixed within the submission. The text should be double-spaced and use a 12-point font. All figures and tables should be submitted camera ready within the manuscript and designed so that they will fit with the page space of the journal (approximately 4.5 inches wide by 7.5 inches high) and use an 8-point or larger font size. To assure anonymity during the review process, no identifying information should be included in the submission.

***Review Procedures.*** Three editorial committee members review submissions in an anonymous review process. Authors will normally be notified of the status of the review within two months. The editorial committee adheres to the Research Publication/Presentation Code of Ethics of the Music Education Research Council of NAfME: National Association for Music Education and of the American Psychological Association.





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