ENGAGING MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH MUSIC HISTORY

MINI-LESSONS: A MIXED-METHOD STUDY

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Abstract

Understanding history is a vital part of learning. Nearly every question asked in a music classroom about musical context involves its history, from notation to gestures or technicality to aural listening. History can bring music to life for both the performers and listeners. Despite multiple studies on specific historical music events, music history perspectives have not been addressed in the choral classroom. Moreover, research forums have yet to explore engagement factors of middle school students through a music history curriculum in the choir classrooms. Such research could provide a valid model for educators. This mixed-methods research study seeks to determine if music history lessons offer a statistically significant difference in student engagement by identifying viewpoints that have not been explored and documented concerning middle school choir students' learning, values, and understanding of music. The researcher will illustrate an engagement of middle school choir students with the musical genres of jazz, rock, pop, and classical before and after mini-lessons about the historical context. Responses were collected through a pre-test and post-test survey and questionnaire. This quasi-experiment will utilize a control and variable group of seventh-grade choir students *(N=68)* from a middle school in Iowa.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background: Music Education

This chapter provides a background of middle school student ensemble engagement through music history mini-lessons. Music education can significantly boost student engagement, career goals, and civic achievements.[1] A percentage of high-achieving music programs demonstrate particular outcomes with their students, including positive relationships, increased self-esteem, and a likelihood of continuing to a college program.[2] Notably, music ensemble participation is often an optional course in middle and secondary schools in the United States. These ensemble courses can include orchestra, choir, or band. The National Education Longitudinal Study Characteristics of At-Risk Students reported that music departments sparingly offer music theory or music history courses as either an elective or required course.[3]

According to Author Kenneth Elpus, music theory and history classes have a zero percent reporting rate as an imparted class offered in elementary music settings.[4] Music involvement and literacy have been synthesized with educational standards and increasing scores which challenges the curriculum to incorporate all facets of music. According to the Giveanote Organization, no music history courses are offered for reporting American middle schools. Meanwhile, 99% of schools do engage students through choir ensembles. Author Kenneth Elpus elaborates on middle school course offerings,

> Middle schools offered an average of 3.68 distinct music courses. At the middle school level, band (91%) and chorus (83%) were, by far, the most common music courses offered at schools that employed at least one music teacher. General music is available at

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[1] James S. Catterall, Susan A. Dumais, Gillian Hampden-Thompson, "The Arts and Achievement in at-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies," *National Endowment for the Arts* (2012): 1 – 27,

[2] Denise Bradbury, Phillip Kaufman, and Jeffrey Owings, "National Education Longitudinal Study Characteristics of At-Risk Students," *Department of Education Office of Educational Research and Improvement* (NCES), 1-63.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Kenneth Elpus, "The Status of Music Education in United States Public Schools," *Give a Note Foundation* (2017): 1-36.

56% of middle schools and orchestra or string ensemble is offered at 41% of middle schools. Less common middle school music offerings include jazz band (19%), individual instrument lessons (18%), music appreciation (9%), guitar ensemble (7%), piano (6%), music theory (5%), and show choir (4%).[5]

Educational researchers made many recommendations on improving instructional practices. Their efforts bring awareness to increasing student academic levels and equalizing the positive outcomes and curriculum across the United States. These stakeholders describe ways for institutions to bolster student scores. In one such forum, the Every Child Succeeds Act was signed into law in 2015. This bill requires that all school districts report Kindergarten through 12th-grade student learning to the federal government and state sponsors to track achievement levels in differing curricular areas such as literacy, math, and science.[6]

Moreover, the ESSA mandate emphasizes high-quality learning and well-rounded educational experiences like physical education and the fine arts. In particular, ESSA makes a separate mention of music and addresses deficiencies with federal funds. The bill also considers student engagement, parent involvement, and socialization instead of focusing solely on standardized test scores. Music education is suited to measuring the agencies of success mentioned above.

<center>Engagement</center>

While public school teachers facilitate the whole child learning experience, music educators can provide students with an in-depth framework to understand each new piece of music. As a result, students profoundly develop their craft. In support, author Elizabeth Parker concludes,

> The authors indicated that students participated in order to grow individually, work collectively with other people and make friends and experience stress

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[5] Kenneth Elpus, "The Status of Music Education in United States Public Schools," *Give a Note Foundation* (2017): 1-36.

[6] NAfME, "ESSA," National Association for Music Education, (2014): 1-27.

release in a stress-filled academic environment. Choral singers viewed the school music program as affiliation and saw themselves connected to the larger school setting.[7]

Socialization is a fundamental aspect of how students experience music, and through these musical experiences, a sense of community can build in their school programs. Much research exists between music involvement and an increase in academic performance. A new wave of research is currently being conducted on the benefits of mental health and music participation. However, middle school engagement principles in music have not been systematically categorized until the last decade. In "A Mixed Methods Investigation of Flow Experience in the Middle School Instrumental Music Classroom," Casey Clementson argues that music education research revolves heavily around secondary-aged students and remotely focuses on collegiate musicians. The purpose of his study was to uncover the experiences of middle school students. Clementson identifies the need for the following,

> Further research is needed to determine if these variables have an effect on student decision-making regarding participation in music classes. The variables of gender, attitude, ability, and musical self-concept have appeared to be stronger predictors for music participation due to the number of studies showing similar results among different music courses.[8]

In return, a lack of research causes middle school music teachers to generalize available studies to fit the contexts and experiences of young adult learners. Clementson examines student experiences in the middle school band and links the participants' culture and community.[9] Furthermore, his research highlights expectations and successful transitions within the middle school band program.[10] An abundance of student engagement research demonstrates positive

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[7] Elizabeth Cassidy Parker, "The Experience of Creating Community: An Intrinsic Case Study of Four Midwestern Public School Choral Teachers," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 64, no. 2 (2016): 221.

[8] Casey J. Clementson, "A Mixed Methods Investigation of Flow Experience in the Middle School Instrumental Music Classroom," *Research Studies in Music Education* 41, no. 1 (2019): 43–60.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

outcomes between student practices and the influence of teachers or mentors.[11] These varying
levels of engagement in the middle school music class determine a select set of variables and
their changes.

Music History

In efforts to promote history in the music classroom, author William A. Everette states,
"teaching music history is an extraordinary experience, one filled with awe-filled moments,
exceptional opportunities, and certainly its share of challenges."[12] A music history curriculum in
the middle school choir classroom can provide contextual learning and connection to
performance. Eva suggests, "learning the history of music can easily turn into an aesthetic
experience if the teacher, instead of lengthily discussing the biography of the composer and
enumerating all of its works, applies a more illustrative method and offers pupils the opportunity
to hear a musical piece for themselves during each class."[13] Music educators can provide more
than a rote style of teaching within performance-based classrooms by including music history as
a shared learning experience for students. The Iowa Department of Education explains the
importance of music education by suggesting,

> Music is an essential and enriching part of our lives. Performing, creating, and
> responding to music can connect communities and foster personal growth and
> meaning. Music educators enable students not only to perform as effective
> musicians, but to improve their quality of life through the appreciation and
> engagement with the arts as lifelong participants, appreciators, and consumers.[14]

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[11] Derek Lester, "A Review of the Student Engagement Literature," *Focus on College Universities and Schools* 7, no. 1 (2013): 1.

[12] William A. Everett, "Creating a Music History Course, Course Design, Textbooks, and Syllabi," in The Music History Classroom ed. James A. Davis (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2012), 1.

[13] Eva Peter, "Teaching the History of Music in Primary and Middle School," *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai Musica* 55, no. 2 (2010): 12.

[14] Iowa Fine Arts Music Standards: November 2017 Iowa Department of Education Brochure (Des Moines: Iowa Fine Arts in Music, 2017) 1-5, accessed July 6, 2021, https://educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/FineArtsStandardsGuidanceDocument_508.pdf.

Music allows for an outlet of personal expression, and students should have a vast and inclusive experience deserving of youth. Cultivating a learning experience with a music history curriculum may enable students to consider how the content helps prepare them for other course work and relatable practicalities of life. Author Katie Tremblay-Beaton addresses the following, "limiting curricular knowledge focused only on performances creates further constrictions on what is included in the music curriculum."[15] In addition to cross-curricular connections, this current project serves as an example of the intersection between the fields of music history and other curricular areas.

Research studies involving the middle school students' mindset suggest that they long to be understood, and their connection and engagement with music vary across the spectrum of listening and ensemble participation. Author Stanley Holloway writes,

> The conscious contents of musical experiences their cognitive and affective qualities, the way they felt while they last, their short-and long-term effects differ significantly from other forms of experience, including other kinds of artistic experience. Additionally, music-making and listening enable us to experience musical expressions of emotions musical representations of people, places, and things and musical expressions of cultural ideological meanings.[16]

Within a variety of studies on this topic, students have been encouraged to set music goals, work towards solutions within their groups, and gain an in-depth understanding of music's power for change.[17] Researchers Adam Winsler, Taylor Gara, Alenamie Alegrado, Sandra Castro, and Tanya Tavassolie tracked 31,322 students alongside the Miami School Readiness Project (MSRP). Their research findings suggest, "those who experienced arts electives in middle school

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[15] Katie Tremblay-Beaton, "Caught in the Middle: Investigating Middle School Teachers' Pedagogical Approaches in Instrumental Music Class" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto 2019), 18, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

[16] Stanley K. Holloway, "Creating a Music Education Curriculum Based on Current Teaching Strategies," (Master's Thesis, Liberty University, 2020), 7.

[17] NAfME, "Music Standards," National Association for Music Education, (2014): 1-16.

went on to earn significantly higher GPAs and higher standardized math and reading scores."[18] They continue to express the following, "they (middle school students) were less likely to get suspended from school, compared to students who were not exposed to fine art classes…these are meaningful, important, and ecologically valid measures of actual student performance."[19] The researchers collected data from students involved in dance, drama, music, or visual arts through middle school's sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade levels. Furthermore, they concluded that students needed innumerable access to arts education to nourish brain development, foster creativity, sharpen skills, and stimulate students' mindset towards goal-orientation.[20] Many music educators and researchers have advocated for music education benefits by setting, sharing, and suggesting examples of self-expression, creativity, and confidence.

Teaching music history may be an essential factor for peaking student interest, providing a wealth of knowledge, and offering a new way of connecting to varying tastes in music. Bridget Sweet, the author of *Growing Musicians,* shares an example of students discussing their preferences with their teacher in the following conversation,

"I hate opera."

Do you hate opera, or do you not understand opera? There's a difference.

"I don't like opera because it's slow."

Not all opera is slow… let's take a closer look at a few things…You say that you don't' like opera because of the tempo of the music. Does that mean that you do not like any slow music?

"No. Opera is boring sounding. Not just because it's slow, I guess."

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[18] Adam Winsler, Taylor Gara, Alenamie Alegrado, Sandra Castro, and Tanya Tavassolie, "Selection into, and Academic Benefits from, Arts-Related Courses in Middle School Among Low-Income, Ethnically Diverse Youth," *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* 14, no. 4 (2020): 428.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Adam Winsler, Taylor Gara, Alenamie Alegrado, Sandra Castro, and Tanya Tavassolie, "Selection into, and Academic Benefits from, Arts-Related Courses in Middle School Among Low-Income, Ethnically Diverse Youth," *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* 14, no. 4 (2020): 428.

What do you prefer when you are listening to music?

"I like things to have a beat."

So, maybe you are not moved by opera because there is no hard beat – does that sound more accurate?

 "Yea, I guess."[21]

In Sweet's experience, the students exposed to varying music genres developed new ways of

articulating their preferences since they were equipped with different capacities for

understanding. Widespread exposure to music history could allow further opportunities for

creative growth as there are many parallels across musical genres in terms of style, notation, and

rhythmic skills. Additionally, research suggests that varying genres of music affect the brain,

triggering different neurons, hormones, emotive states, and cascading memories.[22]

A recent study by Seth Pendergast and Nicole Robinson sought to uncover students'

preferred learning conditions. The data associated with their initial research question, "what are

secondary students' preferred learning conditions for music class regarding teacher role, group

size, and repertoire,"[23] revealed that 43.5% of participants preferred partial teacher lead

instruction. The other participant percentages chose independent learning. Overall, the least

favored learning approach was exclusively teacher-led instruction.[24] Furthermore, their data

disclosed opinions about large and small group learning preferences and music selection choices.

The overwhelming response from Pendergast's and Robinson's research indicates that

students enjoy being included in their learning process within music classrooms. In a sense, this

data promotes involvement with teacher-student learning relationships instead of a lecture

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[21] Bridget Sweet, *Growing Musicians: Teaching Music in Middle School and Beyond* (New York: Oxford, 2016), 32.

[22] Dale Purves, *Neuroscience* 2nd edition (Sunderland, Mass: Sinauer Associates, 2001), 158.

[23] Seth Pendergast and Nicole Robinson, "Secondary Students' Preferences for Various Learning Conditions and Music Courses: A Comparison of School Music, Out-of-School Music, and Nonmusic Participants," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 68, no. 3 (2020): 270–271.

[24] Ibid.

approach. Students engage with music in various ways, such as listening to their iPhones while getting ready for a sporting event, YouTube videos, TikTok dances, live concerts, and several award shows. There are vast opportunities to include student preferred music within the school curriculum and concert programming. Music classrooms can comfortably connect, administer, and accommodate the preferences propounded by the research mentioned above.

Author Ann Clements shares a common concern amongst music educators, "positive attitudes towards music have been found to decline with advance in age."[25] To reach their full potential through active participation in their music ensemble, students should feel a deep sense of belonging. Building this rapport and sensation takes daily diligence. Clements suggests that in order for students to fully accept and engage with their music ensemble, all stakeholders have an immense responsibility to lead by example and support the music program. Stakeholders include teachers, colleagues, classmates, students, families, and the community at large.[26] An incredible benefit of student curiosity in music is that the ample history of human social development inherently exists by bonding family traditions, intergenerational community groups, and cultural connections.[27]

Music also has emotive features for relaxation and relieving stress-induced feelings. Author Sarah Watts believes that,

> We (music educators) engage children and young people in much-needed artistic expression and exploration, providing what are intended to be safe spaces to investigate the human birthright that is music. Yet, in the practical sense, we frequently have the luxury of interacting with students over an extended time,

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[25] Ann Callistro Clements, "The Importance of Selected Variables in Predicting Student Participation in Junior High Choir" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 2002), 2, ProQuest Dissertations & Thesis Global.

[26] Frederick Ebot Ashu, *Effectiveness of School Leadership and Management Development in Cameroon: a Guide for Educational Systems, Schools, and School Leaders (E*ngland: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 108.

[27] Camille Savage-Kroll, "Supporting Parent–Child Bonding through Relationship-Based Community Music Programmes: Description of an Elemental Music Pedagogy Programme with Young, at-Risk Mothers and Their Children," *International Journal of Community Music* 12, no. 1 (2019): 27.

perhaps even throughout their entire K–12 school music lives. This continuity cultivates relationships and fertile soil for overt and purposeful caring.[28]

Listening to music and singing together has been shown to create a sense of group identity.[29] Jill Suttie agrees that music involvement brings about social integration because the sensation of a community directly impacts neurochemicals in the brain, which facilitate feelings of closeness and connection with others.[30] Despite additional studies on music and emotions, relationships, and specific music events, teaching music history to gauge student engagement levels have yet to be uncovered. This chapter introduces middle school choir students' perceptions of music history learning.

Statement of the Problem

Little research exists on students' passion for varying music styles when taught about the historical idiom in class. As a result, research forums are not fulfilling every aspect of the music education continuum by not including history. For students to feel immersed and connected to their performance and peers, students should have a working understanding of the historical contexts and events surrounding each piece of music, its composer, and cultural influences. Educators could use history to unite students under a shared learning experience by constructing an emotional connection and sense of relatability to the compositions. There is value in music history, and to be an accomplished performer, teacher, and student, one must know the history of the craft. Author Pete Burkholder concedes the following,

> For both performers and listeners, another reason to know the history of music is because it brings music alive and makes it more meaningful. History can be a way of imagining what it must have been like to be a person living in a certain place and time, with experiences in some ways very different from our own. If we imagine ourselves back into their world, we can hear and understand in their

[28] Sarah Watts, "Caring and Connectivity: a Framework for Active Caring in the Music Classroom," *Music Educators Journal* 106, no. 4 (2020): 51.

[29] Watts, "Caring and Connectivity," 51.

[30] Jill Suttie, "How Music Bonds Us Together," *Greater Good Magazine: Science-Based Insight for a Meaningful Life,* June 2016, https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_music_bonds_us_together 2016.

music something of what they heard in it. That makes it come alive in ways we might never experience otherwise.[31]

The current thesis provides music educators with a new music history mini-lesson curriculum for performance-based ensembles to promote a relatable shared learning experience for all students.

Statement of the Purpose

The current study aims to examine the relationship between music history learning and its influence on ensemble students' engagement levels. Participants surveyed include seventh-grade choir members at Solon Middle School in Solon, Iowa. There are inconclusive preliminary studies on middle school student engagement through music history; therefore, the nature of the dissertation seeks to edify this insufficiency.

Significance of the Study

This study is essential for music educators, musicologists, curriculum directors, and fine arts stakeholders. The perspectives concerning the learning gap of middle school choir students have not been identified, explored, or documented as a means for relatability and engagement through music history connection, creation, performance, and response. The significance of this study addresses statistical data and factors relating to engaged middle school choir students. Educators are tasked with motivating students, and all teachers must be willing to change and challenge their instructional practices by developing a variety of approaches that allow students to succeed. This could be achieved by creating a safe and welcoming environment that promotes multi-sensory musical experiences in addition to relatable content.

Furthermore, researchers have studied student engagement by large. However, only a meager amount of educational scholars have examined the link between student engagement,

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[31] Peter Burkholder, "The Value of Music History," *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 5, no. 2 (2015): 58.

instructional approaches, responsive curriculum, and student achievement in the music classroom. There is a breadth of potential for expanding on music education topics, such as history.

Research Questions

There is a need to investigate music history components in the ensemble classroom. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

RQ1: How does the impact of learning about multiple styles of musical genre history engage middle school choir students?

RQ2: Does exposure to music history predict a change in choral students' levels of engagement from pre-test to post-test?

Hypotheses

The following are the specific hypotheses for this mixed-methods research study:

H1: Learning about multiple styles of musical genre history engages middle school choir students by emotionally connecting students to other individuals throughout history, informing students' musical interests, and proposing an evaluation process of musical works and performances.

H2: Exposure to music history significantly increases choral students' levels of engagement as identified from pre to post-test.

It is reasonable to assume these hypotheses because several authors and research studies mention student engagement through the contextual learning process. Using music history as an integrated approach in music class allows research to broaden the scope of tools to engage students. Students who are fully involved with an educational lesson do not simply complete and memorize but are actively engaged in the subject matter. Music history mini-lessons may

promote engagement by rewarding participation through thoughtful discussion, relatable content, and cross-curricular connections to other subjects.

Research Plan

This mixed-methods research study identifies viewpoints of seventh-grade choir students and documents their engagement in learning about music history, the value of education connectedness to the information. Students participated in a pre-test and post-test Likert scale survey. To fulfill the qualitative portion of this research, students free wrote their opinions to two open-ended questions after the post-test survey. In addition to igniting middle school choir students' curiosity, this mixed-methods study aimed to explore, understand, and determine predicted factors by measuring students' responses to the music history curriculum. Each week, the teacher introduced a music history genre via the music history mini-lesson plans. Statistical analysis and thematic analysis were used to examine the results and answer the research questions.

> Author Bridget Sweet fortifies the understanding of students and music as she writes,
>
> Adolescents don't know what they don't know, and their understanding of music is limited by what they have learned thus far in their lives. By teaching students about music through performance, listening, conversation, analysis, dissection, demonstration, composition, and research, while also encouraging critical thinking, we provide them with ways to better understand why they feel the way they do and to more clearly communicate with others.[32]

All students gained skills for dissecting how they heard music and shared experiences when they listened to music.[33] Sweet advocates the following, "we need to help our adolescent students move forward from our music lessons toward understanding how musical experiences are relevant to them in their own lives."[34] As students share their opinions and hear from peers, it is

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[32] Bridget Sweet, *Growing Musicians: Teaching Music in Middle School and Beyond* (New York: Oxford, 2016), 32.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid., 33.

plausible that they could feel more validated and confident about their connection to music. Every musical genre can reach students and possibly adjust the lens through which they view learning. On a grand scale, music develops an affiliation with one another. As a result, this could influence how students process and approach empathy and relationships.

Definition of Terms

There are various descriptions related to this thesis, so there is a need to define terms. "Student engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion students show when they are learning or being taught."[35] Author Ah Hong elaborates on student engagement,

> When students are highly engaged in their learning, they can improve their academic achievement, such as critical thinking and grades, and then apply the acquired knowledge to real life. Student engagement is also an indicator of the quality of education and whether active learning is taking place in classes. Scholars agree that student engagement is fundamental to success in higher education.[36]

Student engagement also extends to the level of motivation they have in order to learn and progress in their education.[37]

The term "musical genres" refers to varying styles such as classical, salsa, jazz, rock, or blues.[38] These styles indicate cultural influences, time periods, traditions, and conventions. The genres involved in this research include classical, jazz, rock, doo-wop, Motown, hip-hop, and pop. The classical genre intervals Mozart, Beethoven, and Schumann's genius from 1750 to 1830. The jazz genre covers work songs, spirituals, blues, ragtime, Dixieland, swing, and bebop.

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[35] Great Schools Partnerships. "Student Engagement." *Educational Reform,* February 18, 2016. Accessed December 26, 2021. https://www.edglossary.org/student-engagement/.

[36] Ah Hong, "Exploring Factors, and Indicators for Measuring Students' Sustainable Engagement in e-Learning," *SUSTAINABILITY* 11, no. 4 (2019): 2

[37] Gale M. Sinatra, Benjamin C. Heddy and Doug Lombardi, "The Challenges of Defining and Measuring Student Engagement in Science," *Educational Psychologist* 50, no.1 (2015): 1.

[38] Robert Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 70.

This time period spans the years 1840 to 1970 by outlining artists such as Billie Holiday, Scott Joplin, and Bessie Smith. This thesis's rock music history curriculum introduces Elvis and the 1950s and includes Doo Wop from the same era. Motown and Pop survey the Temptations plus Franki Valli and the Four Seasons from the 1960s and 1970s. The curriculum concludes in the 1980s and 1990s with hip-hop artists Sugar Hill Gang, Run D.M.C., and Beastie Boys (see Appendix E).

Summary

Middle school choir plays a considerable role in the public school system as either a required or elective course. Though integrity and a sense of pride surround this treasured educational opportunity, valid and exhaustive research is lacking concerning adolescents' engagement in ensemble-based practices. Student engagement is at the central core of educational learning, and it is interchangeable with student motivation. If students are motivated to participate and learn, then music ensemble classrooms have limitless possibilities for growth.

Music educators and students can work diligently side by side to create a space for socialization, a love for music through multiple avenues of engagement, and a sense of community and family. Ruth Gurgle highlights,

> As music teachers, we work hard to make our classrooms places to experience musical joy—where students engage with the music, the instruction, and each other. When this happens, students and teachers from a range of communities, experiences, and backgrounds can enrich and broaden their perspectives, become a family community, and create music together.[39]

Music involvement is an essential part of a well-rounded education because it brings together diverse people by generating communication, empathy, inclusivity, and emotional connections.

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[39] Ruth Gurgle, "Building Strong Teacher–Student Relationships in Pluralistic Music Classrooms," *Music Educators Journal* 101, no. 4 (2015): 77.

The current research demonstrates a need to incorporate a music history curriculum in ensemble classrooms by evaluating the longstanding context of music's importance, reverence, and antiquity.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the existing literature surrounding student

engagement, music education, and music history. The first section highlights student engagement

research in music education, with detailed cross-curricular and emotional connections. The

second section identifies past and present methodological approaches to the music education

curriculum, with a subsection recognizing varying assessment approaches and pedagogical

frameworks. The final portion reviews music history studies in the classroom while reporting

music history connections in other subject areas.

Student Engagement in Music Education

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was launched in 2000 and updated

in 2013. NSSE sought to assess how students engaged in educational practices. Their

questionnaire collected information and used quantifiable metrics to determine engagement from

four indicators. These four indicators are outlined as follows,

> The academic challenge, including measurements of higher-order learning,
> reflective and integrative learning, learning strategies, and quantitative reasoning.
> Second, learning with peers, broken down into elaborative learning and
> discussions with diverse others. Thirdly, experiences with faculty, based on
> student-faculty interactions and signs of effective teaching practices. Lastly, the
> campus environment, determined by the quality of interactions and the presence
> of resources for support.[40]

The NSSE describes their analysis, "Engagement Indicators (EIs) were created with a blend of

theory and empirical analysis. Items were rigorously tested using quantitative and qualitative

methods during a multi-year development process. This process involved conducting focus

groups and cognitive interviews with students and two years of pilot testing and analysis."[41] The

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[40] National Survey for Student Engagement, "Engagement Reports," accessed January 30, 2020, https://nsse.indiana.edu.
[41] Ibid.

first category included intellectual and creative collegiate work, as indicated by its resounding

learning theme. Category two displayed how each student responds to the differing EI's, and the

third expounded on social interactions with faculty members. Mentorship is a quality guide for

lifelong learning.[42] The campus environment concluded the four indicators and supported the

cultivation of positive relationships within the school community. NSSE included measurements

for higher-order education and reflective learning, which involved a conceptual connection in a

big-picture visualization format.[43] NSSE attributed problem-solving as the synthesis for higher-

order thinking through encapsulated strategies for discussing and comparing personal life and

experience.[44]

Learning strategies have incorporated a vast amount of instruction that helps students'

study and acquire information such as memorization or anecdotes. NSSE related quantitative

reasoning to academic challenges by summarizing learning strategies as an act of understanding

information.[45] Most often, quantitative reasoning devotes itself to mathematical idioms such as

music theory. The indicator, studying with peers, explained collaborative learning and discussion

with diverse others. These umbrella titles summarized intellectual adventures together, whether it

be student groups or teacher groups. Educators, curriculum directors, and stakeholders in student

engagement research agree with the NSSE questionnaire findings.

Similarly, author Bridget Sweet outlined ideas for empowering adolescent musicians.

Each chapter of Sweet's book elaborates on different aspects of education and engagement,

including classroom climate, humor in the classroom, the music teacher, the adolescent musician,

establishing a framework, and humanity in music teaching. Her focus in each chapter primarily

revolved around adolescents and socialization aspects that coincide with music ensemble

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[42] NSSE, "Engagement Reports."
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.

participation. Sweet mentions, "it is so important to keep in mind that every age group has both positive and less positive characteristics. For me, adolescents are funny, quirky, brave, guarded, loyal, caring, empathetic, wicked, vicious, and occasionally a bit smelly."[46] Her first chapter dove into emotional and cognitive connections with student musicians and recommended further writings on the positive impacts of adolescent experiences. Chapter two explored teaching styles and their impact on student awareness through personality traits. The third chapter provided the reader with a plethora of current music education issues such as diversity and safe places. In using a variety of personal stories, Sweet generated a list of implications and team-building examples. Sweet rounded out the fourth chapter by supporting individual models from working with students in the music classroom to successful engagement strategies. She calls for structure and flexibility by suggesting the following,

> Adolescents tend to feel powerless over their bodies and lives, knowledge provides them with a new sense of power. When privy to information in music class-be it a daily agenda, diagrams, and explanation of how voices change, or even the designated time for the next fire drill-adolescents may act more rationally and more predictably because they know what to expect.[47]

In providing knowledge for adolescent students and engaging them in music practices, chapters five and six delineate relationship-building strategies for the music teacher, humanity, and humor. Throughout her book, *Growing Musicians: Teaching Music in Middle School and Beyond,* Sweet intentionally complied with the resources of other middle school music teachers by sharing their trades and tricks to engage students. Instead of a conclusion, Sweet's examples pointed to a further need for research in each of her chapters and sections.

Daniel Albert's article, "The Classroom Culture of a Middle School Music Technology Class," sought to examine American middle school classrooms based around technology and

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[46] Bridget Sweet, *Growing Musicians: Teaching Music in Middle School and Beyond* (New York: Oxford, 2016), 59.
[47] Ibid.

music composition. Albert's article discussed the influences of classroom culture between students and teachers. This work was incredibly articulate and advantageous for music studies because it solely applied to the under-researched middle school climate. Albert's research developed main themes during his data analysis. Primarily, student engagement increased when a co-created culture existed between students and teachers. Albert included field notes from class observation, video recordings, and interviews to round out his ethnographic case study.[48] He outlines that "findings from the present study suggest that a classroom culture that encourages collaboration and embraces the messiness of learning can be a positive influence on music learning, regardless of previous formal musical experiences."[49] Albert points out, "the beginning of the school year brings teacher and students together to transform a room—a space in the social institution called school—into a purposeful place known as the classroom with a unique culture that is co-created by both the teacher and students."[50] Music is a social experience that connects students emotionally and provides varying degrees of satisfaction.

Seth Pendergast and Nicole Robinson authored "Secondary Students' Preferences for Various Learning Conditions and Music Courses: A Comparison of School Music, Out-of-School Music, and Nonmusic Participants." This study investigated students who participated in music programs against non-participants in a stratified random sample design. Research questions implicate a "preference for teacher role, group size, and repertoire in the music classroom as well as interest in six different secondary music courses."[51] This article related to music education careers and provided the next steps in engaging students through preferential

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[48] Daniel J Albert, "The Classroom Culture of a Middle School Music Technology Class," *International Journal of Music Education* 38, no. 3 (2020): 383–399.

[49] Ibid., 396.

[50] Ibid., 383.

[51] Seth Pendergast and Nicole R. Robinson, "Secondary Students' Preferences for Various Learning Conditions and Music Courses: A Comparison of School Music, Out-of-School Music, and Nonmusic Participants," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 68, no. 3 (October 2020): 264.

choices. Their research suggested that music and nonmusical participants do not have significant interest levels in music courses except within a large ensemble. There seemed to be an emerging result between student and teacher relationships that engage student participation.[52]

Student Cross-Curricular and Emotional Connections

Student engagement levels have been closely researched with links to reading and writing. Literacy has become a significant focus for several public schools across the United States. With plummeting standardized scores, the push for heightening literacy scores spans through all curricular subjects. "Repertoire and Standards: Junior High/Middle School Choir: Integrating Reading and Writing into the Secondary Choral Curriculum" displays a clear presentation of the 4-Block Literacy Framework designed by Patricia Cunningham. This framework is intended for use in multiple subjects. Renee DeJager's article provided the choral music educator with curriculum-based assignments to help cross-curricular boundaries.

The report is organized into three sections: Reading and Fluency, Comprehension, and Writing.[53] In each section, she explained different techniques or ideas to engage students. To provide insight, four diagrams were included: Word Wall Example, KWL (know/need to know/already learn), T Chart (likes/dislikes), and Venn Diagram – an organizational tool.[54] More specifically, how to incorporate writing and how to make it meaningful. DeJager provided thought-provoking ideas and summarized an encouraging desire for a comprehensive choral curriculum that integrates cross-curricular connections.[55] She connected music vocabulary to reading and fluency by demonstrating a collection of words called a Word Wall.[56] Furthermore,

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[52] Pendergast and Robinson, "Secondary Students' Preferences," 278.

[53] Renee Chavez DeJager, "Repertoire & Standards: Junior High/Middle School Choirs: Integrating Reading and Writing into the Secondary Choral Curriculum," *Choral Journal* 47, no. 11 (2007): 40-43.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid., 43.

[56] Ibid., 41.

DeJager made apparent that comprehension in music and literacy are interconnected by addressing terms through vocabulary and suggests that "there are many means by which we (choral educators) can incorporate writing and make it musically meaningful."[57] This article linked educators' understanding of how to approach the subject of literacy in the music classroom

Galen Cisnell's dissertation, *The Real Factor: How Relevance and Learning Combine to Create Student Engagement in the Classroom*, looked through the lens of sociological studies. She affirms the following,

> Confirms that which many already suspected – people do not pay attention to subjects in which they are not interested. As we are usually interested in topics that create an emotional response in us, it is not surprising that information linked to emotional content is far more likely to be recalled later when compared to information not linked to strong emotions. Indeed, we pay the most attention to the emotional components of our memories.[58]

Sufficient research exists to support the non-academic benefits of music participation. These include but are not limited to confidence, creativity, emotional expression, socialization, motivation, and self-esteem. Furthermore, participation in music is a critical component of cross-curricular connections. There is ample data to support that studying and participating in the fine improves learning throughout all academic areas. A neurological study conducted by Judith Burton at Colombia University suggested what Gale Cisnell's study outlined, that fine arts education enhances learning in both cognitive and emotional provisions.[59]

"Why Care about Emotions in Music*"* by Gilead Bar-Elli sought to outline the role of emotions, or what we perceive as emotions, in understanding music. The focus of this article explained the significance of musical features, connections, and processing music in real-time.

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[57] DeJager, "Repertoire & Standards," 41.

[58] Galen Cisnell, "The Real Factor: How Relevance and Learning Combine to Create Student Engagement in the Classroom," (PhD diss., Colorado State University, 2013), 4, ProQuest Dissertations & Thesis Global.

[59] Judith M. Burton, Robert Horowitz, and Hal Abeles, "Learning in and Through the Arts: The Question of Transfer," *Studies in Art Education* 41, no. 3 (2000): 230.

Much of music's aesthetic value takes root from a philosophical standpoint and implores whether the listener can appreciate or even understand the work.[60] Her article questions, "what awareness and attendance to the emotive nature of music contributes to understanding its musical features and appreciating it aesthetically."[61] Bar-Elli suggested that music is hard to describe or represent through emotive notions but functions more as an interpretation by the listener. Her sole purpose was to explain emotive notations as the listener engages with them.

The purpose of Bogdan's article, "The Shiver-Shimmer Factor: Musical Spirituality, Emotion, and Education," was to investigate the musical and spiritual experience of both listener and performer. She suggested that two distinct concepts exist in the moment of connection, with either a shiver or shimmer.[62] Bogdan defined shivers as a physiological phenomenon and shimmers as part of a soul-making transcendence – employing the Csikszentmihalyi's flow and the Jungian concept.[63] When explaining this phenomenon, Bogdan used a critical thinking toolset. She points out, "in the quest for clarity about the meaning and import of musical spirituality in education theoretically in practice, many questions still remain."[64] Her article advanced philosophical explorations of emotional engagement to music but inconclusively requested more research on the subject. Bogdan also discussed the aesthetic of being genuinely moved by music.

Sharpley Hsieh studied Australian dementia patients' responses to music. In this article, scientists explained emotional connections to music with their research subjects. Individuals with a dementia diagnosis were recruited, as explained, "a type of frontotemporal dementia whereby patients experience a severe loss of language and factual knowledge but retain their everyday

[60] Gilead Bar-Elli, "Why Care about Emotions in Music," *Philosophia* 46, no. 3 (2018): 633.
[61] Ibid., 637.
[62] Deanne Bogdan, "The Shiver-Shimmer Factor: Musical Spirituality, Emotion and Education," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 18, no. 2 (2010): 111-129.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid., 127.

memory."[65] Participants received a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan to detail images of their brain while listening to melodies representative of emotions such as happiness, sadness, peace, and fear.[66] Hseih's results included analyzed MRI scans and interviews with participants. Results suggested that dementia patients had difficulty identifying emotions when compared to similar-aged healthy adults. However, the researcher discovered that individuals could recognize famous tunes from their youth even when a doorbell or dog bark sound was unfamiliar. These findings concluded that much more research needs to be done to uncover music pleasure and recognition on a brain cortex level.

Dedicating considerable attention to music and emotions, the article "Searching for Music with Emotions" by Andrea Hrckova and Milan Macko cataloged data that explained connections and various classifications for emotions within music listening. Unlike Hsieh's article, these researchers suggested that MRI results do not easily explain human emotions.[67] Next to complicated human emotions, the portrayal of emotions in music and perceived emotional responses are problematic, as the authors reveal.[68] Hrckova and Milan explain the following,

> Besides the multidisciplinary nature of Mir, many contextual influences affect our perception of music. First, it is the individual preferences of music genres and associations with individual memories, not to mention the cultural background of the listener. Second, human emotion is a variable that is subjective and hard to classify. There is little consensus regarding its definition. Note particularly that emotions are not the same as feelings.[69]

To conclude, these researchers pointed to a need for a more musically complete identification MIR that includes five to 289 spectrums of categorical emotions.[70]

[65] Sharpley Hseih, "The Language of Emotions in Music," *Australasian Science* 11, no. 33 (2012): 19.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Andrea Hrckova and Macko Milan, "Searching for Music with Emotions," *Online Searcher* 43, no.5 (2019): 35.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Hrckova and Milan, "Searching for Music with Emotions," 35.
[70] Ibid.

Seeking to gain perspective, Peter Webster provided five elements of creative thinking: problem-solving, convergent/divergent thinking, stages of consideration, aspects of novelty, and usefulness of result to education necessities. He suggested that problems drive creative thinking and those mentioned above aesthetically acceptable strategies. To define creativity, Webster's review of research and opinion concluded that creative individuals inhabit well-executed preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. Webster suggested that music measurements in creative thinking are relatively new. He proposed that creativity and cognitive intelligence must consider creative thinking as a proponent of learning strategies.[71] He writes, "a clear implication of the model is that the traditional views of creativity by the music education establishment are often confused and misdirected."[72] Moreover, Webster called for continued research to support creative thinking strategies in music.

Other music education studies discuss lifespan theories, cognitive-affective developmental theory, and differential emotional theories surrounding the music education curriculum. Authors Birren and Schaie write, "the term, *differential emotions*, derives its name from the theory's emphasis on the qualitatively different nature of the primary or basic emotions. Primary emotions, like anger, joy, or sadness, are said to have different neurophysiological, phenomenological, and motivational properties."[73] Furthermore, psychologist Altshuler explained music's potency to arouse emotions as a catalyst for releasing adrenalin and other hormones. Altshuler purported multiple perspectives to portray the influence of music on the physical, psychological, social, learning, and aesthetic experience of human beings. He recognized that music could affect mood and emotions, the endocrine system, circulation,

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[71] Peter Webster, "Creative Thinking in Music Education," *Design for Arts in Education* 89, no. 5 (2001): 33-37.

[72] Ibid., 37.

[73] Jill Birren and Katie Schaie, *Handbook of the Psychology of Aging* 5th ed. (San Diego, California: Academic Press, 2001), 399.

respiration, blood pressure, associations, and imageries. Altshuler mentioned that the mechanical and primitive part of the brain compares to the higher cortex used for executive functions and responds unconsciously to sensory input such as music. His perspective complements the writings of music educators E. Thayer Gaston, Willem van de Wall, and psychologist Carl E. Seashore.

Moreover, music education researchers Susan Maury and Nikki Richard promoted a development strategy for music education curriculum to include social-emotional wellbeing. They write, "in recent years, there has been increasing recognition that social-emotional competencies and wellbeing have a significant impact on how students both enjoy school and learn."[74] Music classrooms have virtually intervened to help students regulate emotions and strengthen social bonds by promoting music education as a beneficial and positive activity.[75]

Music Education Curriculum

A versatile music education curriculum can positively impact students. Researchers agree that benefits include increased academic performance, preferred social-emotional skills, and outlets for creativity.[76] These encompass vital and pivotal roles in a student's development. Dr. Straight and Dr. Kraus suggested their statistical research findings point to a biological impact of expert listening skills across entire lives. Straight and Kraus's research was funded by the National Institute of Health and included interpreting principles based on previous cellular studies on auditory complexes with musically trained individuals. The authors reviewed animal and human neurology models. They go on to explain,

[74] Susan Maury and Nikki Richard, "Wellbeing in the Classroom: How an Evolutionary Perspective on Human Musicality can Inform Music Education," *Australian Journal of Music Education* 50, no. 1 (2016): 3-15.
[75] Peter Benson, *"All Kids Are Our Kids: What Communities Must do to Raise Caring and Responsible Children and Adolescents* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997).
[76] Dana L. Strait and Nina Kraus, "Biological Impact of Auditory Expertise Across the Life Span: Musicians as a Model of Auditory Learning," *Hearing Research,* no. 308 (2014): 109-121.

Music training has been associated with significant physiological enhancements throughout the auditory system that underscore general auditory processing. For example, adult musicians have heightened auditory perception and more differentiated cortical evoked potentials to slight acoustic distinctions compared to non-musicians. These auditory senses help students develop listening skills in those who are musically trained versus those without training.[77]

Attention span, memory, speech, and sound perception are directly impacted.[78] Another study found that students involved in high-quality music programs scored higher on testing. These scorings for math and reading involved high and low socio-economic students in third grade from various school districts.[79] Authors Katrin, Hille, Kilian Gust, Ulrich Bitz, and Thomas Kammer suggest,

Active music performance relies on a demanding action-perception-loop calling for long periods of focused attention on dynamic visual, auditory, and motor signals. Given the extra training of high-level-cognitive skills in children who learn to plan an instrument, it can be asked whether making music enhances children's performance in domains other than music.[80]

The authors reading and writing survey included a questionnaire that was distributed to parents of students involved in music. Results incorporate, "boys playing an instrument showed better performance in spelling compared to the boys who were not playing, despite family members with instruments."[81] They suggested that music education improves cognitive ability and incidentally increases language skills. Music education was a vehicle for mental capabilities in multitudinous ways including, but not limited to high achieving academics and associated scores.

Several systematic approaches to education serve as integral pieces of the music classroom curriculum machine. Both well-known curriculum developers and philosophers Carl Orff and Zoltán Kodály developed well-implemented methods related to Karl Marx's theories of

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[77] Strait and Nina Kraus, "Biological Impact of Auditory Expertise Across the Life Span," 5.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Katrin Hille, Kilian Gust, Ulrich Bitz, and Thomas Kammer, "Associations Between Music Education, Intelligence, and Spelling Ability in Elementary School," *Advances in Cognitive Psychology* 7, no. 1 (2011): 1-6.

[80] Ibid., 1.

[81] Ibid.

historical reflection. Marx theorized about who individuals are as means of production. In the article, "Processes of Alienation: Marx, Orff, and Kodály," author Cathy Benedict relates to the repetitive approaches of Orff and Kodály much like an assembly line. Though these methods were not intended to be ridged and systematic, they have developed into using instruments like tools, free from actual music-making. The focus of Benedicts' article discussed the historical influences of Orff and Kodály on music education through the lens of Marxist theories. It was not intended to push for sociological ideals but instead compared methods and philosophies. Her article is organized into four main sections, including how Orff and Kodály used exchange-value and modes of production (Marx), how their methods function, and a conclusion header; remaining lingering thoughts. This article served as a resource for comparing nationalistic music education method developers and Karl Marx theories, linking the two together through careful examination of music processes. Such approaches outline potential curricular suggestions for music curriculum using different modes of production to reach students through musical engagement. Moreover, this article was written explicitly for presentation at the 5th International Conference for Research in Music Education and applied mainly to elementary music educators' classroom approaches.

Carley Pelella's dissertation, *Responsive Classroom Approach (RCA) in Music Classrooms to Acknowledge and Cultivate Diversity: A Curriculum,* highlights the need for diversity in the music curriculum. Pelella discussed social-emotional learning, building rapport, and pointed to the Responsive Classroom Approach as a cultural impact tool to help us educators build relationships. Her report suggested that the bounteous devices available in a curricular

toolbox, the more exceptional opportunities educators will have in creating culture and community amongst students.[82]

Author Matthew Rescsanszky shared his exuberance about changes in the curriculum by writing the following closing statement in his text "Mixing Formal and Informal Pedagogies in Middle School Guitar Classroom," he states, "I am excited to explore ways to extend the principles of informal pedagogy into a more traditional ensemble environment."[83] His article explored widespread music curriculums and pedagogies used in the music school curriculum. The idea behind his research was to advocate for music's popular genre being used alongside traditional and classical styles. Many educators could have the same experiences with several students interested in ensembles but not pedagogy. Rescsanszky suggested one of the ways to recruit and retain students is to make the music curriculum relatable and diverse. At the very least, music educators could respond to the changing culture and adjust the curriculum to engage the interests and build community within the ensembles.[84]

Curriculum development is necessary to grow the whole musician and retain interested elective music students. Keita Hanman's article, "Influence on the Curriculum Choices of Middle School Choir Teachers," discussed specific choices in music literacy during the gap years of general music in both elementary and performance-based programs at the secondary level. She argued that an appropriate vision for the middle school level music curriculum does not exist. Characteristics and results from the *Survey of Influences on Middle School Choral Music Educators' Curriculum Choices (SICC)* are examined within each section of the article. Furthermore, SICC introduced three primary questions: demographics of choir, middle school

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[82] Carley Pelella, "Responsible Classroom Approach (RCA) in Music Classrooms to Acknowledge and Cultivate Diversity: A Curriculum." Masters Project, Liberty University, 2020.

[83] Matthew J. Rescsanszky, "Mixing Formal and Informal Pedagogies in a Middle School Guitar Classroom," *Music Educators Journal* 103, no. 4 (2017): 32.

[84] Ibid., 33.

philosophy, and choral curriculum influences. Hamann argued that insufficient teacher training during the collegiate years or student teaching time prepares educators for the middle school years. She explained her thoughts through middle school recommendations, teaming, interdisciplinary planning, exploratory curriculum, and comments from respondents.[85] As a resource for middle school choir teachers, Hanmans' discussion supported the importance of research during middle school years and any educator who values curriculum by choosing an appropriate assessment. Moreover, this research is critical to aid in the defense of music education curriculum development, particularly choral ensembles.

Music Education Assessments and Pedagogical Framework

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a bill that enacted educational reform, reached its peak interest in the twenty-first century. Several school districts interpreted the law with different funding and campaign incentives. With prompting from ESSA initiatives, teachers had to document student progress, assess federal standards with student scores, create best practices, and rise under pressure as educators are evaluated according to their student's success. This mandate was somewhat popular and highly controversial yet was adopted to improve standardized testing and implementation of state and national standards. Each state began to focus on specific areas of literacy as their Common Core State Standards, with English and Language Arts being front runners with conditions including mathematics as a focus standard.[86] "The Framework for the 21st Century Learning" author Ashley Gilbert proposes, "in response to this changing educational environment, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have emerged as an attempt to create consistency among states in terms of outlining student learning

[85] Keitha Lucas Hanman, "Influences on the Curriculum Choices of Middle School Choir Teachers," *Applications of Research in Music Education* 26, no. 1 (2007): 64-74.

[86] United States Department of Education, "Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)," accessed November 13, 2021, https://www.ed.gov/essa?src=rn.

goals."[87] Music is rarely labeled as a common core class in the education profession. Scholars would agree that not only should music be included for a student's well-rounded education but, an abundance of the music teachers' jobs includes recruiting and militantly defending the importance of music education.[88]

Katie Tremblay-Beaton's dissertation, "Caught in the Middle": Investigating Middle School Teachers' Pedagogical Approaches in Instrumental Music Class," reviewed the pedagogical practice of middle school music teachers who specialize in instrumental ensembles. Tremblay – Beaton suggests,

> The manifesto calls for a shift from music directors to facilitators; thus, meaning a similar change from depth to breadth. While aiming for breadth over depth may promise a more versatile educational experience for the learners, it also creates challenges for teaching new pedagogical approaches, as it asks music teachers to become experts in a variety of musical fields and styles rather than specializing in one area of musical instruction. It also raises the question of what level of ability is needed to become an educator in a music discipline.[89]

Additionally, this case study evaluated the framework of pedagogical knowledge and strategies towards teaching middle schoolers, including, but not limited to, psychology, socio-emotional, and relationships. Tremblay-Beaton's dissertation added a unique addition to music education research because it looks primarily through the lens of pedagogical practices as she reviews the educational approaches of middle school music teachers who specialize in instrumental ensembles. She promotes the following experiences such as, "I felt it was challenging to vary my instructional approaches to meet the needs of adolescent learners as well as satisfy the curriculum and school community expectations of my role as the music teacher."[90] Additionally,

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[87] Ashley Gilbert, "The Framework for 21st Century Learning: a First-Rate Foundation for Music Education Assessment and Teacher Evaluation," *Arts Education Policy Review* 17, no. 1 (2016): 13.

[88] John L. Benham, *Music Advocacy: Moving from Survival to Vision* (Chicago: GIA Publications Inc 2010), 5.

[89] Katie Tremblay-Beaton, "Caught in the Middle: Investigating Middle School Teachers' Pedagogical Approaches in Instrumental Music Class" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto 2019), 115, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

[90] Ibid.

she explained the case study evaluation through psychology, socio-emotional learning, and teacher-student relationships under the Pedagogical Content Knowledge framework. Tremblay-Beaton critiqued the pedagogical framework while offering its use to further middle school educators' knowledge of pedagogy.

Difficulties can arise in the context of music criteria with fair, accurate, and subjective assessments. These assessments were designed as a tool for checking student engagement, including the arduous task of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting musical works.[91] Once information is sorted, outcomes are created for each student. In the article titled "Classroometrics" by Brian C. Wesolowski, he delegated the necessity for validity, reliability, and fairness of music classroom curricular assessments. He called to the quality of teachers' ability to consider the endowments of each instruction process. The focus of this article included the following sections: tests/inferences/use, traditional theories, classroometric theory, and a new conception. Written to provide insight on the definition of classroometrics, Wesolowski compared traditional approaches to validity, reliability, and fairness concepts. He ascertained that these do not take into consideration educational checks for understanding in all areas of assessment. Wesolowski suggested, "particularly in music, the demonstration of student-learning outcomes can occur under multiple contexts. The ability of a student to perform a rhythm, identify the same rhythm orally, or identify the same rhythm in written notation may all address a similar learning outcome but vary slightly in the context and skill."[92] His concept of classroometric assessments involved referring to levels of thinking processes that expound on Bloom's Taxonomy. He advocated that each unique student should be considered their levels of understanding to make an educated choice towards their assessment. Next, he outlined the effect

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[91]Brian Wesolowski, "Classroometrics: The Validity, Reliability, and Fairness of Classroom Music Assessments," *Music Educators Journal* 6, no. 3 (March 2020): 35.
[92] Ibid., 29-37.

of relationships in the congruency of a classroom. Reliability was contextualized as the dependability of each teacher's assessment as what is demonstrated day-to-day.[93] Much of his research elaborated on concise communication between students, parents, and teachers alongside a systematic set of assessment procedures that could help improve consistency. He concluded with steps to change assessment concepts that could drastically alter students' involvement in music.[94]

Angela Leonhardt's article, "Using Rubrics as an Assessment Tool in Your Classroom," responded to challenges as an authentic assessment in the music curriculum. The focus of this article included descriptions for four sections: rubrics as accurate assessments, steps for creating an original rubric, scoring, and benefits of using rubrics. Written to provide insight into teacher approaches and forge examples through evaluations, the author included High-Order/Thinking Skills (HOTS). HOTS established a scoring grid with graduated proficiency levels and a student-generated rubric. She suggests that "traditional music assessments have included pencil-and-paper tests, tests that involved rote memorization, and recall tasks"[95] and continues to advocate for new and improved music assessments. Her proposal included student feedback and real-world examples as a part of an authentic process. Leonhardt argues that "our goal as music educators should be to equip our students to be lifelong music makers. When students can connect isolated facts, they have learned with real-world examples that they actively participate in, learning becomes more meaningful, and students will take ownership of their musical growth."[96] Her research and real-life experiences promoted the case for a motivational approach in school to widen students' personal growth and gain a deeper understanding of music. Though

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[93] Angela Leonhardt, "Using Rubric as an Assessment Tool in Your Classroom," *General Music Today* 19, no. 1 (2005): 10-16.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid., 10.

[96] Ibid., 12.

this article was found in the scholarly journal *General Music Today*, it remains a resource for any

grade level of music education informant who desires to fortify their departments and safeguard

the necessity of music education in the schools. Moreover, this article related to levels of

students' assessment in a nonpartisan approach. Her opinions and desire to encourage lifelong

musicians were inspiring and easily transferable cross-curricular within all facets of the teaching

profession.

In E. James Kotra Jr.'s article, "Assessment Practices in the Choral Music Classroom: A

Survey of Ohio High School Choral Music Teachers and College Choral Methods Professors,"

he defined assessment literature, measurement, evaluation, and testing. The assessment was a

general term, while the measurement differed from the actual assessment. Assessment contrasted

with the traditional avenues of testing. The main focus of Kotra's article connected assessments

in music education to the urgent need for a designed questionnaire approach.[97] According to this

article, its purpose was to identify assessment strategies from participants, including a high

school choral educator and a collegiate choral music education professor. He explains the styles

of assessment in the research questionnaire,

> The high school teachers were asked to indicate if they used, and the college
> professors if they taught, 12 assessment strategies: (a) videotape recordings, (b)
> audiotape recordings, (c) singing tests, (d) written tests, € independent
> study/written projects, (f) student portfolios, (g) check sheets, rating scales, and
> rubrics, (h) concert performances, (i) individual performances, (j) student
> participation, (k) student attitude, and (l) student attendance.[98]

This qualitative research study pointed to the desired assessment style based on teacher

preference over the required state standards.[99] Written to provide insight, Kotra evaluated

high school choral teachers' use of his 12 assessment strategies compared to collegiate

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[97] E. James Kotra, "Assessment Practices in the Choral Music Teachers and College Methods Professors," *Contributions to Music Education* 32, no. 2 (2005): 65-80.

[98] Ibid., 65.

[99] Ibid.," 74.

choral methods professors teaching of the 12 assessment strategies. He followed the comparative analysis with a discussion of the data. To conclude, he shared differing frustrations on proper assessment practices and suggested that professionals address the lack of collegiate preparation. He proclaimed that an increasing emphasis on assessments with new standards is vital for the growth of the music education curriculum.[100]

Music History in Music Education

Music history can suit the diverse nature of teaching by drawing on talents, experiences, and philosophical backgrounds. Knowing the history of music can create a meaningful connection between performer and listener by providing a thorough insight into the composer, context, or time period. Scholastic Magazine offered music history lessons on their website and in print. Lesson plans are provided and available for other music educators in performance-based ensembles to implement in their classrooms including, lectures, collaborative prompts, conceptual art ideas, and other engaging activities. Moreover, Progressive Music owner recommends,

> The first thing is, there's probably already people out there who have put something together, so it's finding that connection. Be that through State Music Educators Association, or an Arts Education Network or Arts Education Coalition. The first opportunity is finding those outlets and getting yourself connected because most of them put out information.[101]

To continue the history implementation curriculum in music classrooms, the researcher and author of *The Music History Classroom*, James Davis, suggested using a lip-synch battle to engage students with various music history genres.[102] Davis aligned several essays authored by experienced music history teachers in the field. He promoted the value of music history,

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[100] Kotra, "Assessment Practices in the Choral Music Teachers," 76.
[101] Sharon Paquette Lose, "Progressive MUSIC: 70 Years of Music Education Advocacy," *Musical Merchandise Review* 176, no. 7 (2017): 77.
[102] James Davis, *The Music History Classroom* (Routledge: New York, 2016).

"teaching music history is an extraordinary experience, one filled with awe-filled moments, exceptional opportunities, and certainly its share of challenges."[103] Though his book focused on an undergraduate music history course, much of its content was transferable to music history lesson planning in various levels of performance ensembles. He suggested that the actual presentation of the material is the copacetic variable for the success of any subject. Davis goes on to explain, "it is not uncommon to hear most teachers, including music history teachers, discuss the difficulties encountered when trying to get a class motivated and responsive to the material."[104] His text included a comprehensive overview of a music history classroom, complete with instructional design, course materials, and lesson plans.

Ethnomusicology is a defined study of different cultures and dually inhabits two worlds – music history and sociology. There has been a recent push in music education to incorporate non-western music into the curriculum. In the article authored by Patricia S. Campbell, "Ethnomusicology and Music Education: Crossroads for Knowing Music, Education, and Culture,"[105] she acquainted influences of ethnomusicology in a practical approach for music educators spanning kindergarten through twelfth grade. Her research is organized into six main sections; the culture of ethnomusicology, world music for preservice and practicing teachers, the ethnomusicological method defined, music educators in the ethnomusicological process, the music teaching/learning interests of ethnomusicologists, and potential intersections. The historical component to her research suggested that music education necessitated reform and pointed to symposiums at Yale and Tanglewood as the establishment of ethnomusicology. The focus of her article elaborated on the hallmarks of ethnomusicology and proclaimed its benefits when applied to music educator coursework or recertification courses. She suggested that world

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[103] Davis, *The Music History Classroom*, 1.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Patricia S. Campbell, "Ethnomusicology and Music Education: Crossroads for Knowing Music, Education, and Culture," *Research Studies in Music Education* 21, no. 1 (2003): 16-30.

music or ethnomusicology seminars would benefit those studying music education. She stated that ethnomusicology also enlightens the music theorist, composer, conductor, and music historian.[106] To provide insight, Campbell believed that further preparation and studying has gone into educational psychology than the necessary pursuits of world music acquirements. Moreover, this article was written to call attention to ethnomusicology's influences on music education and the lack of material in music educational prep courses. To that end, she linked music education and ethnomusicology together for a broader world of studies and structures.

The purpose of Jere T. Humphreys's article, "The Context of Music Education History? It's a Philosophical Question, Really," was to explore the histories and correlations between historiography, musicology, and music education history. Humphreys discussed many influential persons involved in the three fields of history, musicology, and music education histories, such as Peter Burke, Allen Britton, Horatio Parker, Leopold von Ranke, and more. He recommended that music education philosophers and historians can benefit from relationships with each other's research methodologies by writing, "music education philosophers can support those who use other research methodologies in developing concepts that lead to further insights and discoveries."[107] To conclude, Humphreys pointed to history re-writing itself repeatedly, which ignites several complications because the discussion requires new developments in music education.

In agreeance, Rebecca Holman's dissertation discussed pedagogical approaches to teaching history in an introductory music appreciation course. She suggests that "many music students do not have a fundamental understanding of basic musical elements such as melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, timbre, and dynamics when they begin their undergraduate

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[106] Campbell, "Ethnomusicology and Music Education," 16-30.
[107] Jere T. Humphreys, "The Content of Music Education History? It's a Philosophical Question," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 6, no. 2 (1998): 90-95.

careers."[108] Holman explained that the students also lack knowledge regarding theoretical and historical views towards music. Furthermore, she recommends, "music history professors are looking for new and innovative ways to teach musical elements through the lens of music history and assess students' learning using the Essential Learning Outcomes of the LEAP initiative."[109] Additionally, Holman analyzed data based on three pedagogical approaches, analytical, historical, and contextual, to find the most effective. She examined several course textbooks and relevant literature as follows,

> All of these suggestions embody a musicological approach to teaching and understanding music history. If professors follow these guidelines, their students are more likely to understand music history as a dynamic and ever-evolving field rather than a static, outdated world. If students can relate to music history as a dynamic subject, it is more likely that they will enjoy learning the material and retain more of the information.[110]

Her evidence supported students' success in LEAPs literacy, analysis, inquiry, creativity, and critical thinking skills.[111] Finally, Holman pointed out several methodologies to teaching music but displayed that educators cannot all agree on one being more effective than another.

Music History in Other Subjects

Historical music knowledge about regions, timelines, and personal stories may inspire students to create music throughout their lifetime. Music ensembles can unite individuals, forming bonds through shared experience, connecting students to different cultures, and aiding in curricular sequencing that might not otherwise have existed. Authors, Mantie and Tucker point to the following, "…we subscribe to the view that humans learn in order to participate. This is not to discount learning 'for its own sake,' but to stress our contention that learning is motivated

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[108] Rebecca Holman, *Music History Pedagogy: Three Approaches to Teaching a One-Semester Music History Survey Course in Accordance with the LEAP Initiative* (California State University: Long Beach, 2014), 3.
[109] Ibid., 4.
[110] Ibid., 46.
[111] Ibid., 104.

primarily by social factors."[112] Research paralleling music involvement and increased academic

performance existed, and currently, a new wave of research is being conducted on the benefits of

mental health and music participation.

To elaborate, *Let the Music Play, Harnessing the Power of Music for History and Social

Studies Classrooms* authors Anthony Pellegrino and Christopher Lee suggest, "…the

incorporation of the conscious construction of historical narrative in song provides teachers with

an opportunity to address issues of historiography and historical research."[113] The authors

advocated for the use of music in social studies classrooms by providing the reader with

historical examples and aligned lesson plans. Their research pointed to, "musicians, like movie

directors and writers, use history as a platform from which to weave yarns that excite and engage

their audience."[114] Additionally, Pellegrino and Dean argued that incorporating music in other

content areas would help students engage and be quicker to recall necessary information. This

book examined music and history from the early republic through the civil war, continuing with

the 1960s and into the hip-hop genre.

Laura Leigh Kelly's article explained how to assimilate hip-hop music and culture into

curriculum. Titled, "Building Critical Classroom Community through Hip-Hop Literature," the

ideas of diverse subject areas such as hip-hop have exciting possibilities for student learning

preferences and connections. Her article is focused on English classrooms as a means for literary

analysis and poetry. The philosophies behind her research were easily connected to music class,

particularly choir. In terms of being relatable to middle school students, hip-hop combined a

passion for language and music. The famed Broadway musical Hamilton was created by Lin-

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[112] Roger Mantie and Lynn Tucker, "Closing the Gap: Does Music-Making Have to Stop Upon Graduation," *International Journal of Community Music* 1, no. 2 (2008): 218.
    [113] Anthony Michael Pellegrino and Christopher Lee Dean, *Let the Music Play! Harnessing the Power of Music for History and Social Studies Classrooms* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc., 2014), 8.
    [114] Ibid.

Manuel Miranda and rose to popularity four years ago. Hamilton is an easily accessible tool to incorporate into the various classroom contexts, particularly social studies or history. The music of Hamilton mainly falls into the stylistic genre of hip-hop, and its culture alone tells students an incredible historical truth through a familiar music genre.

Very little research exists regarding music and sociology, though music is regarded as culturally intuitive throughout the globe. Music plays a vital role in our emotions and health, whether engaged as a listener in the car, walking the aisles of a grocery store, eating at a restaurant, or jogging down the street. The authors of "Music and Emotions in the Brain: Familiarity Matters" suggest that "music fruition is a highly subjective experience, which varies widely across individuals. While listening to music, we can be moved by the melody, or we may find ourselves focusing on a timbre of an instrument or combination of instruments, or else we can be emotionally engaged by abrupt changes in the harmony or rhythm."[115] Conversely, music provided cultural identity with various folk songs, lyrics, and instruments. Some may not have recognized when music was available but remembered silence much more drastically. Music performance required a considerable production and activity with multitudes of people. Conversely, music had a chance to be a highlight course within public education.

The social sciences point to music ensembles as a lifelong learning tool for individual musicians to find their self and communal identity by communicating with others in social settings. One can be a good judge of musicianship as a director, producer, or evaluator. By listening to music, persons feel influenced in their identities and cultural tastes. Likewise, music elicited memories and allowed a bond over a shared favorite artist, band, or song. Communities were able to foster emotional responses based on their beliefs and behaviors. Juslin elaborates,

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[115] Carlos Silva Pereira, João Teixeira, Patrícia Figueiredo, João Xavier, Sã Castro, and Elvira Brattico," Music and Emotions in the Brain: Familiarity Matters," *PLoS One* 6, no. 11 (2011): 1-9.

"styles of audition, of aural perception, of aural awareness, of *listening* in response to musical events directly impinge upon studies of emotion in music."[116] In addition, music listening requires a shared knowledge and understanding in regulating collective situations. Music is known to exalt life, and the scholarly literature revealed that studying music history not only paves a way to understand the past but also provides a celebration of culture, appreciation for others, and an understanding of who we are as humans.

Summary

A considerable volume of research suggests a link between engagement through music ensemble participation, well-acquainted assessment strategies, and a framework for cross-curricular connections. The studies presented in this chapter focus on increased advocacy and processes to produce a well-rounded education for all. Despite the existing literature, more information is needed to determine the connectedness between music history and music education at every level of schooling. To date, there is limited research exploring middle school engagement factors through music history. The current study aims to address this gap in the literature by testing engagement factors within a sample of seventh-grade students attending Solon Middle School.

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[116] Patrick N. Juslin, "From Everyday Emotions to Aesthetic Emotions: Towards a Unified Theory of Musical Emotions," *Physics of Life Reviews* 10, no. 3 (2013): 235-266.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Due to the assumed nature of the positive influences of music history in education, the lack of mixed-methodology studies within this field, and the variety of research in the ensemble classroom, it is essential to empirically analyze the impact of music history lessons in the middle school choir room. The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine the link between seventh-grade student engagement and music history mini-lessons. This chapter explains the study's methodology, including research design, participants, procedures, and data analysis methods to provide relevant research to the subject.

Design

A mixed-methods pre-test and post-test survey was conducted to determine if students felt an increase in connection to the songs performed in their seventh-grade choir class. The potential increase in connection was due to learning about music history. A qualitative questionnaire was offered at the end of the post-test survey. The research design was a convenience sample, as treatment and control group participants were pre-assigned based on class section.[117]

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions for this study were:

RQ1: How does the impact of learning about multiple styles of musical genre history engage middle school choir students?

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[117] John W. Creswell and David J. Creswell, *Research and Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches 5th ed.* (Los Angeles: Sage Publishing, 2018).

RQ2: Does exposure to music history predict a change in choral students' levels of

engagement from pre-test to post-test?

The hypotheses for this study were:

H1: Learning about multiple styles of musical genre history engages middle school choir

students by emotionally connecting students to other individuals throughout history,

informing students' musical interests, and proposing an evaluation process of musical

works and performances.

H2: Exposure to music history significantly increases choral students' levels of

engagement as identified from pre to post-test.

Participants

This research utilized a convenience sample. Participants were recruited through an in-person setting. Participants (*N*=68) in this study were seventh-grade students within two sections of the same middle school choir at Solon Middle School (SMS). The study included 37 female (54.4%) and 31 (46.6%) male participants aged 12 to 13. All participants were in their second year of choir class in SMS. The treatment and control groups received the pre-test, post-test, and questionnaire. The treatment group received music history instruction between the two survey tests. Descriptive data was collected to include participants' grade level, age, gender, and ethnicity. All participants were seventh-grade choir students. The number of participants totaled 68, with the treatment group comprised of 35, and the control group, 33 participants (see table 1).

Table 1: Sample Demographics

Gender	Number	Percent
Male	31	46.6%
Female	37	54.4%
Age		
12	39	57%
13	29	43%
Race		
White/Caucasian	64	94.1%
Asian	1	1.5%
Other	3	4.4%

Setting

The site for this study was a choir classroom within a 3A sized middle school in Solon, Iowa. Participants were greeted when entering the classroom and provided with a survey and pencil. They were asked to sit in their assigned riser seats which were tiered like a lecture hall. The setting was familiar to participants as they attended choir in this classroom every other day throughout the school year. Participants were asked to complete the survey honestly and quietly, and it took approximately ten minutes. The post-test survey and questionnaire were administered in the same classroom in the same manner. Participants were also asked to complete the questionnaire honestly and quietly. They were advised to complete a minimum of two complete sentences per question.

Procedure

Prior to the study, Solon Community School District permission was secured. Citi training was required for behavioral and social research. Institution Review Board (IRB) approved the mixed-methods design, study procedures, and other required documents, including consent and parent approval (see Appendix A). Permission was also granted from each student's

parent guardian. Two participant groups were involved in the pre-test and post-test survey. The treatment group received music history instruction.

The music history instruction included mini-lessons that covered a range of genres, styles, and time periods (see appendix E). Each lesson lasted approximately ten minutes of a forty-minute choir class. These mini-lessons were designed and implemented by the current author. Each lesson encompasses a short lecture and a singular slideshow. The slideshow included one or two music videos which were used as examples to support the lecture. A few mini-lessons also incorporated a student worksheet. The control group did not receive music history instruction however, both the treatment and control groups participated in the pre-test and post-test survey. At the end of the post-test survey, a qualitative questionnaire with two questions was included to gather participant opinions.

Recruitment

Recruitment included verbal acknowledgment to confirm the study in class. Two weeks before the first survey, each seventh-grade student's primary contact person was emailed an IRB-approved permission request. Participants verbally agreed to partake in the study on the first survey day if their families had previously provided consent material. The students who did not have approval were supplied with a separate activity. Students did not leave the room while completing each survey/questionnaire. Students were also not required to participate and given the option to opt-out of the experiment. The design of the surveys did not require anonymity, but the researcher was the only individual who collected participants' personal information. In this study, individuals will be provided with a pseudonym. Participants then completed a demographics survey, including gender, age, race, and grade level.

Materials and Testing

The surveys and questionnaire were created for the control and treatment groups. The survey and questionnaire were identical but the mini-lessons were only provided to the treatment group. The music history mini-lessons pinpointed prominent composers, performers, and compositions from a variety of genres and styles including, classical, jazz, rock, doo-wop, Motown, hip-hop, and pop. Each mini-lesson was designed to surface the history topic for approximately ten to fifteen minutes. For example, the classical genre covered both the classical and romantic era by outlining the following composers; Wolfgang Mozart, Ludwig Von Beethoven, and Robert Schumann. The jazz genre covered the following styles; work songs, spirituals, blues, ragtime, Dixieland, swing, and bebop. The prominent jazz artists included Louis Armstrong, Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday. Elvis, The Temptations, and the Four Seasons rounded out the Motown and Pop genres. To conclude, the artists Sugar Hill Gang, Run D.M.C., and Beastie Boys fulfilled the hip-hop genre.

The survey was based on the definition of student engagement which "refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion students show when they are learning or being taught."[118]

The Likert scale included the following statements,

1 – Strongly Disagree
2 - Disagree
3 – Neither Agree nor Disagree
4 – Agree
5 – Strongly Agree

    a) I feel connected to the songs we sing.

    b) I pay attention to the meaning of lyrics.

    c) I want to learn more about singing.

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[118] Great Schools Partnerships. "Student Engagement." *Educational Reform,* February 18, 2016. Accessed December 26, 2021. https://www.edglossary.org/student-engagement/.

d) I enjoy a variety of musical styles.

e) I am passionate about the songs we sing.

f) I am inspired to sing better and more often.

g) I am motivated to learn about music history.

h) I am driven to learn more in other areas of study.

Each statement of the survey portrays the following connections,

a) Interest

b) Attention

c) Curiosity

d) Optimism

e) Passion

f) Motivation

g) Motivation

h) Motivation

Both pre-test and post-test surveys included a demographic survey. Following the post-test,

participants were given space to answer the following questions,

- Does learning about music history help you to engage with the songs we sing in class?
  How so?

- Does learning about music history help you to engage with different musical genres
  outside of class? How so?

The qualitative questionnaire was developed based on the above definition of student

engagement. The purpose of the questions was to gather student opinions by connecting their

thoughts of music history to choir participation. Both groups were administered the same testing

procedure. The proctor instructed consented participants to complete the demographic portion

before beginning the survey. During the post-test portion, the proctor also instructed participants

to complete the demographic portion before the identical survey, followed by two to three

complete sentences for each question. Finally, the surveys were collected, and choir class began. At the end of class, participants were thanked and dismissed.

Data Analysis

The researcher hand-scribed data from the tests and stored it in an excel document. The document was held on a laptop with a secure password and in a locked office. Initially, the research was conducted to assess whether exposure to music history predicted a change in connectedness to musical performance from pre-test to post-test. Next, the questionnaire was analyzed to test whether the impact of music history instruction increased student engagement or their opinions of engagement. A series of t-Tests were conducted using excel for the quantitative data analysis portion. Thematic analysis was utilized for the qualitative section.

Summary

A mixed-methods approach in music research helps dissect qualitative and quantitative data. In this manner, participants' points of view were reflected using a qualitative approach for the open-ended questions at the end of the post-test. Employed quantitative methodologies uncovered participant findings via the Likert scale survey, pre-test, and post-test. The mixed-methods research affords participant notions and integrates a scholarly advantage point.[119] Due to the short data collection time, a mixed-methods approach was preferred.

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[119] Kate R. Fitzpatrick, *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research in American Music Education,* ed. Colleen Marie Conway (New York City: Oxford University Press, 2014).

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter describes the various tests conducted on the mixed-methods research hypotheses. The first hypothesis predicted that middle school choir students would be more engaged with singing when informed about multiple styles of musical genre history. The second and final hypothesis predicted that exposure to music history would significantly increase choral students' engagement levels as identified from pre-test to post-test. This chapter also reports the themes uncovered from open-ended survey response questions and statistical analysis of a pre and post-test experiment.

Results

A mixed-methods study was conducted to assess whether music history mini-lessons presented a significant difference in engagement levels between the control and treatment groups. Authors of "The Challenges of Defining and Measuring Student Engagement in Science" outline various qualities of student engagement,

> A perspective that spans the spectrum is school engagement, which has been characterized as a multidimensional construct with behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. According to this perspective, behavioral engagement includes actions such as attendance and participation in school activities. Emotional engagement includes a sense of belonging or valuing of the school. Cognitive engagement is described as a willingness to engage in effortful tasks, purposiveness, strategy use, and self-regulation.[120]

In the current study, participants in both the control and treatment groups filled out a Likert-scale survey prior to receiving music history instruction. The treatment group was taught mini-history music lessons for ten days over a two-week period, while the control group did not receive any

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[120] Gale M. Sinatra, Benjamin C. Heddy and Doug Lombardi, "The Challenges of Defining and Measuring Student Engagement in Science," *Educational Psychologist* 50, no.1 (2015): 2.

music history instruction. After the experiment was conducted, the control and treatment groups completed an identical survey and answered two open-ended questions.

Quantitative Data Results

A series of t-Tests were conducted for four major data sections: assumption testing, control group pre and post-test, treatment group pre and post-test, and a two-sample gain. An initial t-Test was performed to determine the similarities between the pre-test control and pre-test treatment groups. Commonly, a Wilcoxon paired signed-rank test would be used to analyze ordinal data such as Likert scale results. Additionally, this non-parametric test is appropriate when a random sample is not an option, as was the case with this experiment. Wilcoxon can be considered with non-paradoxical testing or when a convenience sample is used. However, when the pre-test groups are similar, as is the case with the current study, it is appropriate to utilize a t-Test rather than a Wilcoxon test. Authors, Gary E. Meek, Ceyhun Ozgur, and Kenneth Dunning agree in their article, "Comparison of the t vs. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test for Likert Scale Data and Small Samples," by recommending the following "it appears that the t-Test may be preferred over the signed-rank procedure, even for very. Small sample sizes."[121] The initial t-Test in the current study was conducted to assess the similarity of the control and treatment pre-test groups. All the statistics were conducted in excel, and the findings are discussed in this chapter. The results from the initial t-Test showed a P-value of .36/(P=.36) (see table 2). This indicated that the initial groups were similar; therefore, it was determined that t-Tests should be used for the remaining analysis.

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[121] Gary E. Meek, Ceyhun Ozgur, and Kenneth Dunning, "Comparison of the t vs. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test for Likert Scale Data and Small Samples," *Journal of Modern Applied Statistical Methods* 6, no. 1 (2007): 106.

Table 2: Assumption t-Test

	3.75	4.25
Mean	3.602971	3.4375
Variance	0.386826	0.685484
Observations	34	32
Pooled Variance	0.531488	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	64	
t Stat	0.921545	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.180114	
t Critical one-tail	1.669013	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.360227	
t Critical two-tail	1.99773	

After the assumption was met and a t-Test was decided to be used, a paired t-Test for two sample means was used to assess the difference between the control groups' pre-test and post-test results. The results showed a P value of .21/(P=.21) (see table 3), meaning no significant change or difference in the pre-test and post-test surveys. These results indicate that the participants who did not receive music history instruction did not experience additional educational engagement.

Table 3: t-Test Paired Two Sample for Means Control Group

	4.25	4
Mean	3.4375	3.523438
Variance	0.685484	0.673828
Observations	32	32
Pearson Correlation	0.89366	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	31	
t Stat	-1.27845	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.105291	
t Critical one-tail	1.695519	
2P(T<=t) two-tail	0.210582	
t Critical two-tail	2.039513	

Following the t-Test for the control group, a paired two-sample means was completed for the treatment group. The results showed a P value of .03/(P=.03), meaning there was a significant difference from the pre-test to the post-test, most likely due to the history lesson treatment (see table 4).

Table 4: t-Test Paired Two Sample for Means Treatment Group

	3.75	4.125
Mean	3.602971	3.704412
Variance	0.386826	0.396609
Observations	34	34
Pearson Correlation	0.911509	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	33	
t Stat	-2.24558	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.015774	
t Critical one-tail	1.69236	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.031548	
t Critical two-tail	2.034515	

A final t-Test was utilized to measure the gain between the control and treatment groups from pre-test to post-test. The results showed a P-value of .84. Therefore, there was no significant difference between the control and treatment group gains (see table 5).

Table 5: t-Test Two Sample Gain Control and Treatment Group

	0.25	-0.375
Mean	-0.08594	-0.10144
Variance	0.144594	0.069383
Observations	32	34
Pooled Variance	0.105813	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	64	
t Stat	0.193512	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.423586	
t Critical one-tail	1.669013	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.847171	
t Critical two-tail	1.99773	

While the gain between the two groups did not produce a statistically significant difference, there was a significant difference found in the treatment group from pre to post-test, indicating that the history lesson treatment impacted student outcomes. Though there was not a significant difference between the control and treatment group post-tests, the music mini-lessons provided some impact on the treatment group, as evidence by the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results.

Qualitative Findings

Qualitative data consisted of participant responses to two open-ended questions. The information was extracted from the treatment group after completing the second survey. The first question was written as follows, *does learning about music history help you engage with the songs we sing in* class? *Explain.* The second question read, *does learning about music history allow you to engage with different musical genres outside of class*? *Explain.* The approach to qualitative data analysis was systematic. Written participant responses were analyzed using

Braun and Clarke's theoretical analysis strategy.[122] The first phase of analysis required thorough reading of the data. A second phase involved revisiting participants' written answers numerous times to collate pertinent data excerpts and accurately represent participant responses.[123]

An initial list of codes was assigned from qualitative data. Participant answers are authentically represented, and codes were manually identified without using the software. Once initial codes were identified and collated, a thematic analysis was conducted.[124] Emerging themes were hand-scribed and transferred to an excel document to facilitate further evaluation. This process ensured that all codes could be organized into themes. After themes were identified from the qualitative data, specific and relevant transcript excerpts relating to dominant and subdominant themes were generated regarding student engagement through music history. There was no indication that demographic profiles influenced data groupings, as all participants were within the same age range and grade. Additionally, the following themes were equally present across gender.

Themes from Question 1

Two dominant themes emerged from the first written participant question. These themes included "relatability" and "appreciation." Two subdominant themes emerged to include "lyrics" as an engagement tool for singing and "emotional connection" as a form of relatability.

Relatability: The most represented element during the process of participant writing was relatability. 71% of the participants reported that they connected to the songs sung in choir class once they understood the context behind each composition and the history of the composer or performer. Participant 51 writes, "learning about music history helps me learn how songs have meaning. It also tells us what the creator of a song is like." In support, participant 67 suggests, "if

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[122] Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 77-101.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Johnny Saldana, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researcher* (London: Sage, 2009).

I learn the deeper meaning, then I connect more because I know the singer's history, and I connect more because I think about it when listening or singing."

Lyrics: 92% of participants in the treatment group credited lyrics as the engagement factor for relating to songs sung in choir class. Participant 45 pointed to the aid of lyrics in engaging with the desire to sing. They express, "I can know what the lyrics mean, which helps me feel more connected." Participant 52 writes, "learning about music history helps me understand the lyrics of the songs and how the composer connected those (lyrics) to the music." Author Patrick Juslin established that lyrics are not as often studied as music, although they are often partners.[125] Music preference and engagement can differ between individuals, but many songs performed in a choir or listened to on the radio have words that accompany the music. Juslin suggested that these words or lyrics add power to engagement factors.[126]

Emotional connection: This was the second co-operation element of relatability in this mixed-methods study. Authors Elena Commodari and Jasmine Sole suggest the following,

> The association between musical characteristics and emotions is established for happiness and sadness in adults. Listeners tend to associate faster tempi and the major mode with joy, and slower tempi and the minor mode with sadness…the major mode is happy, joyous, graceful, and playful, while the minor mode is sad, dreamy, and sentimental.[127]

Participant responses complemented their emotional connection by writing, "music is a part of me, and I love to sing even when I don't like the genre of the kind of music. I can still feel emotionally connected." Participant 64 explains, "some songs or artists have an emotional backstory, which makes me think deeper about the meaning of the song." Participant 61 outlines

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[125] Patrick N. Juslin, "From Mimesis to Catharsis: Expression, Perception, and Induction of Emotion in Music," in *Musical Communication,* ed. Dorothy Miell, Raymond MacDonald, and David Hargreaves (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005), 115.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Elena Commodari and Jasmine Sole, "Music Education in Junior High School: Perception of Emotions Conveyed by Music and Mental Imagery in Students Who Attend the Standard or Musical Curriculum," *Psychology of Music* 48, no. 6 (2020): 825.

their emotional connection by elaborating, "when we learned about certain parts of music history, and some of the stories were sad, I felt really connected and started to feel sad too. Some of the songs we learned about sounded sad. Other times, some of the songs and composers had happy or funny stories, and I felt emotional then too."

Appreciation: The next most represented engagement element in participant narratives was an appreciation for either music history or their current life experiences. Approximately one-fourth of the participants suggested that learning about music history helped them appreciate music in a greater sense. Participant 42 explains, "Music history helps me engage with the songs we sing in class because it helps me appreciate our choir music." Participant 37 elaborates as follows, "music history helps explain the hardships engraved into the song and shows how we should not take things for granted." In conclusion, participant 57 describes their opinion, "I feel more appreciative of the times we live in compared to Beethoven and other composers/musicians we learned about." One participant writes, "music history makes me feel lucky about how I live now. And it makes me appreciate music a little more too."

While the two dominant themes, "relatability" and "appreciation," were present, a small number of participants reported that they were not engaged**.** For example, Participant 49 cites, "if I know song history, why should I be more engaged in singing?" Another participant elucidates, "I just sing what we are supposed to sing. The history doesn't matter that much to me."

Theme from Question 2

While the first question discussed applicability to the music classroom, the second open-ended question articulated participants' engagement with music history in their day-to-day lives. One dominant theme emerged as outlined below.

Increased Interest: 89% of participants expressed feelings of encouragement in listening to new genres and styles of music. Participant 36 shares, "I never really liked classical music, but

after learning about some music composers, I have more interest in it." Participant 46 explains, "music history helps me realize that not only one genre is good or the only music I should listen to." Participant 41 proposed, "music history helps me know more about the genres, origins and what it's all about. I want to try new styles." One participant submits, "because different history we learned about encourages me to connect to other genres." Participant 34 clarifies by writing, "music history makes me more eager to learn about more music and listen to more music."

No increase**:** While one dominant theme emerged, "increased interest," a small minority of participants cited no increase. For example, Participant 68 indicates, "not really, most songs I listen to don't necessarily have a deeper meaning to them."

Summary

Both the Likert scale and the open-ended questionnaire were conducted to compare engagement levels of middle school choir students with music history mini-lessons. The quantitative data indicates that the second hypothesis is supported by demonstrating a significant change from the treatment pre and post-test scores. The qualitative findings suggests that the first hypothesis is supported through thematic analysis. Several participants indicated that they felt an emotional connection to learning about music history and its content. From the 68 participant narratives, the thematic analysis reflects and highlights the complexity of learning experiences. The students explained how the curriculum's relatability and context appreciation made a difference in their connectedness to music in and out of the classroom. These results will be discussed in chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the current study and presents conclusions based on the mixed-methods research findings. Chapter five begins with a summary of the findings, followed by an outline of the significance and limitations of the study. Next, recommendations for future research are suggested to build upon these results. Finally, this chapter concludes with the potential implications for music educators, curriculum directors, music researchers, and culminates with a conclusion.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study aimed to examine the relationship between ensemble student engagement and music history. The pre-test and post-test results indicated that exposure to the music history curriculum impacted participants' engagement levels. The researcher organized the qualitative findings into themes, revealing that participants felt an emotional connection to the mini-lessons. These results were consistent with the original hypotheses,

> H1: Learning about multiple styles of musical genre history engages middle school choir students by emotionally connecting students to other individuals throughout history, informing students' musical interests, and proposing an evaluation process of musical works and performances.

> H2: Exposure to music history significantly increases choral students' levels of engagement as identified from pre to post-test.

Additionally, the findings were compatible with several research studies that discuss the positive effects of students' emotional connection to music.[128] While participants in this study's treatment

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[128] Galen Cisnell, "The Real Factor: How Relevance and Learning Combine to Create Student Engagement in the Classroom" (Ph.D. diss., Colorado State University, 2013), 4, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

group received music history instruction between the pre and post-test, the control group did not. The control groups' quantitative data revealed no statistical difference in engagement with choir class, while the qualitative portion indicated little interest in musical preference. Likewise, only 1% of participants cited emotional connection to music. In comparison, the qualitative data of the treatment group revealed that the participants experienced an enhanced connection to the music's relatable content. The same participants also outlined a sense of general appreciation for music history. This finding supports Rebecca Holman's dissertation and other research studies that discuss how an appreciation of music can describe a multitude of aspects regarding music education. Possessing an appreciation for music can factor into the avenues of music genres, music history, musical eras, and music contributions.

Many studies mentioned in the previous chapter revealed that emotional connections through music have various research potential. Authors Andrea Hrckova and Macko Milan argued for the classifications of emotions experienced within the music.[129] As a result, the current research details a potential inference between music history and emotional connections. In this way, the findings are applicable to Hrckova and Milan's research ideas. Gilead Bar-Elli's article, "Why Care About Emotions," explained the role of emotions in understanding music.[130] Since the focus of her research examined musical connections, [131] the data from the current study support students' capabilities in processing music when instructed about historical aspects pertaining to performance. Conclusively, the control group participants were not educated in music history. Thus, the data concluded that no emotional connection was made because students were not given an opportunity to understand the work. This finding supports Bar-Elli's theories and Hrckova and Milan's request for further research on emotions in music.

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[129] Andrea Hrckova and Macko Milan, "Searching for Music with Emotions," *Online Searcher* 43, no.5 (2019): 35-37.

[130] Gilead Bar-Elli, "Why Care about Emotions in Music," *Philosophia* 46, (2018): 633–646.

[131] Ibid.

The current study also explored the role of engagement levels in the music ensemble classroom based on contextual learning. Two groups of seventh-grade students participated in control and treatment groups to evaluate whether knowledge about music history impacted their engagement with the choir songs sung in class. The quantitative results indicated a statistically significant difference in engagement levels within the treatment group. Their qualitative results also suggested that participants experienced a sense of relatability to the music material after learning about each composition's history and bibliography. These results bolster the views of the National Survey of Student Engagement which suggested that learning about a variety of topics is beneficial for all students.

Additionally, the results provided an affirmative example regarding the importance of lyrics, a topic recognized by several music education researchers. Many studies have consummated the impact of music and emotions; research on the effect of lyrics has only recently demonstrated its influence on our emotional states. [132] Valerie Stratton and Annette Zalanowski conducted a study that reported how their participants had increased emotional responses to music and lyrics when compared to listening to music without words.[133] The addition of the lyrics affected the participants' mood, which led to a greater connection to the music.[134] The impact of lyrics is significant, as shown by the past research conclusions of Brattico, Alluri, Bogert, Jacobsen, Vartiainen, Nieminen, and Tervaniemi.[135] These researchers extracted MRI samples from twelve individuals who participated in a testing cycle of emotional classification. The testing consisted of processing brain images while participants listened to music with and without lyrics.

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[132] Nune Nikoghosyan, "Music and Wellbeing – a Sociological Perspective," *Musicalist* (2017), https://musicalist.hypotheses.org/428.

[133] Valerie Stratton and Annette Zalanowski, "Affective Impact of Music vs. Lyrics," *Empirical Studies of the Arts* 12, no. 2 (1994): 173-184.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid., 178.

Their study reported the following, "we found that a number of brain regions were active in response to sad music with lyrics versus sad music without lyrics and the interaction between the effects of lyrics on sad versus happy music, whereas no brain activation was obtained in the opposite contrasts."[136] In corroboration, the qualitative results from the present study support that the song lyrics influenced participants' emotional responses and engagement with the material. Students could imagine what it would have been like to be a person living during a specific time period and how they could have experienced living in a vastly different way. From hymns to anthems or love songs to mournful music, history came alive to the participants through the language of lyrics.

Music education researchers Susan Maury and Nikki Richard promoted a music education curriculum that would forefront and includes social-emotional learning. Their suggestions recognized that social-emotional learning impacts how students engage with school. Maury and Richard believed that music is a positive activity and deserving of teaching students how to regulate emotions and strengthen relationships with peers and teachers.[137] Likewise, in a study conducted by Georgia Tech, college students who take a minimum of one music-related elective, such as music history, have a four and a half times greater likelihood of staying in school than the rest of the enrolled students.[138] A comprehensive music education curriculum is needed to address diverse, differentiated, and changing student learning approaches. This includes folding music history into every part of students' education while also connecting to other subjects.

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[136] Stratton and Zalanowski, "Affective Impact of Music vs. Lyrics,"178.

[137] Peter Benson "*All Kids Are Our Kids: What Communities Must Do to Raise Caring and Responsible Children and Adolescents* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997).

[138] The University of Alabama in Huntsville, "School of Music*," *UAH, last modified 2022, https://www.uah.edu/ahs/departments/music/about.

Significance of the Study

Though an array of music education research exists on various topics, the field of middle school student engagement through music history is lacking in all research styles. Therefore, the nature of this thesis sought to edify this area of study. Author Katie Trembalay-Beaton supports continued research in various idioms of music education with the following claim,

> Consideration of curriculum as the connection between content delivered and the experience of the student also supports this conceptualization of curriculum as it shows how teachers' interaction with the curriculum is influenced by their own content knowledge and instructional approaches. The teacher's role is to consider how the subject may become part of the students' learning experience and to support their growth based on their interests.[139]

Music practices and systems currently limit or obstruct student population learning preferences. As a result, music teachers become the agent for diverse student education. Results from this research indicated that experiencing music history learning led to higher levels of engagement because students felt an emotional connection to the content. Researcher Larry Shirey confirms what several studies have suspected; students do not engage with materials if they are not interested.[140] Students are involved in topics that create an emotional response within them. Information linked to dynamic content is more likely to be recalled when compared to information that does not elicit strong emotions.[141] Researchers Dolcos, LaBar, and Cabeza suggest that individuals pay the most attention to the emotional components of their memories.[142] Moreover, data analysis from the present study revealed that the participants exhibited feelings

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[139] Katie Tremblay-Beaton, "Caught in the Middle: Investigating Middle School Teachers' Pedagogical Approaches in Instrumental Music Class" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, Canada, 2019), 17, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

[140] Larry L. Shirey, "Importance, Interest and Selective Attention," In *the Role of Interest in Learning and Development*, ed. by Ann Renninger, Suzanne Hidi, and Andreas Krapp (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1992), 281-296.

[141] Kevin LaBar and Roberto Cabeza, "Cognitive Neuroscience of Emotional Memory," *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 7, no. 1 (2006): 55.

[142] Florin Dolcos, Kevin LaBar, and Roberto Cabeza, "Interactions Between the Amygdala and the Medial Temporal Lobe Memory System Predicts Better Memory for Emotional Events," *Neuron* 42, no. 5 (2004): 855-863.

of emotional connection. The treatment group reported increased relatability to the song lyrics once they were taught the history behind its meaning.

Limitations

The mixed methods research design naturally had a few shortcomings. Limitations are unavoidable in any research study, which was the case with this study. To control participant experiences, it was necessary to incorporate several music history topics, songs, and composers across hundreds of years. A few participants were familiar with the demonstrated material and facts surrounding the composer, time period, lyrics, and song. Thus, some of the material was recognizable and possibly mundane.

Another limitation to the study was the familiar proctor and environment of the experiment. The proctor has served as the primary researcher for this study. Additionally, the proctor has been the participant's music teacher for four years. Moreover, the room where the experiment took place has been the participants' choir room for two years. The recognizable rapport between the researcher, students, and the classroom could have made participants feel overly comfortable or uncomfortable answering honestly. These comfort levels may have conducted dishonest answers as participants were also asked to provide their names on the survey and questionnaire. While the proctor took all possible actions to reduce potential bias, it is unreasonable to rule out that the researcher's familiarity could have elicited the responses. While all measures taken were necessary to control the study, students could have likely engaged more truthfully in a neutral situation.

Another possible limitation was the pre-test and post-test design. This design provided the circumstance of participants' ability to conclude the nature of the testing. Furthermore, the survey design potentially allowed for participants to recall previous responses from the initial

pre-test survey to the post-test. This fault suggests a limitation in the precise measuring of the data.

Finally, to corroborate the results, further testing is needed. This study is the first of its kind, and the findings should be viewed from a preliminary lens. Replication studies are needed with larger data sets and participants to paint a complete picture of the engagement impact of music history mini-lessons in the ensemble classroom.

Recommendations for Future Study

This study provided an opportunity to explore how students could engage in choir through a music history curriculum. Nevertheless, few studies have focused on middle school student learning through music history. However, these students hold information that can assist in addressing the missing components of music education research. Author Stephanie Pitts suggests, "research in music education has been remarkably prolonged to value children's perspectives, tending to study the outcomes of their learning rather than how they experience the process."[143] The present research results suggest a need for research that develops and tests an exhaustive and inclusive music curriculum in the ensemble classroom. Bennett Reimer argues for a "comprehensive, sequential, and balanced"[144] music education curriculum. Reimers continues by suggesting that music education "incorporates as many dimensions of musical value as it can, seeking extensiveness in its offerings and goals so that it can serve the widest possible spectrum of people's musical needs and interests."[145] In pursuing this area of study, future researchers are encouraged to consider a variety of research designs and methods in music

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[143] Stephanie Pitts, "How Popular Musicians Learn by Lucy Green, Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2001, Reviews," *Popular Music* 23, no. 2 (2004): 238.

[144] Bennett Reimer, *A Philosophy of Music Education: Advancing the Vision* 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J: Prentice Hall, 2003), 296.

[145] Ibid., 295.

education. The quantitative and qualitative analysis indicates that participants reported varying engagement levels due to or lack of music history instruction.

There is a need for more research on effective engagement strategies in the music classroom. Studies on vibrant music programs could aid in the identification process of course offerings, curriculum, and approaches in retaining a larger population of music ensemble participants. Various engagement research suggests that the relationship with music teachers plays a role in sustaining or discouraging engagement factors. More research is needed to support responsive pedagogical practices that intend to meet the needs of all student learners. There is power in personal perceptions of emotive feelings when learning about music. Treatment group participants cited relatability and appreciation as an engagement tool. Further research in the themes mentioned above could impact music education practices.

Control group participant results indicated certain perceptions and attitudes towards music history. Evaluations of music involvement might reflect a desire to learn more about history. The present research did not test such indirect effects, but the influence factors may reveal other areas of research interest. There is no one universal solution, but when combined, the results could allow stakeholders to piece together a variety of engagement tactics for all settings. Music teaching and learning are complex. This endeavor should use multiple forms of data and perspectives to increase knowledge and understanding.

A final recommendation for future research could be a study that involves scholastic testing. The current research candidly measured students' perceptions and opinions. At the same time, researchers Peter Gouzouasis, Martin Guhn, and Scott D. Emerson examined data from every student who graduated between 2012 and 2015 in British Columbia.[146] The data sample

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[146] Martin Guhn, Scott D. Emerson, and Peter Gouzouasis, "A Population-Level Analysis of Associations Between School Music Participation and Academic Achievement," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 112, no. 2 (2020): 308-328.

included 112,000 students who completed one standardized exam and met the demographic requirements.[147] Gouzouasis and his team found that students who partook in the available music education programs had far superior academic achievements than students who did not. This particular evidence suggests that music learning transfers to scholastic success. With this concept in mind, institutes could design a rigorous testing process that pulls from subliminal messages, linguistics, and comprehension. These isolated measures are complex and ripe for a study involving a correlational method using linear regression analysis.

Implications for Practice

After evaluating the limitations and findings from this study, the outcomes provide practical implications for fine arts standards-based grading stakeholders, music educators, and curriculum directors. Standards-based grading or SBG is a current movement in education that focuses on student learning and is commonly used in public schools across the United States. Each standard can be broken into smaller learning targets, resulting in collective mastery by the end of the trimester or semester. Under the umbrella of SBG, students have considerable opportunities to receive feedback or prove their mastery of the concept or standard.

For standards-based grading stakeholders, music history lessons fulfill the elite music standards published by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) in 2010. The publication of the NAfME standards resulted in a broad implementation, widespread curriculum change, and various assessment divergences across music departments in several states. Each mini-lessons created for the current research uniformly had one or two assigned standards that correlate to each music history genre. Each standard and sub-standard identified categories,

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[147] Guhn, Emerson, and Gouzouasis, "A Population-Level Analysis," 308-328.

essential questions, learning targets, and levels of understanding within its contexts. For example, Educate Iowa documents seek to establish the purpose of music standards as follows,

> Fine Arts Standards seek to establish rigorous expectations for excellence in teaching and learning in the arts. Process-based pedagogy empowers students with the knowledge and skills to engage their imaginations, ask authentic questions, and solve problems creatively in order to understand, serve, and innovate in their communities.[148]

Music history lessons can also fulfill an innumerable amount of NAfME's assigned standards through a categorial outline. Furthermore, music history lessons align with development protocol and learning targets for music teachers across the United States. In total, the four artistic processes, *creating, performing, responding,* and *connecting,* have a breadth of applicable possibilities for fine arts standards investors. Conclusively, NAfME's standards are relevant and can differ in importance depending on their application in an ensemble or general music classrooms. Standards can be a tool for organizing and understanding the implication of a music history curriculum.

To confer, author Stephanie Cronberg remarks, "in the United States, there is a strong emphasis on performing ensemble participation serving as music learning once a student reaches the upper elementary grades. Although course offerings vary widely by state and district, most middle-level schools and high schools offer band, choir, and/or orchestra."[149] Every music educator, particularly in ensemble settings, can benefit from the current studies' data. Since performance ensembles receive insistence in the United States, an SBG approach would recommend nine germane categories. Authors Michael Mark and Patrice Madura suggest, "the

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[148] Iowa Fine Arts Music Standards: November 2017 Iowa Department of Education Brochure (Des Moines: Iowa Fine Arts in Music, 2017) 1-5, accessed July 6, 2021, https://educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/FineArtsStandardsGuidanceDocument_508.pdf.

[149] Stephanie Cronenberg, "Music Teachers' Perceptions of General Music as a Required Middle Level Course," *RMLE Online* 43, no. 9 (2020): 2.

nine content areas describe what all students, whether in general music or an ensemble, should

be able to do."[150] The nine categories include the following,

1. Sing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Perform on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvise melodies, variations, and accompaniment.
4. Compose and arrange music.
5. Read and notate.
6. Listen to, analyze, and describe music.
7. Evaluate music and musical performances.
8. Understand relationships between music and the other arts and disciplines outside the art.
9. Understand music in relation to history and culture.[151]

These categories mentioned above house each music standard, which falls under the following

processes: *creating, connecting, responding,* and *performing,* accompanied by sub-standards and

essential questions. The four processes are not required for each standard or learning target but

can rotate cyclically throughout the grouping (band/choir/orchestra/general music), unit,

semester, or year. For music educators, NAfME proposes the *responding* process and

substandard *evaluation* as a check for student understanding, such as "individuals' selection of

musical works is influenced by their interests, experiences, understandings, and purposes."[152]

The standard's essential questions ask, "how do individuals choose music to experience?" This is

advantageous for educators, as shown by the current research data because students experience

higher levels of engagement. After all, the music history coursework provides rigorous

opportunities for students to connect, relate and participate in their education.

Curriculum directors could benefit from the inferences of this study within their school

districts by including and producing a comprehensive curriculum to include music history

learning. The term "comprehensive curriculum" was birthed in 1963 when the Ford Foundation

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[150] Michael Mark, and Patrice Madura, *Contemporary Music Education 4th ed.* (Boston: Schirmer Cengage Learning, 2014), 127.

[151] Ibid., 127.

[152] NAfME, "Music Standards," National Association for Music Education, (2014): 1-16.

funded the Contemporary Music Project for Creativity in Music Education (CMP).[153] The goal of

CMP was to advance the music education curriculum through workshops, projects, and seminars.

Its desire to bring music teachers into current times helped develop new approaches, methods,

and standards through symposiums and conferences. Going beyond traditional Western classical

literature, CMP persuaded music educators to include non-Western music to relate and engage

students.

Moreover, CMP argued that a comprehensive curriculum would provide cross-curricular

connections, thus, higher levels of understanding. Authors Michael Mark and Charles Gary

explain that by relating music to the other arts, the curriculum can unify musical learning. This

result is achieved by bringing music theory and history into broadly-based foundations courses

for all music teachers in training. The school programs would then provide an opportunity for

music teachers to broaden their backgrounds.[154] To approach the concept of comprehensive

music education, curriculum directors should embrace all students' proclivities, interests, and

needs. Author John B. Hylton outlines the benefits of comprehensive music education,

> Comprehensive music education focuses on the student (i.e., the students in a
> school performing ensemble, and their individual musical and personal growth are
> more important than the reputation of the conductor.) Comprehensive music
> education focuses on a rich and varied repertoire of musical literature, whose
> characteristics are understood by the students through a range of carefully
> planned, appropriate experiences that connect students to the basic elements of
> music and to the deep places of their own humanity. Comprehensive music
> education is aesthetic.[155]

The crux of a comprehensive music curriculum in the education paradigm would include

listening perspectives, diverse repertoire, high-quality opportunities, and learning units involving

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[153] Bennett Reimer, "Comprehensive Education, a New Vision," *Music Education Research International*, 1 (2007): 1-12.

[154] Michael L. Mark and Charles L. Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 3rd ed. (Lanham, Md: Rowman and Littlefield Education, 2007).

[155] John B. Hylton, "Fifty Years of Comprehensive Music Education: Is it Déjà All Over Again*?*," *Music Education Research International*, 1 (2007): 14.

musical and aesthetic judgment options. By connecting to the structure and essence of music, a comprehensive curriculum can focus students' attention on relating to their learning.

Conclusion

Due to history's influence in the music ensemble classroom; educators, curriculum directors, and SBG stakeholders should incorporate music history material into students' learning. While more research is needed to replicate these findings, the idiom of middle school student engagement alone should be considered. These preliminary outcomes suggest that music history can play a significant role in middle school age level engagement, particularly within ensemble-based classrooms. Furthermore, there are limitless possibilities for research between music history, other content areas, and cross-curricular connections. Music history education has many benefits to offer; as the author of *Music and the Mind,* Anthony Storr, wrote it best, "music exalts life, enhances life and gives it meaning. Great music outlives the individual who created it. It is both personal and beyond the personal. For those who love it, it remains a fixed point of reference in an unpredictable world. Music is a source of reconciliation, exhilaration, and hope which never fails."[156] Student improvement and learning depend on engagement, and music history lessons in an ensemble-based classroom are rich with opportunity.

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[156] Anthony Storr, *Music and the Mind* (First Ballantine Books edition. New York: Ballantine, 1993), 48.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval

September 28, 2021

Jessica Frerich
Hanna Byrd

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY21-22-93 Engaging Middle School Choir Students through Music History Mini-Lessons: a Mixed Methods Study.

Dear Jessica Frerich, Hanna Byrd,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 1. Research, conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, that specifically involves normal educational practices that are not likely to adversely impact students' opportunity to learn required educational content or the assessment of educators who provide instruction. This includes most research on regular and special education instructional strategies, and research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

Appendix B: Survey and Questionnaire

Name:

Demographic information

Student: Are you a 7th-grade student at Solon Middle School for the 2021-2022 school year?

- Yes

- No

Age: what is your age?

- 11

- 12

- 13

- 14

Gender: what is your gender?

- Female

- Male

- Other (specify)

Race: are you White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, multiple races or some other race?

- White

- Black or African American

- American Indian or Alaskan Native

- Asian

- Native Hawaiian or Pacific islander

- From multiple races

- Some other race (please specify)

Survey:

Likert Scale

1 – Strongly Disagree
2 - Disagree
3 – Neither Agree nor Disagree
4 – Agree
5 – Strongly Agree

a) I feel connected to the songs we sing.	1	2	3	4	5
b) I pay attention to the meaning of lyrics.	1	2	3	4	5
c) I want to learn more about singing.	1	2	3	4	5
d) I enjoy a variety of musical styles.	1	2	3	4	5
e) I am passionate about the songs we sing.	1	2	3	4	5
f) I am inspired to sing better and more often.	1	2	3	4	5
g) I am motivated to learn about music history.	1	2	3	4	5
h) I am driven to learn more in other areas of study.	1	2	3	4	5

Questionnaire:

- Does learning about music history help you to engage with the songs we sing in class? How so?

- Does learning about music history help you to engage with different musical genres outside of class? How so?

Appendix C: Music History Mini-Lesson Outline

COMPOSER	TIME PERIOD/STYLE	LISTENING + PERFORMER(S)
Mozart	Classical	Queen of the Night Aria (Diana Damaru) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuBeBjqKSGQ
Beethoven	Classical/Romantic	Moonlight Sonata (Berlin Philharmonic) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rEEStLHQfxc
Schumann	Romantic	Piano Concertó in A minor (Van Cliburn) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8oqeijxIH0
N/A	Work Song	Po Lazarus (Fairfield Four) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16bl609lNx4
N/A	Spiritual	Free at Last (Carol Dennis -Big River Musical) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7OSWrHNHdcg
Joplin	Ragtime	Maple Leaf Rag (Scott Joplin) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMAtL7n_-rc
Smith	Blues	Boweavil Blues (Bessie Smith) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6qXYNCVoH8

COMPOSER	TIME PERIOD/STYLE	LISTENING + PERFORMER(S)
Nunez/Lopez	Dixieland	Livery Stable Blues (The Original Dixieland Jazz Band) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WojNaU4-kI
Goodman	Swing	Sing, Sing, Sing (Benny Goodman) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r2S1I_ien6A
Holiday	BeBop	Strange Fruit (Billie Holiday) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Web007rzSOI

Elvis	Rock	Jailhouse Rock (Elvis Presley) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gj0Rz-uP4Mk
Singer/Medora/White	Doo-Wop	At the Hop (Danny and the Juniors) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6EeObPCMR8
Robinson	Motown	My Girl (Temptations) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_CSjcm-z1w
Valli	Pop	Big Girls Don't Cry (Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DagQIb77UhU
Van Zant	Southern Rock	Southern Man (Neil Young) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5FCcDEA6mY
Daniels	Country	Devil Went Down to Georgia (Charlie Daniels Band) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AIii2_ZLBmQ
N/A	Blue Grass	I Am a Man of Constant Sorrow (Soggy Bottom Boys) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBVnKYOvWcs
Brown	Rock	Take it Easy (Eagles) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vf0p8Z1LQqI
Lindemann, Krusep, Lorenz, Schneider, Landers, Riedel	Heavy Metal	Du Hast (Rammstein) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3q8Od5qJio
Carlsson	Contemporary Pop	I Want it That Way (Backstreet Boys) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fndeDfaWCg
Hammer	Hip-Hop	Can't Touch This (M.C. Hammer) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otCpCn0l4Wo
Coolio, Wonder, L.V. Rasheed	Rap	Gangsta's Paradise (Coolio) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPO76Jlnz6c