

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

**Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19:  
Re-envisioning Middle School Band Programs After COVID-19**

A Thesis Submitted to  
the Faculty of the School of Music  
in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Music Education

By

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April 2022

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A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Music Education

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April 2022

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## **Acknowledgments**

First, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Mindy Damon. I am grateful for your feedback and belief in my ability to successfully research such a unique topic during a challenging time in music education. I would also like to thank my reader, Dr. Rebecca Watson. Your observations, perspectives, and knowledge of the band field and teacher preparatory programs were invaluable to my research.

To the research participants: Thank you for sharing your time, experience, and wisdom. Your unique perspectives were critical to the findings of this study. I understand how challenging it can be to reflect on such a difficult time for music education. I sincerely appreciate your vulnerability and honesty.

To my mentors, colleagues, and students: Thank you for trusting me to be a part of your music education journey. I am grateful for the opportunity to spend my days sharing music with young people and growing as a musician and educator inside and out of the classroom.

To my parents, McKinley and Beverly Stinson, and sisters, Charlene, Kiasha, and Michelle: Thank you for demonstrating faith, hard work, and compassion. You always believed I was capable of more, never failing to simultaneously express pride for my accomplishments and encouragement towards pursuing improvement. Thank you for your prayers and encouragement.

To my wife, Jessica: Thank you for your unwavering support during this degree. You are an incredible partner and loving mother to our brilliant son James. I could not imagine taking this next step in my career without you. I am eternally grateful for your love and daily sacrifices.

Last, I would like to thank God for allowing me to explore my passion for music and education. Thank you for continuing to equip me to serve past, present, and future students.

## ABSTRACT

Despite increased accessibility regarding instructional technology for music education classrooms, an achievement disparity continued to broaden amid COVID-19. When school districts began to close their buildings, curriculum and instruction transitioned to online platforms. Varied student and teacher participation indicated multiple challenges. Experimental virtual learning concluded the 2019–2020 school year and continued in variations through summer 2021. This qualitative historical study examined perspectives concerning teaching during COVID-19 as held by music teachers, secondary band directors, school administrators, and university music educators. Individuals reflected on four periods between 2019–2021. The initial phase detailed instructional and experiential goals for the 2019–2020 school year. The survey participants shared strategies and philosophies for adapting the curriculum once schools closed in March 2020. The planning phase leading up to the 2020–2021 school year included preparations and goals for virtual, in-person, asynchronous, and synchronous learning. Last, participants reviewed the events and practices utilized during the pandemic from March 2020 to February 2022. Although a crisis of COVID-19’s magnitude may not impact formal education to this extent again, evaluating areas of concern for veteran and new teachers is critical to diminishing achievement inconsistencies. This study may address similar questions of other disciplines related to student motivation, the impact of culture and environment during virtual learning experiences and developing philosophies and filters for discerning which practices should remain, evolve, or be eradicated.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### Background of Middle School Band General Practices

The challenges of successful middle school band teaching were varied and significant before COVID-19. Many systemic concerns have become commonplace in the middle school band room, such as high student-teacher ratios,<sup>1</sup> hearing health issues provoked by loud sounds in small classrooms, and limited school district resources for instruments, instruction, and materials.<sup>2</sup> Although these structures impact student achievement, the traditional responses of band directors to counter systemic challenges may have incurred unintended consequences. The repercussions of creating and sustaining solutions without adequate district support may result in director burnout and program instability.

When researching thriving middle school band programs, quality instruction, director leadership, student motivation, and community support were frequent contributors to positive results.<sup>3</sup> Before COVID-19, many middle school band programs supplied students with resources for sectional coaches and private instruction. Researchers Martin Bergee and Emily Rossin's mid-level band performance evaluation study acknowledged, "rhythm, technique, tone quality, intonation, and expressiveness to be primary components of excellent bands."<sup>4</sup> Utilizing a curriculum and fundamentals package within the daily in-

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<sup>1</sup> 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 Non-music Participants," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 68, no. 3 (2020): 264.

<sup>2</sup> Sue Winton, "Challenging Fundraising, Challenging Inequity: Contextual Constraints on Advocacy Groups' Policy Influence," *Critical studies in Education* 59, no. 1 (2018): 55.

<sup>3</sup> Bradley J. Regier, "Examining Relationships Among Concert Band Directors' Efficacious Sources, Self-Efficacy for Teaching Strategies, and Effective Teaching Skills," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 68, no. 4 (January 2021): 437.



person framework presented a myriad of challenges. Creating spaces for young students to increase executive and auditory skills typically require partnerships, cooperation, and strategic planning. Although many instructors may have access to personnel resources for private lessons and masterclasses, an abundant population of directors in rural areas do not.

Band teacher Mike Lawson asserts:

Over time, the quality of my program has grown. We are a small rural school in the middle of nowhere. We have a 67 percent poverty rate. There are no private instructors outside of myself; I rely on grant writing to get any equipment. The school regularly lends out around 60 completely free instruments per year. We have developed an honor band program. The honor band regularly gets superior ratings at contests on grade 3–4 literature performed by second- and third-year students—the kids sight-read like crazy. For three years, we have been named a NAMM Foundation Support Music Merit Award-winning school through their Best Communities for Music Education program. The U.S. House of Representatives recently honored us in a session of congress.<sup>5</sup>

Directors like Mike Lawson create systems within limited frameworks to serve students in the rural community despite structural challenges.

Pre-pandemic responses to perennial middle school band issues are also prevalent in urban environments. Band director Ricky Flores has experienced local, regional, and statewide success at Washington Irving Middle School in San Antonio, Texas. His program “consistently earned Sweepstakes at the Region XII Concert and Sight-Reading Evaluations. In 2002 and 2004, the honor Band Program at Irving became a Regional/Area Finalist in 2C State Honor Band auditions.”<sup>6</sup> Similar regional and statewide success among

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<sup>4</sup> Martin J. Bergee and Emily G. Rossin, “Development and Validation of a Scale Assessing Midlevel Band Performance: A Mixed Methods Study,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 67, no. 2 (2019): 230.

<sup>5</sup> Mike Lawson, “Thoughts from a Beginning Band Director,” *School Band and Orchestra*, August 2018, 4. accessed December 6, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Ricky Flores, “Building a Successful Band Program in the Inner-City,” *Bandmasters Review*, December 2005, 23.

band programs across the country continue to prosper despite varied challenges and strategies.

Before COVID-19, middle school band programs traditionally engaged in similar event sequences of instrument tryouts, beginner camps, first concerts, progress through the method book, and a spring concert to promote the first-year band. The planning may have undergone minor adjustments contingent on personnel, space, and instructor availability; however, daily class meetings, access to students, and resource awareness were expected and generally received.

Following March 2020, annual practices and teaching longevity were no longer dependable resources for leading successful band programs. Before band directors returned to in-person teaching, considerations for achievement during a global pandemic required restructuring programs and priorities. For example, the impact of a respiratory virus on wind playing demanded alternative methods for mouthpiece testing, traditional rehearsals, sanitation practices for repairing instruments, teaching fundamentals, and ensemble size.

The pandemic's effect on attendance negatively influenced band enrollment, resulting in unbalanced wind and percussion instrumentation. Professor Stacy Dziuk's recommendation to "implement intelligent rewrites to make pieces fit the ensemble"<sup>7</sup> may be an essential skill for directors to develop when responding to COVID-19 protocols. Band directors willing to develop their arranging skills to accommodate their ensemble's compromised instrumentation may present positive performing opportunities for students experiencing mandated quarantine periods. Selecting literature with flexible

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<sup>7</sup> Stacy Dziuk, "Choosing and Altering Repertoire for the Small Band," *Music Educators Journal* 104, no. 4 (2018): 32.

instrumentation may aid young band members learning new instruments while managing inconsistent attendance from pandemic-related absences.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Traditional middle school band teaching practices were challenged and disrupted during the 2020–2021 school year amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Each area of planning, execution, and reflection required additional consideration for the coronavirus' impact.

Composer and professor Robert W. Smith recalled:

We're asking our teachers to teach in three environments. We knew we had to prepare to teach in person, but we also knew we had to be ready to do this virtually. We also had to plan on a hybrid scenario. I go back and look at my correspondence and documents I helped prepare in COVID-19 committees, and we thought about it, we talked about it, we planned for it, and yet, we are in late July, school is about to open, and we're no further down the line. That's quite disturbing.<sup>8</sup>

Smith's recollection of the weeks and months before schools reopened was familiar to many preparing to welcome students into buildings and virtual environments across the country. Delayed directions from leaders appeared to influence the anxiety of teachers and instructors. Researchers Alma Harris and Michelle Jones shared, "School leaders are caught in the unfavorable position of being the pinch point in the system. They rely on COVID-19 responses, processes, procedures, and protocols from above. These can change, almost overnight, depending on how the virus develops."<sup>9</sup>

In spite of exceptional circumstances, it appears pre-pandemic systems of decision-making were exposed, causing delays and uncertainty for those depending on clarity from leadership. The fear of mistakes impacted timely decisions causing personnel paralysis on

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<sup>8</sup> Robert W. Smith and Mike Lawson, "On Returning to Band Classes," *School Band and Orchestra*, August 2020, 12.

<sup>9</sup> Alma Harris and Michelle Jones, "COVID-19 – School Leadership in Disruptive Times," *School Leadership & Management* 40, no. 4 (July 2020): 243.

all levels of education. Despite frustrations by many educators and community members with school leadership, an acknowledgment of the pre-pandemic system may require reflection when processes and systems must demonstrate flexibility. Professor Mary Uhl-Bien believes “the problem is that adaptive responses in bureaucratic organizing systems are not the norm. Bureaucracy stifles adaptability. It does this by inhibiting efficiencies needed to generate strong operational responses.”<sup>10</sup>

Although many educators experienced varying amounts of planning, adjusting, and leadership, the impact of decision-making affected middle school band directors’ ability to execute recruitment strategies, instrument testing, resource distribution, and collaborative practices with colleagues. The band directors’ objectives regarding time-sensitive tasks may be secondary when addressing pre-pandemic problems before adaptability became paramount to proficiency.

### **Statement of the Purpose**

Although the impact of COVID-19 has influenced significant shifts in instrumental education, an examination of traditional practices may be beneficial to students and instructors. An analysis of adaptations in music education during and after COVID-19 could yield innovative practices in music education. The purpose of this study is to address and contrast the efficacy of standard practices amongst middle school band directors before COVID-19 with responsive actions to limitations and restrictions by the pandemic according to secondary, collegiate, and administrative music personnel throughout the Southeast United States.

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<sup>10</sup> Mary Uhl-Bien, “Complexity and COVID-19: Leadership and Followership in a Complex World,” *Journal of Management Studies* 58, no. 5 (2021): 1401.

### Significance of the Study

Despite the improbability of a global pandemic disrupting education to similar magnitudes, introspection of traditional practices and unintended consequences may better serve students, teachers, higher education, and communities. Associate professor Alfredo Bautista observed, “classroom videos have been primarily utilized to foster teachers’ reflection upon the instructional practices, to understand student thinking or learning, or teachers’ confidence, beliefs, or identity.”<sup>11</sup> Leaders of systems primarily working for select students and communities should evaluate its effectiveness for all stakeholders.

Extended focus on executive skills such as operating the instrument, identifying pitches, and progressing through the method book are consistent expectations for new musicians. Although students can perform satisfying concerts within three to nine months of study, their inability to consistently hear incorrect pitches and self-correct may harm their future musical opportunities.<sup>12</sup> Traditionally, large group classes have not been conducive to individual instruction and aural development.<sup>13</sup>

During the 2020–2021 school year, many directors experienced numerous instructional scenarios. The teaching variations and inconsistency of face-to-face learning demonstrated a further need for students interested in continuing progress to exude initiative and self-diagnose performing issues before returning to school. Perhaps older experienced players were not as affected by an influx of personal knowledge. Without private instruction and daily class attendance, directors may struggle to keep students progressing and engaged. Professor,

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<sup>11</sup> Alfredo Bautista, Clarence Tan, Joanne Wong, and Colleen Conway, “The Role of Classroom Video in Music Teacher Research: A Review of the Literature,” *Music Education Research* 21, no. 4 (2019): 340.

<sup>12</sup> Chad West, “Developing Internal Musicianship in Beginning Band by Teaching the ‘Big 5,’” *Music Educators Journal* 101, no. 3 (2015): 101.

<sup>13</sup> Pendergast and Robinson, “Secondary Students’ Preferences,” 266.

pedagogue, and author Edwin Gordon states, “There is a distinction between executive skills and audiation skills. Executive skills are the skills involved in physically manipulating the instrument, often referred to as technique.”<sup>14</sup> An unintended consequence of emphasizing executive skills above aural competencies is a frequent misdiagnosis of student idiosyncrasies.

Author and professor Chad West explains:

Often what seems to be an inability in one area may be a symptom of an entirely different problem. For example, a student consistently plays a B-flat when a B-natural is indicated. To address this, the teacher directs the student’s attention to the key signature and reminds the individual of the fingering for B-natural. The student nods, and the teacher proceeds thinking that the student’s misunderstanding was corrected; after all, the student is now playing the correct pitches. The student may be aware of how to read notation and know the fingering for the correct note; the problem may be that the student was aurally unaware that the note was incorrect in the first place. If this were the case, the teacher’s time would have been better spent on developing the student’s tonal ability.<sup>15</sup>

Rhythm, tonality, notation identification, creativity, and instrumental executive skills are essential to long-term musicianship development. These performance components are critical to self-correction. Without consistent, face-to-face instruction, many students may fail to progress at a similar pace to those learning instruments before COVID-19. This immediate responsibility for instrumental musicianship development typically begins with the middle school band director. Student success impacts high school directors, professors, private instructors, administrators, and commercial music industry affiliates.

In addition to questionable pedagogical practices exposed by the pandemic, the autonomy of band directors increased as they navigated unfamiliar virtual environments. Although performances, trips, and large social gatherings will likely return, technology with informed pedagogy was instrumental for continued student learning if access was available. There were

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<sup>14</sup> Pendergast and Robinson, “Secondary Students’ Preferences,” 101.

<sup>15</sup> West, “Developing Internal Musicianship,” 102.

concerns of access for pre-service and in-service educators ahead of the pandemic, albeit disproportionately for instructors in low socioeconomic status environments. Professor Brian Nichols asserted, “Even before the pandemic, some research had shown that when retested, children in poverty had lower test scores at the beginning of the school year compared to the end of the previous year, whereas students of high-SES situations-maintained achievement levels over the summer.”<sup>16</sup>

### **Statement of the Research Questions**

This study investigated standard practices of the middle school band program before COVID-19 and the adaptations during the pandemic. The primary research questions for this thesis are:

Research Question One: Which pre-existing problems in middle school band programs were exposed by COVID-19?

Research Question Two: How can music teacher training programs prepare pre-service educators to lead middle school band programs post COVID-19?

### **Teacher Training During COVID-19**

The transition of pre-service educators into full-time teaching is a critical focal point for band program’s direction and stability. Despite many teachers entering secondary education from graduate programs with teaching experience, many pre-service undergraduate educators will be new to the teaching field. A post COVID-19 classroom environment may be their first teaching experience. Understanding the music teacher training program’s adaptation to virtual learning is crucial to the second research question regarding preparatory programs. Professors have begun to

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<sup>16</sup> Bryan E. Nichols, “Equity in Music Education: Access to Learning during the Pandemic and Beyond,” *Music Educators Journal* 107, no. 1 (September 2020): 69.

reflect on the experience of preparing college students for full-time teaching, and many have reevaluated the social and emotional components of training. Professor Bryan Powell states, “let’s not forget that our students are more important than the content. Let’s engage them in meaningful musical experiences that allow them to create their own music utilizing technologies available to them. Talk to your students about what their musical goals are for the class and don’t worry about perfection.”<sup>17</sup> Intentionality regarding content, activity selection, and mental well-being may become central elements of teacher preparatory programs. Featured performances, job interviews, and admission into graduate and doctoral programs may continue to be paramount in higher education; however, non-music-related skills may have an increased presence in the preparatory program. Comparing activities before COVID-19, during the academic calendar, and the following year may illuminate patterns and priorities in training programs.

### **Formal and Informal Music Education**

Formal and informal education within the middle school band program is a conceptual extension of alternative ensembles. Professor and author Lucy Green’s distinction between formal music education and informal music education examines the potential for balance:

In many cases the two areas merge, and each may combine elements of the other. In some vernacular music, as well as in many art musics of the world such as Indian classical music and to a large extent jazz, there are systems of what might be called ‘apprenticeship training’ whereby young musicians are either trained or guided by an adult community of expertise: a star guru in India, the Akan master drummer, the samba schools of Rio de Janeiro, the Irish session, or the group-learning methods of Javanese Gamelan are just a few examples.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Bryan Powell, “Pre-Service Music Teacher Education in a Virtual Environment,” *School Band and Orchestra*, November 2020, 16.

<sup>18</sup> Lucy Green, *Hear, Listen, Play! How to Free Your Students’ Aural, Improvisation and Performance Skills* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 23.



The possible impacts of multicultural instruction within the formal and informal education environment may positively affect social and emotional learning during COVID-19's displacement of normalcy. New practices of intermediate instrumental music education may include broader content use, including history, community partnerships with experts of eclectic genres, and additional student ownership.

### **Common Characteristics of Successful Beginning Band Instruction**

When analyzing the survey and data results, awareness of common characteristics of the successful band director is pertinent to the reflections of the educators' experience through COVID-19 and adjustments for future instruction. Directors Michael Worthy and Lane Thompson's study regarding observations of expert teachers examined consistent traits and approaches from leaders of thriving programs. Their notes affirmed instructors were competent and proactive during classroom management. The responsive behavior of students allowed for the prioritization of characteristic sounds through the use of daily fundamentals. Breathing exercises and frequent feedback of proper embouchures, posture, instrument carriage, and prepared modeling on wind instruments were standard practices of elite beginning band music educators.<sup>19</sup> Additional observations observe collaborative efforts to improve quality instruction for students. "One of the teachers team-taught the beginning and classes with two assistants. The assistants spent the class periods pulling individual students from the class for one-on-one instruction.

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<sup>19</sup> M. D. Worthy and B. L. Thompson, "Observation and Analysis of Expert Teaching in Beginning Band," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 180 (2009): 29-41, 29.

The assistants attempted to maximize the number of individuals they worked with by keeping individual instruction brief.”<sup>20</sup> Modeling characteristic sounds, and positive band norms may diminish the achievement gap between new and veteran directors. The teachers from Worthy and Thompson’s study commented on a recurrent focus of “individual tone qualities and offered prescriptive feedback and specific instructions for improvement. Teachers modeled both appropriate and inappropriate tone qualities on their primary and secondary instruments. One teacher modeled a variety of tone qualities and solicited evaluations and solutions from students.”<sup>21</sup> Formative assessments of performance issues for improved student results included brief questions and statements within large and small groups. Worthy and Thompson noted expert beginning band teachers demonstrated, “extended periods of modeling on an instrument and other listening activities.”<sup>22</sup> Despite programs with enhanced volumes of students enrolled in private instruction, reinforcement of habits through multiple methods of communication seem to be helpful for student achievement. Thompson and Worthy’s study concluded with recommendations for teacher preparatory programs and new teachers:

Beginning band instruction requires teaching skills and strategies that are different from those required for typical band rehearsing. Novice teachers should work to increase their idiosyncratic knowledge of instruments, including the ability to model effectively on a variety of instruments, and should develop a teaching style that is appropriate for the pace of instruction in beginning band. Pitch accuracy, tone, and other performance fundamentals that contribute to the accomplishment of these primary instructional goals should be prioritized in lessons and rehearsals.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Worthy and Thompson, *Expert Teaching in Beginning Band*, 34.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

When reviewing interviews and survey results from band teachers, administrators, and professors, understanding content, pedagogy, best practices before COVID-19, and successful teaching methods is critical to adapting new teacher training programs.

### **Student Practice**

COVID-19's interruption of routine and systemic advantages of regular meetings may have placed additional responsibilities on students to participate in their progress with less formal interactions and direction. Author Matthew Schatt analyzed motivational factors for students to consistently practice. The data reported that "Middle school students appeared to desire to learn more about their instrument, accomplish a task successfully, and experience the positive stimulation of music, as the three Intrinsic Motivation subscales were rated higher than the three Extrinsic and Amotivation subscales."<sup>24</sup> This observation, along with traditional external rewards practices, may conflict with common motivation related beliefs.

In addition to Intrinsic Motivation of middle school students improving performance in practice, there are varying levels of efficacy determined by grade level, private lesson study, and years of experience and time spent practicing.<sup>25</sup> "Significant differences in self-determination to practice were found by grade level for all of the subscales with the exception of the Extrinsic Motivation – External Regulation subscale. Motivation to persist decreased between the sixth and seventh grade."<sup>26</sup>

The data related to student determination to practice before COVID-19 may identify a need to explore alternative instructional motivation practices within teacher responses. Schatt

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<sup>24</sup> Matthew D. Schatt, "Middle School Band Students' Self-Determination to Practice," *Psychology of Music* 46, no. 2 (2017): 217.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

recommends offering “autonomy-supporting activities, such as a variety of music from which to choose for practice.”<sup>27</sup> Researcher McKenzie Squires utilizes Daniel Pink’s research regarding motivation. Pink splits “motivation into three elements: autonomy, mastery, and purpose.”<sup>28</sup> These observations and responses may appear in the data collection regarding positive and negative COVID-19 teaching experiences. Teacher training programs, student practices, and styles of formal and informal learning may impact traditional middle school band instruction and instrumental education curriculum.

### **Hypotheses**

Many teachers shared successful adaptations to new work environments. Despite educators’ diverse teaching experiences during COVID-19. Conferences, workshops, presentations, and podcasts hosted many experts willing to share their expertise. Middle school band teachers presumably reflected throughout the year to determine which practices were successful regardless of the pandemic’s environmental impact.

Research Question One: Which pre-existing problems in middle school band programs were exposed by COVID-19?

The first research questions may be answered with the following hypothesis: Pre-existing problems in middle school band programs that were exposed by COVID-19 include motivation, instrument selection, and performance practices. COVID-19 restrictions have limited many middle school band activities. Although performances can be an effective motivator, frequent performances may detract from a quality, well-paced education. The social aspect of school

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<sup>27</sup> Schatt, “Middle School Band Student’s Self-Determination,” 46.

<sup>28</sup> McKenzie Squires, “Motivation in Secondary Music Education,” *The Canadian Music Educator* 59, no. 1 (2017): 10.

ensembles may primarily impact motivation. Peer connectedness, or “feelings of closeness, support, and care by friends,”<sup>29</sup> can contribute to a positive culture for student motivation. As each participant shares their experiences and lessons learned, flow theory may become an identifiable pattern. Professor and author Karen Beard states, “In response to the critical need to advance equity and excellence in education and improve the life quality of marginalized populations, rigorous exploration of what works is required, particularly as educators reconsider pedagogy, access, and creating climates conducive for teacher and student engagement.”<sup>30</sup>

The impact of COVID-19 on performance practices regarding rigor and frequency may have influenced the instructor’s pace. Author Danni Gilbert encourages student-centered performing ensembles whose members “contribute to the ensemble in ways that support their interest and strengths and present their progress alongside community members through performances.”<sup>31</sup> Consequences of COVID-19 protocols may reduce student participation, retainment, and recruitment. The response from band directors and supports insisted on altered practices and emphasis of activities. Reevaluating the needs and methods of performance evaluations and individual assessments may yield productive results for individual musicianship. According to Professor Stephanie Pritchard, “Novice instrumentalists are typically unsure of how to budget practice time and may be unable to select appropriate music practice strategies. Disillusionment with the task of independent practice time may lead to frustration, boredom, and

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<sup>29</sup> Jared R. Rawlings and Sarah A. Stoddard, “Peer Connectedness in the Middle School Band Program,” *Research Studies in Music Education* 39, no. 1 (August 2017): 122.

<sup>30</sup> Karen Stansberry Beard, “Theoretically Speaking: An Interview with Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi on Flow Theory Development and Its Usefulness in Addressing Contemporary Challenges in Education,” *Educational Psychology Review* 27, no. 2 (May 2014): 353–364.

<sup>31</sup> Danni Gilbert, “Curious, Collaborative, Creativity: Applying Student-Centered Principles to Performing Ensembles,” *Music Educators Journal* 103, no. 2 (December 2016): 33.

even attrition.”<sup>32</sup> The concern of individual practice may increase due to hybrid scheduling and quarantine protocols. Before COVID-19, many directors employed daily instruction to each student. Reviving a similar performance product may require a shift towards improving personal practice habits for students to excel at similar rates amid virtual, hybrid, and in-person learning.

Additional adjustments to traditional secondary education band programs are ensemble sizes. Due to frequent absences during COVID-19, many students performed in smaller ensembles. Chamber music may have accelerated progress for students performing in large ensembles despite the challenges of compensating for student absences. Although smaller ensembles create greater exposure for each musician, the benefits may involve an accelerated learning experience. Within secondary education, primarily middle school, chamber ensembles can present unique challenges. Middle school band schedules may be rigid, with few opportunities for placing students with peers of similar abilities. Professor James Scott recommends:

For the greatest level of engagement, the near quality of ability of all the players has demonstrated itself to be a greater value than the configuration of the ensemble itself. If levels among the students absolutely cannot be well-matched, the strategy of having an instructor can mitigate the potential frustrations deriving from markedly different unequal abilities. Leadership from within will be appreciated by students at all levels.<sup>33</sup>

In-service band directors may have discovered and implemented chamber music out of necessity.

Research Question Two: How can music teacher training programs prepare pre-service educators to lead middle school band programs post COVID-19?

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<sup>32</sup> Stephanie Prichard, “The Impact of Music Practice Instruction on Middle School Band Students’ Independent Practice Behaviors,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 68, no. 4 (2020): 420.

<sup>33</sup> James Scott, “Small Ensembles as Components of Professional Music Curricula,” *Journal of Performing Arts Leadership in Higher Education* 8 (2017): 7.

The second research question may be answered with the following hypothesis: Music teacher training programs can prepare pre-service educators to lead middle school band programs post COVID-19 by increasing contact with successful practitioners, implementing leadership development, and expanding practicum requirements. According to authors and professors Alison Daubney and Martin Fautley:

Due to school closures, there have also needed to be significant changes to initial teacher education and teacher training courses. For postgraduate and many undergraduate teachers nearing the end of their courses, as well as those on qualified teacher status only routes, this has meant that their face-to-face teaching experience in schools as part of the course has been temporarily, if not permanently, curtailed.<sup>34</sup>

New hires and graduates from higher education teacher training programs may endure additional scrutiny for not completing a traditional student-teaching experience. Further ramifications of COVID-19 on band instrumental teacher training programs may include the indefinite suspension of other opportunities. Drum Corps International, symphonic music festivals, student band camp, and summer professional development seminars may engage attendees virtually with no in-person option. Daubney and Fautley state, “Whilst it is too early to say what the impact on the range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses will be, performing arts courses are already precariously placed in a fragile higher education ecosystem, and any changes risk further damaging the pipeline of potential music teachers.”<sup>35</sup> Music educator training programs may contemplate an adjustment to course study through additional partnerships with successful in-service practitioners and leadership development education.

A potential need for pre-service teachers is an increased awareness of social aspects of the music classroom exacerbated by COVID-19. Author and professor Samuel Escalante stated,

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<sup>34</sup> Alison Daubney and Martin Fautley, “Editorial Research: Music Education in a Time of Pandemic,” *British Journal of Music Education* 37, no. 2 (November 2020): 112.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

“Researchers have discussed the importance of meaningfully embedding social-justice-related content across teacher preparation programs rather than as standalone courses or fragmented units.”<sup>36</sup> Through additional observations and supervised teaching, pre-service educators may avoid misdiagnosis of classroom issues. According to professor and author Lee Ross, “The fundamental attribution error is the pervasive and well-studied tendency to explain another person's behavior primarily in terms of their internal characteristics while neglecting external factors.”<sup>37</sup>

Authors Carl Wieman and Ashley Welsh examined this principle and its correlation of teacher methods and student outcomes. They determined, “Instructors using fewer effective methods were more likely to say the greatest barrier to student learning was the internal deficiencies of the students such as poor preparation and work ethic.”<sup>38</sup> Lacking knowledge of secondary instrument performance and classroom management may be initial manifestations of compromised teacher training programs. Despite potential instructional deficiencies, personal development regarding positive interactions with colleagues and humility to request aid may become primary focuses for pre-service educators entering in-service teaching.

The second research question regarding the innovative methods of teacher training programs for pre-service teachers to lead middle school band programs successfully must address access issues. Inequity in the middle school band program may result in fundamentally ill-equipped students in secondary and university programs. Although music educator Bennett

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<sup>36</sup> Samuel Escalante, “Exploring Access, Intersectionality, and Privilege in Undergraduate Music Education Courses,” *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 29, no. 2 (February 2020): 36.

<sup>37</sup> Carl Wieman and Ashley Welsh, “The Connection Between Teaching Methods and Attribution Errors,” *Educational Psychology Review* 28, no. 3 (October 2015): 645.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*



Reimer states, “The problem with students entering music programs, it is widely observed, is not the level of their technical achievements but the shallowness of their musical understandings and the narrowness of their musical perspectives.”<sup>39</sup> Many students may struggle to enter universities equipped to understand and create music at a high level. Environmental influences such as poverty and access may compound challenges to continue pursuing music in middle school band through high school. In addition to pedagogically sound instrumental instruction, music teachers possessing elevated levels of empathy may be able to identify non-musical issues hindering student advancement. Authors Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves recommend teachers focus on developing self-awareness or, “the ability to accurately perceive their own emotions at the moment and understand their tendencies across situations.”<sup>40</sup> In addition to emotional intelligence, there is a growing need for band directors and advocates to create partnerships with community members to support the band program.

Authors Lyn Tett, Jim Crowther, and Paul O’Hara advise, “Partnerships need to build a meta-strategy that is designed to allow all relevant interests to explore possible ways forward whilst, at the same time advancing their own mission, and building up the capacity to engage in effective and sustained collaborative working.”<sup>41</sup> Beyond instructional skills, leadership prowess in the classroom and community may be essential to building a thriving band program for all students. A final critical component of reflection and growth is to embrace humility. National Board-certified educator Rick Wormeli believes, “to accept a new idea, we have to first admit

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<sup>39</sup> Bennett Reimer, *Seeking the Significance of Music Education: Essays and Reflections* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2009), 204.

<sup>40</sup> Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* (San Diego, CA: TalentSmart, 2009), 15.

<sup>41</sup> Lyn Tett, Jim Crowther, and Paul O’Hara, “Collaborative Partnerships in Community Education,” *Journal of Education Policy* 18, no. 1 (November 9, 2010): 37.

that what we're doing is less effective than we thought. This can be tough because, for many of us, the way we teach defines much of who we are as individuals.”<sup>42</sup>

### **Definition of Terms**

**Adaptive Challenges** – A problem for which a) there is no known solution, b) people must work together in new partnerships, c) conflicting views, and characterize these partnerships, d) agents have high interdependence.<sup>43</sup>

**Adaptive Responses** – When complexity requires new ways of doing things.<sup>44</sup>

**In-person or face-to-face learning** – Students and teachers are in the classroom together.<sup>45</sup>

**Virtual learning** – Students are learning from a different location than the instructor.<sup>46</sup>

**Hybrid learning** – Utilizes the intentional use of technology as a replacement of seat time in class to foster an environment or student learning.<sup>47</sup>

**Asynchronous learning** – Virtual students learn similar lessons to in-person learners at different times than the designated class meetings.<sup>48</sup>

**Synchronous learning** – Virtual students are logged in to their electronic meeting platform during the in-person class to receive instruction simultaneously.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Rick Wormeli, “The Seven Habits of Highly Affective Teachers,” *Educational Leadership* 73, no. 2 (Oct. 2015): 14.

<sup>43</sup> Uhl-Bien, “Complexity and COVID-19,” 1402.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 1402.

<sup>45</sup> Andrew King, Helen Prior, and Caroline Waddington-Jones, “Connect Resound: Using Online Technology to Deliver Music Education to Remote Communities,” *Journal of Music, Technology & Education* 12, no. 2 (January 2019): 202.

<sup>46</sup> Powell, “Pre-Service Music Teacher Education in a Virtual Environment,” 16.

<sup>47</sup> Kem Saichaie, “Blended, Flipped, and Hybrid Learning: Definitions, Developments, and Directions.” *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 2020, no. 164 (2020): 97.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the existing middle school band literature regarding traditional pedagogical practices and collegiate preservice music education training programs. The current literature will include pre-COVID-19 performance and instructional practices regarding beginning band instrumentation, instructional techniques, student motivation, and technology. This chapter will also address the leadership development of the preservice music education curriculum, in-service practitioner interactions, and expanded practicum requirements. The literature will feature perspectives and trends frequently associated with middle school band students and environments.

### Instructor and Fundamental Practices

The perspective of band directors regarding pedagogical concerns may differ for veteran teachers and new instructors. Researcher and music educator John M. Denis' survey of new band directors reports "a desire of novice music teachers to understand the competencies, both musical and practical, necessary for successful integration into the profession; specific content focused on the fundamentals of teaching beginning instrumentalists to content discussing advanced performance techniques."<sup>50</sup> Denis' observations seem to demonstrate concern from new in-service teachers' ability to guide band students from beginner to advanced levels of musicianship.

Although the training for new band directors addresses a myriad of skill levels for students, the beginning band curriculum seems to be a constant concern for the pre-service

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<sup>50</sup> John M. Denis, "Novice Texas Band Directors' Perceptions of the Skills and Knowledge Necessary for Successful Teaching," *Contributions to Music Education* 44 (2019): 20.

educators' transition to full-time secondary instruction. The data explains many schools' performance practices were rooted in hands-on experiences ideally executed by through in-person instruction. Denis discovered his respondents believed "the majority of skills and knowledge learned were acquired outside of the university setting teaching lessons, working at high schools and middle schools, etc. where there are more hands-on practical applications of the teaching idiom and skill."<sup>51</sup> The educators returned to the traditional practice of acquiring additional and essential training through informal methods amid COVID-19. Virtual teaching through synchronous and asynchronous instruction demanded an expedited approach to electronically based lesson delivery.

Researchers Ritu Gandhi Arora and Anushree Chauhan affirm educators need "more time to prepare for online classes and active participation of students."<sup>52</sup> Time restraints for developing new instructional delivery skills were noted as significant challenge to teaching from home. According to Arora's findings, many faculty and staff members did not anticipate the instructional lost from not being able to "make eye contact with students while teaching, observing signs of recognition, or addressing confusion on students' faces."<sup>53</sup>

Regarding beginning band instruction, COVID-19 influenced the methods of fundamental instructional skills acquired primarily in the classroom, such as teaching lip slurs, which in-service practitioners may often seek. Music educator J. Si Millican investigated pre-pandemic brass-specific skills for beginning band members by investigating "pedagogical content knowledge, a method in which teachers understand their subjects to teach concepts and

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<sup>51</sup> Denis, "Novice Texas Band Directors' Perceptions," 21.

<sup>52</sup> Ritu Gandhi Arora and Anushree Chauhan, "Faculty Perspectives on Work from Home: Teaching Efficacy, Constraints and Challenges during COVID-19 Lockdown," *Journal of Statistics and Management Systems* 24, no. 1 (February 2021): 48.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

skills of a particular discipline to others.”<sup>54</sup> The performance practice of expert teachers appears to include demonstrations of educator and psychologist Lee Shulman's pedagogical framework content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, and knowledge of students.<sup>55</sup> Millican’s research expressly identifies:

Content knowledge alone is not sufficient to communicate these ideas to the students; teachers need to be able to package this knowledge by considering how students relate to the material, what sequencing, and materials help students best, all the while using their general pedagogical skills. It is not enough that preservice teachers understand teaching concepts and mechanics of playing- they must also develop fluency and experience with content, concepts, and the ways students interact with these elements to put their knowledge into action.<sup>56</sup>

Extensive literature exists regarding the utilization of instrumental executive skills in middle school band pedagogy, despite a diversion of focus regarding the prioritization of beginning band instruction emphasizing music notation or aural training. Music professor Chad West’s approach suggests a hybrid approach based on repetition during in-person learning. West asserts, “while some teachers believe that rote teaching can hinder a student’s future ability to read notation, research suggests that learning by ear does not interfere with students’ ability to read notation and, in fact, contributes to sight-reading ability.”<sup>57</sup> Rote learning requires modeling.

Despite the limited understanding of notation and executive skills for beginning band musicians, West believes students can experience growth and success through a balance of rote learning and pitch identification. Common rebuttals include a need for additional explanation

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<sup>54</sup> J. Si Millican, “Examining Pedagogical Content Knowledge of an Expert Band Director Teaching Lips Slurs,” *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 26, no. 2 (2016): 91.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>57</sup> Chad West, “Sound Foundations,” *Music Educators Journal* 102, no. 4 (2016): 58.

and complete notation lessons before modeling with an expectation of dictation from students. West states, “by pronouncing through chanting or singing the pattern while the teacher points to the notes, students are able to construct their understanding organically, and we do not explain the rules of grammar before children learn to speak. Why should we first explain the rules of notation?”<sup>58</sup> West's mixed-method approach to developing aural and executive skills during in-person learning also emphasizes repetition. According to the literature, repeated actions for young musicians are essential to fundamental development. While improving aural understanding, replays for the student and teacher allow the player multiple guided opportunities to explore articulation, pitch, intonation, tone, and consistency. Despite the efficacy of Millican’s approach to isolated skills such as lip slurs, West focuses primarily on tunes in a group practice to develop these skills. West explains:

Beginning band students are typically not as excited about spending time on isolated activities such as these as they are about playing tunes, so I always try to develop executive skills in the context of playing tunes. Once students have had a couple attempts at the pitches and rhythms of a rote tune, the teacher could disguise practice by having students play the tune several times, each time focusing on a different executive skill. The teacher might say something like, “Great – now play it again with your best posture”; or “This time, let’s play it with a firmer embouchure”; or “Now, let’s play it with crisp articulation on each note.”<sup>59</sup>

The repetition previously described seems to yield positive results; however, its success appears to require a face-to-face approach. Music education professor Laura A. Stambaugh examined the productiveness of repetition in practice for young band musicians by comparing blocked practice orders, completion of one task before moving on to the next, and random practice orders, constantly switching among tasks.<sup>60</sup> Stambaugh’s study declared no differences

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<sup>58</sup> West, “Sound Foundations,” 60.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>60</sup> Laura A. Stambaugh, “When Repetition Isn’t the Best Practice Strategy: Effects of Blocked and Random Practice Schedules,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 58, no. 4 (February 2010): 369.

in the results of performance immediately following the three practice sessions. Despite the minimal impact of the three practice sessions, retention seemed to favor the random practice group the following day. Stambaugh believes, “random group participants were able to play significantly faster than blocked group participants without sacrificing accuracy. Performance speed by the blocked group participants actually deteriorated to the level of early practice trials.”<sup>61</sup>

Although West and Stambaugh’s research focused on repetition in class and groups, student practice at home is critical for the progress and retention of individual musicians and the ensemble. Stambaugh recommends teachers structure their class instruction using random orders rather than relying exclusively on repetition drills to teach students how to structure their home practice.<sup>62</sup> Demonstrations of analytical practice in class may influence a strategic and intentional approach to home practice. Stambaugh’s study focused on speed, pitch accuracy, and temporal evenness. The following parameters reflect measures of novice and experienced musicians when practicing alone:

Speed was measured in hundredths of seconds from the onset of the first pitch to the onset of the last pitch, using the internal timer in Cubase software. I measured pitch accuracy through repeated listening, employing a point deduction scoring system ranging from 0–7 used in a previous study: 1 point deducted for each incorrect, skipped, repeated, or added pitch, and 2 points deducted for each instance of stopping or starting over, with only the second attempt scored.<sup>63</sup>

Developing deliberate practice habits for middle school students seemed to become a critical skill for music educators amid COVID-19’s impact on in-person learning. Authors Stephanie Prichard and James Austin’s research regarding self-regulation and motivation of

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<sup>61</sup> Stambaugh, “When Repetition Isn’t the Best Practice Strategy,” 377.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 379.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 371.

middle school band students' practice habits emphasizes a need for instructional guidance.

Austin cites four critical characteristics of self-regulation:

Forethought, planning, and activation of both knowledge and motivation; awareness, monitoring, and self-judgments or personal effort/behavior, context conditions and learning; and constructive interpretations of and affective reactions to learning outcomes. Students engaged in self-regulated learning set goals, plan or prepare, use effective learning strategies, monitor progress toward goals, assess the results of their work, and optimize the physical and social environment.<sup>64</sup>

Despite the universal expectation of independent practice for students learning a band instrument, clarity regarding its quality is necessary to assess its effect on performance quality.<sup>65</sup>

Prichard acknowledges the “disillusionment with the task of independent practice time may lead to frustration, boredom, and even attrition from instrumental music”<sup>66</sup> if not adequately addressed. Among the most critical skills regarding impactful practice is self-regulation within recommended practice strategies. Prichard continues, “Observational studies of middle school musicians’ practice behaviors have demonstrated that students of this age have a tendency to play through their music using repetition as a primary, or only, strategy.”<sup>67</sup>

If students lack awareness and aural training before utilizing repetition, mistakes learned during practice sessions may become habits, further contributing to difficulty, frustration, and attrition. Prichard identified a correlation between experience and practice depth. The results demonstrated “middle school students may lack the perception and/or the tools to move beyond note accuracy in their independent practice sessions.”<sup>68</sup> These observations, along with

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<sup>64</sup> James R. Austin and Margaret Haefner Berg, “Exploring Music Practice among Sixth-Grade Band and Orchestra Students,” *Psychology of Music* 34, no. 4 (2006): 537.

<sup>65</sup> Stephanie Prichard, “The Impact of Music Practice Instruction on Middle School Band Students’ Independent Practice Behaviors,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 68, no. 4 (2020): 420.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 420.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 421.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 430.



interrupted instructional time by the pandemic, may explain potential deficiencies in student development amid asynchronous and synchronous virtual learning.

The research exhibits many cases for aural training being an essential component of instrumental development and practice efficacy. Professor and author Matthew Clauhs recommends approaching young instrumental education through creative musicianship. His four strategies are comprised of composing music, providing building blocks for creating, collaborating, and performing online.<sup>69</sup> Notation and executive skills are not initial priorities for Clauhs's creative musicianship approach. He insists rote learning is an essential part of developing musicianship and creativity before focusing on notation. Although Clauhs's context concerns elementary band, introducing notation halfway through the first year of instruction is suggested following solfège, rote learning, improvisation, and memorization.<sup>70</sup> The executive development is also isolated from notation, aural skills, and creativity by having students view and memorize instructional videos regarding posture, hand position, and proper embouchure placement. Clauhs's objective was to eliminate the music stands to minimize distraction and physical barriers to corrective executive skills.<sup>71</sup>

The aid of student awareness and self-regulation may assist the instructor's ability and effectiveness regarding assessments in the ensemble setting. Music educators Lorrie S. Crochet and Susan K. Green explored the impact of evaluations and monitored the progress of individual student musicianship. Assessments utilized to offer direction for students and instructors are

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<sup>69</sup> Matthew Clauhs, "Beginning Band without a Stand: Fostering Creative Musicianship in Early Instrumental Programs," *Music Educators Journal* 104, no. 4 (2018): 41.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

considered best practices. Although objective feedback encourages instructional clarity, Crochet and Green share additional benefits to performance evaluations:

Gauging progress toward goals is also important to help students focus on their own learning more than simply on their grade or on comparing themselves to others. Research has shown that even in our competitive society and classrooms, teachers can help their students become more mastery-oriented and less centered on a comparison to and judgments of others. Such practices produce students with more positive attitudes about learning who are willing to attempt challenging tasks and exert more effort.<sup>72</sup>

Crochet and Green's assertions regarding prioritizing individual growth compared to the individual's past results may influence the overall band culture and student retainment.

### **Band Instrument Selection**

An initial phase of the beginning band process is the instrument testing and the selection method. The process of instrument placement for new students has varied in approach. J. Si Millican identifies and compares multiple methods for pairing instruments with students:

Some teachers evaluate the size and shape of students' lips, teeth, jaw, hands, and fingers. In contrast, others test fine- and gross-motor skills and coordination or have prospective students complete playing tests on the mouthpiece or the entire instruments. Other teachers pour over the results of music aptitude or timbre preference tests, while others factor in the students' music backgrounds, personalities, or academic achievement.<sup>73</sup>

Physical attributes, piano experience, and playing tests are individual assessments to prepare students for a successful start. Millican outlined a combination of approaches for various instruments. According to the literature, "woodwind players have generally been thought to need well-developed fine-motor control and good hand-eye coordination to manipulate the key-work effectively."<sup>74</sup> These skills are not as sought after for trombone players due to their limited need

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<sup>72</sup> Lorrie S. Crochet and Susan K. Green, "Examining Progress across Time with Practical Assessments in Ensemble Settings," *Music Educators Journal* 98, no. 3 (2012): 49.

<sup>73</sup> J. Si Millican, "Band Instrument Selection and Assignment," *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 35, no. 2 (2016): 46.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

for extensive finger dexterity. Additional wind recommendations include awareness of the students' dominant hand. Millican references Ben-Tovim and Boyd's proposal against placing students on flute or the brass instruments if they were complete left-handers, except for the horn in the brass family since the left-hand fingers work the mechanics of that instrument.<sup>75</sup>

Despite an emphasis for percussionists to have piano experience before joining the band program, the critical attributes for percussionists are a full range of wrist motion and the ability to grip the sticks with both hands. Millican affirmed, "potential percussionists need to be able to use both hands, arms, legs, and feet to play, and thus may need to have exceptional gross-motor skills."<sup>76</sup> Preparing students to make informed decisions regarding instrument selection may begin with a presentation of the instrument and demonstrations by live performers.

Author and music educator Mark Vickers's research exhibits the effects of testing three conditions of musical instrument demonstration – a clarinet biased condition; an unbiased, full demonstration; and a photos-only condition – on preferences for those instruments by third-grade children.<sup>77</sup> Instrument exposure processes seemed to have increased in diversity throughout the pandemic. Vickers concluded that the gender of the model had no significant impact on student instrument preferences as they proceeded through the instrument demonstration process.<sup>78</sup>

Despite these findings, the gender of the instrument model may impact preconceived ideas by prospective students. Vickers's recommendation to remain vigilant about providing

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<sup>75</sup> Millican, "Band Instrument Selection," 48.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>77</sup> Mark E. Vickers, "The Effect of Model Gender on Instrument Choice Preference of Beginning Band Students" (Dissertation, ProQuest, 2015). 28.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

support to students who desire to study an instrument of an atypical gender stereotype nature may become essential due to restrictions of COVID-19.<sup>79</sup>

Beyond the ideas and perceptions of playing an instrument is the student's aptitude for creating consistent and characteristic sounds. The quality and dependability of student instruments remained a critical component throughout virtual and asynchronous learning. Despite the limitations of resources and funds, the need for instruments to demonstrate resilience amid mitigated adult-supervised education is paramount throughout COVID-19. Instrument retail owner Dennis Adcock emphasizes the urgency of quality-made instruments pre-COVID-19. He states, "If one of the aims of a band program is to build student confidence and self-esteem, then expecting them to learn on unplayable instruments is counterproductive, if not actual 'torture.'"<sup>80</sup>

Although instrument repair and rental companies often travel to schools for on-site maintenance, quarantines and positive test cases compounded with a middle school student's limited knowledge of their instrument's workings may render a student without a working horn for extended periods. Adcock's reminiscence of instrument practices in the 1960s reveals similarities of external environmental impacts amid deserted practices such as instrument sharing:

Back in the sixties when I attended high school, the instruments for band classes were all left on shelves without their cases and were available to be played on a first-come, first-served basis—class after class, sharing! We'd just disinfect the mouthpieces in the Dettol solution, rinse, and sit down to play. The upside was that every student had a wide perspective and knew which instruments were playing well relative to the others. We would memorize the serial numbers of the good ones! There was little call for self-doubt. Being early 'Boomers,' there was little time for any kind of self-reflection. Besides, a nuclear bomb could bring the end of the world at any moment anyway!<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Vickers, "The Effect of Model Gender," 93.

<sup>80</sup> Dennis Adcock, "Vital Instrument Testing," *The Journal of the Canadian Band Association* 15, no. 2 (2017): 43.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted programs hampered by financial restraints to mitigate sharing instruments. Many programs may not have the funding to provide each student with an instrument. Along with questionable instrument quality and a potential need to leave the instrument at school, programs may need to reconsider the instrument selection process to allow each student to have their own instrument, despite the ensemble ramifications for completing a balanced wind and percussion ensemble.

Music professor Dr. Darren LeBeau's study declared one of the most influential factors of instrument selection is the band director's approach to students during the selection and instrument transition process. The directors' motivation to transition students from their current instrument may be influenced by the school and community's socioeconomic status. Dr. Darren LeBeau analyzed findings outlining potential solutions to financial struggles within band programs regarding non-beginning band instruments. A tension for some band directors existed regarding the use of non-traditional beginning band instruments during the first year for purposes unrelated to balanced instrumentation:

Few occurrences in the data showed that the directors of the middle school would use non-beginning band instruments as replacements for the poor-quality instruments on which the students started. Doing so allowed the students to feel successful because the instrument worked and was available for them to play. From this study, it seems apparent that some students could continue in band only because they had a school-owned instrument to play.<sup>82</sup>

Beyond the economic ramifications of instrument selections, producing a balanced ensemble seems a universal desire of band directors. LaBeau's research recognized a student's willingness to meet the director's requests and need for a balanced group. The student typically

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<sup>82</sup> Darren S. LeBeau, "Examining Motivations of Band Students Who Switch from Beginning to Non-Beginning Instruments: A Multiple Case Study" (Dissertation, ProQuest, 2020), 158.

felt valued beyond a member of traditionally larger sections like a trumpet, flute, or clarinet.<sup>83</sup> Many students found a sense of unimportance in larger areas of the band. The unbalanced instrumentation of larger units diminished the real and perceived contributions of the individual to the group.<sup>84</sup> The desire to stand out and the appealing nature of specific timbres seems to evoke an overwhelming selection of an instrument. Kent State University professor Dr. Phillip Payne examined various factors related to choosing an instrument, including personality and tone. His use of the Adolescent Personal Style Inventory offered insight into agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, extraversion, and openness.<sup>85</sup>

Utilizing additional factors and methods for instrument selections and assignments may have become more applicable during asynchronous and virtual learning. Payne also disclosed research regarding the relationship of personality with success and retention in instrumental study proposed may correlate with Vickers's research on gender influences and similar perceptions. Payne cites A.E. Kemp's work regarding the personality influences on instrument selection and success. He states, "Kemp found introversion, pathemia, and intelligence to be significant traits of musicians while other traits were context specific and depended on the age and experience of the musician."<sup>86</sup> Although there is no evidence that personality traits were directly related to the choice of an instrument by the student, they strongly confirmed the premise of noticeable personality patterns between string, brass, and woodwind players.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> LeBeau, "Examining Motivations of Band Students," 145.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>85</sup> Phillip David Payne, "An Investigation of Relationships between Timbre Preference, Personality Traits, Gender, and Music Instrument Selection of Public-School Band Students" (Dissertation, ProQuest, 2009), 35.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

These discoveries may impact the longevity of students performing experience or return to playing their instrument after an extended hiatus. Professor Benjamin Helton's research on senior citizens returning to performing following their high school music careers presents various social, physical, and ability-based influences. These factors differ regarding instrument selection as adults over the age of 65 as opposed to secondary students. Awareness of physical change became a crucial component of switching instruments. Helton's interviews with the New Horizons Band members outlined a desire for social connection beyond playing a specific instrument. One participant reported, "For a while, I was getting real problems with my hands, and I thought, 'Oh, what can I play if I can't play my horn?' So, I thought maybe I would try percussion and see if I had to change, I could do that."<sup>88</sup> The information acquired by Helton may influence recruitment practices. Emphasizing the social aspect of making music the prominent feature of middle school ensembles may assist higher retention in school music programs.

### **Motivation**

Student engagement appeared to remain, and perhaps, increase throughout the pandemics' influence on virtual and asynchronous teaching. Inconsistencies regarding attendance, instructional methods, and feedback influenced pedagogical practices and further investigation into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among younger musicians. Many young instrumental music students may have struggled with the inconsistent approaches to music education due to heightened levels of self-expectations and perfectionism. Author Alva Appelgren and colleagues' research investigated the level of perfectionism among 146 young

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<sup>88</sup> Benjamin C. Helton, "The Phenomenon of Adults Relearning Instrumental Music in an American Wind Band, *International Journal of Music Education* 38, no. 1 (2019): 73.

musicians in the age range of 13–20 years and found that striving with a sense of perfectionism was associated with higher intrinsic motivation such as fun and enjoyment and identified extrinsic motivation linked to one's goals.<sup>89</sup> Despite the potential benefits of perfectionism in students yielding increased motivation, effort, and achievement, the findings mention elevated risks of distress and anxiety.<sup>90</sup> The study identifies multiple subscales between motivation and amotivation: Intrinsic motivation, integrated, identified, introjected, external, and amotivation.<sup>91</sup> According to the study, pedagogical implications may encourage educators to be mindful of varying types of motivation in developing students. Appelgren and colleagues state, "Women reported higher levels of global intrinsic motivation as compared to men, regardless of the level of music engagement. In the motivation subscales, women also showed higher ratings of intrinsic, integrated, identified, and introjected motivation than men."<sup>92</sup> Identifying these characteristics in students may aid retention and program growth. Appelgren and colleagues recommend:

Teachers may observe that young female musicians display more of the intrinsic, introjected, and integrated motivation, whilst young male musicians may show more aspects of the extrinsic types of motivation. Teachers may find it useful to be aware of the potential negative impact that higher levels of intrinsic motivation may have on students, which this study indicates are slightly more likely to be female: overcommitment, self-blame, and 'usefulness.' Accordingly, teachers should seek to encourage the development of skills to alleviate such negative forces since they represent a risk for high levels of stress and burnout.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Alva Appelgren, Walter Osika, Töres Theorell, Guy Madison, and Eva Bojner Horwitz, "Tuning in on Motivation: Differences between Non-Musicians, Amateurs, and Professional Musicians," *Psychology of Music* 47, no. 6 (2019): 866.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 866.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 867.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 870.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 871.



Creating environments of music-making may require knowledge of vocabulary relative to intrinsic and extrinsic activities. Professor and author Robert Woody's analysis of language about varied motivations may be crucial to preservice educators. His research into college music students' reasons for participating in nondegree activities identifies common terms such as enjoyment, social connection, expression, autonomy, creativity, experimentation, and identity.<sup>94</sup> An example from Woody's study is a student account of why they participate in a class that does not count towards their degree:

Show choir has constantly been a foundation of positivity and creativity, as well as a source of encouragement and escape from other sources of despair in my life. Specifically, performing in a show choir ensemble has delivered a great amount of deeper understanding and growth as a musician and a fellow human. The interactions found within a show choir between performers are unlike any other ensemble because of the time spent together.<sup>95</sup>

Although musical experiences can differ based on intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors, students may participate with blended purposes. According to Vasil:

Being in a group of extremely talented vocalists and getting to make beautiful music with them is so fulfilling. I am also motivated to participate in this activity because I learn a lot of things that will benefit me as a future music educator. The combination of enjoyment and acquisition of knowledge is extremely effective in creating intrinsic motivation for me to participate in this choir.<sup>96</sup>

This student's reflection seemed to demonstrate a blend of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

Although intrinsically motivated students are typically self-driven, factors such as virtue and achievement can be significant components for students' continued involvement in ensembles of their own volition.

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<sup>94</sup> Robert H. Woody, "Music Education Students' Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation: A Quantitative Analysis of Personal Narratives," *Psychology of Music* 49, no. 5 (2020): 1335.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 1336.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

The accounts of Woody's study, centered on college students, may apply to those considering an initial experience in instrumental music. University of Kentucky professor Martina Vasil investigated the extrinsic motivations of fourth-grade students to join and continue their instrumental music experience. Similar to Applegren's explanation of motivational subscales, Vasil illustrates a path for transitioning from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation:

The first stage, "externally regulated," is when activities are done to satisfy external demand. Second, "introjected regulation" is when a person is "taking in a regulation but not fully accepting it as one's own." Third, "regulation through identification" is when a behavior or regulation becomes more valued and individually crucial to a person. Finally, "integrated regulation" is when an extrinsic value is transformed into one's value. "To integrate a regulation, people must grasp its meaning and synthesize that meaning with respect to their other goals and values."<sup>97</sup>

The initial catalyst for increased participation and retention implies family support and exposure, consisting of multiple prompts to try an instrument that is critical for students to begin and continue musical study. The interviews divulged that "Several social factors inspired participants to join and continue in the instrumental music program. All participants agreed that they enjoyed spending extra time with their friends during instrumental music lessons."<sup>98</sup> Although extrinsic factors appear to be family lead, Vasil advises teachers to develop a "vibrant and energized music program at school."<sup>99</sup> These spaces limit external stressors such as financial strains impacting instrument options and additional pressure to succeed. One student recounted her father's emphasis on the importance of her achievement due to the expense of the instrument. She later claimed that she would only allow her child to participate in band if they could afford

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<sup>97</sup> Martina Vasil, "Extrinsic Motivators Affecting Fourth-Grade Students' Interest and Enrollment in an Instrumental Music Program," *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 32, no. 1 (2013): 74.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

it.<sup>100</sup> Vasil's research seems to support an active transition from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation for music students to engage in a growth mindset. Author and graduate student McKenzie Squires outlined the potential impacts of fixed and growth mindset when challenging amotivation demonstrated through ability, effort, and value.

Squires explains that ability belief is the "theory that people hold expectations about their ability to apply appropriate strategies necessary to execute a task. Effort ability pertains to the student's desire and capacity to invest energy or effort. The final concept is the value placed on the job and its meaningful learning experiences so that it is seen as vital to them."<sup>101</sup> The author recommends targeting Carol Dweck's growth mindset through Daniel Pink's three categories of motivation; autonomy, mastery, and purpose. Promoting student-centered learning to develop independence may increase students' awareness of purpose and encourage deeper learning and engagement to achieve mastery.<sup>102</sup>

Researcher and professional flutist Ana Butkovic examined the environment's motivation by measuring music practice, intelligence, personality, motivation, and flow. Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi defines flow as a state of effortless concentration so focused that it amounts to absolute absorption in an activity.<sup>103</sup> Research tools included surveys, the Wiener Matrizen Test, Big Five Inventory, the General Motivation Scale, and the Swedish Flow Proneness Questionnaire.<sup>104</sup> The results informed that music practice was significantly associated

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<sup>100</sup> Vasil, "Extrinsic Motivators Affecting Fourth-Grade Students" 77.

<sup>101</sup> Squires, "Motivation in Secondary Music Education," 11.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>103</sup> Ana Butkovic, Fredrik Ullén, and Miriam A. Mosing, "Personality Related Traits as Predictors of Music Practice: Underlying Environmental and Genetic Influences," *Personality and Individual Differences* 74 (2015): 134.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

with personality, intrinsic motivation, IQ, and musical flow proneness, but not general flow as measured here:

Musical flow proneness was by far the most significant predictor of music practice in this sample. Once all variables had been included in the model, intrinsic motivation and IQ became non-significant. This indicates that subjective experiences of absorption and enjoyment within a specific domain are important predictors of long-term engagement, and much more so than domain-general variables related to motivation, e.g., intrinsic trait motivation and general flow proneness.<sup>105</sup>

Middle school band students' self-determination to practice addressed resolve, years playing their instrument, time spent practicing, grade level, gender, instrument choice, and private instruction as factors influencing personal practice. The research demonstrated increased motivation as students progressed in their instrumental studies from fifth grade to eighth grade.<sup>106</sup> Author and professor Matthew D. Schatt's study also addressed the private lesson instructor's influence on self-determination to practice. He states, "Private lesson study also appears to be a factor in student motivation to practice. Additionally, interactions with the private lesson teacher or the one-on-one nature of the private lesson experience may establish conditions for greater intrinsic motivation to practice."<sup>107</sup> Although some students may be intrinsically motivated to learn more about their instrument before taking private lessons, one-on-one opportunities may inspire internal motivation and increased self-determination to practice.

Traditional methods inspired by Texas music educator Danielle Whiteside's research regarding motivational techniques to increase practice in students examined the directors' use of tangible rewards and practice logs. Despite the ease of immediately rewarding a student with a treat, Whiteside affirms object-based tips may negatively affect a student's motivation to practice

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<sup>105</sup> Butkovic, Ullén, and Mosing, "Personality Related Traits," 137.

<sup>106</sup> Matthew D. Schatt, "Middle School Band Students' Self-Determination to Practice," *Psychology of Music* 46, no. 2 (2017): 215.

<sup>107</sup> Schatt, "Middle School Band Student's Self-Determination," 219.

outside of class and overcome musical challenges. Political Science professor Ruth W. Grant's findings of John Locke's beliefs regarding virtue and growth align. He believes, "If you give a child incentives or rewards for particular behaviors or tasks, all you do is make matters worse. You 'authorize his love of pleasure.' Incentives can do many things, but they cannot teach self-discipline."<sup>108</sup> Although many are opposed to incentives, author Daniel Pink recommends differentiation regarding algorithmic and heuristic tasks. He states:

An algorithmic task is one in which you follow a set of established instructions down a single pathway to one conclusion. Many tasks in banking are process-related and, therefore, algorithmic in nature. Extrinsic rewards can be effective when the job is algorithmic, "following an existing formula to its logical conclusion." By contrast, a heuristic task may have multiple possibilities and novel solutions. Consequently, 'if-then' systems can reduce depth of thinking, encouraging short-term thinking.<sup>109</sup>

Although practice logs and instrument demonstrations by the director show no significant impact on student practice, students may need to create methods for progress.<sup>110</sup> Directors may support student achievement and see increased practice by focusing on practice techniques, offering practice guidelines, frequent communication with parents regarding their role in student practice, and continued professional development.<sup>111</sup>

### **Preservice Music Teacher Education and Perceptions**

Professor Carla E. Aguilar and music coordinator Christopher K. Dye researched the possibility of expanding opportunities for music education students to explore political and policy-based interests and develop their musicianship and leadership abilities. Although the

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<sup>108</sup> Ruth W. Grant, "Incentives and Praise Compared: The Ethics of Motivation," *International Review of Economics* 66, no. 1 (June 2018): 23.

<sup>109</sup> Thomas L. Albright, Christopher M. Burgess, and Stan Davis, "The Balanced Scorecard and Twenty-First-Century Thoughts on Motivation," *Journal of Corporate Accounting & Finance* 26, no. 4 (2015): 45.

<sup>110</sup> Danielle Whiteside, "Effective Techniques for Motivating Middle School Band Students to Practice" (Dissertation, ProQuest, 2013), 32.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

National Association of Schools of Music has specific outlines regarding expectations of curriculum and competencies for graduates, the authors believe “embedding topics within existing courses; for example, a senior seminar in music education, taken concurrently with student teaching where policy realities could be problematized more fully.”<sup>112</sup> Aguilar and Dye’s recommendations aim to develop socially and politically conscious music educators engaged in proactive behaviors towards laws, policies, and procedures, allowing the possibility of effective changes for students.<sup>113</sup>

Re-envisioning policy and other environmental impacts may influence curricular changes to music education programs. Music professor and author Jonathan Kladder investigated the undergraduate music education curriculum and the potential for innovative adaptations. Initial recommendations include recognizing and implementing students’ diverse musical backgrounds and experiences across the curriculum, creating open spaces where students explore alternative approaches beyond traditional paradigms, and validating students’ interests outside the Western-European art tradition.<sup>114</sup> Despite developing significant connections with students and their potential work environments, many students shared concerns regarding the adapted curriculum. The following is an administrator’s account of student resistance:

At the end of the sophomore year, the second year of the new curriculum, I had a group of students come in and talk to me, and they had written a document with all of their complaints about the program and about what was going on. They were thinking a lot about what they were being asked to do and about how it was manifested in their classes, and also what they wanted to be prepared for. There was definitely a concern about the workshops and about not having enough time on each instrument.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Carla E. Aguilar and Christopher K. Dye, “Developing Music Education Policy Wonks: Preservice Music Education and Policy,” *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 29, no. 2 (January 2019): 80.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>114</sup> Jonathan Kladder, “Re-Envisioning Music Teacher Education: An Investigation into Curricular Change at Two Undergraduate Music Education Programs in the U.S.,” *Arts Education Policy Review* 121, no. 4 (2019): 142.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

Although preparing music education majors for in-service teaching jobs, meeting the current needs of students seems paramount to their development and future success. University of Oklahoma professor Christopher M. Baumgartner's study pertains to student teaching seminars and their preparation for classroom instruction. The results of this study may discourage the innovation of the current music education curriculum. Baumgartner's surveys reported that "Professors from areas outside of music taught more than half of all student-teaching seminar courses; most often they were faculty members in the college or department of education."<sup>116</sup>

Despite the expertise of non-music faculty in the education department, Baumgartner recommended lesson/rehearsal planning by music specialists with public school experience to aid preservice educators.<sup>117</sup> The literature frequently mentions student teachers' concerns regarding preparation for the classroom. Author and professor Peter Miksza and Margaret H. Berg examined the concerns of competency and professionalism within the context of student-teacher placement. Their study focused on principal challenges of establishing rapport, a teaching personality, and identity and experiencing success despite the demands for flexibility.<sup>118</sup>

Student teachers appeared to express additional concerns regarding classroom management. One teacher shared, "It is easy at my school to keep students on task with the occasional single student breakdown. However, if I were to teach at a different school, I am not sure I would be able to handle a large group of students breaking down."<sup>119</sup> According to the

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<sup>116</sup> Christopher M. Baumgartner, "An Examination of Music Student Teaching Seminars at Midwestern Universities," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 24, no. 1 (2013): 61.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>118</sup> Peter Miksza and Margaret H. Berg, "A Longitudinal Study of Preservice Music Teacher Development," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 61, no. 1 (February 28, 2013): 55.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

study, similar trepidations exist in the transition from survival to impacting students.<sup>120</sup> To avoid regressions in pre-service development, the authors recommend that music educators benefit from being aware of various developmental profiles. Rather than approach developing teachers through a deficit lens, the field-based teacher might be encouraged through individualized communication or more formalized training with university faculty to accept the pre-service teacher's current focus of concerns as a starting point along a developmental trajectory.

Further investigation into the student teachers' learning process during their field practicum may be crucial to adapting the curriculum to mitigate student concerns. Educators Marit Ulvik, Ingrid Helleve, and Kari Smith's findings acknowledged a need to address and reflect on the diverse attitudes, support, facilities, mentors, and possibilities of each student teacher's experience.<sup>121</sup> The research explained:

Some mentors tend to tell the students what to do; others leave the students more or less to their own trial and error. A third group promotes dialogue and encourage and support students to try out different ways of teaching. Mentors in the first group tend to promote fixed standards for good teaching. Those in the second group seem to believe that learning to teach is done through own trial and error.<sup>122</sup>

Despite the preparation of the student-teacher, the perception of the mentor band director may have a significant impact on the preservice teacher and band students' experience. University of Southern California music professor William J. Coppola examined how students viewed humility and arrogance among band teachers. The study suggests multiple subtypes of humility, including

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<sup>120</sup> Miksza and Berg, "A Longitudinal Study of Preservice Music Teacher Development," 56.

<sup>121</sup> Marit Ulvik, Ingrid Helleve, and Kari Smith, "What and How Student Teachers Learn during Their Practicum as a Foundation for Further Professional Development," *Professional Development in Education* 44, no. 5 (January 2017): 643.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.



intellectual, cultural, leadership, and musical humility.<sup>123</sup> Despite the social aversion to arrogance, Coppola shares the root causes of band director arrogance and egotism. He states:

Veridical egotism manifests itself in band directors through a personal sense of superiority by distinguishing themselves from others through trophies, awards, and high enrollment numbers; consequently, failing to keep their sense of self appropriately balanced with the praise and positive reinforcement they receive. Defensive egotism appears in the absence of self-confidence and expertise, commonly witnessed in novice teachers; strategic egotism can result when a person knowingly alters their self-presentation in an attempt to impress or intimidate others—a heightened projection of confidence toward competitors through their speech, dress, and body language.<sup>124</sup>

Although the perceptions and impacts of arrogance and humility are critical to the audience receiving those actions, the authors note “judgements of humility and arrogance are rooted inextricably in normative cultural, racial, gendered, and other social expectations regarding what constitutes ethical or prosocial behavior from others easily can reproduce dominant values if not critically examined.”<sup>125</sup>

The awareness of diversity and its varied expressions of confidence may offer additional benefits regarding impostor phenomenon. Professors Wendy L. Sims and Jane W. Cassidy analyzed successful individuals struggling with impostor feelings related to an irrational fear of failure and exposure as a “fraud.”<sup>126</sup> According to the research, this fear can add stress and anxiety to preservice and new teachers regarding career longevity and continued competency. Despite confidence and security in their abilities to train teachers, the majority of the respondents, especially women, expressed impostor phenomena related to their role as a

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<sup>123</sup> William J. Coppola, “Students’ Social Perceptions of Humility and Arrogance among Band Directors,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 69, no. 3 (July 2021): 286.

<sup>124</sup> Coppola, “Students’ Social Perceptions,” 294.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 295.

<sup>126</sup> Wendy L. Sims and Jane W. Cassidy, “Impostor Phenomenon Responses of Early Career Music Education Faculty,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 67, no. 1 (2018): 45.

researcher.<sup>127</sup> Similar to the preservice educators' concerns regarding adequate training and preparation for secondary education, graduate students shared similar fears stating, "The traditional components of the graduate school curriculum – such as making oral presentations in class, attending and presenting a poster at a national conference, and writing a review of literature are not sufficient preparation for university faculty research expectations."<sup>128</sup>

Many primary, secondary, and higher education institutions utilized e-learning per the recommendation of The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Their declaration stated all countries should "provide alternative modes of learning and education for children and adolescents who are not in education institutions, and put in place equivalency and bridging programs, recognized and accredited by the state, to ensure flexible learning in both formal and non-formal settings, including in emergency situations."<sup>129</sup>

During the second semester of the 2019–2020 academic calendar, school districts began to explore alternative instructional delivery methods. Virtual learning, also known as e-learning, became a primary setting for courses across all curriculums. Effective communication between educators and families became a focal point for educators during COVID-19. Addressing student motivation and their attendance habits became an essential focus for many band teachers. Author and researcher Iskhaki Andre Muhammad Mabrur questioned students' familiarity, access, and willingness to join and actively participate in the e-learning classes.<sup>130</sup> Mabrur's study habitually mentioned continued participation as a recurring challenge for educators teaching during

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<sup>127</sup> Sims and Cassidy, "Impostor Phenomenon," 55.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>129</sup> Iskhaki Andre Mabrur and Tono Suwartono, "Junior High School Students' Readiness to Participate in e-Learning and Online EFL Classes during the COVID-19 Pandemic," *International Social Science Journal* 71, nos. 241–242 (2021): 153.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 154.

COVID-19. He recommends “trying to find out their motivation and understandings related to e-learning. Goal awareness for participants may provide useful input when designing more suitable online classes, managing students’ expectations, and minimizing the likelihood of bad learning experiences.”<sup>131</sup>

The efforts of faculty and staff to accommodate online learning amid the country’s lockdown surfaced many challenges regarding. The urgency to meet the educational needs of the students and families positively and negatively impacted the educator. Psychologist and authors Lisa Kim and Kathryn Asbury explored the mental state of teachers during the first six weeks of the COVID-19 lockdown. Their interviews and data analysis identified six themes: uncertainty, finding a way, worry for the vulnerable, importance of relationships, teacher identity, and reflections.<sup>132</sup> Participant 22 from the Kim and Asbury interviews exposed uncertainty when plans to move forward were ambiguous. They stated, “I’m so used to being almost like a crutch for the children to lean upon. We are meant to know what we’re doing. We are meant to reassure them. We are meant to be the kind of guiding light, and I wasn’t able to do that.”<sup>133</sup>

Following the initial period of unpredictability, many teachers began to explore new ideas for their classrooms and COVID-19 protocols. While identifying the benefits of learning from home for students who thrive in environments of familiarity and comfort, consideration for vulnerable populations and their well-being required additional attention from teachers and leaders. Kim and Asbury shared participant 11’s example regarding a “five-year-old who looked so happy to be there and doing work and challenging herself. Being at home and learning in that

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<sup>131</sup> Mabur and Suwartono, “Junior High School Students’ Readiness,” 159.

<sup>132</sup> Lisa E. Kim and Kathryn Asbury, “‘Like a Rug Had Been Pulled from under You’: The Impact of Covid-19 on Teachers in England during the First Six Weeks of the UK Lockdown,” *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 90, no. 4 (2020): 1070.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 1071.

environment that they love is clearly working... wow, this could turn a child that doesn't like school into somebody that really enjoys their education."<sup>134</sup> Although some students blossomed through e-learning from home, others experienced multiple challenges from various sources. The stability supplied by schools continued to be necessary. Daily check-ins for attendance by each student were strongly encouraged for instructional and safety purposes. Kim and Asbury shared, "Teachers are used to seeing them so regularly and being able to check-in and know they're okay, they've had something to eat, and they've got clean clothes."<sup>135</sup>

Although teacher-student adaptability to synchronous and asynchronous online learning appeared to be a universal challenge, instrumental music educators experienced unique difficulties when converting instruction from in-person to online. Lecturer and performer Leon R. de Bruin shared diverse observations of instrumental music instruction through online platforms. His interviews unveiled an increased "teacher reliance on relational capacity and reciprocity with students, based on trust and mutual respect, which enabled honest and open discussion and shared control of the online platform to take place."<sup>136</sup> Increased musicality and critical analysis of compositions seemed to be an additional paradigm shift amid virtual learning. De Bruin cites the adaptation of one band teacher, stating,

I concentrated more on exploring a piece in more detail rather than loading them with technical, solo, and ensemble material. My students could immerse more in the thinking rather than the rote playing of things for the sake of being ready for band. We all enjoyed the freedom to explore aspects of music that we didn't have time for before isolation.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Kim and Asbury, "Like a Rug Had Been Pulled from under You," 1071.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 1072.

<sup>136</sup> Leon R. de Bruin, "Instrumental Music Educators in a COVID Landscape: A Reassertion of Relationality and Connection in Teaching Practice," *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (2021): 5.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 6.

## Leadership and Culture

The research focused on teacher development efficacy about classroom leadership has amassed more incredible notoriety. Rheumatologists Chen Xie, Pingping Song, and Huimin Hu acknowledge leadership's critical role in school improvement and student success. Among all school-related factors, leadership is second to classroom instruction.<sup>138</sup> Although many may consider leadership competency as a subjective quality, the authors have identified six domains:

Association leadership; create and guide effective interactions and collective action; build an environment of trust, respect, and collegiality. Professional learning leaderships models and encourages professional learning; promote and design job-embedded, integrated and differentiated professional learning. Assessment leadership encompasses informing and facilitating colleagues' selection. Instruction leadership demonstrates excellence in instructional contexts, share effective teaching with colleagues. Community leadership notes that teacher leaders collaborate effectively with families and communities, while promoting the quality of each environment. Policy leadership highlights teacher leaders helping colleagues to understand educational policies and advocacy.<sup>139</sup>

The authors' categorization of leadership emphasizes varying qualities and values of Eastern and Western education. Xie asserts, "The study finds that K–12 teachers in China have strong association leadership. Compared to Western countries, contemporary China prefers to emphasize collectivist culture, in which collective interest is considered more important than personal interest."<sup>140</sup> The implications for music education training may suggest an increased focus on leading programs and creating systems to serve the organization's best interests. Authors and professors Justin West and Alfredo Bautista argue, "High-quality professional development – that which is content-specific, job-embedded, sustained, collaborative, and self-

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<sup>138</sup> Chen Xie, Pingping Song, and Huimin Hu, "Measuring Teacher Leadership in Different Domains of Practice: Development and Validation of the Teacher Leadership Scale," *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher* 30, no. 5 (2020): 409.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 411.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 416.

directed – can be a powerful force in building teacher capacity and effectiveness.”<sup>141</sup> Using intentional and specific professional development as part of a learning system to create predictable success may generate and sustain progress. Systems as a leadership filter for organizational growth shifts the focus of the problems. West and Bautista state, “rather than seeing phenomena in schools as idiosyncratic, irregular, or unexpected – and thus difficult to explain, predict, or address – many issues in schools can be understood as the result of system dynamics.”<sup>142</sup>

The idea of systems being the primary focus of school improvement may counter elevated attention on teacher performance. Despite this prevailing idea, West and Bautista propose holding “systems as a first-order priority, with the expectation that enhancements within and between structures will necessarily benefit stakeholders on the ground. Individual teachers matter, but systemic conditions – and system policy – arguably matter more.”<sup>143</sup> Similar concepts of systemic success within organizations may seem familiar within the structured middle school band program. As the leader, research demonstrates a blend of hard and soft skills. Deputy Donna Weston, Deputy Director of Learning and Teaching at the Queensland Conservatorium in Australia, received responses from 80 graduates between 2005 to 2015 primarily stating the value of soft skills – communication, teamwork, problem-solving, critical and innovating thinking, creativity, self-confidence, ethical understanding, the capacity of lifelong learning, the ability to cope with uncertainty, as well as the willingness to accept responsibility as much if not

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<sup>141</sup> Justin J. West and Alfredo Bautista, “Greater than the Sum of Its Parts: Promoting Systemness in Music and Arts Teacher Professional Development,” *Arts Education Policy Review* 122, no. 1 (July 2020): 54.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

more than the hard skills of content competency.<sup>144</sup> Although pedagogy and technical prowess are essential components of a successful musician and educator, graduate accounts placed networking and entrepreneurship at the apex of crucial soft skills.

Weston recommends:

...tertiary educators to be mindful of future world challenges and prepare their graduates to deal with the unpredictable and discontinuous world that lies ahead. Increasing the time and resources allocated to developing students' soft skills, creates an opportunity for academics to enable and encourage the learner to enrich their development in a broad range of professional, charitable, voluntary, or leisure interest beyond academia.<sup>145</sup>

## **Instructional Technology**

### *Distribution and Copyright*

Although online music instruction has increased with the demand for social distancing, remote learning has been prevalent amongst many music instructors since the 1930s. University of North Texas Professor Nathan Kruse analyzed the attributes and deficiencies of applied lessons conducted remotely. His study examined the evolution of remote instruction, beginning with conductor and educator Joseph Maddy's radio broadcast for string students in 1932.<sup>146</sup> Despite the initial challenges of Maddy's program, resulting in cancellation, he narrowed his focus towards students in rural environments by providing young learners exposure to string quartets with practice guides and supplemental materials.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Donna Weston, "The Value of 'Soft Skills' in Popular Music Education in Nurturing Musical Livelihoods," *Music Education Research* 22, no. 5 (2020): 528.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 536.

<sup>146</sup> Nathan B. Kruse, Steven C. Harlos, Russell M. Callahan, and Michelle L. Herring, "Skype Music Lessons in the Academy: Intersections of Music Education, Applied Music and Technology," *Journal of Music, Technology and Education* 6, no. 1 (January 2013): 44.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

Maddy's efforts to connect listeners with elite recordings and sequential lessons by peers did not go unnoticed. As the Montana state music supervisor throughout the 1930s, Marguerite Vivian Hood advocated for music education in schools and radio to assist institutions struggling with funding and music education personnel.<sup>148</sup> Hood's efforts received mixed responses. Despite the service to public schools and aspiring young musicians, her broadcast faced cancellation due to copyright regulations. Professor Shelly Cooper referenced a letter from Marguerite Hood addressed to musicians Al Jolson and Fred Waring regarding rules from the American Society of Recording Artists and royalties. Hood pleaded:

There is no way I can tell you how much lessons of this sort mean, not only to our town schools but to the thousands of isolated schools. Perhaps one-half of these schools are in the drought-stricken area where live music at the best is very discouraging. Most of the others are in extremely isolated mountain districts where they have little or no contact with the outside world. Most of these schools have phonographs and will buy some records but the radio lessons are a source of joy which is impossible to describe to anyone who has not been in the situation. We are trying very hard this year to provide means to give a little encouragement and happiness to these people through activities connected with school and the community.<sup>149</sup>

Hood's appeal to broadcasting executives spurred a new partnership that yielded immediate results. American Society of Recording Artists executive secretary Arthur W. Levy responded:

I am instructed to advise you that it is neither the Society's intent nor purpose to in any manner whatsoever hinder or retard the advancement of educational pursuit. In fact, the Society in every instance where the case warrants, is lending its cooperation to such worthy endeavors. Therefore, I am afforded great pleasure in informing you that the Society will not interfere with your program and stands ready to lend its cooperation, so long as the purpose for which you intend to use the talents of our artist members, through the medium of recordings, is not a commercial one from which profit is to be derived.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Shelly Cooper, "Marguerite v. Hood and Music Education Radio Broadcasts in Rural Montana (1937-39)," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 53, no. 4 (2005): 296.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 298.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.



Hood's challenges with copyright and royalties have continued throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The precedence set by Hood's appeal to broadcasting companies and the recording artists' Society may have been essential to the development of distance learning curriculum leading to and during COVID-19. Beyond mastering the modern technology of remote learning, schools and educators had to remain vigilant regarding media sharing and copyrights. Although the 1976 Copyright Act granted flexibility to educators in the classroom, parameters were limited to in-person instruction. Once the Technology, Education, and Copyright Harmonization Act of 2002, also known as the TEACH Act, became law, the existing exclusion section specified that nonprofit educational institutions' digital transmissions for distance learning were not infringements. Author Rebekah J. Griggs poses the query of copyright relevance amid remote learning.<sup>151</sup> The TEACH Act did not eliminate all liabilities to nonprofit schools and educators. Griggs summarized the following stipulations. She stated:

The work's performance or display must be facilitated by or supervised by the instructor and must be a regular part of the systematic mediated instructional activities of a governmental body or accredited nonprofit educational institution. The performance or display must be directly related and of material assistance to the teaching content. The transmission of the work is for and limited to enrolled students or government employees. The transmitting institution is responsible for distributing information related to the project and place measures to prevent unauthorized use.<sup>152</sup>

#### *Remote Learning Instructional Practices*

Marguerite Hood's recommendations for remote learning's best practices have continued to guide modern instruction procedures during the pandemic. Several guiding points apply to synchronous instruction. Hood's essential factors included using a room large enough for all children to sit and engage with minimal distraction comfortably. Pre-planning should have

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<sup>151</sup> Rebekah Griggs, "Going the Distance: Closing the Gap Between Copyright Provisions and Distance Learning," *Journal of Law and Education* 50, no. 2 (2021): 307.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 318.

consistent meetings for students to retain previous lessons and progress each week. Hood's classes provided outlines for teachers, student materials, and instructions for delivery.<sup>153</sup>

Although the studies were not interactive from the radio host to those listening, the supplemental materials seemed to strategically plan for environments void of professionally trained music educators.

Following the work and advocacy of Marguerite Hood, various music educators continued to apply new technology to increase the efficacy of remote instruction. University professors Drs. Andrew King, Helen Prior, and Caroline Waddington-Jones aimed to utilize innovative methods to expand music education's reach throughout the United Kingdom. Their study entitled *Connect Resound* focused on the impact of remote learning through technology, delivery, and environment. Despite the study's occurrence one year before COVID-19, the challenges and recommendations detailed by the authors appear to remain relevant. Primary concerns related to technology during online lessons included time lags when teachers attempted simultaneous accompaniment during ensemble rehearsals.<sup>154</sup>

Varied internet connections seemed to have contributed to technology frustrations. King's research demonstrated, "The quality of the internet connection seemed to be variable: 51.2% of pupils described it as 'okay,' with 22% ticking the 'bad' category, 21.9% ticking the 'good' or 'very good' categories. Teachers gave a median score of 5/10 for connection quality."<sup>155</sup> The initial contrast regarding delivery throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries may be significantly impacted by varying degrees of interaction. King, Prior, and Jones

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<sup>153</sup> Cooper, "Marguerite v. Hood and Music Education," 301.

<sup>154</sup> King, Prior, and Waddington-Jones, "Connect Resound," 207.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

examined the pedagogical ramifications of two private lesson studies and one group lesson study.<sup>156</sup> The pre-study interview revealed trepidation from teachers about teaching children to assemble instruments, which seemed to counter their successful results when the standard protocol was demonstrated to students.<sup>157</sup> Beyond time delays due to internet connections, the study showed, “few problems were reported to teaching beginner techniques, including tuning instruments with the assistance of an adult or app.” Beyond the methods of instructional broadcasts came interactive lessons and live corrections.<sup>158</sup>

Additional findings from King, Prior, and Jones pertaining to instructional delivery addressed behavior management, family influence, and interests. The study affirmed:

Teachers reported that the pupils concentrated well, and all the children reported enjoying the lessons ‘a bit,’ ‘quite a lot’ or ‘very much,’ with 63.4 percent in the latter category. Parents’ reports of their children’s enjoyment were slightly lower but still very positive. The vast majority of pupils reported practicing between lessons. Parents were slightly less positive about the amount of practice, but most reported their children doing some practice between lessons. Face-to-face delivery was seen as preferable to online remote delivery was seen as preferable to online remote delivery by both children and their parents, but 39.0% of children and 29.2% of parents wanted the lessons to continue over the internet.<sup>159</sup>

Similar to Marguerite Hood and Joseph Maddy’s vision for reaching a greater audience, the Connect Resound project exposed instrumental music instruction to those who may not have considered this experience for their family. The project's data inferred remote music education opportunities were effective for those who may not consider in-person private or group music

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<sup>156</sup> King, Prior, and Waddington-Jones, “Connect Resound,” 208.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

instruction. The authors discovered 73.1% of parent respondents would not have pursued instrumental lessons for their child if this opportunity had not been available.<sup>160</sup>

Two years after the Connect Resound Project, students and teachers were faced with online music education as the only option for music learning. Professors Madalina Dana Ruscanda, Alexandra Belibou, and Ana-Maria Cazan conducted a study one year into the pandemic to analyze the feedback of students regarding their attitudes towards online learning. The researchers employed 220 university students with an average age of 26.57. After completing a questionnaire, the study exposed consistent video and audio quality issues, lack of physical platforms, lack of physical proximity, eye contact, personal musical instruments, and the impossibility of in-person learning.<sup>161</sup>

Ruscanda and her team acknowledged the benefits and effectiveness of teaching online instrumental lessons and group music activities; however, the potential risks associated with remote learning should be considered when contemplating long-term practice. Ruscanda concluded:

We believe that for individual instrument lessons or for practical courses in orchestra, choral ensemble or chamber music, online education can only be an additional, occasional form that can complement, not replace, the in-person forms of education, where students interact with each other and with their teachers. The lack of the possibility to perform rehearsals for choir, orchestra, band, chamber music during the pandemic was a phenomenon felt internationally.<sup>162</sup>

Although Ruscanda's team concluded varied preparation of classes and the uncertainty of meetings did not impact the students' desire to continue online instruction. Similar enthusiasm

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<sup>160</sup> King, Prior, and Waddington-Jones, "Connect Resound," 212.

<sup>161</sup> Mădălina Dana Ruscanda, Alexandra Belibou, and Ana-Maria Cazan, "Students' Attitudes toward Online Music Education during the COVID-19 Lockdown," *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (2021): 6.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

for online learning seemed to persist in Georgia. Graduate student Michelle Thomas led a team of researchers to examine teachers' perspectives during the lockdown in March, April, and May of 2020. One participant shared, "Students and the teachers, myself included, have lost the drive to continue. It is now May while doing this survey, and it has been roughly a week without any significant work being done in the classroom. Most higher-level classes are seniors and juniors receiving no prom, graduation, final concert, or musical production."<sup>163</sup>

### *Instrumental Instructional Software*

COVID-19's impact on in-person instrumental instruction spurred an increased interest in web technologies related to teaching, learning, and assessments. Professors Hua Zhen Lv and Junyi Luo analyzed online learning resources, such as SmartMusic, music theory, and Dolmetsch Music Theory, to bolster executive and aural fundamentals during the pandemic. Following a pre-and post-assessment, Lv and Luo observed an increase of skills by the end of their exam. The authors acknowledged an average increase of 25.1 points related to the effect of SmartMusic use on sight-singing schools by the end of the study.<sup>164</sup> The eMusic Theory and Dolmetsch Music Theory software also positively influenced auditory skills. Lv and Luo stated:

Based on the data obtained, it can be concluded that the use of eMusicTheory and Dolmetsch Music Theory to develop auditory skills in the music classroom improves students learning and acquisition of specific skills. The mean pre-assessment score of the control group was 69.1, and at the end of the training period, it amounted to 81.5 points with an average increase of 12.4 points. The mean pre-assessment score of the experimental group also turned out to be slightly lower – 67.2. However, the post-test showed that the score amounted to 86.5 points with an average increase of 19.1 points.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Rucsanda, Belibou, and Cazan, "Students' Attitudes" 7.

<sup>164</sup> Hua Zhen Lv and Junyi Luo, "Creative Approaches in Music Teaching: Possibilities of Web 2.0 Technologies," *Thinking Skills and Creativity* 40 (2021): 7.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

An initial purpose of the Lou and Lv article was to evaluate the efficacy of music technology during COVID-19 and distance learning. As many instructors learned, a quality product must be user-friendly for students and teachers. One student declared, “At first, I found it difficult to navigate the sights, but I decided to manage it without instructions, which was a bad idea. As soon as I read the detailed instructions and understood the principle of work, I started using SmartMusic very often.”<sup>166</sup> Remote learning seems to have required students and teachers to re-evaluate the responsibilities of instructors and students when preparing successful lessons for distance learning. Although the frustration from the student was alleviated once he read the directions, teacher development regarding leading students through technology challenges is critical.

Despite an increased emphasis placed on music technology and remote learning instruction, many scholars continue to express concern related to the direction of music education appertaining to technology. In 2001, Dr. Scott Shuler declared his vision and concerns for music education in the twenty-first century.

Shuler recognized:

One central challenge of arts education is to reverse the current trend toward comfortable passivity, lest we become a society of cultural couch potatoes. After all, culture is not a static phenomenon passed down from one generation to the next, but rather a dynamic, living environment to which every citizen must be prepared and motivated to make a contribution. In this context, the purpose of arts education might be concisely described as helping every student discover a path that they are willing to pursue toward lifelong involvement in the arts.<sup>167</sup>

Although Shuler’s statement does not explicitly acknowledge digital technology, his ambition for creative solutions through innovation to increase music participation is implied. He

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<sup>166</sup> Lv and Lou, “Creative Approaches in Music Teaching,” 9.

<sup>167</sup> Scott C. Shuler, “Music and Education in the Twenty-First Century: A Retrospective,” *Arts Education Policy Review* 102, no. 3 (2001): 25.

continues, “Each evolutionary development in music technology has demanded new techniques to take full advantage of possibilities and empower a new generation of performers. For example, valves on brass instruments caught on slowly, as many older musicians stubbornly completed their careers without converting.”<sup>168</sup>

Challenges regarding the implementation of technology seem to reach beyond imagination and vision. In 2014, Professor Barbara Payne McLain’s review and response to Scott Shuler’s declarations encouraged educators to embrace the challenge of music technology. McLain believed, “Most arts educators today are responding to their ‘train to the future’ with the first two responses; staunchly denying the increasing importance of digital art and distance education and thus refusing to learn new technology or merely smiling as they observe new technologies.”<sup>169</sup> Shuler and McClain appear to implore educators to embrace curiosity concerning current technology and the next innovation. Shuler discussed technology’s role in reviving singing through Karaoke. He stated:

By the final decade of the twentieth century, Vivace! Software already afforded a sophisticated “music minus one” experience, in which a “smart” computer-based accompaniment readily followed the interpretive whims of a soloist. The digital technologies that emerged during the first decade of the twenty-first century allowed aspiring performers to compensate electronically for almost any combination of personal deficiencies. Karaoke evolved through artificial intelligence to the point where users could receive feedback, either verbal or numeric, based on how well they had sung. Popular hits were released complete with software that provided would-be emulators with opportunities to sing along with or without the original vocalists. Amateur crooners could receive ratings based on their execution and interpretation.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Shuler, “Music in the Twenty-First Century,” 26.

<sup>169</sup> Barbara Payne McLain, “Scott Shuler’s ‘Music and Education in the Twenty-First Century: A Retrospective’—Review and Response,” *Arts Education Policy Review* 115, no. 1 (November 2013): 18.

<sup>170</sup> Shuler, “Music in the Twenty-First Century,” 28.

McClain praised Shuler's vision for the sing-along technology. In 1998, Vivace Karaoke was renamed SmartMusic Studio and became a web-based subscription service in 2002, and continues to revolutionize practice, performance, and assessments.<sup>171</sup> Shuler's recognition of SmartMusic's path to secondary education seemed to foreshadow the need for educators to examine the potential of technology in the music curriculum. Professor Evan Tobias accepted Shuler's vision of technology, digital media, and policy. Tobias asserts, "An inability or refusal to think through technology and media imaginatively, in terms of pedagogy, or through critical lenses, is problematic when addressing societal changes and educational needs through digital media and technology, along with their implications for arts teaching and learning."<sup>172</sup>

Professor Matthew D. Thibeault also acknowledges the accurate predictions of Scott Shuler while applying continued visions throughout the twenty-first century. Amid a culture of predictability and customization regarding technology services, Thibeault poses the possibility of viewing the music world through algorithmic culture. Before the widespread use of devices and software to predict the following music selection, disc jockeys and other experts were responsible for exposing the public to new music. Thibeault states, "we are far more likely to become aware of content today through algorithms than through experts. Indeed, because algorithms take into account the choices of a massive user base."<sup>173</sup>

Thibeault's implications of algorithmic culture in the classroom present unique challenges to educators regarding credibility and expertise. Although music access resources

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<sup>171</sup> McClain, "Shuler's Review and Response," 14.

<sup>172</sup> Evan S. Tobias, "Reflecting on the Present and Looking Ahead: A Response to Shuler," *Arts Education Policy Review* 115, no. 1 (November 2013): 30.

<sup>173</sup> Matthew D. Thibeault, "Algorithms and the Future of Music Education: A Response to Shuler," *Arts Education Policy Review* 115, no. 1 (November 2013): 21.



continue to increase, allowing students opportunities to explore an abundance of content, the algorithm may stunt exposure. Thibeault believes, “For many young people, YouTube’s algorithm is their guitar teacher, curating and suggesting video lessons. The role of the teacher as facilitator is being brought about in part by the shifting of authority resulting in algorithms possessing greater authority and power than their teachers.<sup>174</sup> This trend may require educators to focus on increasing students’ critical thinking skills to determine quality online instruction and content.

Despite SmartMusic’s positive qualities and attributes, Thibeault believes educators should approach the software’s algorithms. Thibeault considers:

Most research into SmartMusic has looked at the program in terms of its effectiveness, but the description provided in this article opens questions regarding the nature of the program – how SmartMusic mediates practice and musical growth, as well as whether a “SmartMusic sound” is cultivated among frequent or long-time users. At the level of the individual, SmartMusic aims to cultivate a certain style of practice and a way of approaching instrumental study. The program likely shapes musicians in ways that differ to a greater and a lesser degree than what teachers and program developers understand and intend.<sup>175</sup>

The innovations of technology interwoven in policy, pedagogy, expression, and creativity seem to be supported by many researchers and music educators. McClain, Shuler, Tobias, and Thibeault have demonstrated support for innovation; however, adjusting the balance of technology-focused spaces may aid creativity. Thibeault states, “today’s technological enthusiasm is based on accounts of the past in which the history of participation and creativity fail to be acknowledged, and participatory culture can only exist through digital technology

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<sup>174</sup> Thibeault, “Algorithms and the Future of Music Education,” 22.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

despite the demonstrated creativity and innovation of artists like Samuel Barber, Thelonious Monk, and Joni Mitchell.”<sup>176</sup>

### **Chapter Summary**

Factors contributing to additional study regarding student motivation, instrument selection, and instructor practices correlate with music education training, band program development, and successful outcomes. Although there is extensive literature regarding beginning and middle school band pedagogy, information relevant to leading instrumental music programs through the crisis is limited. The literature suggests expanding the music education training program’s curriculum to encompass soft skill development, reflection, mentorship, and advocacy. Multiple studies referenced preservice teachers’ perceptions of the band director profession concerning bias, life balance, and successful characteristics.

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<sup>176</sup> Thibeault, “Algorithms and the Future of Music Education,” 24.

### CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to analyze standard practices among middle school band directors utilized before COVID-19, then compare those methods with current practices employed during the pandemic. The researcher utilized the qualitative research method to explore and understand human issues pertaining to traditional pedagogical approaches in middle school band programs.<sup>177</sup> The following research questions guided the study:

Research Question One: Which pre-existing problems in middle school band programs were exposed by COVID-19?

Hypothesis One: Pre-existing problems in middle school band programs that were exposed by COVID-19 include motivation, instrument selection, and performance practices.

Research Question Two: How can music teacher training programs prepare pre-service educators to lead middle school band programs post COVID-19?

Hypothesis Two: Music teacher training programs can prepare pre-service educators to lead middle school band programs post COVID-19 by increasing contact with successful practitioners, implementing leadership development, and expanding practicum requirements.

This historical qualitative research study utilized surveys and interviews from a diverse panel of secondary and university music educators, administrators, and instructors. The goal was to address the varied facets of the research questions. Researchers Tine Köhler, Anne Smith, and Vikram Bhakoo recommend avoiding “mechanistic applications of templates for conducting qualitative research; the increasing role of qualitative researchers as glorified reporters of participant perceptions and experiences rather than interpreters and critical evaluators of

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<sup>177</sup> John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2018), 3.

underlying tensions, dynamics, and process.”<sup>178</sup> The participants shared a variety of experiences. Their distinct responses established commonalities from the interviewee’s feedback.

The data collected from participants was used to create a profile associated with their account of teaching and leading during COVID-19. This approach permitted “exploration and understanding of meanings individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.”<sup>179</sup> Inquiries addressed their pre- and post-COVID-19 calendar of events, student engagement, teaching and leading practices, expectations, goals, and recommendations moving forward. These tools unveiled perspectives from secondary music educators’ preparatory experiences and the impact of their university education on their decision-making practices.

In addition to examining existing literature to establish standard practices and precedence for pre-COVID-19 activities, surveys and interviews offered critical insight into various band rooms. Following the Institutional Review Board’s approval, the interviews and survey portion of the thesis project commenced. A thorough examination of the participants’ answers offered critical information related to the impact of COVID-19. In addition, surveys and interviews outlined details of the director’s interpretation of success and chronic issues within the program before and during COVID-19.

### **Research Design**

This study utilized a historical qualitative research design to collect and analyze the experiences and approaches of in-service music educators and administrators between March 13, 2020, and February 2022. Due to COVID-19’s global pandemic status, the environment’s impact on instruction seemed pertinent to consider pedagogy development and the consequences of

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<sup>178</sup> Tine Köhler, Anne Smith, and Vikram Bhakoo, “Feature Topic for ORM: ‘Templates in Qualitative Research Methods,’” *Organizational Research Methods* 22, no. 1 (August 2018): 4.

<sup>179</sup> Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 3.

traditional instructional practices. John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell's reasoning for utilizing the qualitative approach stems from human beings' construct of meanings engaging in their world based on their historical and social perspectives.<sup>180</sup> Following approval from the Institutional Review Board, potential contributors were contacted via email requesting their time for an audio and video recorded interview. The contents of the email included the purpose of the study, interview structure, a consent form, and a link to a Google form containing individual data regarding experience in music education and administration. Once the participant submitted the consent document, information form, and meeting availability, they received the Zoom link to log on at the designated meeting time. After the interview, a video recording transcription was created and analyzed to explore and address the research questions and hypothesis.

### **Questionnaire Development**

The questionnaire was structured to compare traditional practices regarding teaching and leading middle school band programs. Inquiries were primarily open-ended questions allowing the interviewee to employ a range of responses from short, direct answers to openly talking about a topic.<sup>181</sup> The interview consisted of four areas: band programs before COVID-19, administrator and teacher preparation, student relationships and motivation, and practice reconsiderations. The initial section collected personal data to create a profile to correlate with a pattern of responses. Gender, race, ethnicity, education, experience, professional appointments, certification, primary musical instrument, and performance frequency were questions to create a profile to analyze against the responses from the interview.

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<sup>180</sup> Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 8.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

## Participants

Participant considerations were contingent on the individual's experience in music education before and during COVID-19. Comparable qualities of all interviewees included in-service status within a teaching or administrative capacity and professional appointments relative to the middle school band experience. Despite analogous qualifications, a diverse selection of participants was critical to the integrity of the study.<sup>182</sup> The group consisted of three public school sixth–eighth-grade band directors, three public school ninth–twelfth-grade band directors, two college band directors, one private school fifth–twelfth-grade band director, and one fine arts director. Each of the ten professional educators presented their unique views from different environments.

The differences between the secondary and private school personnel and the collegiate instructors presented distinct outlooks to challenge the researcher's hypotheses. Within the subgroups of middle school directors, each band teacher represented a different school district and sect of their county, serving a varied population. The middle school band directors also varied by experience, ensemble achievement, and education. These educators' experiences teaching and leading sixth – eighth-grade students during COVID-19 provided insight into the role of educators and administrators attempting to aid student achievement despite the pandemic's impact on education and performance.

## Analysis

The researcher utilized inductive and deductive analysis to examine the data collected from participants during the interview. Participants' similar themes and opposing viewpoints became evident following a thorough transcription process. The researcher deduced the

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<sup>182</sup> Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 182.

evidence's reliability to support the perspectives' collective motifs based on significant themes.<sup>183</sup> In addition to comparing the participants' responses and experiences, the researcher's hypotheses were scrutinized by the information collected from the interviews. The participants' interviews spanned between twenty minutes to seventy-five minutes. Due to the excess of information, the data was winnowed, allowing the researcher to document and exhaust relevant portions of the meeting while disregarding less relevant sections.<sup>184</sup> Verification of the data ensued before the interviews were complete. The researcher reviewed the transcripts for accuracy of content, consistent coding interpretations, and cross-checked codes to increase validity and reliability measures.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 181.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Introduction

This chapter aimed to analyze the findings of the participants' experiences regarding teaching and leading during COVID-19. In conjunction with the current literature of traditional methodologies, the ten participants addressed an analysis of current issues in middle school band pedagogy. The criteria utilized to select the interviewees included years of teaching experience, contrasting work environments, diverse clienteles, and potentially varied perspectives regarding problems, solutions, and priorities in music education pertaining to middle school band. The responses contributed by educators during the interviews may support new considerations for middle school band instructional practices.

### Core Concepts

#### *COVID-19 Aerosol Emissions Study*

Colorado State University conducted an extensive study on the spread of aerosol emissions from wind instruments. The objective was to share findings of “endogenous particle release rates stratified by gender, age, and activity type while recommending guidelines stating the efficacy of various strategies to control emissions and reduce exposures to infectious bioaerosols.”<sup>186</sup> The activity types referenced by the objectives refer to talking, singing, and playing a wind instrument. Preliminary instrument-specific results revealed trumpet, saxophone, and bassoon released the highest level of emissions during testing. In addition, singing and

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<sup>186</sup> John Volckens, Daniel Goble, Rebecca Phillips, Charles Henry, and Heather Pidcoke, “Reducing Bioaerosol Emissions and Exposures in the Performing Arts - School of Music, Theatre and Dance,” *School of Music Theatre and Dance*, last modified 2020, accessed June 7, 2021, <https://smt.d.colostate.edu/reducing-bioaerosol-emissions-and-exposures-in-the-performing-arts/>.



playing wind instruments with a mask significantly decreased the release of particle emissions along with social distancing and performing in open, outdoor areas when possible.

### **Participant Profiles and Demographics**

Before completing the interviews, participants completed a consent form and survey to create a profile associated with their responses.

**Educator 1:** African American female, B.M., certified music educator, twenty-one plus years of teaching experience, seventeen years in her current position as a middle school band director, clarinet player participating in one–four performances per year.

**Educator 2:** Hispanic male, M.M., certified music educator, twenty-one plus years of teaching experience, nine years in his current position as a middle school band director, trombone player participating in more than eleven performances per year.

**Educator 3:** African American female, M.M., certified music educator, six–ten years of teaching experience, two-and-half years in her current position as a middle school band director, flute player participating in one–four performances per year.

**Educator 4:** White male, B.M., certified music educator, six–ten years of teaching experience, four years in his current position as an elementary, middle, and high school band director of a private school, saxophone player participating in one to four performances per year.

**Educator 5:** African American male, B.M., certified music educator, one–five years of teaching experience, two years in his current position as an assistant high school band director, tuba player participating in one to four performances per year.

**Educator 6:** African American male, Ed.D., certified music educator, twenty-one plus years of teaching experience, seventeen years in his current position as a high school band director at a

fine and performing arts magnet program. Educator 6 spent the first six years teaching middle school band, trumpet player participating in one–four performances per year.

**Educator 7:** African American male, B.M., certified music educator, six–ten years of teaching experience, four years in his current position as a high school band director. Educator 7 began teaching middle school band for four years, trumpet player participating in one–four performances per year.

**Educator 8:** White male, M.Ed., certification in leadership and history, sixteen–twenty years of teaching and leading experience, eleven years in his current position as a fine arts director and middle school drama director of a private school, guitar and vocal performer participating in more than eleven performances per year.

**Educator 9:** African American male, Ph.D., certified music educator, eleven–fifteen years of teaching experience, two years in his current position as an assistant professor of music education, trumpet player participating in more than eleven performances per year.

**Educator 10:** African American male, DMA., certified music educator, eleven–fifteen years of teaching experience, one year in his current position, began his career teaching middle school band, trumpet player participating in one–four performances per year.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Research Question One: Which pre-existing problems in middle school band programs were exposed by COVID-19?

Hypothesis One: Pre-existing problems in middle school band programs that were exposed by COVID-19 include motivation, instrument selection, and performance practices.

Research Question Two: How can music teacher training programs prepare pre-service educators to lead middle school band programs post COVID-19?

Hypothesis Two: Music teacher training programs can prepare pre-service educators to lead middle school band programs post COVID-19 by increasing contact with successful practitioners, implementing leadership development, and expanding practicum requirements.

### **Participant Responses**

#### *Performance Practices in Band Programs Before March 2020*

Each educator began their interview by describing traditional events, performances, fundraisers, and occasions involving their band programs before COVID-19. Middle school band directors outlined similar events and sequences beginning with instrument testing. Band teachers would collect information regarding uniforms, fees, instrument rentals, and updated contact information following the beginner band instrument tryouts and assignments. Typical events for each middle school director included the fall and winter concert, a fundraiser, and an eighth-grade band night at a high school in the cluster feeder pattern. Towards the end of the first semester, advanced seventh and eighth grade band students would participate in the first round of the state music educators' association all-state auditions. Students also participated in college and university band festivals. Solo and Ensemble was also mentioned as a common band event hosted in November or April of the school year. Before the end of the first semester, ensembles would typically begin rehearsing their large group performance evaluation music. The second semester was filled with multiple weekends of music making experiences sponsored by the state music education organization. These events included region or district honor band, the all-state band weekend, performance evaluations, a spring trip, and the end-of-the-year concert. Educator 1 shared her traditional travel plan for each grade level. She recalled:

We usually do three different trips. The top group, symphonic band or eight-grade band would do the big overnight trip. So, places like Busch Gardens in Williamsburg, Virginia or Universal Studios in Orlando, Florida. The middle group or the seventh-grade band

would usually do a day trip out of town, so we would do pigeon Forge in Gatlinburg, Dollywood or Carowinds. Instead of spending the night, we would just leave really early in the morning, drive up, perform, play in the amusement park and then come back home later that night. Our sixth-grade band would perform at the Trills and Thrills festival then have a huge party at Dave and Buster's.<sup>187</sup>

### *Traditional Performing Opportunities*

Additional performance opportunities included smaller ensembles such as a jazz band or chamber group. Students also had the opportunity to perform with peers in different classes and grade levels in the pep band. Educator 2 cited other nontraditional middle school performance ensembles. Select students were nominated for an opportunity to perform off-campus at Georgia State University with the Rialto for Jazz Kids Ensemble, a metro-regional group consisting of students within a forty-mile radius of the university. An additional campus-based performing opportunity for students by Educator 2 was the basketball pep band.

Subject to the relationship between the middle school and high school band program was participation by middle school students in the high school marching. Educator 4 and Educator 10 affirmed the middle school experience for their students at their respective private schools might include marching band for seventh and eighth-grade students. Their institutions allow students to begin learning a wind or percussion instrument in fifth grade. The beginners attended daily band classes and participated in the Association of Christian Schools International band events.

Educators 4, 5, 6, and 7 shared their experiences of similar events to the middle school programs with the addition of competitive marching bands, high school musicals, and the end-of-the-year commencement affiliated performances. Educators 9 and 10 reflected on their years teaching high school band before the pandemic. A major fundraising event for Educator 10 was hosting a southeastern marching band competition. Educator 10 explains:

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<sup>187</sup> Educator 1, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

I almost forgot our biggest fundraiser, of course, is the marching band contest. We hosted a marching contest in mid-October for thirty-two bands from South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia. It was such a large contest that we'd have to break it into two parts. So we'd have 1A through 3A bands perform in the first part of the day, have an awards ceremony, then they would ship off, and 4A and 5A bands would arrive, and we would do the back part of the day. So, there were thousands of people coming onto our campus.<sup>188</sup>

## **Band Program Activities and Repercussions After March 2020**

### *Director Responses to COVID-19*

Once school buildings closed and all in-person activities were indefinitely suspended, band teachers began to adjust instructional delivery for the rest of the semester. When asked to recall if any of the activities mentioned remained in their current form, each educator expressed varying degrees of adaptations. As teachers and leaders attempted to revive their programs, a diverse approach by directors ensued to continue instruction. Educator 6 and Educator 10 both held district leadership positions amongst band directors in their county.

Before the 2020–2021 school year began, music educators, specifically choral and wind conductors, tracked the Colorado Aerosol Study. Distinct philosophies emerged regarding an approach to band considering the university's findings. Educator 10 explained his proactive approach to make as many band activities as possible compliant to the CDC recommendations and county safety regulations. His urgency to initiate the narrative was motivated by a concern for survival. He stated, "I decided to take the bull by the horns and try to lead the conversation, understanding that honestly, if you're not careful, if you're not steering the conversation, someone else who doesn't do what you do will end up telling you what you're able to do."<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Educator 10, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

Despite the lack of information regarding COVID-19 between March and August, financial solvency created additional pressure for those educators in the private sector. Educator 8 recalled the sense of immediacy to begin the school year in-person with no virtual or remote option. He detailed the unique challenges of private schools serving students and families across multiple county lines during the final quarter of the 2019–2020 school year. Educator 8 shared the frustrations of using a 5G router at home when he was used to speeds of a thousand megabits per second.<sup>190</sup> His difficulties regarding reliable internet connections were shared by students as well. In addition to the demands of altering instructional delivery, private schools considered the tension associated with continuing remote learning while acquiring tuition checks.

Educator 8 recounted a conversation with the administration expressing attrition concerns. Their primary fear was having to depend on parents to pay thousands of dollars to an empty school to get the same type of education from a public school utilizing remote learning. Although they began the 2020–2021 school year in person at the beginning of August, Educator 8’s institution used similar strategies to increase the safety of band activities throughout the pandemic.

Consistent practices included seating students in straight rows with six-plus feet in every direction. Directors shared their strategies to employ the attributes of their environment, community, and personnel to prevent the spread of COVID-19 while continuing to teach band.

Educator 5 explained how he and his colleagues split each class to teach outside and in separate rooms when possible. Their first performance was the winter concert, and the first time the concert band performed together since March 2020. Puppy pads were designated for brass players to allow them to empty their spit valves inside the rehearsal space opposed to going outside. Puppy pads were dispersed daily by Educator 8 and Educator 1. Procedures for band

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<sup>190</sup> Educator 8, “Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19,” 2022.

classes were aggressively altered to comply with COVID-19 restrictions. Educator 1 shared her classroom procedures:

So, each day, every kid, when they came into the room, would pick up one of these pads, put it by their seat. They would empty on the pad. And then, when they were dismissed for the next class period, they would pick up the pad and throw it in the trash can on the way out of the room. We had band masks that we purchased, so the students wore these while they played their instruments. So at no time were their faces exposed except to switch from their day-to-day masks into their band mask. We also purchased bell covers for the kids, so at first, that started out as plastic Tupperware covers. And then, we also purchased shower caps and cloth bell covers. Wind players had to bring their own wire stands to school each day. Percussionists were the only students allowed to use school stands, and then we had a stand rack, one side with dirty stands and the other side with clean stands. So, at the end of the day, I would have to clean every stand, put it back on the clean rack to repeat the next day.<sup>191</sup>

Concert formats were significantly impacted due to restrictions related to the pandemic. Many performances required each ensemble to have its own time slot to mitigate overcrowding. Additional measures included limiting the number of guests per student and performing outside when possible. Programs impacted most seemed to be those in highly populated urban settings. Educator 7 taught virtually from March 2020 to February 2021. His district moved each high school schedule from a four-by-four A/B block format which allowed students to have band every other day throughout the school year, to a four-by-eight block. The four-by-eight structure required students to take A-Day classes every day in the fall and B-Day classes daily in the spring. Educator 7 shared his schedule of advanced winds, intermediate winds, and jazz band in the first semester of the 2020–2021 school year, which was fully remote learning. The spring schedule included percussion methods and two group piano classes. However, half of the spring semester was hybrid and in-person. In Educator 7's band program, wind players in the concert band did not receive consistent in-person instruction from March 2020 to August 2021. Despite

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<sup>191</sup> Educator 1, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

the advocacy of many music educators, the decision to resume the previous four by four A/B block schedule for the arts community was not considered.

Recruiting and mentoring practices were essential to Educator 6. Before COVID-19, recruiting and preparing students for the rigors of a fine and performing arts magnet program depended on visiting various middle schools in the county. Recruiting was an essential task due to Educator 6 not having a primary feeder. As students returned to in-person learning, Educator 6 experienced the effects of remote learning in the urban middle school setting. He observed, “Teaching kids to sight-read at a grade one and two-level for a band of ninth and tenth graders is very stressful because they can’t do it, and it makes me wonder what was going on in the middle schools pre-COVID and how detrimental it was when COVID hit.”<sup>192</sup>

The current ninth and tenth graders were seventh and eighth-grade band students in March 2020. These students experienced a traditional year of beginning band and two years of remote and hybrid learning. 2019–2020 school year resulted in a forfeit of in-person learning during the final quarter of the year. Many districts returned in the fall to a hybrid schedule with multiple quarantines throughout a significant portion of the 2020–2021 academic calendar. Educator 9 anticipates extended consequences from the pandemic. He states, “If you want this band program to be your band program, it’s going to take you four to seven years to build that in the middle school. I think now it’s going to take us even longer than that. After COVID, I think it would add easily three to four years.”<sup>193</sup> Although the interviews demonstrate a variety of variables impacting a band program’s ability to return to pre-COVID form, most will agree the timeline has lengthened for building an outstanding band program after COVID-19.

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<sup>192</sup> Educator 6, “Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19,” 2022.

<sup>193</sup> Educator 9, “Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19,” 2022.



### *Reduced Instrumentation and Selection*

Following the March 2020 shutdown, educators began to inspect the purpose of each activity and practice. Instrument selection, performance quantity, in-person playing exams, and in-person meetings were consistently discussed by interviewees. Considerations included the time necessary to complete the task, COVID-19 restriction compliance, and the return on the financial and time investment.

Primarily middle school band teachers scrutinized traditional methods of executing instrument selection for beginning band students during COVID-19. None of the educators mentioned the annual instrument tryout night or weighted interest on balanced instrumentation. Testing students presented unique challenges for educators. Educators 1, 3, 4, and 8 mentioned adapting the group instrument fitting process to a one-on-one experience due to COVID-19 restrictions. Educator 4 grieved the loss of excitement for groups trying out new instruments together. Educator 1 shared a popular method of safely administering the instrument tests. She recommended using a wind mouthpiece testing kit. Jupiter produced a \$35.00 Wind Mouthpiece Testing Kit complete with plastic dishwasher-friendly materials to test for single-reed instruments, flute head joint, and plastic trumpet and trombone mouthpiece testing.

Educators 1 and 3 shared their support of the reduced instrumentation beginner class.

Educator 1 explained:

I will say one of the reasons that I do it is to give the kids not quite an individualized experience when they start band as beginners, but definitely a streamlined experience because when you only have two different instruments in the class, it's a lot easier for those kids to learn in those large groups than to have six or seven or eight different instruments in the same class. Because not only is my attention all over the place, but it's also hard for them to learn in that environment. When we were hybrid, that was clutch because I had kids at home; I had kids in front of me. It was a lot easier to only have two instruments that I was working with at one time.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Educator 1, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

Flute, clarinet, trumpet, and trombone are the four options available to students during their first semester of band. Educator 3 described expanding the instrumentation at the end of the semester. She found students experienced higher levels of success when trying out other instruments after spending three–four months in the reduced instrumentation class. Students interested in trying French horn typically tested well after a semester of trumpet or trombone. Woodwind players experienced the same benefit when transitioning from flute or clarinet to saxophone, oboe, or bassoon.<sup>195</sup>

Educator 3 also mentioned the importance of deemphasizing performing on one instrument. She stated, “If you play clarinet or flute, I tell the kids, if you test well for saxophone, you can play saxophone, but you’re still going to play your clarinet or flute. You’re a ‘doubler’ now, and if you play trumpet and you want to play French horn, then you switch.”<sup>196</sup> Despite starting students in a reduced instrumentation ensemble, Educator 3 created procedures to mitigate the overpopulation of saxophones and percussionists.

Educator 2 shared a phrase he uses to work within the instrumentation of an ensemble. He refers to transitioning students between instruments due to unforeseen circumstances as playing “small ball.” He advises educators to always be prepared to move students to areas of the ensemble needing additional players and skills. Educator 2 stated, “I call it playing small ball, right? I have a baritone player in mind all the time that I could switch to tuba or a trumpet player I know can switch to French horn.”<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Educator 3, “Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19,” 2022.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Educator 2, “Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19,” 2022.

Although Educator 8's school remained in person with no remote option beginning August 2020, COVID-19 protocols, positive cases, and quarantines interrupted multiple performance opportunities. Educator 8 contemplated their performance frequency and rehearsal pacing. Educator 8 stated, "There were a lot of things we realized that was excess, and they also were tiresome for our students, teachers, and faculty. Preparing a September concert, while running a marching band and preparing for the October variety show collaboration for a band program with fewer than fifty students was draining."<sup>198</sup>

### *Revisiting Academic Policies*

Various policies regarding academic student failure were debated as many schools suspended formal assessments. Traditional in-class assessments became a secondary priority following school building closings in March 2020; however, educators revisited the purpose of evaluations while preserving limited instructional time. Although performance evaluations, playing tests, pass-offs, and spring concerts were canceled for the remainder of the spring, exams were expected to return in the fall.

Most teachers abandoned paper assessments and down the line playing. Educator 1 stated, "If I give an assignment, they are electronic. They are done online. Most of them are self-grading, so when they turn them in, all I have to do is record their grade, and we're done."<sup>199</sup> Most educators utilized an online platform to aid student achievement during COVID-19. Educators 3, 5, and 7 championed Flipgrid for pass-offs and playing exams. Educators 1 and 10 utilized Microsoft Teams to listen to student assessments while sharing live, direct feedback.

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<sup>198</sup> Educator 8, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

<sup>199</sup> Educator 1, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

Educator 9 shared his use of Ableton software to create practice tracks and assessments. The educators also expressed enthusiasm for utilizing virtual meetings to share information and social opportunities within the band program. Educator 10 referenced their boosters' upgrading the Zoom membership for additional access to breakout rooms.

*Strategies Created During COVID-19 to Achieve Pre-pandemic Goals*

While navigating remote learning, the social, emotional, and musical consequences were readily apparent. The activities each educator listed at the beginning of the interview were linked to purposes and values for the band program. Educator 8 shared his desire for each discipline in the fine arts department to create its own identity within the organization's character. He explained, "We want to build a community in our band program, and we want kids to feel like they build their identity off of what they're doing as well. And so we began to see kids being sold out to our band program because having their own fall concert really made them have something of their own right at the beginning of the year."<sup>200</sup> Although student commitment is critical to program success, educator 5 believes the amount of practice requested by directors before and during COVID may have been excessive. He suggested assigning brief practice videos for students to regularly submit. He expressed:

We required the students to submit sixty-minute practice videos. We didn't watch all of it, but we wanted the students to practice. Sometimes we would go through it and see that a student just let the metronome play for half of it. Honestly, I don't know if it's reasonable to expect an hour practice session. I think that's too much. You got five days in the week. I need three, ten-minute videos. It's not every single day. You can get so much done in ten minutes if its focused practice, but you have to teach them how to do that. I think a system can be created where kids turn in that kind of thing, and it can make them so much better.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Educator 8, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

<sup>201</sup> Educator 5, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

While offering students an individualized approach during remote learning, many directors noticed substantial growth from students while learning from home. Educator 7 discovered frequent deficiencies in his students' abilities when listening to individuals. He concluded that his band students were codependent when asked to execute ensemble tasks such as clapping and counting. Despite the individual progress achieved by many students during remote learning, ensemble skills seemed to be an area for growth requiring in-person attention. Educator 7 discussed a freshman tuba player returning from virtual learning who lacked a sense of pitch. This musician immediately demonstrated growth when rehearsing with a group of experienced players. He also observed the individual attributes of a senior trumpet player whose skills increased from practicing at home.<sup>202</sup>

### **Leadership Development**

Educator 10's approach to remote learning embraced a unique enthusiasm for developing individual skills and leadership. He shared, "I certainly had some students that came back better musicians because we focused on the fundamental things because we couldn't play literature. We did features and popcorn calls. I would call on random people to lead exercises. They would unmute, start their metronome, and we would play along."<sup>203</sup>

The interviews exposed a stark contrast regarding pedagogical approaches for middle and high school directors. Individual musicianship seemed to be a consistent focus of high school directors. Although each educator communicated a focal point of their program no longer demonstrating the same rigor, middle school directors seemed to focus primarily on routine and

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<sup>202</sup> Educator 7, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

<sup>203</sup> Educator 10, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

procedure beyond individual musicianship. Educator 1 addressed the importance of properly setting up a system of simplicity to assess and instruct properly. The band activities' continuation for the younger musicians implied urgency, resulting in individual musicianship becoming a minor concentration. When students were learning remotely, she explained her rationale for adjusting the rigor. She stated:

I quickly determined that we were not going to achieve some of the same goals that we did when the students were all in the room together and without all of the mitigation strategies and restrictions that were put into place. If the goals were no longer attainable, I, as a teacher, had to temper them for student success. Students were learning from home in a county that doesn't require them to turn their cameras on or their microphones on, then I can't require them to play for me. We had to basically start over.<sup>204</sup>

Due to similar restrictions, transferring students from the reduced instrumentation after the semester break was not permitted, so students remained on their current instruments for the remainder of the first year. Canceled performances, group evaluations, and auditions allowed for a change of pace. Comparable to educator 10, educator 2 emphasized a commitment to the fundamentals. He expressed his delight to focus on all aspects of rhythm, tone, and pitch. Although he enjoys making music, he loves classroom teaching.

#### *Recommendations for Teacher Preparatory Programs Before and During COVID-19*

Their interviewees expressed an assorted approval of their teacher preparation programs regarding the challenges of teaching before COVID-19. Educators 1 and 5 reflected on their former teachers' insistence to become elite musicians. They believed the benefits of those skills would aid in teaching at any level. Educator 1 shared the challenges for teachers attempting to develop students into good musicians without embracing this practice first. Many educators credit their degree's rigor along with additional teaching opportunities for their instructional

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<sup>204</sup> Educator 1, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

success. Educator 10 acknowledged his teacher program, coupled with the work sought outside of the program, created confidence when his career began.

Most educators expressed similar sentiments regarding a lack of preparedness due to minimal instructional time before student teaching. Educator 5 recalled:

They didn't prepare me very well. And I don't think that is necessarily anyone's fault. I think it's just a bigger problem. But I think it comes down to you need to actually teach to get the experience. The only teaching experience I got that wasn't on my own was 15–30 minutes a semester in front of my colleagues during my senior year. That was the only time we taught. You know, that was getting us prepared for student teaching, and that class was so horrible. They would ring the bell on you when you made a mistake; that was bad. So that wasn't very helpful.<sup>205</sup>

Administrative competency was a significant concern for many new band teacher.

Depending on the teaching situation and building personnel, management deadlines, parent communications, money, and logistics could become overwhelming tasks. Educator 7 explained his understanding of teacher preparation programs' challenges to prepare new teachers for the clerical demands of the job. He believes the task is not complicated, but the balance is critical to prevent stress.<sup>206</sup> Educator 1 assessed the ratio of music-making to administrative tasks is forty to sixty percent.<sup>207</sup>

### *Connecting with Successful Practitioners*

The interviewees' recommendations for teacher preparation programs included instructional delivery through technology, additional teaching opportunities, and broader musical experiences. Each educator invested substantial time and resources exploring instructional options after March 2020. Although a global pandemic will create inevitable hardships,

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<sup>205</sup> Educator 5, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

<sup>206</sup> Educator 7, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

<sup>207</sup> Educator 1, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

awareness and competency of virtual instruction could have served the education community and stakeholders immensely. In retrospect, allowing physical separation to thwart instructional delivery appears unnecessary. Resources habitually mentioned throughout the interviews included Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and the Google Education Suite. Educator 1 was supremely impressed with the Microsoft company and their willingness to heed feedback from educators. She stated, “I did not love Microsoft Teams at first, but I found that they really listen to teacher feedback. The upgrades they’ve made this year are incredible. You can tell they’ve listened, and that is impressive.”<sup>208</sup>

#### *Additional Practicum Recommendations*

Timely feedback to students is critical to steady progress. Awareness of the technology and proficiency of the tools are necessary skills for music educators. College classes and professional development sessions on applications and software available for students such as Flipgrid and SmartMusic were additional recommendations. Following the 100% shift to virtual learning, many educators expressed dread and fear. Educator 3 advised teachers to avoid learning technology while they’re teaching. She recommends spending time on a break focusing on one application, then presenting it to the class with backup plans should the technology fail.<sup>209</sup>

Educator 9 stated a case for focusing on musical groups and genres beyond the large ensembles of concert and marching band. Educator 9 stated:

I wish I would have gotten more chances to know how to do Ableton video editing and things like that, because I feel like that’s just a normal part of the job now. I wish we had more sound classes and technology classes, how to run mixers. A lot of this stuff I learned on my own when doing the jazz education thing. So many teachers don’t know this, so many teachers don’t know how to do basic things with computers. Also, the

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<sup>208</sup> Educator 1, “Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19,” 2022.

<sup>209</sup> Educator 3, “Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19,” 2022.



realization that marching bands are doing the same eight minutes of music all semester. Once people get to the point where they realize that's what we've been doing in the fall, then they go, What about Jazz band, Samba band, etc...? Those experiences need to be part of our education curriculum because that's relatable to students. That's the next thing that's relatable to students in order to get them used to the music that a lot of our students are listening to now with contemporary media.<sup>210</sup>

*Relationship Building, Student Motivation, Connection and Engagement*

Student engagement and connection were common concerns among the educators in this study. Before the pandemic, many educators viewed friendship and connection as a byproduct of music-making. Each interview began with a description of the typical events, performances, fundraisers, and general happenings of the band program. As these gatherings returned, multiple directors shared their observations of student interactions. Educator 2 acknowledged a need to understand the importance of balancing music-making and the social experience. He reflected on his experiences traveling with friends and performing with peers in various spaces. Educator 2 shared:

So, one of the first things we did was a cluster concert within our high schools and the other middle school. My school serves a working-class neighborhood. So a lot of the parents can't just come over here and pick them up. So I get a bus, and we go over there, and the parents meet us at the high school when it's concert time. The kids were so happy just to be on the bus. That's when the light bulb went off in my head. They just want some opportunities to be kids. Hang out, be with their friends going somewhere, and we were going 15 minutes down the road, and they were thrilled.<sup>211</sup>

Educators 3 and 5 communicated unique responses to building relationships and motivation within the middle school band. Educator 5 confidently stated, "How do you spell band? That's easy, band is spelled 'F-U-N.'" My cooperating teacher taught me that. There will be some kids that will be all about the music, but most of the kids aren't there for that, and you

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<sup>210</sup> Educator 9, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

<sup>211</sup> Educator 2, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

just have to accept it.”<sup>212</sup> Educator 3 made a deal with her students regarding a fundraiser, achieving a particular benchmark, and silly string before the Halloween costume concert.

Despite social distancing becoming the norm amid hybrid and remote learning, many educators attempted to connect with students socially through music and games. Students could bring music they believed exuded an admirable quality for their instrument or select from a different genre they wanted to share. Educator 10 discussed his enthusiasm for ‘Listening Fridays’ over Zoom. He also discussed hosting optional game nights with breakout rooms for students to connect over Zoom. Early into the 2020–2021 school year, Educator 7 recognized the disconnect with many of his students during remote learning. His strategy to engage and connect varied between bringing in a special guest to speak and perform for the students and simply immersing the group in different topics. He stated, “Some days, we would start class and talk about various things that had nothing to do with music. We would play a little bit and talk a little bit.”<sup>213</sup>

Educators 1, 2, and 10 addressed a need to revisit personal philosophies and how their reflections impacted their teaching. Educator 2 discussed being content while discovering where the students are musical. He stated, “slowing down, as you know, kind of made me look in the mirror and say, ‘Hey, you know you’re teaching kids, you’re not teaching music, you’re teaching children. That’s somebody’s child you’re responsible for.”<sup>214</sup> Each instructor took a moment to evaluate the condition of the students and the impact of the pandemic. The social repercussions of isolation were evident once in-person learning resumed. Educator 1 lamented:

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<sup>212</sup> Educator 5, “Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19,” 2022.

<sup>213</sup> Educator 7, “Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19,” 2022.

<sup>214</sup> Educator 2, “Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19,” 2022.

You could see the lights in their eyes dimmed a little bit. And I noticed that this year when I recommended kids that are go-getters and trying out for all state and signing up for events, they just stared back with no emotion like they've really been beaten down. That's why I backed off the rigor. I see how important the little, tiny things are. Now when a student approaches me, I stop what I'm doing and look them in the eye and give them my undivided attention. I had to deeply relearn kids to get through to them by sincerely engaging with them in all interactions.<sup>215</sup>

Directors have also reconsidered their interactions with students, colleagues, and parents. Before the pandemic, additional inquiries from parents regarding protocols and procedures may have been viewed in frustration; however, perspectives on parent involvement appear to have shifted. Educator 6 appreciated parents questioning how the band program is handling COVID-19 and the county's position on activities resuming. Educator 1 discussed her transition from angry to curious regarding aggressive correspondence from parents and students. Educator 1 stated:

I have developed my fascination with humans and the human spirit. What drives people? What angers people? Fears? Toning down my ego when parents email me and I immediately and this knee-jerk reaction. I stopped answering emails that had a lot of words. A lot of times, I don't even read to the bottom. When I can tell it's an angry email, I just respond, "Hey, when can you talk, when can we meet?" One of my favorite lines from Ted Lasso is to be curious, not judgmental, and I try to I feel that way towards the angry band parent, the kid that won't take his hood off, the student who talks back to me, etc...<sup>216</sup>

Educator 10 addressed the repercussions of common motivators utilized pre-COVID-19 and the challenging realities many directors had to overcome. External motivators such as trophies, competitions, and rewards disassociated with the activity yielded significant consequences for programs defining success by contest results. When multiple music educator association events and tournaments were canceled, directors were forced to find meaning and

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<sup>215</sup> Educator 1, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

merit in the process. Although external motivators may be typical for students, the message sent by the director may influence a negative impact on a healthy culture. Educator 10 explained, “I always taught my students you live and die by the trophy. So, if that’s the only thing you’re after, what happens when you don’t get it. So, you’ve got to be invested in your process and improvement.”<sup>217</sup> As the educators detailed, many programs were at a loss for direction when the performance, competition, or audition was no longer available. For some directors, a reprioritization seemed inevitable. Moving forward, Educator 10 shared a mantra he encourages colleagues, pre-service teachers, and himself. He asserted, “Don’t underestimate the value of simple connection. The bottom line is we teach students. We teach people music through band in that order of priority.”<sup>218</sup>

### Leadership and Reflection

Leadership development and self-reflection were consistently discussed by the interviewees. Although each educator was a veteran teacher and leader, their teacher preparation programs seemed to have influenced their decision making through remote and in-person learning. Participants in this study with fifteen years or more of band teaching experience expressed their thoughts on leadership in the classroom. As the participants completed their interviews, each educator contemplated their philosophies and leadership styles before and during the pandemic.

When considering his final thoughts on teaching band during COVID-19, Educator 5 shifted his attention away from the classroom. He stated:

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<sup>217</sup> Educator 10, “Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19,” 2022.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

Well, I think a lot of what happened during COVID-and teaching didn't really have a lot to do with the actual teaching. I think it had a lot to do with what was happening when you weren't teaching, and it makes you think about balance. So, it made a lot of people sit down and really think about, "Do I really want to do this? Is it worth it?" And I think we're starting to just go back to what we were doing before. And that's why everybody's dropping out because people realize this was kind of crazy. So, I think what we need to get out of it is it's band. It is just band, you know, a lot of things are way more important, you know, than ones that LGPE. And yes, you should want to get ones at LGPE, but I don't think you should be killing yourself trying to do that. You know? I think a lot of other things are more important. I just wanted to say that because that's what I got out of out of all this and. I think everybody kind of realized that, but I'm sad because I feel like once things started coming back up, we started going right back to it.<sup>219</sup>

As director's evaluate their calendars and priorities, Educator 5 seemed to believe the excess of activities contributed to personal and professional balance issues. Returning to the pre-pandemic events calendar of the 2018–2019 school year for many directors was challenging. Multiple directors discussed experiencing margin in their schedules. Many of the interviewees utilized that time to examine past decisions and contemplate new possibilities for their life and program.

Identifying and acknowledging challenges was a consistent leadership action from each educator. An objective understanding of current issues in music education and how they affect the band director's classroom was exhibited by each educator. Educator 1's demonstration of high-level leadership was expressed on two occasions during her interview. As discussed in the literature review, deciding which instruments to offer in beginning band may have incited trepidation and anxiety for other band teachers. Concerning the hypothesis regarding instrument selection, the presumption leaned towards offering all possible instruments to discourage students from quitting or not joining band. Educator 1 and Educator 3 challenged this fear by offering fewer instruments believing this path was best for students. When discussing instrument transitions, Educator 1 stated:

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<sup>219</sup> Educator 5, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

We actually ended up delaying our switch process because, you know, it was impossible for us to do it because we couldn't have parents come to the building. We couldn't have kids testing in certain locations. You know, there was no way we could have done it the way we normally do it, or even like an edited version. So I held off switching. I prepared them at the end of their sixth-grade year. And then when they came in at the beginning of seventh grade, that's when we placed all the kids on the new instruments. And because we were starting over anyway, nobody was really behind. Like we all just started together.

Although Educator 1's initial decision to begin students on four instruments was pedagogically based, her understanding of COVID-19 and the difficulty of properly transitioning students to other instruments seems to demonstrate clarity in her leadership. An additional side of action-oriented leadership is to know when to change course. Educator 3 adopted a similar instrument selection approach to educator 1. According to the interviewees, most students achieve on pace with the class on their first instrument, however; some students may need interference to prevent falling behind. Despite the plan to shift students to different instruments simultaneously, exceptions should be made. Educator 3 asserts:

And then of course, when you get a kid, it's just really you can see it. They're not working out on an instrument. Then I'm like, you're going to switch to the saxophone, and you just play saxophone because I mean, anybody can get a sound on a saxophone and that's fine, but this baby was struggling on clarinet and flute. And then I got one baby that no matter what she tried, she struggled, and she ended up playing the flute but I think I will put her in percussion. But she hates loud sounds, and we know percussion can be loud, so I don't know, maybe I'll put keep her on the keyboard side of the ensemble. She'll have special privileges, whereas most percussion students, they'll learn all the instruments. But she can stay on keyboard and do some of the auxiliary stuff, you know, that kind of thing.<sup>220</sup>

### *Vision Casting*

Educator 2 shared an effective approach to leading students and parents in his community. He asserts:

Yeah, I yeah, I've learned quite a bit. I guess I've tried to tell myself I'm not teaching music, I'm teaching young people, and I've tried to be more open with the kids with

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<sup>220</sup> Educator 3, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

parameters, of course, and building appropriate relationships so they want to come into the band room. That doesn't work on everybody, but a lot of the kids, you know? If they understand what the goal is and where we're going, I think they'll be more likely to go along with you. So I've tried to explain that more and sooner. so even to the young kids. "I know you're in sixth-grade man, but man, you make a great sound. And I see you in the top band at the high school in five years." That's where we're headed right now. We're going down that road. And you can see it in their eyes like, Oh, so you know, I said, I see you in the top band someday, but you have to go down this road. You can't go down that other road. You got to go this way. I'm just pointing you in the direction, but you have to do the work.<sup>221</sup>

Educator 2's vision for students beyond their time in the middle school may adjust the trajectory of the student's belonging in band. Although multiple performances, auditions, competitions, and events have been cancelled, Educator 2 continues to instill hope and belief in students to continue playing their instrument for enjoyment and excellence.

Educator 6 employed a different approach before and during the pandemic. He suggested, "having your prominent alumni come back and speak to the kids. Those former students who have taken a positive path forward for current students to follow are great ambassadors."<sup>222</sup>

Leading a band program often includes directing parents. Educator 6 reflected, "We did a lot of parent building so that we had the parents on board and have the students more likely to participate on a higher level."<sup>223</sup>

### *Gratitude*

Expressing gratitude during the pandemic can be challenging, however, Educator 4 conveyed delight in his ensemble during the uncertain times of returning to in-person and hybrid learning. He stated:

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<sup>221</sup> Educator 2, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

<sup>222</sup> Educator 6, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

I was really pleased with my ensemble, particularly my marching band group and my middle school students that worked within that group. Just the way that all of those students persevered through those challenges just to meet every single step along the way, whether it is making sure that when we arrive at school, we do the temperature checks. Getting their stuff quickly and then going straight outside. Every challenge that I had in place for them, they rose to the occasion and exceeded my expectations for that because they wanted to play. and I think school administrators or other folks thought we should put the brakes on this and just do music theory. But I can't even express the gratitude that my students had for being able to have the opportunity to play, even if it was with instrument masks and bell covers. The opportunities that they had to continue to play and grow really helped them to push through a really challenging time, and it gave them that outlet that they really needed, and they were able and willing to make any sort of changes necessary to be able to do that.<sup>224</sup>

Gratitude seemed to be an effective and recurring feedback method for educators. Although the leader's expression of thanks may be appreciated by students, colleagues, and administrators, a similar effect can influence band directors to change course. Educator 1 has been conducting concerts for over two decades in gyms filled to capacity. Unfortunately, COVID-19 restrictions limited attendance and restricted many family members from viewing their student's performance. Educator 1 explained:

I will never do another concert without live streaming ever again. The gratitude from kids who have family members in other countries is a common occurrence in my classroom. For that kid's relative to be able to pop on at seven o'clock from Morocco and watch them play live is huge! And the concert is forever on our YouTube channel so they can go watch the concert. Whatever fundraiser we do, there will always be funds that will be designated for that recruitment strategy.<sup>225</sup>

Educator 1 found an additional benefit to a greater performing audience. Recruiting students into the band program with the aid of multi-media may allow increased enrollment without additional in-person engagement from the director.

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<sup>224</sup> Educator 4, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.

<sup>225</sup> Educator 1, "Reflections on Lessons Learned During COVID-19," 2022.



## Chapter Summary

The findings presented in this chapter demonstrated the diverse perspectives of the participants regarding their experiences teaching and leading before and during COVID-19. Educators began their interviews by reflecting on performance practices in band programs before March 2020. This information established events and structures before the mandated lockdown in the final three months of school. Responses were consistent between educators pertaining to concerts, fundraising, rehearsals, and meetings.

After sharing the details of a typical year in band, educators discussed the impact of COVID-19 on their programs. They also shared their ideas to rebuild their programs during distance learning and CDC regulations. The middle school directors contemplated strategies for starting beginning band while the high school band teachers attempted to safely navigate marching band activities. Throughout various blended instructional methods, high school directors began to learn more about their students' musical deficiencies online. Middle school directors seemed to veer more towards music technology and social emotional learning.

Critical components of each interview contributed to a re-envisioned middle school band experience. Each educator shared insights regarding their teacher training programs, new skills, and abandoned pre-pandemic practices. When questioned about resources utilized to prepare teaching during the pandemic, many educators mentioned connecting with colleagues and experts online. Accessibility to leaders in the band directing field increased immediately. Although the initial meetings primarily focused on teaching during the pandemic; professors and popular secondary educators continued to share information on pedagogy, culture, and instruction.

The participants concluded the interview by reflecting on personal philosophies, adjustments to perspectives on their positions, and a deeper understanding of relationships. Many directors confessed to experiencing margin in their schedules for the first time in their career. Due to the pandemic's elimination of concerts, rehearsals, and face-to-face meetings, educators allowed themselves to re-evaluate their purpose and motives for becoming and remaining a band director.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION**

### **Introduction**

Despite an abundance of strategies and methodologies for creating healthy cultures within the middle school band program, common issues regarding the middle grades band experience may have been exacerbated due to COVID-19. This chapter summarizes the study, its purpose, significance, and findings relative to the research questions. This chapter also addresses the research limitations and potential next steps for future research. Application of the findings and possible implications for utilizing findings will be included.

### **Summary of Study**

The study's research questions guided an analysis of the pre-existing problems related to traditional middle school band practices and instrumental music teacher training programs. Following an inventory of general characteristics pertaining to the middle school band experience, various focus areas were addressed through a background of traditional challenges and potential solutions to familiar issues magnified by COVID-19.

The current literature identified various conflicts pertaining to the instructor and fundamental practices, instrument selection, motivation, and teacher training programs. Each subject matter contained varying perspectives concerning importance, consequence, and long-term implications. The literature review addressed opposing viewpoints on numerous positions. Areas of contention included prioritization of music theory and executive skills above ear training, reduced instrumentation or full instrumentation for beginners, the impact of rewards as motivation, and the relevance of teacher training programs.

The methodology sought to pursue new information regarding pre-COVID-19 practices through ten interviews of a diverse panel of educators. Each participant completed a brief

questionnaire to form a profile for the reader. Although the information supplied by the participants makes a referenced profile, anonymity remained a priority by withholding degree information, employment locations, and residency. Following an agreement to the consent form, the educators recalled their pre-COVID experiences pertaining to teaching and leading band programs, the impact of COVID-19, their approach to solutions, and the influence of their teacher training programs.

### **Summary of Purpose**

This qualitative historical research study aimed to examine the current practices of middle school band directors and their efficacy pertaining to the goals of the band program. Additional research consisted of consequences exacerbated by COVID-19. These repercussions may have a long-lasting impact for future educators of students experiencing middle school band during the pandemic. An examination of current band director reflections and solutions may guide new practices for leading middle school band programs after COVID-19.

### **Summary of Significance**

Throughout the study, a diverse panel of educators shared challenges, perspectives, and solutions utilized in their school's band program. Although an event of comparable devastation may be improbable, reflection regarding the efficacy of strategies, pedagogy, and methodology may serve students and directors well for external events negatively impacting school attendance and in-person learning. School administrators and educators may consider prioritizing skills associated with successful remote learning. The student's ability to self-correct and demonstrate self-awareness may become a greater focus of the band curriculum.

Additional considerations included increased autonomy by directors regarding student safety amidst starting students on new instruments or aiding retention of knowledge and membership from prior years. Many participants recommended a proactive approach to leading the band program through COVID-19. Despite the unique challenges related to creating protocols for in-person and remote learning, many band teachers took advantage of the opportunity to try new approaches to instrumental instruction. Multiple middle school directors in the study confirmed a shift in decision making from primarily focusing on music making to increased consideration of the students' social and emotional well-being.

The significance of the research should aid in creating a welcoming and thriving culture for all students. Instructional clarity for band students learning in person and at home is critical to teacher efficacy. Further attention on equity, access, and resources for students outside of the classroom may influence instructor planning for increased effectiveness. Although equity challenges existed before the pandemic, remote learning may have diminished noticeable disadvantages of students when they are not in the classroom.

### **Summary of Findings**

Despite the diverse teaching experiences, profiles, conditions, and challenges, teaching and leading during COVID-19 revealed three primary themes: A need for increased training on technology used in the classroom, reprioritization of focus regarding students, music, and band, and additional opportunities for pre-service teachers to gain teaching experience. The interview conducted by the researcher and participants consisted of four sections: band programs before COVID-19, teacher preparation, student relationships and motivation, and practice reconsiderations. Responses for section one included multiple performances, travel, fundraisers, after-school and weekend obligations, contests, and routine in-person instruction. Following the

initial impact of COVID-19 and remote learning becoming the standard, many educators began to explore online services equipped to support instructional delivery. Microsoft Teams and the Google Educator Suite were frequent tools for teachers and administrators.

Educators shared a range of responses equating to seeking recommendations online through social media and aerosol studies addressing the band's safety amid COVID-19. Despite the daily use of technology, each participant lamented the lack of internet-based resources relative to instruction. The interviews confirmed that the abundant nature of the technology used during COVID-19 positively influenced their instructional practices by becoming more efficient with assessments, communication, and feedback.

In addition to increased training on technology in the classroom, in-service educators expressed limited contentment with their teacher training programs before COVID-19 and vigorously encouraged pre-service teachers to take the initiative to engage in teaching beyond their degree requirements. The participants believed an expanded awareness of the classroom during their training program may heighten clarity related to the expectations placed on in-service educators. Further recommendations included exploring diverse genres of music and cultures during their undergraduate degrees.

Based on the findings, students' social and emotional well-being became a top priority for educators, primarily middle school instructors. The pandemic's impact demonstrated resilience and exhaustion from students and colleagues. Former motivational strategies included trips, travel, concerts, and competition. When the COVID-19 restrictions were in effect, all aforementioned means of motivation were suspended along with rewards reserved for in-person learning such as treats and grades.

The responses reported a philosophical shift from band directors amid the suspension of performances, competition, and travel. Multiple participants experienced challenges regarding student engagement. Each educator shared the importance of the community aspect of band for the students' social and emotional well-being. Although the existing literature demonstrated various music-centered discussions, the impact of COVID-19 seemed to influence a reprioritization of students, music, and band.

### **Limitations**

The study's limitations include the absence of information regarding the participants' school history, resume of achievement, student success, and future interviews to compare current and future perspectives. Although the study addresses many issues and potential solutions from a diverse panel of educators, additional information may have been helpful to connect new insights into why the interviewee possessed their viewpoint of each question. These limitations include the anonymity of each educator.

Supplementary study limitations include the number of participants. Despite a range of experiences, a greater number of interviewees may have created further connections and perspectives. A larger pool of participants may have offered patterns specific to unique environments and cultures.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

#### *Pedagogy and Program Structure*

Examining each grade level with specific concerns during the 2019–2020 school year could be an illuminating study. Beginning with fifth-grade students in 2019–2020, inquiries may include why they decided to join the band despite missing significant portions of the recruiting

process. Future researchers may choose to analyze the learning pace of instrumental music skills following the interruption of general music during elementary school and the adherence of the Colorado State Aerosol Study's recommendations. Potential concerns may include limited breathing exercises and embouchure development issues due to wearing a playing mask when learning a new instrument.

Each middle school grade experienced interrupted instruction during various points of development. The repercussions of students in sixth-grade band during the 2019–2020 school year may offer insight into the pacing of their curriculum compared to counterparts able to complete their first year of band in-person. Areas of focus may include assessment frequency, instrumentation, and attendance. Students in seventh and eighth-grade band presumably experienced different consequences from the pandemic's disruption of in-person learning. Information regarding their unique experience may offer the most current data regarding the efficacy of virtual auditions, concerts, playing assessments, and quarantining with respect to ensemble success in high school.

In addition to duplicating this study in five years for participants to reflect on their responses and potential shifts in philosophy, a qualitative study on band directors completing student teaching in 2019, 2020, and 2021 may offer further understanding into COVID-19's impact on teacher preparation programs. A systematic investigation into teacher attrition, current pedagogical practices, methodologies, and technology use could corroborate or refute the perspectives of the present study.



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**APPENDIX A:**  
**IRB Documentation – IRB Approval Letter**

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Date: 2-22-2022

**IRB #:** IRB-FY21-22-309

**Title:** Reflecting on Lessons Learned During Covid-19: Reenvisioning Middle School Band Programs After Covid-19.

**Creation Date:** 10-5-2021

**End Date:**

**Status:** Approved

**Principal Investigator:** McKinley Stinson

**Review Board:** Research Ethics Office

**Sponsor:**

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### Study History

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Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Exempt	Decision	<span style="color: #A52A2A;">Exempt - Limited IRB</span>
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**APPENDIX B:****Recruitment Letter to Participants**

Dear Prospective Participant:

As a graduate student in the School of Music at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Music Education degree. The purpose of my research is to address the efficacy of standard practices amongst middle school band directors before COVID-19 related responsive actions to limitations and restrictions caused by the pandemic. The research questions regarding this study pertain to pre-existing problems in middle school band programs that were exposed by COVID-19 along with traditional and innovative methods used by teacher training programs to prepare preservice teachers to lead band programs during and after COVID-19, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Eligible participants must be 18 or older with experience in music education or administration. Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete a virtual audio and video recorded interview. It should take approximately 30–45 minutes to complete the virtual interview. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please contact me for more information and to schedule an interview.

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it via email before the time of the interview.

Sincerely,

McKinley Stinson  
Doctor of Music Education candidate



## APPENDIX C:

### Consent Letter to Participants

#### Consent

**Title of the Project:** Reflecting on Lessons Learned During COVID-19: Re-envisioning Middle School Band Programs after COVID-19

**Principal Investigator:** McKinley Stinson, Doctor of Music Education candidate, Liberty University School of Music

#### Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 or older with experience in music education or administration. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

#### What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to address and contrast the efficacy of standard practices amongst middle school band directors before COVID-19 with responsive actions to limitations and restrictions caused by the pandemic according to secondary, collegiate, and administrative music personnel throughout the Southeast United States.

#### What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Participate in a virtual interview. The interview should take approximately 30–45 minutes to complete and will be audio and video recorded.

#### How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include information that may be helpful to those teaching middle school band and teacher preparation programs of instrumental music educators.

#### What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

#### How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

#### **How will you be compensated for being part of the study?**

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study

#### **Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

#### **What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?**

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

#### **Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?**

The researcher conducting this study is McKinley Stinson. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Mindy Damon.

#### **Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515.

*Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.*

#### **Your Consent**

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.*

The researcher has my permission to audio and video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

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Printed Subject Name

---

Signature & Date

**APPENDIX D:****Participant Interview Questionnaire**

## Interview Questions

**Part 1****Demographics**

Your Gender

1. Male
2. Female
3. Prefer Not to Answer

What is your race or ethnicity?

1. American Indian
2. Asian
3. Black or African American
4. White
5. Hispanic or Latino
6. Native Hawaiian
7. Other
8. Prefer Not to Answer

What is your highest degree obtained?

1. Bachelors
2. Masters
3. Specialist
4. Doctoral
5. No Degree obtained

What grade/education level(s) do you currently teach or administrate? (check all that apply)

1. Elementary/Primary School
2. Middle/Junior High
3. High School
4. College/University

How many years of experience do you have as a teacher or administrator?

1. None
2. 1–5

3. 6–10
4. 11–15
5. 16–20
6. 21+

How many years have you been employed in your current teaching position? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you certified in Music Education?

1. Yes
2. No

Please list other or additional certifications. \_\_\_\_\_

If applicable, what is your primary instrument? \_\_\_\_\_

How often do you perform on your primary instrument?

1. Never
2. 1–4 performances per year
3. 5–10 performances per year
4. More than 11 performances per year

## Part 2

### I. Band Programs Before COVID-19.

1. Please describe the school year by sharing events, rehearsal schedules, concerts, fundraisers, and other occurrences involving the band program before March 2020.
2. Regarding the typical happenings described, which occasions remained in their same form and delivery after March 2020?
3. Which practices were discontinued due to the COVID-19 pandemic?
4. Did you adopt or create new practices for achieving pre-COVID-19 guidelines and standards?

### II. Administrator and Teacher Preparation

1. How do you feel your teacher or administrator preparation program prepared you regarding leading or supervising successful band programs before COVID-19?

2. Which resources did you find most helpful when navigating and supporting music education amid COVID-19 restrictions? (i.e., online groups, mentors, colleagues, etc.)
3. What recommendations would you make for your teacher or administrator preparation programs to best prepare educators to thrive in, during, and after COVID-19?

### III. Student Relationships and Motivation

1. What methods and strategies did you employ to build relationships and motivate student participation in the band program before March 2020?
2. Have social distancing and other COVID restrictions diminished connection and engagement between students and staff?

### IV. Practice Reconsiderations

1. Have you discovered practices consistently employed in your teaching and leading before COVID-19 that may warrant reconsideration (i.e., student instrument selection, recruiting, funding, professional development, etc.)? If so, please share your perspective.
2. Are there any practices primarily utilized due to the Co vid restrictions that would have enhanced teaching and leading prior to COVID-19?