PROMOTING SELF-REGULATED LEARNING AND INTRINSIC MOTIVATION IN THE

MIDDLE SCHOOL CHORAL CLASSROOM THROUGH e-PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT:

A QUALITATIVE INSTRUMENTAL CASE STUDY

by

Melissa Legge Mauck

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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APPROVED BY:

Gail Collins, EdD, Committee Chair

Tony Ryff, PhD, Committee Member

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative instrumental case study was to examine the perceptions and experiences of middle school students who exhibit self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation as they utilize e-Portfolio assessment in chorus. The theoretical framework for this study was Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory, which defines intrinsic and extrinsic sources of motivation with three psychological needs being met: competence, relatedness, and autonomy. Students who were engaged in various levels of a middle school choral program were selected as participants using purposeful sampling. Data were collected through field notes generated during individual interviews, observations, and focus group discussions with selected student participants, as well as physical artifacts. Data were analyzed using reading and memoing, categorizing strategies, and connecting strategies. The results generated four themes that middle school chorus students perceived as sources of motivation regarding e-Portfolio assessment and self-regulated learning: (a) participation as a source of motivation in middle school chorus; (b) differentiated types of assessment are key motivating factors for achievement among advanced middle school chorus students; (c) chorus meets social and emotional needs for middle school students; and (d) middle school chorus students need various sources of motivation to participate or complete work. The implications of this study indicate that school policies and practices need to be reevaluated to include Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) strategies, required fine arts credits, competency-based grading strategies, and individualized goal setting and self-monitoring.

Keywords: assessment, e-Portfolio, chorus, motivation, persistence, self-regulated learning

Copyright Page

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, who have sacrificed so much throughout this process, all while believing in me and my doctoral journey. As my first teacher, I want to thank my mother, Karen, a retired special education teacher and administrator, for instilling a love of teaching and learning at a very young age. Along with my father, Mike, the two of you never failed to love, support, and encourage me through the most challenging of times. I will be forever grateful.

To my children, Garrett, Brent, and Carson, I appreciate the time and space that you allowed me to finish this degree. My hope is that I have set the example of persistence, dedication, hard work, and faith in God above while striving for your goals in life. As you pursue your dreams, whatever they may be, my prayer is that my accomplishment will remind you to never stop learning. Education is a valuable component in all phases of your life. We accomplished my goal as a family, and I will never forget that. I love you.

Lastly, to my loving and supportive husband, Willie, who gave me the encouragement I needed to go back to school and pursue this lifelong dream. Words will never be enough to thank you for the countless hours that you sacrificed while I worked on research. I appreciate your selflessness as you allowed me the time to work, ears to vent, a shoulder to cry on, and the prayers that you lifted up on my behalf. I love you . . . more.

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First of all, I never would have started this process if it was not for my very first music education professor at Shenandoah University, Dr. Darla Hanley. I can still remember our conversation outside of the chapel prior to my graduation in 1995 encouraging me to pursue a doctorate so that I could teach at the collegiate level. You always saw my potential and gave me opportunities that were unprecedented for an undergraduate music education student. Your words did not fall on deaf ears. They continued to ring for almost 25 years before I finally listened.

Secondly, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge my dissertation chair, Dr. Gail Collins, for the countless hours of reading and editing so many iterations of this dissertation. Not only did she provide me with so much guidance, but she gave me the encouragement to continue to strive for the goal. I am so thankful that God chose her to be my chair as she not only has a love of education but also a passion for music. As a team, it was a perfect match. And, of course, it was made even better with Dr. Tony Ryff on my dissertation committee. His attention to detail was greatly appreciated and allowed me to become an even better writer. I cannot acknowledge either of you enough for your confidence in my research study and my abilities every step of the way.

I also want to acknowledge the many colleagues and students who have molded and shaped me as a music educator over the past 27 years of my career. The experience I gained by working with each one of you helped me filter through potential topics for research and

eventually land on something that I am so passionate about in my own classroom. I have so many colleagues within education who have taken on the quest for a doctorate. Some finished and now hold that beloved prefix in front of their name, and some did not. Nonetheless, each of them offered advice and support that got me to this point, and I appreciate that so much.

Lastly, I could not have done all of this without the students and director who so willingly volunteered their time to meet with me and share everything they have experienced regarding self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation in the middle school choral classroom along with e-Portfolio assessment. Their willingness to be vulnerable and put their trust in me and my research was deeply appreciated.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Central Research Question (CRQ)

Electronic Portfolio (e-Portfolio)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Newtown Valley Middle School (NVMS)

Northern Virginia Public Schools (NVPS)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-Regulated Learning (SRL)

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Sub-Question (SQ)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative instrumental case study was to examine the perceptions and experiences of middle school students who exhibit self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation as they utilize e-Portfolio assessment in chorus. This chapter describes the background and current state of authentic, formative, and e-Portfolio assessment as well as motivation and persistence within the secondary choral field. The social contexts of e-Portfolio assessment are discussed in terms of student learning, persistence, and achievement. The self-determination theory (SDT) as defined by Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000, 2017) provides the theoretical framework for this study. The problem statement, purpose, significance of the study, research questions, and definitions are also presented in this chapter. Lastly, the summary provides a review of the need for authentic and formative assessment, specifically e-Portfolio assessment, within the middle school choral classroom and the researcher's intent in investigating its influence on motivation and self-regulated learning through the perceptions of the participants of the study.

Background

Over the course of the 20th and 21st centuries, societal demands on education have promoted the philosophy of accomplishing many tasks within a minimal amount of time (Burke, 2015; Furby, 2013; Gerritsen-van Leeuwenkamp et al., 2017). One of the key indicators that society has used to gauge the education system has been academic achievement (Karimi & Sotoodeh, 2020; van Uden et al., 2014). Assessment practices have been predominantly standardized, making it easier for educators to grade them more efficiently. Assessment in music education has not been immune to this phenomenon (Burke, 2015; Furby, 2013). Music students

have had to adapt to a prescriptive discipline which is reliant on the music teacher's dominant teaching paradigm within the classroom (Burke, 2015; Evans, 2015; Furby, 2013; Parkes et al., 2017). The music teacher decides the repertoire, how it will be taught and learned, and how and when it will be performed and assessed (Evans, 2015; Parkes et al., 2017). Music classrooms have often appeared controlling to music students as teachers display and expect perfectionist behaviors (Burke, 2015). In addition, assessment within music classrooms continues to be predominantly based on non-musical attributes such as attendance and participation (Russell & Austin, 2010). As music students have remained passive in their learning processes, their motivation and self-regulation of their own learning within the music discipline has been stifled (Evans, 2015; Furby, 2013).

Historical Context

According to philosophers such as Howard Gardner and John Dewey, the purpose of education is to prepare students for life through an understanding not only of the past, present, and future world around them but also of one's self within that world (Silveira, 2013). Music education has typically used whole group explicit assessments such as "good" and "excellent" praise which are followed by clear directions from the teacher (Ivaldi, 2019; Johnson, 2019). This is typically a transition to the next segment, piece, or conclusion of the rehearsal or class and provides students with very little opportunity to engage in dialogue about the learning taking place (Ivaldi, 2019; Johnson, 2019). In addition, formal assessments of student learning within the music classroom have relied on summative assessments that involve traditional grading (Klapp, 2018). Klapp (2018) also suggested that summative assessments can impact students' self-concept as well as their motivation for learning and achievement in school. Klapp defined self-concept as the perception of oneself formed by the personal experiences with and of their

environment. Motivation and persistence have been influenced due to academic self-concept (Klapp, 2018).

Ivaldi (2019) suggested that students must be part of the assessment process so they know what they were trying to achieve from a position of self-knowledge. Individual student growth and continuous improvement became the focus for many core subjects as a shift in instructional strategies began in the 21st century (Hardin & Wright, 2017). Portfolios emerged as an alternative form of assessment to measure student growth. Portfolio assessment has been defined as a collection of student artifacts to demonstrate an individual student's abilities acquired over a period of time. Typically, the student has autonomy over what artifacts are selected to be part of the portfolio that is turned in for assessment (Hardin & Wright, 2017; Yang et al., 2016).

Derived from portfolio assessment, the e-Portfolio provides students the opportunity to showcase their achievement and learning in a digital depository in order to support their technological needs. They allow students to choose artifacts that show what they are currently learning and achieving as well as what they can and/or will achieve in the future (Silveira, 2013; Yang et al., 2016). Electronic portfolios have become increasingly popular over the last 10 years as they support self-directed and self-regulated learning strategies within a digital society (Beckers et al., 2016). Teachers in other academic areas have found them to be more advantageous over traditional paper-and-pencil portfolios because of the access and ability to include multimedia along with self-reflections of personal growth and development (Beckers et al., 2016; Bennett et al., 2016; Chang et al., 2018; Rowley & Munday, 2014; Yang et al., 2016).

Social Context

Recently, there has been more research aimed at broadening the spectrum of assessment within music education (Crochet & Green, 2012; Furby, 2013; Hope & Wait, 2013; McPhail &

McNeill, 2019; Russell & Austin, 2010; Sanchez et al., 2017; Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017; Silveira, 2013). As educational reform emphasizes a participatory and collaborative approach to the classroom, music education should be responding to the individual needs of young developing musicians and teaching them how to participate in their own independent learning (Crochet & Green, 2012; McPhail & McNeill, 2019; Sanchez et al., 2017; Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017). Summative assessment has been used in chorus classrooms for many years as music educators have given participatory and attendance grades for singing in a final concert (Russell & Austin, 2010). Presently, many of the assessments utilized in chorus classrooms are too narrowly focused on participation and attendance, which becomes problematic within an educational paradigm that is now pursuing individualized and student-centered learning and assessment strategies (Hope & Wait, 2013). Researchers have determined that summative assessments alone do not give students beneficial, individualized feedback on their work. Therefore, utilizing complementary and overlapping formative and summative assessments is much more effective within chorus classrooms (Crochet & Green, 2012; Furby, 2013; Hope & Wait, 2013; McPhail & McNeill, 2019; Russell & Austin, 2010; Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017). Research indicates that utilizing grades and rewards alone within the music discipline enhances ego rather than involvement (Chen et al., 2017; Crochet & Green, 2012; Evans, 2015; Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017). This can potentially be damaging to students who may suffer from low self-esteem and low achievement resulting in learned helplessness.

For the reward vs. punishment stigma to be removed from assessment, it is vital for music educators to investigate types of formative assessment within the music classroom (Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017). Formative assessment is when the teacher makes observations, suggestions, notes, and plans for students to continually improve in their academic or performance area

(Crochet & Green, 2012; Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017). The role of the music educator in this type of learning environment must change from an expert to a facilitator as students invest in their own learning process. Formative assessment allows music educators the opportunity to use evidence of student learning to inform their teaching practices in order to meet individual student needs (Chen et al., 2017; Furby, 2013; McPhail & McNeill, 2019; Silveira, 2013). Three questions characterize effective formative assessment: "Where are we going? Where are we now? Where to next?" (Chen et al., 2017, p. 298). Music educators who use these three questions to uncover the gap between the current and desired learning outcomes will be more effective than those who prescribe and control the learning outcomes within the classroom (Chen et al., 2017). Self-assessment, peer assessment, and formative feedback through the use of e-Portfolio assessment improve motivation and allow music students to develop a self-regulative attitude toward their own learning (Chen et al., 2017; Sanchez et al., 2017; Silveira, 2013). Formative assessments such as the use of e-Portfolios in the secondary chorus classroom can positively impact student learning, persistence, and achievement (Chen et al., 2017; Crochet & Green, 2012; Furby, 2013; Hope & Wait, 2013; McPhail & McNeill, 2019; Russell & Austin, 2010; Sanchez et al., 2017; Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017; Silveira, 2013).

In addition to educational reform promoting formative assessment, the landscape of traditional educational assessment is rapidly changing with the adoption of student growth measurement. This is defined as the change in student achievement between two points in time, such as the beginning to the end of the academic year (Wesolowski, 2015). Student growth measurement is attained by setting growth targets that can be differentiated in three ways: whole-group, tiered/group, or individual. Whole-group targets are for ensembles of similar performance achievement and experience where the entire group has the same learning target (Wesolowski,

2015). Tiered/group targets categorize students within the ensemble based on performance

achievement data (Wesolowski, 2015). For example, when students are given a sight-singing

benchmark, students would be categorized into Level I, II, or III sight-singing difficulty levels

based on benchmarks from the state chorus association. Individualized targets utilize customized

goals for each individual student within the ensemble (Wesolowski, 2015). Electronic portfolio

assessment allows music educators to collect, track, and report individual student growth for all

students. This not only improves the motivation, self-regulated learning, and persistence for

students but also informs teachers of each student's strengths and weaknesses (Chen et al., 2017;

Crochet & Green, 2012; Furby, 2013; Hope & Wait, 2013; McPhail & McNeill, 2019; Russell &

Austin, 2010; Sanchez et al., 2017; Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017; Silveira, 2013).

Theoretical Context

It is vital for music educators to understand motivation as they address issues surrounding

how students learn, persist, and achieve in music classes. Motivation is broadly defined as an

intrinsic or extrinsic state or process by which goal-directed activity is initiated and keeps one

engaged (Evans, 2015; Ormrod, 2012). Schatt (2018) suggested that music educators need to

encourage and associate music study with as many intrinsic motivational behaviors as possible.

A disconnect exists within current literature between various theoretical perspectives and the

motivation needed to persist in music. Research on motivation within music education still lacks

a well-defined theoretical approach that is practical for music educators (Evans, 2015).

Current literature suggests using SDT to give music education researchers a framework to

explain a wide range of behaviors and factors of interest in studying motivation within the music

discipline (Evans, 2015; Krause et al., 2019; MacIntyre et al., 2018; Virkkula, 2020). Resulting

from research on other motivation theories, Deci and Ryan (Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 1985,

2000, 2008, 2014, 2017) developed SDT that defines intrinsic and extrinsic sources of motivation. They suggested that internal, external, and contextual factors are argued to influence one's fulfillment of three essential needs or constructs: autonomy, relatedness, and competency (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Autonomy refers to the need for individuals to feel that their efforts in a task are self-governed or self-endorsed. Relatedness is the desire to feel connected socially in a task. Competence is the need to feel effective or successful in one's efforts (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Krause et al., 2019). SDT asserts that these three constructs are universal and must be met to result in intrinsic motivation.

Within music education, these needs must be prioritized within music making opportunities (Krause et al., 2019). The fulfillment of these needs increases or decreases one's motivation to complete or participate in a task (Deci, 1971; Deci et al., 2001; Deci & Ryan, 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2000) such as singing or playing a musical instrument (Krause et al., 2019). This means that SDT can be used as a lens to understand one's engagement and participation within an activity such as chorus. Motivation is a critical factor in not only starting but persisting in musical ensembles (Krause et al., 2019). SDT also places a strong emphasis on the quality of motivation within music ensembles which directly relates to purposeful and meaningful strategies within the classroom, with direct implications on motivation and persistence (Evans, 2015; Krause et al., 2019).

Chorus is typically offered as an elective activity within middle and high schools. Since SDT has been consistently used as one of the most significant motivation theories to study engagement, motivation, and persistence in other elective activities, it provides an effective lens for exploring motivation and persistence within middle school chorus for this study (Krause et al., 2019; Virkkula, 2020). Music is a complex and multi-faceted subject which requires

motivation that will promote internal energy and direction (MacIntyre et al., 2018). SDT was used in this study to understand how utilizing e-Portfolio assessment might meet the three essential needs of intrinsic motivation: autonomy, relatedness, and competency, thus increasing one's motivation to participate in middle school chorus and persist with the elective into the high school chorus program. The e-Portfolio assessment promotes one's competency by self-evaluating group and individual performances, allowing the student to feel effective in their efforts. Relatedness to others is promoted through the socialization of middle school chorus, as individuals are automatically integrated into a social group. Autonomy is given to students as they select the artifacts that will go into the e-Portfolio for assessment. These include group and individual performances as well as written artifacts.

<div align="center">**Problem Statement**</div>

The problem is that while other academic areas are focusing on educational reform emphasizing individualized participatory and collaborative approaches to the classroom, music education is not transforming traditional methods of an antiquated rehearsal and performance-based educational paradigm (Denis, 2018; Ferm Almqvist et al., 2017; Henry, 2015; Hope & Wait, 2013; McMillan, 2018; McPhail & McNeill, 2019; McQuarrie, 2013; Wesolowski, 2015; Woody, 2021). Conventional assessment practices within many secondary chorus classrooms continue to focus on nonmusical criteria such as group participation and attendance (Hope & Wait, 2013; McPhail & McNeill, 2019; Russell & Austin, 2010). Students within the chorus discipline are not being assessed with instruments that are fundamentally appropriate for the singing discipline (Furby, 2013; Silveira, 2013). Instead, outdated assessment practices are coupled with short-term extrinsic motivators such as ranking systems and extrinsic rewards as well as the traditional grading system (Denis, 2018; Ferm Almqvist et al., 2017; Henry, 2015;

McPhail & McNeill, 2019; McQuarrie, 2013; Wesolowski, 2015; Woody, 2021). Current literature suggests the choral discipline requires assessment strategies that place the focus on long-term goals for longevity, motivation, patience, and persistence (Crochet & Green, 2012; Denis, 2018; Ferm Almqvist et al., 2017; Furby, 2013; Henry, 2015; McPhail & McNeill, 2019; McQuarrie, 2013; Silveira, 2013; Wesolowski, 2015; Woody, 2021). Participation grades and ranking systems have been used by middle and high school chorus teachers for years as forms of extrinsic motivation. These are used to promote practice goals and improve achievement levels with hopes of improving intrinsic motivation and self-regulated learning (Woody, 2021). In addition, group assessments have been utilized over assessments that hold students accountable for their individual level of performance within the group (Furby, 2013; Hope & Wait, 2013; McPhail & McNeill, 2019). Long-term growth, improvement, and persistence is not achieved through short-term extrinsic motivation (Karlen et al., 2019).

A significant gap exists in the literature on authentic, formative assessment within the middle school music classroom, especially chorus, which not only recognizes students' scaffolded abilities but also intrinsically motivates their self-regulated learning and persistence within the music discipline (Evans, 2015; Freer & Evans, 2018; Schatt, 2018). This significant gap, although not the problem that underlies this research, points to the need for this research examining the perceptions and experiences of middle school students enrolled in chorus using e-Portfolio assessments. The immense motivation needed within the chorus classroom becomes even more difficult for students who lack the support and resources necessary for sustainability and persistence (Denis, 2018; Ferm Almqvist et al., 2017; Hendricks, 2014; Henry, 2015; López-Íñiguez & Pozo, 2016; McQuarrie, 2013; Parkes et al., 2017; Wesolowski, 2015; Woody, 2021). The body of literature that connects formative, authentic, and individualized assessment

strategies and intrinsic motivation remains sparse within the choral discipline (Hendricks, 2014, 2016; López-Íñiguez & Pozo, 2016; Parkes et al., 2017). Even fewer studies have sought to examine student perceptions of the formative, authentic assessment strategies and their influence on intrinsic motivation within the middle school choral classroom.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative instrumental case study is to examine the perceptions and experiences of middle school students who exhibit self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation as they utilize e-Portfolio assessment in chorus. Electronic portfolio assessment is defined as a digital collection of a student's growth within the chorus discipline. It includes a collection of digital artifacts which include performances and accomplishments utilized for self-reflection (Bennett et al., 2016). The theory that guided this study is Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2000, 2017) SDT. The constructs in SDT are competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000, 2017). These constructs enable music education researchers and practitioners to address motivation through assessment within the middle school chorus classroom.

Significance of the Study

E-Portfolio assessment within a middle school chorus curriculum not only allows music students the opportunity to archive their performances, reflections, and accomplishments, but it also gives them a sense of identity within the discipline (Bennett et al., 2016; Silveira, 2013). Electronic portfolio assessment motivates chorus students to adopt goal-oriented thinking as they strive for competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Bennett et al., 2016; Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017; Silveira, 2013). Research suggests that e-Portfolio assessment also allows music students to self-regulate their own learning and understand their independent value within a group environment (Furby, 2013; Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017; Silveira, 2013). A recent qualitative study

of music education students in Slovenia indicated that many students express a negative attitude towards assessment when numerical grades are used (Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017). Electronic portfolio assessments allow students self-reflective and descriptive opportunities in order for them to participate in their own self-regulated process of music development (Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017). Yang et al. (2016) suggested that e-Portfolio assessment can have both a high-stakes summative function as well as a low-stakes formative function. The former is using the artifacts within the e-Portfolio as evidence of a certification or grade. The latter is using the artifacts within the e-Portfolio to inform and assist a student's individual learning process (Yang et al., 2016). This is more efficacious than traditional grades within a chorus class where the emphasis is on continued improvement.

Empirical Significance

The intent of this case study is to address the problem between the antiquated assessment practices currently used in most middle school chorus classrooms and the current literature on effective classroom assessment promoting self-efficacy and motivation (Denis, 2018; Ferm Almqvist et al., 2017; Henry, 2015; McMillan, 2018; McPhail & McNeill, 2019; McQuarrie, 2013; Wesolowski, 2015; Woody, 2021). Although there is literature on pedagogical strategies to promote self-efficacy and motivation within the middle school chorus classroom, there is very little empirical research on authentic, formative assessment strategies to improve the longevity, patience, and persistence needed within the chorus discipline (Evans, 2015; Freer & Evans, 2018; Schatt, 2018). This study contributes new information to the ongoing research on intrinsically motivating, student-centered assessment strategies that focus on long-term goals in the middle school classroom. Focusing this study on the middle school demographic also significantly contributes to the gap in current literature on motivation and persistence of

secondary chorus students (Evans, 2015; Freer & Evans, 2018; Henry, 2015; Hope & Wait, 2013; MacIntyre et al., 2018; McPhail & McNeill, 2019; McQuarrie, 2013; West, 2013; Woody, 2021).

Theoretical Significance

The theory used as a framework for this study is SDT. SDT defines intrinsic and extrinsic sources of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000, 2017) with three psychological needs being met: competence, relatedness, and autonomy. These needs, when met, are argued to offer the most high-quality levels of motivation, which result in enhanced performance, creativity, and persistence (Deci, 1971; Deci et al., 2001; Deci & Ryan, 2017; Evans, 2015; Freer & Evans, 2018; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Schatt, 2018; Valenzuela et al., 2018). The theoretical significance of the current study is that e-Portfolio assessment will be presented utilizing SDT as a framework to address intrinsic motivation and self-regulated learning within music education (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000, 2017; Evans, 2015; Freer & Evans, 2018; Schatt, 2018; Valenzuela et al., 2018). The findings of this study will help fill in the gap that exists between various theoretical perspectives regarding intrinsically motivating pedagogical strategies within the chorus classroom and types of assessment strategies that will induce the same type of intrinsic motivation improving longevity and persistence. Research on motivation and assessment within the middle school chorus classroom is active but lacking a well-defined theoretical connection (Evans, 2015).

Practical Significance

The findings of this study may assist practicing music educators in investigating new and improved approaches to motivating and assessing middle school choral students. The findings may aid current and future music educators in the longevity of their programs as students are intrinsically motivated to persist. Middle and high school administration will also have

information to guide them on the importance of self-regulated learning within chorus classrooms removing the previously prescribed standards of a "one size fits all" curriculum (Furby, 2013). The findings may benefit future researchers investigating critical areas of need in motivation and assessment within music education.

Research Questions

To better understand the phenomenon of e-Portfolio assessment in public middle school choral classrooms, the following central research question was developed to guide the study. The constructs from SDT were developed as sub-questions to better understand the influence of e-Portfolio assessment on intrinsic motivation and self-directed learning.

Central Research Question

How do participants perceive, value, and experience self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation opportunities using e-Portfolio assessment practices in the middle school choral classroom?

Sub Question One

What factors influence participants' perceptions of e-Portfolio assessment regarding competence in the middle school choral classroom?

Sub Question Two

What factors influence participants' perceptions of e-Portfolio assessment regarding relatedness in the middle school choral classroom?

Sub Question Three

What factors influence participants' perceptions of e-Portfolio assessment regarding autonomy in the middle school choral classroom?

Definitions

The following terms are defined to help the reader understand the context of each term in the study:

1. *Autonomy:* Self-regulating and being the causal agent of one's own life (Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 2017).

2. *Competence:* Seeking to control the outcome and experience mastery of the task (Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 2017).

3. *Extrinsic motivation:* The desire to do something because it leads to an outcome that is usually externally rewarding in nature (Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 2017).

4. *Intrinsic motivation:* The desire to do something because it is innately interesting or enjoyable, with self-satisfaction as the end reward (Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 2017).

5. *Motivation:* The feeling of being moved, energized, or activated toward achieving an end result (Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 2017).

6. *Relatedness:* Experiencing commonalities, interaction, and connectedness to others (Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 2017).

Summary

Secondary choral music education, specifically middle school, must seek new opportunities for formative assessment that are intrinsically motivating for all students (Crochet & Green, 2012; Hope & Wait, 2013; McPhail & McNeill, 2019; Russell & Austin, 2010). Primarily, five overall areas are the central focus of middle school choral music education within Virginia's public-school sector: theory/music literacy; individual/ensemble performance skills; music history and cultural context; analysis, evaluation, critique; and aesthetics (Music Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools, 2020). Formative assessment utilizes levels of

competency within these five areas such as beginning, intermediate, and mastery (Chen et al., 2017; Music Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools, 2020). Effective formative assessment research utilizing self-regulated and autonomous learning, however, is where current literature is failing music educators (Chen et al., 2017; Evans, 2015; Schatt, 2018). The need for formative assessment has been determined within secondary music education, increasing self-determination and self-regulated learning within the traditional rehearsal paradigm. Specific types of formative assessment have not been effectively researched and analyzed within this type of environment, which does not aid in the practicality for music educators seeking traditional assessment alternatives. Electronic portfolios have reportedly been successful in other core subjects, allowing students to chart growth through chosen documents and artifacts within the subject. Research suggests that e-Portfolio assessment is intrinsically motivating, resulting in improvement and persistence (Beckers et al., 2016; Bennett et al., 2016; Rowley & Munday, 2014). This study investigates the perceptions of e-Portfolio assessment on motivation and self-regulated learning among public middle school chorus students (Evans, 2015; Schatt, 2018).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Alternative forms of assessment within music education are a relevant and timely issue as educators move toward more self-regulated learning strategies within the middle school choral classroom. This literature review identifies studies that explore self-determination theory (SDT), the theory guiding this study. It will also include studies within the middle and high school choral discipline concerning persistence, intrinsic motivation, and self-regulated learning using e-Portfolio assessment. The first section of this chapter discusses Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2000, 2017) SDT, selected as the framework for this study. The second section synthesizes the literature pertaining to persistence within secondary choral music education programs. Finally, the literature review investigates studies regarding self-regulated learning and self-determination within secondary vocal education music programs and reviews studies relative to formative assessment and e-Portfolio assessment. This study seeks to address the gap in the literature that exists between various theoretical perspectives regarding intrinsically motivating pedagogical strategies within the secondary chorus classroom and types of authentic and formative assessment strategies, such as e-Portfolio assessment that will encourage intrinsic motivation, improving longevity and persistence. Research on motivation and assessment within the secondary chorus classroom is active but lacks a well-defined theoretical approach such as SDT (Evans, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks in qualitative research should challenge, expand, and build on the existing knowledge gleaned from previous research on a particular phenomenon. This aids in its prediction, understanding, and explanation (Galvan & Galvan, 2017). This literature review

examines how the phenomenon of e-Portfolio assessment relates to the SDT constructs of

competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000, 2017). These constructs

enable music education researchers and practitioners to address motivation through assessment

within the secondary chorus classroom. Broadly defining motivation as "the process by which

goal-directed activity is instigated or sustained" (Evans, 2015, p. 65), researchers have not

agreed on a single, theoretical lens to view motivation within the music education paradigm

(Evans, 2015).

SDT is a theory that describes conditions thought to be necessary for one to be motivated

and psychologically healthy (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2017; Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016). These

conditions are both intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is when one pursues an activity or

task because of the internal satisfaction it offers an individual (Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 1985,

2014; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016; Vergara-Morales & Del Valle, 2021).

Extrinsic motivation is when one pursues an activity due to a proposed reward, approval from

others, or to avoid punishment (Deci, 1971; Deci et al., 2001; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2017; Ryan &

Deci, 2000; Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016; Teixeira et al., 2012). Within each type of motivation,

there are three psychological needs or constructs argued to offer the highest levels: competence,

relatedness, and autonomy (Deci et al., 2001; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2017; Evans, 2015; Freer &

Evans, 2018; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Schatt, 2018; Valenzuela et al., 2018; Vergara-Morales & Del

Valle, 2021). Research suggests that these needs are not acquired from social or cultural

environments but are a universal and essential aspect of the human essence (Deci, 1971; Deci et

al., 2001; Deci & Ryan, 2017; Evans, 2015; Kingsford-Smith & Evans, 2021; Ryan & Deci,

2000; Vergara-Morales & Del Valle, 2021). Deci (1971) and Deci and Ryan (2017) proposed

that intrinsic motivation or "internalization" satisfies all three psychological needs or constructs.

Once met, results include enhanced performance, creativity, increased persistence, and a healthier well-being (Deci, 1971; Deci et al., 2001; Deci & Ryan, 2017; Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016). Intrinsic motivation often leads to a phenomenological state of intense involvement and intrinsic enjoyment known as "flow" (Miksza et al., 2016; Valenzuela et al., 2018). Flow is extremely important for students within the arts and sports as they take on challenging tasks that require persistence and sustained levels of effort and practice (Teixeira et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2018).

The first psychological need or construct is competence, which is defined as one's ability to be successful and effective (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2017; Evans, 2015; Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016; Vergara-Morales & Del Valle, 2021). Competence is a motivating influence as one strives to achieve or complete a task (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2017; Evans, 2015). An individual who feels incompetent in a specific skill, such as music, is more likely to feel like a failure and thus abandon the activity (Evans, 2015; Evans & Bonneville-Roussy, 2016; Evans & Liu, 2019; Evans et al., 2012; Freer & Evans, 2018; Krause et al., 2019; MacIntyre et al., 2018; Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016). However, when a sense of effectiveness within an activity is realized, one's motivation and overall achievement is influenced (Kingsford-Smith & Evans, 2021; Vergara-Morales & Del Valle, 2021). Connections between students' efforts and the outcomes support competence-conscious teaching (Kingsford-Smith & Evans, 2021).

The second psychological need or construct is relatedness, which refers to the relationships or bonds within a social network such as a music ensemble (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2017; Evans, 2015; Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016). Social relationships occur within the context of music education as students relate to not only their peers but also their teachers, parents, and members of the community (Kingsford-Smith & Evans, 2021; Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016). These

types of emotionally supportive environments are mutually beneficial as they provide the ability

and opportunity to connect with others (Evans, 2015; Evans & Bonneville-Roussy, 2016; Evans

& Liu, 2019; Evans et al., 2012; Freer & Evans, 2018; Krause et al., 2019; MacIntyre et al.,

2018; Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016; Valenzuela et al., 2018; Vergara-Morales & Del Valle, 2021).

Research in other subject areas posits that the teachers need to develop healthy and positive

relationships with students, which in turn influences motivation toward school (Allen et al.,

2018; Deci & Ryan, 2017; Kingsford-Smith & Evans, 2021; Sparks et al., 2016; Vergara-

Morales & Del Valle, 2021). Relatedness-supportive classrooms also give students an additional

bond through nurturing relationships with peers, parents, and the school community (Kingsford-

Smith & Evans, 2021; Pendergast, 2020; Sparks et al., 2016).

The last psychological need or construct is autonomy, which equates to a structure-free or

self-directed form of learning (Evans, 2015; Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016; Vergara-Morales & Del

Valle, 2021). Autonomy provides student choice and a willingness to freely engage in activities

(Deci & Ryan, 2008; Evans, 2015; Kingsford-Smith & Evans, 2021; Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016;

Valenzuela et al., 2018). According to SDT, meeting these psychological needs or constructs

promotes quality motivation, engagement, and value within an activity (Deci & Ryan, 1985,

2008, 2017; Freer & Evans, 2018; Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016; Teixeira et al., 2012; Valenzuela et

al., 2018; Vergara-Morales & Del Valle, 2021). Associated with enhanced participation and

increased persistence, this type of motivation is described as self-determined or self-regulated

(Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000, 2017; Evans, 2015; Freer & Evans, 2018; Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016;

Teixeira et al., 2012; Valenzuela et al., 2018; Vergara-Morales & Del Valle, 2021). Research has

indicated that when teachers adopt autonomy-supported teaching styles such as explaining the

reasoning behind lesson activities, allowing students ample time to complete tasks, and allowing

students to self-reflect on their growth, there is an increased value of the subject matter on the part of the student (Kingsford-Smith & Evans, 2021).

SDT gives music education researchers a framework to predict and explain a wide range of behaviors and factors of interest in studying motivation within the music discipline (Kingsford-Smith & Evans, 2021; Pendergast, 2020). Importance is placed on the level and quality of motivation within music education which directly relates to purposeful and meaningful strategies within the classroom (Evans, 2015; Evans & Bonneville-Roussy, 2016; Evans & Liu, 2019; Evans et al., 2012; Freer & Evans, 2018; Kingsford-Smith & Evans, 2021; Krause et al., 2019; MacIntyre et al., 2018; Pendergast, 2020; Valenzuela et al., 2018). When the satisfaction of competence, relatedness, and autonomy are met, music education teachers can foster student value and persistence within their programs (Kingsford-Smith & Evans, 2021; Pendergast, 2020; Reeve, 2009, 2012). However, there is minimal research related to how SDT might be used to explain motivation in music education, especially within chorus at the middle and high school level (Evans, 2015; Krause et al., 2019). Recent research has primarily focused on motivational strategies within the instrumental discipline at the middle school and university levels (Evans & Bonneville-Roussy, 2016; Mieder & Bugos, 2017; Schatt, 2018; Valenzuela et al., 2018). Past music research has broadly recognized that SDT explains the behavior of students who play and persist on an instrument as well as those who cease playing (Demorest et al., 2017; Evans et al., 2012; Mieder & Bugos, 2017). More research needs to focus on middle and high school students who are intrinsically motivated to persist in music, especially chorus as an elective subject when their psychological needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy are met (Evans, 2015; Evans et al., 2012; Freer & Evans, 2018; Krause et al., 2019; West, 2013; Woody, 2021).

SDT, which defines intrinsic and extrinsic sources of motivation with three psychological needs being met (competence, relatedness, and autonomy) provides the theoretical framework shaping this study (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000, 2017). The research sub-questions for this study are directly derived from the three psychological needs or constructs of SDT: competence, relatedness, and autonomy.

Studies related to SDT will be presented in the next section along with literature on persistence, self-regulated learning, and intrinsic motivation within middle school and secondary chorus. In addition, assessment practices within middle school and secondary chorus will be discussed. Formative assessment practices will be discussed that will include performance and e-Portfolio assessment within the middle school chorus classroom.

Related Literature

The music discipline requires immense intrinsic motivation for sustainability and persistence as it becomes increasingly more difficult at the secondary level (Kingsford-Smith & Evans, 2021; MacIntyre et al., 2018; Oliveira et al., 2021). Edward Deci's (1971) initial work on motivation included asking two groups of participants to solve puzzles that gradually increased in difficulty. Researchers gave a monetary reward for each puzzle solved to one group of participants while the other group did not receive any award. Approximately an hour after the experiment began, each group of participants was informed that the experiment was over and was told to wait while the researchers left the room. While waiting for the researchers to return, the group that did not receive any type of award continued to solve more puzzles. However, the group that received the monetary award did not continue at all. The extrinsic type of monetary award did not increase the motivation of this group (Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 2017; Evans, 2015), which suggests that similar phenomena extend to other extrinsic events such as types of

assessment, surveillance, competition, and threats of punishment. Music teachers have used

extrinsic motivators for many years that included stickers for meeting practice goals or

achievement levels, individual or group competitive strategies, and student ranking systems, such

as chair placement in orchestra or band. However, the emphasis on these extrinsic motivation

systems is on the short-term and not the long-term intrinsic value of growth and improvement

(Evans, 2015; Evans et al., 2012; Freer & Evans, 2018; Karlen et al., 2019; Krause et al., 2019;

MacIntyre et al., 2018; Roberts, 2018; Schatt, 2018; Valenzuela et al., 2018; Virkkula, 2020;

West, 2013; Woody, 2021).

Assessment not only includes objectively measuring knowledge and skill, but also what

and how students need to improve over time (Chen et al., 2017; Crochet & Green, 2012; Denis,

2018; Ferm Almqvist et al., 2017; Furby, 2013; Henry, 2015; Hope & Wait, 2013; Long, 2021;

McQuarrie, 2013; Nichols, 2017, 2019; Peterson, 2014; Russell & Austin, 2010; Silveira, 2013).

Assessment plays a significant role in the music discipline and must not be limited to attendance

and participation at the group level (Kotora, 2005; Nichols, 2017, 2019). Instead, individualized

assessment of musical skills must be evaluated over time through formative and authentic

assessment strategies (Chen et al., 2017; Crochet & Green, 2012; Denis, 2018; Ferm Almqvist et

al., 2017; Furby, 2013; Henry, 2015; Hope & Wait, 2013; Kotora, 2005; Long, 2021; McQuarrie,

2013; Nichols, 2017, 2019; Peterson, 2014; Russell & Austin, 2010; Silveira, 2013). Formative

assessment is a daily phenomenon within music education as the teacher makes observations,

suggestions, and plans for students to continually improve upon their instrument (Chen et al.,

2017; Crochet & Green, 2012; Denis, 2018; Ferm Almqvist et al., 2017; Furby, 2013; Hope &

Wait, 2013; Long, 2021; McPhail & McNeill, 2019; McQuarrie, 2013; Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017;

Silveira, 2013). Assessment within the music discipline should be a joint effort between the

teacher and the student (Ivaldi, 2019; Johnson, 2019; Long, 2021). However, many music teachers, including middle school chorus, continually combine assessment with some type of extrinsic motivator, including traditional grading systems (Evans, 2015; Henry, 2015; Hope & Wait, 2013; McQuarrie, 2013; Peterson, 2014; Russell & Austin, 2010; Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017; Woody, 2021). This combination undermines the value of intrinsic motivation as it hinders student autonomy (Deci, 1971; Deci et al., 2001; Deci & Ryan, 2008, 2017; Evans, 2015; Freer & Evans, 2018; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Woody, 2021). Traditional grading systems, for some students, are an extrinsic motivator that does not promote the self-regulated or self-directed learning for its intrinsic value (Evans, 2015; Ferm Almqvist et al., 2017; Gerritsen-van Leeuwenkamp et al., 2017; Woody, 2021).

Persistence in Middle School Music Education

Middle school music education can be compared to the business strategy of customer recruitment. Customers are enticed with creative advertisements and deals to get them in the door with the hope of attaining a commitment to their business. However, persistence within music education as an elective is on the decline (Alegrado & Winsler, 2020; Demorest et al., 2017; Kinney, 2019; Lorenzo Socorro et al., 2016). Music is the most consistently available elective in the United States at the elementary and secondary level, yet only about 21% of high school seniors are involved in elective music ensembles (Alegrado & Winsler, 2020; Demorest et al., 2017; Elpus, 2014). Music researchers have suggested that music education has long-term positive effects on cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and social development (Alegrado & Winsler, 2020; Williams et al., 2015). Motivation and the commitment to persist within music education has also contributed to the assertion by researchers that music has the potential to build success and achievement (Alegrado & Winsler, 2020; Kinney, 2019). However, participation

with music in general and persistence in middle and high school music education as a subject is quite contradictory (Bray, 2000; Lamont & Maton, 2008; Ng & Hartwig, 2011). Although listening to music is quite common among most teenagers, actively participating in music-making activities, such as large chorus ensembles, is not and declines as students get older (Bray, 2000; Lamont & Maton, 2008).

Limited research in the declining persistence within secondary music education suggests that motivation, demographics, and social factors play a large role influencing retention in music performance electives (Alegrado & Winsler, 2020; Bray, 2000; Demorest et al., 2017; Elpus, 2014; Lamont & Maton, 2008; Ng & Hartwig, 2011). Previous research has primarily been focused on instrumental ensembles that require the purchase or rental of an instrument to participate (Alegrado & Winsler, 2020). Many school districts do not have the funds available to assist low socioeconomic families who cannot afford the instrument requirement (Alegrado & Winsler, 2020). In addition, family structure and academic achievement have been suggested as prominent variables in predicting persistence in instrumental music programs (Alegrado & Winsler, 2020; Demorest et al., 2017; Elpus, 2014; Kinney, 2019). Chorus participation, however, does not involve the expensive barrier that instrumental ensembles require. Very little research has been done to investigate the demographic profile of secondary chorus students and its possible influence on persistence within the program (Alegrado & Winsler; Kinney, 2019).

Early participation in music ensembles, such as chorus, is also critical for rising high school students. Music participation is usually mandatory in elementary school, but it becomes an elective as students enter middle school. Transition points such as elementary to middle school, middle school to high school, or high school to college are critical factors in the recruitment and persistence within secondary chorus ensembles (Demorest et al., 2017). Students

gain autonomy during middle school when they are no longer required to take certain subjects, such as art and music, that become optional electives. However, other resource classes that were taken in elementary school such as physical education remain a requirement through half of a student's high school education. While the ability to make decisions about one's academic journey is important, it also sets the precedent in a young adolescent's mind that some classes, like physical education or athletics, are more important than others like art or music (Cronenberg, 2020).

When students choose to take other subjects, their musical skills, which take continual practice and persistence, start to decline (Demorest et al., 2017). These students may enroll with limited skills, but they must persist within the program to be equipped for more advanced high school chorus enrollment (Alegrado & Winsler, 2020). Participation becomes more of a closed system within the high school as it is often dependent on auditions, technique, and the ability to read music. This type of closed system is a social deterrent for many students as their motivation is impacted by the relationships or relatedness of others within the program (Alegrado & Winsler, 2020; Demorest et al., 2017; Ng & Hartwig, 2011). Interpersonal relationships among students' teachers, parents, and especially other students have a direct impact on the motivation for students to persist within the program (Demorest et al., 2017; Lorenzo Socorro et al., 2016; Ng & Hartwig, 2011). In addition, the effort within these types of higher-level ensembles is significant, which results in many students beginning the program but very few completing them to graduation (Lorenzo Socorro et al., 2016; Ng & Hartwig, 2011). Requiring motivation and commitment, music studies can be described as a funnel where a large group of students begin the training, but very few make it to the top (Lorenzo Socorro et al., 2016).

Limited attention and research have been given to understanding the issue of declining music enrollment through Grade 12 in the United States. Past studies in Britain have investigated the issue with hypothetical reasoning but lack empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks (Ng & Hartwig, 2011). Several of these studies suggest that declining persistence and low enrollment within secondary music programs is due to a failure to meet students' needs and interests, a perceived unimportance of music education among the school community, and the students' perceived difficulties in learning music at a higher level (Bray, 2000; Ng & Hartwig, 2011). In addition, cognitive and social factors were cited as potential reasons explaining students' intent to continue to study music throughout high school to graduation (Ng & Hartwig, 2011). Cognitive factors such as the value of the subject matter, personal interest, and beliefs in one's musical ability are directly related to competence, one of the constructs of SDT (Ng & Hartwig, 2011; Sichivitsa, 2007). Social factors refer to the construct of relatedness of SDT as students interact with peers, teachers, and school community through music (Ng & Hartwig, 2011; Sichivitsa, 2007).

Hardré et al. (2008) suggested a direct correlation between teachers' perception of persistence and their actions to motivate and engage students. Their research stated that classroom environments are structured around their perceptions of declining enrollment. In addition, they noted that strategies to motivate and engage students were directly influenced by teachers' perceptions of student motivation. Other studies suggest that participants view many music classrooms are antiquated and out of touch with today's teaching and learning styles as well as the music taught in the classroom (Hardré et al., 2008; Lamont & Maton, 2008; Ng & Hartwig, 2011). Quality teaching instruction to motivate and engage potential music students is critical in their retention as well as social support derived from the school community promoting

sustained participation (Bray, 2000; Hardré et al., 2008; Lamont & Maton, 2008; Ng & Hartwig, 2011; Sichivitsa, 2007).

Several variables have been suggested by music researchers as a reason for declining persistence within middle and high school chorus. Negative self-perceptions and a low level of perceived competence are frequently cited as factors in students' motivation toward music ensembles, especially when students are assessed within whole group activities (Demorest et al., 2017). In addition, relatedness plays a factor in a student's motivation to continue in a music ensemble, as the influences of the school community are critical for support and engagement (Demorest et al., 2017). Although socioeconomic factors have been suggested to be significant in instrumental ensembles, they have not been researched within the paradigm of chorus ensembles (Demorest et al., 2017). There have been no specific music studies that related persistence in middle and high school chorus ensembles and types of authentic formative assessment to promote motivation.

Self-regulated Learning in Middle School Music Education

Research on the reciprocal relationship of student self-regulated learning and self-assessment has been ongoing for the past 20 years or more (Beckers et al., 2016; Chang et al., 2018; Gerritsen-van Leeuwenkamp et al., 2017; Karlen et al., 2019; Panadero et al., 2017; Rowley & Munday, 2014). "Self-assessment has been conceptualized as a learning regulatory strategy; self-regulated learning is dependent on self-assessment through self-monitoring and self-evaluation" (Panadero et al., 2017, p. 75). Self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies are cyclic and intentional through self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions which lead to the attainment of individual goals (Chang et al., 2018; Mieder & Bugos, 2017; Nolker & Sinclair, 2020; Panadero et al., 2017; Rowley & Munday, 2014). SRL unfolds in real-time as the learner

negotiates through three phases: forethought, performance, and self-reflection (Nolker &

Sinclair, 2020). The student and teacher engage in dialogue throughout each process to promote

students' self-generated thought, feelings, strategies, and behaviors. It becomes the responsibility

of the director to communicate the expectation of individual growth for self-regulation (Nolker

& Sinclair, 2020). Nolker and Sinclair (2020) suggested that for an ensemble director to promote

self-regulated learning, they must establish and maintain an individualized environment within

the music ensemble providing opportunities for individual assessment and self-reflection.

SRL in combination with self-assessment is thought to enhance intrinsic student learning

(Beckers et al., 2016; Nolker & Sinclair, 2020; Panadero et al., 2017; Rowley & Munday, 2014;

Sanchez et al., 2017). This is also known as self-determination that increases the motivation of

personal goal setting (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000, 2017). Self-determination involves students

monitoring their own learning process and reflecting about their overall achievements and

learning outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000, 2017; Furby, 2013; Panadero et al., 2017; Roberts,

2018; Rowley & Munday, 2014; Sanchez et al., 2017; Wesolowski, 2015). The combination of

these constructs impacts students' self-efficacy in that they gain a deeper understanding of the

requirements expected and are likely to perform better on the task at hand (Bandura, 1986). In

turn, research suggested that their feelings of worth and competence will improve, which will

directly impact their level of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Panadero et al., 2017). A meta-

analysis study by Panadero et al. (2017) suggested that self-assessment has a positive influence

on academic achievement and performance levels. Their research also indicated that self-

monitoring has a larger impact on students' overall self-efficacy as compared to other self-

assessment components (Panadero et al., 2017). This implication suggests that by using an e-

Portfolio, students can have choice in the artifacts selected for the assessment and can self-monitor their progress throughout the course.

In a study by Mieder and Bugos (2017), self-regulation in music was stated to consist of six focus areas: motivation, teaching method, time management, learning behaviors, physical environment, and social factors. Motivation is driven by individual goal setting and influenced by feelings of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Chang et al., 2018; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000, 2017; Furby, 2013; Mieder & Bugos, 2017; Panadero et al., 2017). Students are active participants in their learning as they set attainable goals, recognize useful resources, select proper learning strategies, and evaluate or self-assess their own learning outcomes (Chang et al., 2018; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Panadero et al., 2017). Teachers instruct students on how to set meaningful goals that benefit the overall experience and then step away from the process. When students have goals, they acquire a greater sense of self-efficacy, value, interest, and persistence in SRL (Bandura, 1986; Chang et al., 2018; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Panadero et al., 2017). Goal setting is also an intrinsic form of motivation, and it allows students to guide and regulate their own learning (Chang et al., 2018; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Panadero et al., 2017). The goals are treated as incentives, which triggers intrinsic motivation and enhances effort and behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Furby, 2013; Karlen et al., 2019; Roberts, 2018; Sanchez et al., 2017; Wesolowski, 2015; Woody, 2021).

Although motivation is one of the most important areas of SRL, the other five are also of utmost importance and tend to work cohesively together. Teaching methods within SRL need to incorporate music learning activities that include goal setting and self-monitoring (Mieder & Bugos, 2017; Panadero et al., 2017). When students are provided the opportunity to incorporate higher level critical thinking, they engage deeper into what is being taught (Bloom, 1969; Mieder

& Bugos, 2017). This is a critical skill necessary for musical independence within any music ensemble (Mieder & Bugos, 2017). Time management encourages students to develop specific pathways to structure their practice time effectively. Prior music research suggests that learning systematic approaches to time management increases productivity and achievement for young musicians (Mieder & Bugos, 2017). Although chorus students cannot always control the learning environment, they can acquire appropriate learning behaviors within the chorus classroom. These include but are not limited to proper posture, quiet practice environments, and positioning of the music. The physical environment of the chorus classroom is closely connected to social factors, which also impact SRL. "The curriculum is influenced by social factors and the environment is influenced by the students" (Mieder & Bugos, 2017, p. 580). This type of social community within the chorus classroom environment is a safe place for students to participate in creating and exploring new skills and concepts. This promotes the autonomy, self-efficacy, and collaboration associated with SRL and SDT (Deci, 1971; Deci et al., 2001; Deci & Ryan, 2017; Mieder & Bugos, 2017; Nolker & Sinclair, 2020; Panadero et al., 2017). SRL will promote independent levels of musicianship that will benefit the entire ensemble (Nolker & Sinclair, 2020).

Intrinsic Motivation in Middle School Music Education

Decades of research examining the reasons for students' goals and willingness to engage in the classroom have suggested that motivation is a crucial aspect of learning (Karimi & Sotoodeh, 2020; Oliveira et al., 2021). Deci (1971) and Deci and Ryan (2017) defined motivation as both intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is defined as an "internal interest for an activity, such as the enjoyment one may experience from hearing a moving musical performance" (West, 2013, p. 14). Conversely, extrinsic motivation is described as receiving a

reward for engaging in an activity (Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 2017; West, 2013). Whereas research has suggested that extrinsic motivators undermine the innate value of the activity itself, intrinsic motivators are regarded as more advantageous to the overall learning process (Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 2017; MacIntyre et al., 2018; West, 2013; Woody, 2021). For example, when grades are overemphasized within a class project or activity, students may become less interested in something that they previously participated in and enjoyed. Bandura (1986) suggested that mastery level experiences are central to developing students' intrinsic motivation.

Students with intrinsic motivation and mastery goals hold a deeper engagement within school activities and a higher persistence within learning activities when compared to students who only have extrinsic motivation (Karimi & Sotoodeh, 2020; Klapp, 2018). Within the music discipline, this is relative to competency-based learning activities (Ferm Almqvist et al., 2017; Kupers et al., 2013; Parkes et al., 2017; Schatt, 2018; Valenzuela et al., 2018; West, 2013; Woody, 2021). Students may need to retake performance assessments several times prior to mastering them individually; however, collectively mastering them as an ensemble is encouraged and celebrated (Ferm Almqvist et al., 2017; Furby, 2013; Hope & Wait, 2013; Wesolowski, 2015; West, 2013). To help foster this type of intrinsic motivation, music teachers can place value on mastery level experiences by avoiding separation of students by ability, which aids in vicarious experiences and providing continuous positive formative feedback, which aids in verbal persuasion (Bandura, 1986; Karimi & Sotoodeh, 2020; Wesolowski, 2015; West, 2013). This type of learning environment rewards individual student growth rather than achievement (Karimi & Sotoodeh, 2020; Oliveira et al., 2021). SDT suggests that when students are given more choice in activities, they feel more self-determined which also impacts intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000, 2008, 2017). Choice is a major factor in student motivation within a

music discipline as it gives voice to students in choosing appropriate literature and in making musical decisions (Evans, 2015; Krause et al., 2019; MacIntyre et al., 2018; Oliveira et al., 2021; West, 2013; Woody, 2021).

The limited number of studies on motivation within the K–12 music education paradigm mostly focus on middle school instrumental music, particularly band and orchestra, resulting in a challenge for choral music researchers (Evans & Liu, 2019; Kupers et al., 2013; Miksza et al., 2016; Oliveira et al., 2021; Parkes et al., 2017; Schatt, 2018; West, 2013). One such study by Parkes et al. (2017) investigated the intrinsic motivation of secondary students in a traditional band ensemble. Adapting the MUSIC model of academic motivation inventory for the music discipline, the researchers administered the MUSIC Inventory to 93 middle and high school students. The 6-point Likert-type scale responses included five areas, which are the acronym for MUSIC: eMpowerment, Usefulness, Success, Interest, and Caring. Using Cronbach's alpha values for which .9 is excellent and those between .7 and .9 are good, the results were as follows: eMpowerment ($\alpha = .73$), usefulness ($\alpha = .86$), success ($\alpha = .92$), interest ($\alpha = .91$), and caring ($\alpha = .92$). This study revealed that these particular students felt empowered by having some choice in their learning; understood the usefulness and "why" of their short and long-term learning; believed if they put forth the effort, they would succeed; were interested in the instructional activities; and believed that the instructor and other within the learning environment cared about their overall learning (Parkes et al., 2017). Constructivist, student-centered teaching strategies have become highly favorable within music education as they encompass greater enjoyment, interest, progress, motivation, and positive attitudes toward overall learning (Evans, 2015; Krause et al., 2019; López-Íñiguez & Pozo, 2016; MacIntyre et al., 2018; Oliveira et al., 2021; Parkes et al., 2017; West, 2013; Woody, 2021).

Intrinsic motivation was observed several times during a qualitative case study by López-Íñiguez and Pozo (2016) examining a cello instructor's constructivist teaching approach, while extrinsic motivation was never observed by the researchers. The relaxed atmosphere and enjoyment that the observed teacher created in her lessons were intrinsically motivating for the student to practice outside of the lesson as well as succeed within the lesson (López-Íñiguez & Pozo, 2016). Intrinsic motivation within the music education paradigm has been shown to impact students' future musical aspirations by their enjoyment of musical activities, their attitude towards their instrument, their personal value of music education and performance, and their self-beliefs toward their practice, study, and assessment strategies (Freer & Evans, 2018; Furby, 2013; Hope & Wait, 2013; Krause et al., 2019; Kupers et al., 2013; López-Íñiguez & Pozo, 2016; MacIntyre et al., 2018; McPhail & McNeill, 2019; Oliveira et al., 2021; Parkes et al., 2017; Rowley & Munday, 2014; Wesolowski, 2015; West, 2013; Woody, 2021).

Self-Determination in Middle School Music

SDT has been researched in many contexts, including education, but not much has been done in terms of SDT and assessment within middle school choral music (Evans, 2015; Henry, 2015; Hope & Wait, 2013; McQuarrie, 2013; Russell & Austin, 2010; Schatt, 2018). Specific research within the general discipline of music has investigated SDT in relation to student participation in music in which instrumentalists reported higher levels of psychological needs fulfillment when engaged in music learning (Evans, 2015; Schatt, 2018; Valenzuela et al., 2018; Virkkula, 2020; Woody, 2021). Evans (2015) examined perceived musical identity in relation to the constructs of SDT. Very little research, however, has directly examined SDT and types of formative assessment strategies within choral music education (Furby, 2013; Hope & Wait, 2013; McQuarrie, 2013; Russell & Austin, 2010; West, 2013; Woody, 2021). Within all other

contexts studied, intrinsic motivation has led to increased participation, persistence, and desire for improvement (Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 2017; Evans & Bonneville-Roussy, 2016; Evans & Liu, 2019; Gerritsen-van Leeuwenkamp et al., 2017; Karlen et al., 2019; Krause et al., 2019; Kupers et al., 2013; López-Íñiguez & Pozo, 2016; McMillan, 2018; Roberts, 2018; Sanchez et al., 2017; Schatt, 2018; Smith & Skrbiš, 2017).

Past music research has suggested that healthy musical development and education are characterized by a student's autonomy and thus, self-determination (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2020; Kupers et al., 2013). They found that when students felt in charge of their own music learning, they were more likely to be intrinsically motivated. Music students are better equipped for more difficult challenges within their own learning within an autonomy-supportive learning environment (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2020). A study by Schatt (2018) examined factors that motivate middle school band students to practice using SDT as a theoretical lens. When participants in that study engaged in practice on their instrument, they were more intrinsically motivated to persist within the program. Schatt suggested that teachers creating more autonomous learning environments encourage students to learn more about their instrument and the discipline of music. Students were also more motivated to practice when using goal-setting strategies and performance assessment opportunities in a variety of settings. More research needs to be done in creating personal audio and/or video portfolios that may impact student motivation through a feeling of accomplishment and growth (Beckers et al., 2016; Bennett et al., 2016; Chang et al., 2018; Crochet & Green, 2012; McPhail & McNeill2019; Panadero et al., 2017; Rowley & Munday, 2014; Schatt, 2018; Silveira, 2013).

Assessment in Middle School Music Education

Music educators, especially in ensembles such as band and chorus, place an immense

amount of value on the overall group experience (Nolker & Sinclair, 2020). The hours of score

study, planning rehearsals, and concert preparation result in a meaningful experience not only for

the ensemble but also for the targeted audience. However, the individual growth and meaningful

learning experience for each student is sometimes lost in the many responsibilities that fall on the

band or choral director (Nolker & Sinclair, 2020). While the overall performance can be

aesthetically rewarding for each of them, it is imperative that music educators make certain that

it is also educationally sound. Music directors have a responsibility to provide a quality music

education for each individual student (Nolker & Sinclair, 2020). Individuals within a group

setting still learn individually, so it is imperative that the music director know the strengths and

weaknesses of all individuals in the group setting. Therefore, assessment is critical within

performance ensembles.

Assessment within education is an expected and natural part of the teaching and learning

process (Peterson, 2014; Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017; Silveira, 2013; Wesolowski, 2015). Its goals

include evaluating the extent to which learning has occurred within the classroom, diagnosing

student needs, assigning grades and student placement, communicating student achievement

expectations, planning and evaluating instruction, and providing group and individual feedback

to students (Furby, 2013; Kotora, 2005; Peterson, 2014; Wesolowski, 2015). While these goals

are all important, the informative feedback from assessment is crucial for both the student and

the teacher (Furby, 2013; Kotora, 2005; Sanchez et al., 2017; Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017;

Wesolowski, 2015). The student needs to understand what still needs to be learned and the

teacher needs to evaluate where there are gaps in the learning for each student within the

classroom (Long, 2021). Feedback falls into two distinct categories: summative and formative (Long, 2021). Summative feedback is typically given at the end of an instructional unit and given asynchronously, without any interaction between the student and teacher. Typically, music students receive summative feedback through written comments on quizzes and tests. Summative assessments serve a diagnostic purpose, and the feedback cannot usually be acted on by the student (Long, 2021; Wesolowski, 2015). Formative feedback, however, is given to the student synchronously, or in real-time, to encourage dialogue and enact improvement (Long, 2021). Well-crafted formative feedback closes many of the learning gaps within as clear criteria isolates specific areas of improvement (Long, 2021). Therefore, formative classroom assessment practices are valuable for all stakeholders within the classroom. Choral music educators can document, monitor, and improve student learning through future planning of instruction and assessments (Wesolowski, 2015). Data from formative assessments can also be shared with students, parents, and administrators to advocate for resources to enhance instruction and program development (Furby, 2013; Long, 2021; Payne et al., 2019; Peterson, 2014; Sanchez et al., 2017; Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017).

Differentiated instruction and formative, authentic assessments are becoming a standard practice within most public middle and high schools (Nichols, 2017; Payne et al., 2019). Teachers, including music teachers, are being required to provide evidence of individualized student progress (Nichols, 2017; Payne et al., 2019). However, many music classrooms continue to also assess students based on non-musical criteria such as attendance, behavior, and participation (Kotora, 2005; Nichols, 2017, 2019). Research has indicated that these are difficult to measure and do not allow for the documentation of individual student progress within the classroom (Kotora, 2005; Nichols, 2017). Music teachers have very few evidence-based tools for

constructing and administering these types of assessments, relying on their own self-designed tools for evaluating individual student progress (Long, 2021; Nichols, 2017, 2019). Individual performance assessments, such as singing assessments, allow music educators to monitor and improve student learning (Nichols, 2017,2019; Payne et al., 2019; Wesolowski, 2015). This type of criterion-based performance assessment demonstrates what each individual student has learned, shaping future planning and instruction based on the tangible information received (Long, 2021; Payne et al., 2019; Wesolowski, 2015).

Formative Assessment

Formative classroom assessment is defined as "the practice of using evidence of student learning and achievement to make adjustments to instruction and learning strategies in order to better meet students' needs" (Chen et al., 2017, p. 298). In other words, formative assessment is "for" learning instead of assessment "of" learning, which is referred to as summative assessment (Chen et al., 2017; Gerritsen-van Leeuwenkamp et al., 2017; Long, 2021; Payne et al., 2019; Sanchez et al., 2017). Formative assessment seeks to uncover a gap between current and desired levels of understanding while helping the teacher determine ways in which to close the gap (Chen et al., 2017; Furby, 2013; Long, 2021; Payne et al., 2019; Sanchez et al., 2017; Wesolowski, 2015). However, for students and teachers to close this gap, quality learning must be demonstrated through the communication of clear task criteria throughout the entire assessment process (Chen et al., 2017; Furby, 2013; Long, 2021; Payne et al., 2019; Sanchez et al., 2017; Wesolowski, 2015). Much of the formative assessment research to date has taken place in core subject areas, not the arts (Chen et al., 2017; Sanchez et al., 2017). Within the context of music education, assessment has been "criticized for a lack of responsiveness to our changing world" (McPhail & McNeill, 2019, p. 359).

Hattie and Timperley's (2007) assessment model proposed four levels of formative feedback within an instrumental music lesson. The first was centered around the task performance and the knowledge that was acquired through the performance process. The second was based on the strategies involved in task completion. The third focused on the student's self-regulated learning, which included their self-assessment and monitoring of their own learning. Lastly, the fourth centered on self-feedback from each individual student (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). This type of formative assessment allows learning to evolve as students are continually self-reflecting about what it is they are trying to achieve (Long, 2021).

Another study by Chen et al. (2017) emphasized three key strategies of formative assessment within the performing and visual arts: clarifying and sharing learning goals for success, providing feedback that informs learning and moves the student forward, and promoting students' roles as instructional resources for their peers and themselves. The results of this study suggested that student learning is deepened when students understand the level of importance; receive feedback from teacher-assessment, peer-assessment, and self-assessment; and have opportunities to rehearse, revise, and/or improve (Chen et al., 2017). Once student learning is deepened within this type of formative learning environment, students will display higher levels of overall achievement, thus improving overall persistence (Chen et al., 2017; Long, 2021; Payne et al., 2019; Smith & Skrbiš, 2017).

Bloom (1969) suggested that providing corrective feedback is the main purpose of formative evaluation within each stage of the teaching and learning process. However, corrective feedback when given in terms of traditional grades focuses on the extrinsic motivation rather than task involvement (Smith & Skrbiš, 2017). It also shifts the students' attention on their "ability" rather than on the importance of effort (Gerritsen-van Leeuwenkamp et al., 2017; Long,

2021; Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017; Smith & Skrbiš, 2017). Feedback that focuses on improvement from a positive perspective encourages students to believe in themselves, which becomes intrinsically motivating (Crochet & Green, 2012; Furby, 2013; Gerritsen-van Leeuwenkamp et al., 2017; Long, 2021; McPhail & McNeill, 2019; Payne et al., 2019; Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017; Smith & Skrbiš, 2017).

A meta-analysis conducted by Sanchez et al. (2017) investigated the role of self- and peer-grading for formative assessments in third- through 12th-grade classrooms. The data and insights gleaned from this research indicated that enhanced learning is demonstrated when students participate in self- and peer-grading formative assessment activities. Students who engaged in peer-grading formative assessments performed better on summative assessments than students who did not because they had a clearer and deeper understanding of the material being assessed. "Self- and peer-grading embodies assessment for learning in that it requires students to engage in higher level thinking and disciplined inquiry to review, clarify, and correct one's own or others' work" (Sanchez et al., 2017, p. 1050). The role of the teacher in this type of formative assessment changes from presenting knowledge to promoting dialogue (Long, 2021). The students become actively engaged in their learning and assessment processes, which allows them to search for new and different ways of learning (Crochet & Green, 2012; Furby, 2013; Long, 2021; McPhail & McNeill, 2019; Payne et al., 2019). Rather than simply measuring student outcomes, formative assessment leads to student autonomy and self-regulated learning (Long, 2021; Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017; Smith & Skrbiš, 2017).

Research also indicates that assessments spanning across time encourage individual motivation and mastery-oriented goal setting within the secondary choral classroom (Crochet & Green, 2012; Furby, 2013; Payne et al., 2019). Goal articulation provides students with

individual direction within an ensemble-oriented class (Crochet & Green, 2012; Long, 2021; Payne et al., 2019). These students develop the motivation and persistence necessary to attempt more challenging tasks, resulting in higher achievement levels. Skill development over time allows for long-term success among secondary chorus students (Crochet & Green, 2012; Furby, 2013; McPhail & McNeill, 2019). This type of individualized, long-term assessment encourages students to become more involved in the music making process within the ensemble environment, developing their higher-level thinking skills (Anderson et al., 2001; Payne et al., 2019). Individualized, critical thinking begins to develop within this type of environment as students are philosophically enabled to make valuable judgments about music (Crochet & Green, 2012; Furby, 2013; McPhail & McNeill, 2019; Payne et al., 2019). Grades will also be more authentic and equitable when individualized, formative assessments are planned and implemented into the secondary choral classroom (Furby, 2013; Payne et al., 2019). Data from formative assessments over time provide a mechanism for teachers to provide individualized and guided feedback specific to defined criteria (Long, 2021; Payne et al., 2019). Student-led feedback as well as peer- and self-assessment activities integrated into the class are also beneficial in terms of motivation, quality of learning, and level of engagement (Payne et al., 2019).

Performance Assessment

Defined as a formative assessment "in which the teacher observes and makes a judgment about the student's demonstration of a skill or competency in creating a product, constructing a response, or making a presentation" (McMillan, 2018, p. 196), performance assessments focus on student-centered rather than teacher-centered approaches of evaluating student progress within the classroom (DeLuca & Bolden, 2014; McMillan, 2018; Nichols, 2019). Performance

assessments are common within middle and high school band and chorus classrooms as the majority participate in at least one whole group adjudicated state or national assessment each year (Wesolowski et al., 2018). These adjudicated events involve a panel of qualified judges or evaluators ranking the ensemble into five different classifications: (I) Superior; (II) Excellent; (III) Good; (IV) Fair; and (V) Poor (National Association for Music Education, 2016). The success of performance-based classes hinges on the classification earned at such events, which can carry just as much weight for the school community as standardized testing within a core classroom (Wesolowski et al., 2018). Recent research has focused primarily on the quantitative validity and reliability of instrumental group musical performance assessment (Russell, 2015; Wesolowski et al., 2018). Very little literature to date has been focused qualitatively on the value of individual or solo performance assessments within the secondary chorus classroom.

Music educator scholars recognize that current assessment practices within music classrooms focus more on the summative group performance assessment rather than the formative individual performance assessment (Russell, 2015; Wesolowski, 2015; Wesolowski et al., 2018). Although most music educators assess, diagnose, and correct performances based on the NAfME classifications, they fail to incorporate individualized assessment into their grading criteria (Nichols, 2019; Wesolowski, 2015; Wesolowski et al., 2018). Performance assessment strategies within the chorus classroom not only improve student learning but also promote self-motivated and independent learners (Fautley, 2010; Nichols, 2017). Performance assessments allow students the fortitude to set their own goals and foster musical independence (Fautley, 2010; Gallo, 2019; Nichols, 2019). Music research suggests that performance assessments emphasize music learning as an individualized process more than a whole-group product (Gallo, 2019; Nichols, 2017, 2019). Self-perception and positive feedback from performance

assessments have been linked to persistence within music ensembles, so it is critical for music educators to have research-based studies and tools for developing them (Demorest et al., 2017; Nichols, 2017).

Previous research implicated that choral music educators should plan performance assessments with caution on several ecological factors (Nichols, 2019). The assessment should reflect the normal learning conditions within the classroom and be a frequent feature within instruction (Nichols, 2017, 2019). Tests that are administered to music students merely for school reporting purposes and grades are simply not effective when collecting data on student growth (Nichols, 2017). Chorus students need to be assessed on tasks related directly to what is being taught in class and not those that are unrelated to the practical and daily applied art of making music (Nichols, 2017). However, chorus teachers need to make important decisions when designing performance assessments so that they are closely aligned with the classroom environment (Nichols, 2017, 2019). For instance, some chorus students are fearful of singing alone in an ensemble environment when they are accustomed to singing with their peers. Adjustments might need to be made for these students such as the opportunity to sing in a small group or the ability to record their assessment. The assessment should also utilize the same type of accompaniment that is utilized in class, such as a full piano or instrumental accompaniment, recorded accompaniment, a cappella or parts. Lastly, teachers need to assess what is truly important from the objectives taught in class (Nichols, 2019). Nichols (2017, 2019) suggested that chorus teachers utilize a backwards design approach when deciding what will be assessed. This means that the chorus teacher starts with the desired final outcome during the planning process (Nichols, 2017; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Sequential and pedagogical steps to designing the performance assessment should then follow, which includes determining how to

measure each student's success as they attempt to meet the objective and then choosing the appropriate tool for the performance assessment (Nichols, 2017).

e-Portfolio Assessment

A portfolio can be described as a "file container, either electronic or non-electronic . . . in which artifacts are chosen that display completed work and support the learning process" (Beckers et al., 2016, p.32). Students make purposeful selections for the artifacts contained in their portfolio as they showcase their individual effort, progress, and achievement (Beckers et al., 2016; Silveira, 2013). Electronic portfolios, also known as e-Portfolios, are becoming increasingly more popular in today's technologically enhanced and individualized classroom environments (Beckers et al., 2016). Teachers have found them more advantageous over traditional paper-and-pencil portfolios because of the ubiquitous portfolio access, the ability to include multimedia, and facilitated overviews of personal development and growth (Beckers et al., 2016; Bennett et al., 2016; Rowley & Munday, 2014; Silveira, 2013).

Beckers et al. (2016) conducted a study on the use of e-Portfolios and their impact on self-directed or self-regulated learning. Their results suggested that e-Portfolios are powerful learning aids throughout the entire learning process, which includes the beginning to the end of the school year. They are tailored or customized to the learner and can be constructed so that the offer feedback contingent to the process, also known as authentic assessment (Beckers et al., 2016). The results of this study also suggested that the scaffolding within the assessment process increases overall student motivation and, thus, autonomous self-directed or self-regulated learning (Beckers et al., 2016).

Another study by Bennett et al. (2016) suggested three themes associated with the student experience of e-Portfolio assessment: the e-Portfolio as a self-portrait, identity construction

through the development of the e-Portfolio, and the e-Portfolio as a prompt to guide future goals and thinking. The reflective nature of the e-Portfolio highlights the growth of the student from archive to self-portrait, which allows students the opportunity for deeper engagement as they track their development through mastery experiences (Bennett et al., 2016; Rowley & Munday, 2014). Through student choice, autonomy is given to students as they select the artifacts for and develop their identity through them. Many students identify their strengths through self-assessment of their chosen artifacts, increasing self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Beckers et al., 2016; Rowley & Munday, 2014). Verbal persuasion and encouragement can enhance students' motivation throughout the e-Portfolio process as they think creatively about their future goals. These are shared with peers, teachers, and parents who encourage these processes (Beckers et al., 2016; Bennett et al., 2016).

There is very little literature that discusses e-Portfolio assessment and its influence on motivation and self-regulated learning (Chang et al., 2018). Electronic portfolio assessment, with its emphasis on self-reflection and autonomy, is a means of learning goal setting, thus improving self-regulated learning (Chang et al., 2018). Improved goal setting techniques through an e-Portfolio assessment should include three overall essentials: purpose, reflection, and practice (Rowley & Munday, 2014). The purpose of e-Portfolio assessment is to provide a digital depository for documents, artifacts, performances, and accomplishments collected by the owner (Beckers et al., 2016). As the owner self-reflects on the contents of the e-Portfolio, the collected knowledge and experiences become internally rewarding and motivating (Chang et al., 2018; Rowley & Munday, 2014). Educators, especially music educators, neglect the value of why students choose to participate in the music discipline. Nurturing a student musician's psychological development with meaningful and engaging experiences within a scaffolded

learning environment is vital to their overall success within the field (Rowley & Munday, 2014). Electronic portfolio assessment affords student musicians the opportunity to identify their "why" through a "sense of self" within the discipline.

Summary

Middle and high school choral music education must seek new opportunities for formative assessment that are intrinsically motivating for all students. Primarily, five overall areas are the central focus of secondary choral music education in Virginia: theory/music literacy; individual/ensemble performance skills; music history and cultural context; analysis, evaluation, and critique; and aesthetics (Music Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools, 2020). Formative assessment utilizes levels of competency achievement within these five areas such as beginning, intermediate, and mastery (Chen et al., 2017; Music Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools, 2020). Effective formative assessment research utilizing self-regulated and autonomous learning, however, is where current literature is failing music educators (Chen et al., 2017; Evans, 2015; Schatt, 2018). The need for formative assessment has been determined within middle school choral music education, increasing self-determination and self-regulation within the traditional rehearsal paradigm (Ivaldi, 2019; Johnson, 2019; Long, 2021).

Effective assessment strategies within the chorus classroom can improve student motivation, performance, and persistence (Long, 2021; Payne et al., 2019). Contributing to the evolving assessment culture within other core subjects, individual student growth assessment needs to be a primary focus of the choral music educator and an essential component of the classroom environment. The motivation of students as well as teachers will be enhanced as self-regulated learning is embraced and encouraged within the classroom culture (Long, 2021; Payne

et al., 2019). Choral music education will benefit from effective formative and authentic assessment as strong chorus programs will emerge due to data-driven advocacy and informed instruction (Long, 2021; Payne et al., 2019).

Specific types of formative assessment have not been effectively researched and analyzed within this type of environment, which does not aid in the practicality for music educators seeking traditional assessment alternatives. Electronic portfolios have reportedly been successful in other core subjects, especially in higher education, allowing the student to chart growth through chosen documents and artifacts within the subject, which research suggests is intrinsically motivating, resulting in improvement and persistence (Beckers et al., 2016; Bennett et al., 2016; Rowley & Munday, 2014). More research needs to be conducted on student perceptions of e-Portfolio assessment as a form of authentic and formative assessment within the middle school chorus classroom. More specifically, this study will focus on middle school choral student perceptions on e-Portfolio assessment and its influence on motivation and self-regulated learning (Evans, 2015; Schatt, 2018). There is also a significant gap in the literature on the kinds of assessments necessary to provide middle school music students with a scaffolded approach in recognizing their developing abilities over time, thus intrinsically motivating their self-regulated learning and persistence within the music discipline (Evans, 2015; Nichols, 2017, 2019). The overall goal of assessment within the middle school chorus classroom is to increase independence and autonomy within the music discipline as well as to encourage student motivation (Long, 2021). "Cultivating a culture of commitment" (Long, 2021, p. 56) within the chorus classroom can be achieved through student motivation and engagement with formative assessment strategies.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this instrumental case study was to examine the perceptions of and experiences of middle school students who exhibit self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation as they utilize e-Portfolio assessment in chorus. This chapter introduces and describes the research design, procedures, and data analysis for exploring the practice of e-Portfolio assessment within middle school chorus ensembles. The instrumental case study design allows for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of e-Portfolio assessment and its influence on self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation from multiple middle school chorus students' perspectives. This chapter discusses the research plan, including the methodology, participants, setting, analysis method, and ethical concerns. A summary concludes this chapter.

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative design to highlight the voices and perceptions of the participants within their naturalistic environment. The findings from the data collection were interpreted through the lens of the theoretical framework of self-determination theory (SDT; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The data analysis within a qualitative case study is both "inductive and deductive" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 8), establishing patterns and themes. The case study approach allowed me to collect data using a single case of one middle school chorus setting to illustrate the perspectives of multiple students and interpret them within the natural setting of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), case studies research real-life cases that are currently in progress. This allows current information to be gathered from the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). "The hallmark of a good case study design is that it presents an in-depth understanding of the case" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.98).

Specifically, an instrumental case study design (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Stake, 1995) was used to intensely explore the practice of e-Portfolio assessment within one middle school with multiple students who exhibited self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation as they utilized e-Portfolio assessment in chorus. The instrumental case study design is a qualitative research method that focuses on a single case bounded by time and place to illustrate an issue (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Maxwell, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). Multiple sources of information within this instrumental case study were used for data collection. The instrumental case study design was appropriate for this study as I chose e-Portfolio assessment as the focused issue among middle school students who displayed self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation.

This type of research design allowed me to be a part of the naturalistic learning environment, creating a contemporary, real-life portrayal of the context of the case (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). The data collected in the field were used to explore the key, instrumental focus of the study. The instrumental approach to the case study consisted of one school with multiple sources of information to better understand and analyze the issue (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Maxwell, 2013; Yin, 2018). Case studies are bounded, which means that certain parameters define them (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). This case was bounded by place (a middle school choral classroom) and time (one semester of instruction).

Research Questions

The purpose of this instrumental case study was to examine the perceptions and experiences of middle school students who exhibit self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation as they utilize e-Portfolio assessment in chorus. To better understand this phenomenon, one central research question and three sub-questions were created.

Central Research Question

How do participants perceive, value, and experience self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation opportunities using e-Portfolio assessment practices in the middle school choral classroom?

Sub-Question One

What factors influence participants' perceptions of e-Portfolio assessment regarding competence in the middle school choral classroom?

Sub-Question Two

What factors influence participants' perceptions of e-Portfolio assessment regarding relatedness in the middle school choral classroom?

Sub-Question Three

What factors influence participants' perceptions of e-Portfolio assessment regarding autonomy in the middle school choral classroom?

Setting and Participants

This instrumental case study took place in a northern Virginia public school secondary choral program in the United States. Newtown Virginia Middle School (NVMS; pseudonym) is part of Northern Virginia Public Schools (NVPS; pseudonym) with a total student population of 600 students. Fifty total students were enrolled in choral classes at NVMS. The choral curriculum included three developmentally sequenced choral music classes: seventh-grade auditioned honors chorus, eighth-grade non-auditioned mixed chorus, and eighth-grade auditioned honors chorus. Most of the students at NVMS had their first formal experience with music instruction and singing in chorus at the elementary level. The choral director for the NVMS program was a 17-year veteran of middle and high school choral music in both private

and public-school settings.

Site

The setting of NVMS was appropriate for this study. As a secondary school with multiple sections and levels of chorus, the choral director introduced e-Portfolio assessment in 2020-2021 while using a hybrid model of instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The hybrid learning model consists of teaching students both remotely and in-person at the same time utilizing a video conferencing tool. NVPS and NVMS used Google Meet to communicate and teach students virtually while teaching in-person students at the same time. The choral director at NVMS chose to introduce e-Portfolios as an efficient way to assess all students, both in-person and virtually. Referring to them as "digital notebooks," students put artifacts such as performance assessments, journaling, research assignments, and even auditions in the e-Portfolio.

At the time of this study, the leadership within NVPS and NVMS consisted of a performing arts coordinator who supervised all of the secondary performing arts within NVPS at its central board office and an administration team at NVMS consisting of a principal, an assistant principal, and a dean of students. The performing arts coordinator was also the Supervisor of Secondary English and Reading, whose background was within a middle school English classroom. The performing arts coordinator did not have any formal performing arts certification or background. The choral director at NVMS was also the department chair for the performing arts department at this particular school. The choral department consisted of one choral teacher, who also taught general music and drama.

Participants

Participants for this study included students from each of the seventh- and eighth-grade

choral ensembles within NVMS. All students in each ensemble participated in e-Portfolio

assessment as part of their coursework. However, only students selected as participants in this

study participated in the individual interviews, observations, and focus group discussions. These

took place during the regularly scheduled class time so that students not participating in the study

did not feel excluded. The participants were selected using purposeful sampling, the "primary

sampling strategy in qualitative research" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 326). Purposeful sampling

includes selecting the site and participants in the study based on the information-rich cases

related to the topic of interest (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Maxwell, 2013). Sixteen students were

selected based on the recommendation of the NVMS choral director, focusing on each potential

participant's ability to contribute in a meaningful way to the study. The participants were able to

provide data uniquely relevant to the purpose and goals of the present study.

Researcher Positionality

As a veteran choral director, I have watched my students struggle with motivation for

many years. As a director for a performing arts elective, I struggle with recruitment as well as

persistence within my program on an annual basis. Support for a program such as chorus is

minimal at best. Developing supportive relationships with students, teachers, administrative

personnel, parents, and community members has been integral to the success of my program. I

have used my chorus program as a culturally responsive vehicle to create traditions within the

local school community that will influence my students' present and future lives. Supporting the

majority of my students from recruitment to graduation, however, has been a difficult task. Many

students are torn between in-school musical experiences and out-of-school life experiences that

are completely unrelated to my program. The persistence rate in my own program is

approximately 40% for all 4 years of high school. Research indicates that when students

participate in extracurricular activities that they find personally meaningful, the better chance

they will engage, learn more, and persist longer (Staley, 2017). Electronic portfolio assessment

has been successful in other core subjects, allowing students to chart growth through chosen

artifacts and documents within the subject. Research suggests that e-Portfolio assessment is

intrinsically motivating resulting in overall improvement and persistence (Beckers et al., 2016;

Bennett et al., 2016; Rowley & Munday, 2014).

This instrumental case study was purposeful, bounded by time and place, and had a goal

of investigating the topic of e-Portfolio assessment and self-regulated learning within a middle

school chorus setting. This approach allowed me to create a real-life portrayal of the case and use

the collected data to explore the key, instrumental focus of the study, e-Portfolio assessment.

Interpretive Framework

Social constructivism was the interpretive framework for this study. Creswell and Poth

(2018) referred to this type of framework or worldview as a way for the researcher to explore the

complexities of participant perceptions as they interact with the world around them. Within this

type of framework, open-ended, broad and general questions were posed to the participants so

that they could construct subjective meanings on what was being researched (Creswell & Poth,

2018). Researchers are active listeners and observer in this type of framework, eventually

making their own interpretation of what they see and hear. The goal of the researchers in this

type of framework is to rely as much as possible on the perceptions of the participants as they

interact with the phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2014). The interpretation is not "simply

imprinted on individuals" (Creswell & Creswell, 2014, p. 8), but is formed based on the

interactions with all participants.

Researchers must recognize that their own backgrounds and experiences will shape their

interpretation in social constructivism (Creswell & Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, the researcher's intent must be to interpret the meaning others have about the phenomenon, not just their own (Creswell & Creswell, 2014). The researchers generate their interpretation based on the data collected in the field. This means that the interaction with the participants is extremely important as the researchers need to address the process of the interactions with their participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Philosophical Assumptions

Philosophical assumptions or the researcher's beliefs are addressed in this study. These assumptions guided and informed research topics, especially in the choice of theory selection. Beliefs and views about certain types of problems are unavoidable as they are instilled through personal backgrounds, educational training, and experiences with the selected research topic (Creswell & Poth, 2018). There were three philosophical assumptions addressed in this study: ontological, epistemological, and axiological.

Ontological Assumption

Ontological assumptions are defined as the researcher's belief about the nature of reality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I have used e-Portfolio assessment within my own program in the past with mixed results and perceptions from my students. In addition, I have witnessed the decline of intrinsic motivation and persistence within my own program. My belief is that music education, especially chorus, continues to utilize an antiquated assessment methodology that does not meet current needs of students, resulting in declining participation. During this study, I reported on the different perspectives of participants as they interacted with e-Portfolio assessment within a secondary chorus classroom other than my own. The intent was to report each participant's reality using their actual words (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Epistemological Assumption

Epistemological assumptions are defined as what constitutes knowledge within the study and how those claims are justified (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It is essential for me to conduct studies in the field as close to the participants as possible. This established the context for the words the participants would give me during data collection (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I went to the school where data were collected in this study for both the individual interviews and observations. The focus group discussions were held virtually via Google Meet. During data collection, I received firsthand subjective information from the environment where the participants experienced e-Portfolio assessment in the secondary chorus classroom. From there, I was able to have a better understanding of their knowledge as it is influenced by their environment.

Axiological Assumption

Axiological assumptions are defined as the values a researcher brings to the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). My position as the researcher was important to both the context and setting of the research study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As a veteran music educator, I brought my own values and biases regarding assessment, motivation, and self-regulated learning in choral music education. In addition, I have used e-Portfolio assessment in the past within my own secondary choral classroom as a form of formative and authentic assessment. My interpretation of this study was influenced by my professional axiological assumptions.

Researcher's Role

My role as the researcher was to accurately investigate the perceptions of secondary chorus students using e-Portfolio assessment and its influence on intrinsic motivation and self-regulated learning. As the current Director of Choral and Drama Activities within a similar

school, I have personally watched the decline of motivation and self-regulated learning within performing arts programs over the course of the past 27 years. I gained interest in this phenomenon as I researched alternative routes for my students to monitor their own individual achievement within an ensemble-oriented class. As each student hones their own individual talent, I also felt that it was necessary for each one to be able to see and record their own progress throughout the course of the year without comparing them to other individuals within their class.

My role as the researcher was as a direct observer, not as the teacher or choral director. There was no direct relationship between the researcher or participants of this study that represents a conflict of interest as the participants were from a different school than the one in which I was employed. I traveled to the site on several occasions during data collection to observe and interview the participants. Observations within the middle school choral classroom included students interacting with e-Portfolio assessment, providing valuable information about the case topic (Yin, 2018).

Procedures

This study was an instrumental case study investigating a single case that led to understandings about the key topic. The real-world use of e-Portfolio assessment among middle school students who exhibited self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation was the key topic investigated through multiple data sources. Selected participants were interviewed individually prior to any other data collection. Two observations took place, situating myself in the participants' naturalistic and interactive learning environment of their middle school classroom. These observations informed three focus group discussions. Lastly, participants' e-Portfolios were analyzed as part of the data collection.

Permissions

A letter was sent to the NVPS assistant superintendent for instruction requesting

permission to conduct research at NVMS. Once the letter was received, a request to conduct

research form had to be filled out along with an attachment of the procedures of this study.

Approval was granted from NVPS to conduct research at NVMS (see Appendix A). I had placed

this letter temporarily in Appendix A but it has now been replaced with the Institutional Review

Board (IRB) approval letter to preserve the confidentiality of this school district.

Recruitment Plan

There were 16 participants that included at least one group of students from each level of

choir: seventh-grade honors chorus; eighth-grade chorus; and eighth-grade honors chorus.

Students were selected for this study based on the recommendation of the NVMS choral director,

focusing on students who exhibited self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation along with

the ability to contribute in a meaningful way to this study. Once the participants were identified,

I sent them a recruitment letter (see Appendix B) that included a link to a screening survey using

Google Forms (see Appendix C). The ages of the participants ranged from 12–14 years old,

representing all grades and levels within the middle school chorus department. Gender equity

was attempted when selecting participants but was difficult due to the low percentage of male

students in the program compared to female students. Student participation provided student

perspectives from varying levels of experience in choral singing, vocal skills, and musical

development. After I reviewed the screening survey and selected the study participants, I emailed

the parents of the recruited participants to let them know that their child had been selected to

participate in a research study (see Appendix D). This email included a digital copy of the Child

Assent Form and the Parental Consent Form (see Appendix E for both). Upon my initial visit to

the site, the students who exhibited an interest in participating in this study were given an opportunity to ask questions about the study prior to their participation. This included a formal discussion of the study with the selected participants as well as an opportunity to informally meet with students individually in a separate room within the choral department selected by the choral director and me. Students who wished to participate signed a child assent form. Following the collection of the signed consent forms and student assent forms, data collection began.

<div align="center">**Data Collection Plan**</div>

Data were collected during the 2022 spring semester. Primary data sources included individual interviews, field notes generated during observations, focus group discussions, and the collection of e-Portfolios that included a letter-writing artifact. Emerging topics and themes from individual interviews and observations informed the focus group discussions designed to generate conversations with student participants and to elicit thoughtful engagement with topics about e-Portfolio assessment within the choral classroom.

Secondary data sources included physical student artifacts. These included student work, reflections via e-Portfolio (including recorded singing performance assessment, concert reflections, theory work, sight-singing performances, student self-assessments, and other artifacts within the chorus e-Portfolio). Student grades and detailed descriptions and demographics of participants were used to support and reinforce themes that emerged from other data sources.

Individual Interviews

The interview in case study research is to gain insight and understand the phenomenon from the participants' perspective (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Knowledge is constructed about the research study through the social interaction of the interviewer and the interviewee (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Warren & Xavia Karner, 2015). Individual

interviews for this study were scheduled at the beginning of the semester at a convenient time and location chosen by the chorus director and me. All interviews took place in a separate room other than the choral room to allow for a private setting. The prompts and interview questions were designed to elicit meaningful reflection on the perceived impact that the e-Portfolio assessment strategies had on individual as well as ensemble self-regulated learning. Each interview was recorded and stored in a digital file on a password-protected computer. I transcribed the audio recording into text data as each interview was completed.

Individual Interview Questions (see Appendix F)

Background Questions

1. Describe your chorus background and why you joined choir or have continued with choir. Central Research Question (CRQ)

2. Describe areas of success or achievement both individually and as a group that you have experienced in choir. Sub-Question (SQ) 1; SQ2

3. Describe your choir and the experiences you have had with others in your choir. SQ2

4. What else would you like to discuss about your personal and social experiences in choir that we have not already discussed? SQ2

Assessment Questions

5. Describe how your individual skills and knowledge have previously been or are currently assessed or tested in choir. CRQ; SQ3

6. How does your quarterly grade communicate your individual achievement and success in choir? SQ1; SQ3

7. What are your personal experiences with e-Portfolio assessment in choir? CRQ

8. What else would you like to discuss regarding your personal experiences with assessment in choir? CRQ; SQ1; SQ3

Self-regulated Learning Questions

9. Describe your challenges with motivation to complete individual tasks, assignments, or assessments in choir. CRQ

10. Describe strategies that may influence your motivation to complete individual tasks, assignments, or assessments in choir. CRQ

11. What else would you like to discuss regarding your individual motivation in choir? CRQ

The questions for the individual interview were divided into three categories: background, assessment, and self-regulated learning questions. The background questions allowed the participants to introduce their personal experiences and perceptions of chorus. Based on each participant's response, the questions were adjusted as necessary. These introductory questions were non-threatening, allowing each participant to elaborate on individual and group experiences within choir. Establishing an overall rapport between the participant and the researcher, these questions allowed the students to give relevant background information on their level of expertise (Patton, 2015). These questions focused on the "sense of self" that the participant had within the program, as well as the feeling of relatedness to others within the choir community (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2017; Rowley & Munday, 2014). Relatedness not only offers the most high-quality levels of intrinsic motivation, but it is also a major reason that many students choose to participate in electives such as chorus (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2017; Evans, 2015; Evans & Liu, 2019; Freer & Evans, 2018; MacIntyre et al., 2018; Roberts, 2018; Schatt, 2018; Valenzuela, et al., 2018).

The assessment questions asked the participant to share their perceptions of previous and current assessment practices within the chorus classroom. Some students were hesitant to share if they thought the information would get back to their choral director, especially if there was a negative connotation. The participant had to feel safe enough to share these personal in-depth perceptions in a one-on-one interview. Research suggested that summative and participatory grades within the music discipline can be damaging to students' self-esteem and lower overall achievement (Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017). According to Chen et al. (2017), students are often rewarded with a good grade for attendance and participation in a concert, while students who could not or did not attend are given a punitive grade. Sicherl Kafol et al. (2017) suggested that summative assessment and participatory grades have been used for many years within the chorus classroom, which does not give the student any formative feedback on student growth. Deci and Ryan (2000, 2017) described competence as the feeling of being successful on a task within one's own environment. Often, students' competence beliefs are predictive of their performance level and persistence within the program (Roberts, 2018). The contents of the e-Portfolio often become internally rewarding and motivating as the owner self-reflects on the contents of the e-Portfolio (Beckers et al., 2016; Bennett et al., 2016; Rowley & Munday, 2014).

The self-regulated learning questions focused on the participant's motivation to complete tasks and/or persist within the chorus program. Bennett et al. (2016) and Rowley and Munday (2014) suggested that the reflective nature of the e-Portfolio allow students the opportunity for deeper engagement with their "sense of self" or autonomy. This type of scaffolded learning environment promotes autonomy, one of the three constructs of SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000, 2017; Rowley & Munday, 2014). These questions encouraged the participant to reflect on the

motivating aspects of long-term goals and student growth measurement. Evans (2015) defined motivation as goal-directed activity that is either instigated and/or sustained.

Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan

The data analysis plan I used for the individual interviews was memoing and pattern matching (Maxwell, 2013; Saldaña, 2013; Yin, 2018). Upon reading and re-reading the interview transcriptions, handwritten memos were made in the margins and then typed into a Notes app on my computer. The memos were generated by my experiences and interpretations as I got a sense of the interview as a whole prior to breaking it down into parts (Creswell & Guetterman, 2005; Maxwell, 2013).

Codes and themes were then developed stemming from the information gleaned from the memoing process. A code is a short phrase or word that assigns a summative attribute to observations (Saldaña, 2013). The purpose of coding is to deconstruct the data and rearrange them into categories to support and inform comparisons of categories and the development of themes and issues (Maxwell, 2013). Coding is the process between data collection and data analysis (Saldaña, 2013). This is a way for the "how" and "why" of the interview analysis to be pattern-matched (Yin, 2018). This type of pattern-matching logic increases internal validity, assuming that the predicted outcome of the empirically-researched patterns are similar. Coding began as data were collected and formatted from the individual interviews. Preliminary words and phrases were put in analytic memoing for future reference. My thoughts throughout the entire process were manually documented and coded (Saldaña, 2013). Connections between the various categories and themes were identified and explored using the context in which they occurred as the lens for analysis. Interpretations and conclusions resulted from linking patterns and reconstructing the data to form relevant meanings and findings.

Observations

Observations took place two times throughout the course of the study using an observation template. I observed students both formally and informally. The formal observation was scheduled with the choral director and announced to the students in advance. The informal observation was scheduled with the choral director but unannounced to the students. In both types of observations, I was a participant observer. Participant-observation assumes that the researcher is not merely a passive observer but has a role within the organization being observed allowing unusual opportunities for collecting data (Yin, 2018). I included two samples of the completed Observation Template in Appendix G. Since I was employed by the same school division as NVMS, I was a colleague of the choral director at NVMS. Participant-observation provided the opportunity for me to gain access to student records and student e-Portfolios through the Google domain used at NVMS and to utilize Google Meet if necessary, during my data collection. Descriptive field notes were taken during each observation that informed the final focus group discussions. The purpose of the field notes was to (a) describe the classroom e-Portfolio assessment practices, (b) document behaviors before, during, and after the use of e-Portfolio assessment practice, and (c) identify and examine the participants' intrinsic motivation and self-regulated learning while using e-Portfolio assessment strategies.

Observations Data Analysis Plan

The data analysis plan I used for observations was memoing and pattern matching (Yin, 2018). Handwritten memos in the margins of the field notes were transcribed and/or typed into a Notes app on my computer. The memoing started during the initial reading of the field notes taken during each observation. Coding of observation data began as I collected and formatted the data. Preliminary words and phrases were jotted down following all observational fieldwork

(Saldaña, 2013). Additional memoing occurred upon re-reading the field notes. This process continued all the way through to the conclusion of data collection. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), memoing should be guided by the following questions: What is it? Why, when, how, and by whom was it produced? What meanings does it convey? This process is the first step of qualitative data analysis as the memos are generated by the experiences of the researcher (Maxwell, 2013). Just as I analyzed the data from the interviews, I used lean coding of the memos taken from the observation protocols to further develop the descriptions, codes, and themes for this study.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are advantageous to a research study when time is limited, and the participants are hesitant or nervous about responding to the researcher one-on-one (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Communication among the participants often yields rich information as they build upon their similar experiences. Focus group discussions for this research study were designed to generate conversations with student participants and to elicit thoughtful engagement with topics about e-Portfolio assessment and self-regulated learning within the choral classroom. Focus groups were organized so that participants could share and reflect on their collective and individual experience with the e-Portfolio assessment practices occurring in their choir class. The focus group discussions took place utilizing Google Meet following all data collection from individual interviews and observations.

Data collection for the focus groups consisted of three focus groups, representing one from each choral ensemble level at NVMS. All focus group discussions took place in a separate room other than the choral room to allow for a private setting as I used Google Meet for the discussion. Due to the scheduling and re-scheduling of interviews and observations, the focus

group discussions had to be held via Google Meet because of the calendar demands at that point in the academic year for me at my own school. Focus group discussions concentrated primarily on the participants' attitudes, values, and understanding of e-Portfolio assessment and grading practices in choir along with their perceptions of self-regulated learning. The focus group discussions were recorded electronically using Google Meet and stored in a digital file on a password-protected computer. I transcribed each focus group discussion as part of the data analysis.

Focus Group Questions (see Appendix H)

1. How do your current grades in choir reflect your individual level of achievement? CRQ; SQ2; SQ3

2. What would you like your choir director to know about you or your class that may impact your level of achievement in choir? SQ1; SQ2; SQ3

3. Describe the challenges you have had with e-Portfolio assessment in choir. CRQ; SQ1; SQ2; SQ3

4. Describe the successes you have had with e-Portfolio assessment in choir. CRQ; SQ1; SQ2; SQ3

5. What would you like your choir director to know about your experiences with e-Portfolio assessment? CRQ; SQ1; SQ2; SQ3

6. Is there anything I did not ask that you would like to share? CRQ; SQ1; SQ2; SQ3

The focus group questions focused on achievement, assessment, and e-Portfolio assessment in choir. They allowed each participant to introduce their experience with achievement and assessment, specifically e-Portfolio assessment, in a collaborative, safe environment, which is extremely important for in-depth data (Patton, 2015). Reflecting on

individual and group perceptions regarding assessment during the research study was beneficial in-depth information for the researcher. Many music students have had to respond to a prescriptive discipline with the chorus classroom, where many directors have fallen victim to either a standardized assessment model for all students or use summative, participatory grades (Evans, 2015; Parkes et al., 2017). My intent with these questions was to have a better understanding of student perceptions regarding individual student growth measurement as opposed to a large group assessment with finite objectives and benchmarks (Rowley & Munday, 2014).

Focus Group Data Analysis Plan

The data analysis plan I used for the focus group discussions was memoing and pattern matching (Maxwell, 2013; Saldaña, 2013; Yin, 2018). Upon reading and re-reading the focus group transcriptions, handwritten memos were made in the margins and then typed into a Notes app on my computer or electronic device. The memos were generated by my experiences and interpretations as I got a sense of the discussion as a whole prior to breaking it down into parts (Creswell & Guetterman, 2005; Maxwell, 2013).

Codes and themes were developed stemming from the information gleaned from the memoing process. Pattern-matching between codes and themes took place from the focus group discussion analysis. Pattern-matching logic increases the richness of the data collection if the predicted outcome of the empirically researched pattern is similar. Connections between the various categories and themes were identified and explored using the context in which they occurred as the lens for analysis (Yin, 2018). Interpretations and conclusions resulted from linking patterns and reconstructing the data to form relevant meanings and findings.

Physical Artifacts

Physical artifacts included student work, submissions, reflections via e-Portfolio (including but not limited to recorded singing performance assessment, concert reflections, theory work, sight-singing performances, student self-assessments, and other artifacts within the chorus e-Portfolio), student grades, and detailed descriptions and demographics of choir classes. Electronic portfolios from the participants were included in the data collection as well as a letter to the participant's younger self (see Appendix I). The e-Portfolios contained all of the selected artifacts that the participant placed in it throughout the semester, demonstrating growth measurement in chorus. The letter was the final artifact placed in the e-Portfolio, responding to the following prompt: Based on your growth and achievement in choir as evidenced in your e-Portfolio, recruit your younger self into a middle school chorus program. These artifacts were used to support and reinforce themes that emerged from the other data sources.

Due to my status as an employee of the same school district, I had access to student artifacts such as grades, Google accounts, and e-Portfolios. These artifacts, when combined with interviews, observations, and focus group data, facilitated a triangulation of the collected data, contributing to the trustworthiness of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018).

Physical Artifacts Data Analysis Plan

The data analysis plan I used for the physical artifacts, mostly drawn from participant e-Portfolios, was memoing and pattern matching (Maxwell, 2013; Saldaña, 2013; Yin, 2018). Upon collecting and analyzing each e-Portfolio, handwritten memos were made about each one and then typed into a Notes app on my computer as a form of a digital audit trail. The memos were generated by my interpretations as I got a sense of the artifact and its significance to the data (Creswell & Guetterman, 2005; Maxwell, 2013).

First cycle codes and themes were developed stemming from the information gleaned from the memoing process I completed after reviewing the physical artifacts (Saldaña, 2013). Second cycle codes and themes allowed me to make connections between the various categories and themes after reorganizing and reanalyzing the data coded through first cycle methods (Saldaña, 2013). Data were recoded from the artifacts as more accurate words or phrases were identified and explored. Interpretations and conclusions resulted from linking patterns and reconstructing the data to form relevant meanings and findings.

Data Synthesis

Important and relevant themes that emerge from the primary data were organized during the data synthesis so that I could make comparisons between participant perceptions. Stake (1995) defined data analysis of individual data collection methods, referred to as the primary data, and the final synthesis of all data as a unit as a "matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations" (p. 71). Data analysis for this study included the organization of important and relevant themes that emerged from the primary data so that I could make comparisons between participant perceptions derived from all the data viewed as a whole. Maxwell's (2013) strategies for qualitative data analysis were used to aide in these comparisons by using the following strategies: reading and memoing, categorizing strategies (coding and thematic analysis), and connecting strategies (narrative analysis). This allowed me to search for meanings, patterns, and relationships that supported behaviors, issues, and contexts unique to e-Portfolio assessment, self-regulated learning, and intrinsic motivation (Stake, 1995). The themes and sub-themes revealed the answers to my research questions.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness of one's research study strengthens its overall value (Amankwaa, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that the criteria to ensure trustworthiness of qualitative research involve credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. When met, these criteria ensure the quality and rigor of the research study.

Credibility

Credibility is the confidence the participants of the research study have in the researcher to convey the "truth" of the findings. One of the most critical techniques to establish credibility, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), is member checks, which allow the participants of the study to evaluate the credibility of the collected data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Throughout the course of this study, member checks were conducted with each participant regarding significant activities, but especially individual interviews and focus group discussions (Amankwaa, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I transcribed the voice recordings of each interview and then asked the participants to review their transcript for accuracy. Participants turned in their checked transcripts to me following their review in which they were given the opportunity to make any needed changes to both individual interviews and focus group discussions prior to signing the form affirming the accuracy of the transcripts. This technique strengthens the data to ensure that the researcher and participants have the same perceptions regarding the collected data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Persistent observation and engagement were also integrated into the research study during the semester in which I collected data. The time that I invested at the research site observing and interviewing the participants allowed them to become familiarized and more

comfortable with me as the researcher. This allowed me to build trust with the participants and

gather much more reliable and accurate data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Lastly, triangulation, in which more than one method of data collection is used for the

same topic, was used to establish credibility (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Individual interviews, direct observations, focus group discussions, and physical artifacts

triangulated the data within this research study. Triangulation strengthens the credibility of

research by cross-checking the data using codes and themes derived from field note descriptions,

memoing, and pattern matching gleaned from multiple data sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transferability

Qualitative research gains even more merit in the research community when the research

is found to be transferable or generalized to other contexts or settings. However, this is a

judgement call on the part of the research consumer, not the researcher (Korstjens & Moser,

2018). Thick, descriptive data were rewritten as a narrative along with quotations from the

participants, detailing every aspect of the research process such as details about the location and

atmosphere of the setting, attitudes of the participants involved, reactions (verbal and non-verbal)

that were not observed through the audio recording, and my own feelings and reactions during

the entire study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested utilizing a thick description to establish

transferability. Essential to this process is receiving "thick," detailed responses in which the

researcher can describe the phenomenon for multiple participants (Amankwaa, 2016; Lincoln &

Guba, 1985). The objective is that the phenomenon is reproduced as clearly and as detailed as

possible. Thick descriptions afford the researcher enough information to evaluate the extent to

which the conclusions from the data analysis are transferable to "other times, settings, situations,

and people" (Amankwaa, 2016, p. 122). When I prepared the questions for the focus group discussions and interviews, I developed questions that required extended, detailed answers.

Dependability

Dependability is the consistency within qualitative research and whether or not the research could be replicated (Amankwaa, 2016; Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability can be demonstrated through an effective description of the procedures undertaken for the study and is accomplished through an audit trail. An audit trail allows the researcher to retrace all processes taken during the study. It acts as a safety net for qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I used a digital audit trail, in which all the research activities and dates were stored. The transparent records of district approval, IRB approval, and completion of interviews, formal observations, informal observations, and focus group discussions were stored on a password-protected computer that described the research steps taken from the proposal to the reporting of the overall findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Confirmability

Embedded in the data analysis is the interpretation of the research. The research must establish confirmability so that it is free of research bias (Amankwaa, 2016; Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Confirmability is a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The value of the data is dependent on confirmability as opposed to objectivity (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I utilized a reflexive journal (see Appendix J) to establish confirmability within this research study (Amankwaa, 2016; Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This began at the onset of writing the proposal. Reflexive journaling continued throughout the individual interviews, observations, and focus group discussions. Reflexive

journals included the dates, times, and places and persons involved in the research along with my personal biases as a researcher. These were stored in password-protected digital files for easy access in the data analysis (Amankwaa, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transparency and clarity are important requirements in qualitative research as the researcher is the research instrument (Dodgson, 2019). The positionality of the researcher becomes especially important when considering data collection and analysis. The researcher, therefore, must be able to articulate similarities and differences to the participants to increase the confirmability or neutrality of the research (Dodgson, 2019).

In addition, I incorporated a peer review at the completion of this study. The process of peer review includes one to three non-biased auditors who read through the study to check for internal and external validity, replicability, and neutrality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I chose a non-biased expert within the chorus and educational field who had recently completed her doctorate degree through a different program. Based on her knowledge of qualitative research studies, she was able review my manuscript to determine if my research problem and purpose had been clearly formulated and if a suitable approach had been taken to address the research questions. The research design was also examined to determine the originality of this study and if it could be replicated. Ethical aspects of the research were also discussed within the peer review. Lastly, the "readability" of the manuscript was reviewed to assess how logically the problem and purpose of the research has been constructed and whether the conclusions were well-founded. After discussing these various aspects of my research study, I was able to make several corrections.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to conducting my study, I sought permission from the school division of NVPS where I would be conducting my data collection. I also received IRB approval (see Appendix A), which was guided by many policies surrounding the ethical considerations of persons, welfare, and justice (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the respect for persons or participants in the study involves providing evidence to the IRB showing how privacy measures will be handled during the study as well as how the consent process will be communicated to the participants. Participants must be confident in the fact that their privacy will be maintained throughout the study from data collection to reporting, especially vulnerable populations such as children (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study used pseudonyms for the participants as well as the names of the school district and the middle school where this study took place. All data were stored within a password-protected digital device to which I am the only one who has access. The consent process was conveyed to the participants as well as parents in this study. Participants and their parent/guardian signed assent and consent forms (see Appendix E). They needed to understand that participation was voluntary and that they were able to withdraw from the study at any time (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Welfare concerns involve adequate protection of the participants, showing that the study will not place them at risk (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

This study attempted to limit power issues. Although I was employed by NVPS, since I was not assigned to NVMS, I did not have any authoritative role or previous relationship with the participants. I tried to build trust with the participants through observations, interviews, and focus group discussions. The data collected avoided leading and sensitive questions. Lastly, the

IRB guidelines state that participants must be treated fairly and equitably (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Utilizing purposeful sampling, I made certain that the site, NVMS, fell within the parameters of the study. In addition, the participants selected for the study were recommended by the choral director based on their ability to provide valuable information and data for the study.

Due to the sensitive nature of this study, which included participants within a public-school system under the age of 18, permission was obtained on various levels: district, school, parental, and student. Finding a gatekeeper, such as the principal; Performing Arts Coordinator; and/or the chorus director was key to helping with this process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Since I have utilized e-Learning and e-Portfolio strategies within my own chorus classroom, I tried to avoid the potential of siding with participants' views in regard to this study. I reported multiple perspectives and both positive and contrary findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Participants checked their own transcripts for accuracy so that they could be confident that the information shared was clearly communicated in a neutral and non-biased approach.

Lastly, I investigated the best security measures in terms of data storage. I used digital data storage and ensured that it remains private and not shared with other individuals. I work in a Google-based environment and so does the site school, so I needed an external hard drive to save all data, as there is always the potential for hacking into a public network. In addition, I developed a backup copy of all computer files to secure all data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The confidentiality of the participants is protected by assigning pseudonyms to all participants. The master list of pseudonyms has been stored in a locked safe in my home (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A data collection matrix was also created to efficiently locate and identify all information for the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). All data will be kept for a minimum of 5 years after which it will

be deconstructed. The deconstruction process will utilize a shredder for all paper documents and all electronic files will be permanently deleted.

Summary

The purpose of this instrumental case study was to examine the perceptions and experiences of middle school students who exhibit self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation as they utilize e-Portfolio assessment in chorus. The goal of this chapter was to outline the instrumental case study research method used to answer the research questions for this study. A discussion of the procedures, participants, and data collection outlined the specifics of how the study was conducted. An instrumental case study model was discussed in this chapter as it utilized several participants within a single case to gain an understanding of the perceptions of e-Portfolio assessment on self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation among middle school chorus students. The collected data were analyzed through the lens of SDT.

This chapter explained in detail the design of the case study as well as the methods that were utilized during data collection and analysis. The central research question and sub-questions that guide this case study were presented. The setting of NVMS and its importance to the study were described as well as the participants who were selected through purposeful sampling. The procedures for conducting the study were outlined, and the researcher's role as a participant observer was discussed. All data collection procedures—interviews, observations, focus groups, and physical artifacts—were explained in detail. Data analysis procedures of memoing, pattern-matching, and cross-case synthesis were explained. Trustworthiness, including credibility; transferability, dependability, and confirmability; and transferability as well as ethical considerations were also presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions and experiences of middle school students who exhibit self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation as they utilize e-Portfolio assessment in chorus. This chapter includes participant descriptions; the data, in the form of narrative themes, models, presented by theme; outlier data; and research question responses. Chapter Four concludes with a chapter summary.

Participants

This study included 16 participants representing at least one group of students from each level of choir: seventh-grade honors chorus; eighth-grade chorus (non-auditioned); and eighth-grade honors chorus. Two male students were selected (see Table 1), both 14 years in age and in eighth-grade chorus. Fourteen female students across the entire program were selected, ages 12–14 (see Table 1). Eight of the selected female students were in seventh-grade honors chorus, two in eighth-grade chorus, and four in eighth-grade honors chorus.

Table 1

Student Participants

Student Participant	Age	Gender	Current Middle School Chorus	Years of Experience	Grade Level
Riley	12	F	honors chorus (auditioned)	4	7
Amelia	12	F	honors chorus (auditioned)	3	7
Evan	14	M	chorus (non-auditioned)	5	8
Brandon	14	M	chorus (non-auditioned)	1	8
Scarlett	12	F	honors chorus (auditioned)	4	7
Chloe	12	F	honors chorus (auditioned)	2	7

Student Participant	Age	Gender	Current Middle School Chorus	Years of Experience	Grade Level
Harper	12	F	honors chorus (auditioned)	3	7
Zoe	14	F	chorus (non-auditioned)	4	8
Avery	12	F	honors chorus (auditioned)	3	7
Luna	12	F	honors chorus (auditioned)	3	7
Charlotte	14	F	chorus (non-auditioned)	4	8
Veronica	14	F	honors chorus (auditioned)	4	8
Sophia	14	F	honors chorus (auditioned)	4	8
Hannah	14	F	honors chorus (auditioned)	6	8
Madison	14	F	honors chorus (auditioned)	3	8
Tina	13	F	honors chorus (auditioned)	3	7

Riley

Riley, a seventh-grade student in the honors chorus, had quite a bit of chorus experience prior to transferring to NVMS. She auditioned at her previous elementary school in third grade because she inherently loved to sing. Referencing chorus as her "safe spot," Riley also mentioned that she moved to NVMS in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 when she was in sixth grade. Riley came from a single-parent home but had a very supportive extended family. The pandemic made it very difficult for her to make friends, and she started to decline academically. Placed in the advanced choir, she has since been able to connect with a group of musicians who have similar interests, which has helped her improve academically.

Amelia

Amelia initially joined chorus in fourth grade at one of the feeder elementary schools to NVMS. She stated that since that time, "It's been really fun to grow as a singer. It's fun to just

challenge yourself with singing. I just really liked the experience." Amelia was selected by audition to be in the seventh-grade honors chorus and really enjoyed being part of the ensemble due to its focus and work ethic compared to other ensembles in which she has participated. Although she acknowledged that choir was a social setting for her, she also stated that she would have taken chorus regardless of whether her friends took it or not because she loved singing.

Evan

As a member of the academically gifted program at NVMS, which is a project-based program called NEXT, this is Evan's fifth year of chorus after beginning in fourth grade at one of the feeder elementary schools to NVMS. He stated that he loved to sing and participate in chorus and considered himself a leader within the eighth-grade non-auditioned chorus. During one of the direct observations, many of the students in Evan's class followed his lead. He was quite involved in every aspect of the rehearsal including one of the games called "Pass the Beat." Many in his class seemed to look up to him and participated due to his contagious excitement.

Brandon

As a first-year choir student in the eighth-grade chorus, Brandon decided to join chorus due to family influences. His older sister was in high school chorus, and his father was also a musician. He referenced participating with his family in the follies, a community fundraiser at one of the local community colleges. He really enjoyed performing with his family and decided to join chorus this past year. Brandon recently moved to Virginia from another state to live with his father and step-mother. He was also a well-rounded athlete participating in football and basketball. Brandon had quite a few friends in the eighth-grade chorus whom he enjoyed "having fun" with during chorus class.

Scarlett

Battling attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and mental illness for most of her schooling, Scarlett began taking chorus in third grade because it sounded like fun, and her music teacher was really nice. She stated that she had battled low self-esteem due to her disability and home life. According to her records, Scarlett came from an extremely low socioeconomic family who also had a history of domestic violence and neglect. As part of the seventh-grade honors chorus, she referenced that she had many friends within the class. Because many of her other classes were on a block schedule, she enjoyed chorus more because it was a shorter period. She also enjoyed the constant engagement within the class culture.

Chloe

A quiet and self-proclaimed introvert, Chloe was in her second year of chorus as she joined for the first time in sixth grade due to the influence of her older brother who also went through the NVMS chorus program. Surprisingly, for her, she was selected this past year for the seventh-grade honors chorus. She stated that she believed she made the chorus because there was not enough interest in the class this year. During the interview, focus group discussion, and observations, Chloe seemed to lack quite a bit of self-confidence. She also stated that she had friends in chorus, but they were not friends with whom she spent time outside of class. In fact, she referenced the fact that she did not have many friends at all.

Harper

An accomplished musician and vocalist in the seventh-grade honors chorus, Harper had previously been selected by audition for All-District Honors Chorus in elementary school. She began her chorus journey in fourth grade at one of the feeder elementary schools to NVMS due to the encouragement of her elementary music teacher. Harper stated that her decision to sign up

for chorus in sixth grade was also based on the influence of her elementary music teacher. Harper never questioned that decision as she has enjoyed choir ever since. She referenced her current chorus as a family: "We might not all get along. We don't all like each other. But we all like chorus so we tolerate each other."

Zoe

Initially joining chorus in fourth grade because of her mother's influence, Zoe was part of the eighth-grade chorus. She stated that chorus was something she loved and it also helped her deal with many issues outside of the classroom. Zoe enjoyed singing and the concerts within the choral program. Zoe is on the autism spectrum, but that did not seem to impact her participation in chorus. Zoe was engaged and participated in each class that was observed.

Avery

Avery joined her elementary school chorus, a feeder school to NVMS, because she enjoyed singing. She was also selected for All-District Honors Chorus in elementary school. Once she began middle school, she enjoyed being with others who had the same passion and decided to continue her choral journey. She referenced her current choir as "my second family right now and they're always there when I need someone or if I need someone to talk to." She went on to explain how thoughtful, kind, and amazing her chorus classmates were. An academically gifted student, Avery was very confident regarding her individual contributions to chorus. As an alto, she stated that most songs sound good within her vocal range, and that she was able to contribute quite well to the whole group.

Luna

Luna began chorus in fourth grade at one of the feeder elementary schools to NVMS and was in the seventh-grade honors chorus. Initially, she was influenced by her mother to join choir

but persisted within the program due to exciting concerts like the one at the local theme park for a music festival. Although she described her seventh-grade chorus as a bit "chaotic," she also stated that "when we sing, we get really serious and get down to business. When it's time for concerts, we also get very serious." Luna stated that she had to miss school often due to family issues.

Charlotte

Viewing chorus as one of her hobbies, Charlotte began her choral journey in fourth grade at one of the feeder elementary schools to NVMS. As a member of eighth-grade chorus, Charlotte was very concerned during the interview process about some of the taunting and bullying displayed in her chorus class. She stated that her classmates were "dramatic and they tend to bully me and my friends a lot. Like, for a free day, they video recorded us. And they posted it on their stories and make fun of us." Charlotte confirmed that many of her classmates were afraid to sing out for fear of social media bullying. Her director had taken phones on several occasions due to this same issue. Because of what Charlotte had been through in her chorus class, her attitude was quite negative during both the interview and focus group discussion.

Veronica

Veronica began her choral journey in fourth grade at one of the feeder elementary schools to NVMS because of family and social influences. Her mother and sister had both been in chorus in high school and highly encouraged her to become part of it. In addition, some of her friends signed up, so she thought it would be fun and has never regretted it. As a member of the eighth-grade honors chorus, she has enjoyed auditioning for not only All-District Honors Chorus but also All-State Honors Chorus. Although she did not get to perform in it due to the pandemic, she

was only one of two sixth-grade students selected for All-State Honors Chorus. She also stated

that she enjoyed musical theater and had participated in several musicals and plays at her school.

Sophia

Unlike some of the other participants, Sophia was initially attracted to chorus because her

elementary music teacher told her that she would get to miss class to come to rehearsal.

Although she had always been a straight A student, she thought chorus, coupled with missing a

core class, sounded like fun. But she actually found out that she was quite good at singing. She

had the opportunity to audition for and was selected for the elementary All-District Honors

Chorus. Sophia stated, "I love singing music. . . . I love everything about it!" She also referenced

chorus as a social setting because she had many friends in the eighth-grade honors chorus. She

said, "Singing just meshes us together."

Hannah

Hannah was the participant with the most chorus experience since she had been involved

with one since second grade. Her elementary school, which was not a feeder school to NVMS,

offered a mini treble choir beginning in second grade. Her mother was influential in her initial

decision to join choir. Also, an accomplished church musician, Hannah sang on her church's

praise and worship team. It was evident that Hannah felt confident in her singing abilities and

even stated that other students relied on her to be a leader within her section.

Madison

Madison was part of the eighth-grade honors chorus and had been in choir since fourth

grade at one of the feeder elementary schools to NVMS. She continued chorus in middle school

because she realized she was good at it, found it fun, and felt it was educational. Madison

credited choir with her ability to "come out of her shell" over the years. She stated that she used

to be really quiet and did not like singing in front of people. Since that time, she has become much more outgoing and confident. Madison enjoyed the past year in chorus because it was more serious than her previous choirs. She stated, "I like the people that are there because they actually try to sing and make music."

Tina

A very confident young lady, Tina began her chorus journey in fourth grade due to the encouragement of friends at one of the feeder elementary schools to NVMS. Tina struggled with attendance at times, which made make-up work difficult for her in many academic classes including chorus. Tina stated that she loved singing and the social aspect of choir at NVMS.

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Results

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The data analysis and discussion within this chapter conceptualize the perspectives of middle school chorus students to discuss their understandings and experiences with self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation while utilizing e-Portfolio assessment. Four relevant themes emerged from the primary data after I completed the first and second coding process (see Table 2). Comparisons were made between participant perceptions derived from all the data viewed as a whole. The analysis describes emerging themes that are relevant to the research questions explored in the present study. Rich descriptions of the collected data and narrative of the students' lived experiences are presented below.

Table 2

Theme Development

Key Words/Phrases	Sub-themes
Major Theme 1: Participation as a Source of Motivation in Middle School Chorus	
Participation is graded; pass/fail based on participation; behavior is an issue; students negatively dramatic; quarterly grades reflect individual and ensemble participation; working as a group is enjoyable	Daily Rehearsal
Concerts: participation is graded; enjoyable	Performance Attendance
Major Theme 2: Differentiated Types of Assessment Are Key Motivating Factors for Achievement Among Advanced Middle School Chorus Students	
Less critical of myself; clear expectations; personal value tied to traditional grades; not as confident on paper-pencil tests, too much to remember; grades are motivating; anxiety over grades; immediate feedback especially with testing generator	Summative Assessment for Musical Knowledge
COVID; Show growth over a period of time; personalized; procrastination turning them in on time; prioritize assignments from core subjects to electives; project-based; artifacts; reflections; less pressure when it's not traditionally graded; expectations are not always clear; competency-based; difficult to move away from traditional grading; choir time given to complete assignments; autonomy; procrastination over certain assignments due to feeling of incompetence; easier when artifacts are not graded; graded for completion; negative feeling about being on computer in chorus class; wants to just participate and have fun without written work; track progress; annoying; review random stuff; negative feeling toward "homework"; difficult to make up the assignment after being absent; vocalise; performance videos; beneficial for student and director; extended due date gives those with attention deficit longer to focus on the assignment; discussion with director; can discuss things that might not be discussed in front of the class; not difficult; sometimes get to work in groups; time consuming	e-Portfolio Assessment of Musical Skills
Virtual choir during COVID; auditions for solos; auditions for higher level choirs; can be terrifying in front of others; competency-based; enjoys recording without the fear of being judged live; more enjoyable than paper-pencil tests	Individual Performance Assessments
Honors choirs; virtual choir during COVID; individual goal to pitch match; individual goal to be successful at the concert; individual goal to get all A's; what needs to be perfected or improved; solfège; sight-reading; achieve goals together; soft goals set by director; singing louder; difficult songs or difficult passages in songs; challenge yourself	Individual Short-term and Long-term Goals

Key Words/Phrases	Sub-themes
Major Theme 3: Chorus Meets Social and Emotional Needs for Many Middle School Students	
Parent or sibling was in high school chorus and was influential in participant joining in either elementary or middle school; only time to have fun outside of home life; teacher influence	Parental/family/teacher influence
Friends with similarities and characteristics; chorus is like a family; met future friends; met best friend; help each other; works much better in a group environment; helpful environment; safe space; choir friends since elementary school; people to talk to when in need; choir is uplifting on a bad day; music is therapy; trust	Social benefits
Build confidence through singing; audience reaction; setting goals and attaining them; being in front of others; came out of shell in chorus; confidence from chorus aided in other academic areas; feeling of success at concerts; student has the self-confidence to be themselves	Confidence
Major Theme 4: Middle School Chorus Students Need Various Sources of Motivation to Participate or Complete Work	
Choir is fun; more motivated to complete my choir work; self-motivated in choir; music choices are motivating; feeling of success/competence is motivating; advanced choirs are more motivated; chorus is a hobby; issues with others in the class stifles motivation; favorite elective; growth over a period of time (via e-Portfolio) is self-motivating; ADHD can hinder motivation (short attention span); depends on what drives you	Intrinsic Motivation
Initially joined choir because of missing class; choir competitions; scores and trophies; candy; time outside at the end of class; bargaining with students to complete work; theme park performance possibilities; grades; performance opportunities; free days; parent expectations; Performance Fridays	Extrinsic Motivation

Theme Development

Themes emerging from the data suggested sources of motivation, types of assessments that were motivating, and motivational needs that were met for the participants in this study. Some of these themes paralleled with the research questions and the three constructs of self-determination theory (SDT): competence, relatedness, and autonomy. The first theme was participation within the middle school chorus program as a source of motivation. Daily chorus rehearsals and performance attendance emerged as sub-themes. The second theme was that differentiated types of assessment are key motivating factors for achievement among advanced

middle school chorus students. Summative assessment for musical knowledge, e-Portfolio assessment of musical skills, individual performance assessments, and individual short-term and long-term goals in chorus emerged as sub-themes. The third theme that emerged was how chorus meets social and emotional needs for middle school students. Parental, family, and teacher influence, social benefits of chorus, and confidence built from chorus emerged as sub-themes of social–emotional learning. The last theme was the need for different types of motivation sources to participate or complete work within the middle school chorus classroom.

Theme 1: Participation in Chorus as a Source of Motivation in Middle School Chorus

Many of the students discussed the common theme of individual participation in choir as a source of motivation during daily rehearsals and performances. Many students referenced that much of their quarterly grade is based on their individual level of participation. During the seventh-grade honors choir focus group discussion, Luna stated that her choir director mostly gives A's because "we just have to sing and participate in choir." In this same discussion, Chloe mentioned that the students who participate receive A's, but there are students who receive other grades based on their level of participation. They both agreed that individual participation during daily rehearsals and performances was a motivating factor for the entire group. Also, in this same discussion, Harper chimed in to say that the lack of participation from some individuals "puts more stress and more strain on the rest of us, especially with certain parts." She agreed that individual participation from everyone is motivating for the entire group. A central finding in this study, however, was that the motivation of the individual was linked directly to the level of the ensemble. The overall participation within the seventh-and eighth-grade honors choirs was better, so individual motivation seemed to be more enhanced. The sub-themes of participation in chorus as a source of motivation in middle school chorus included individual and group

participation in performances and individual and group participation in daily rehearsals. These sub-themes are discussed in more detail after Figure 1. Participant quotes from each group of students and the various data collection methods are included in these discussions.

Figure 1

Theme 1 and Its Related Sub-themes
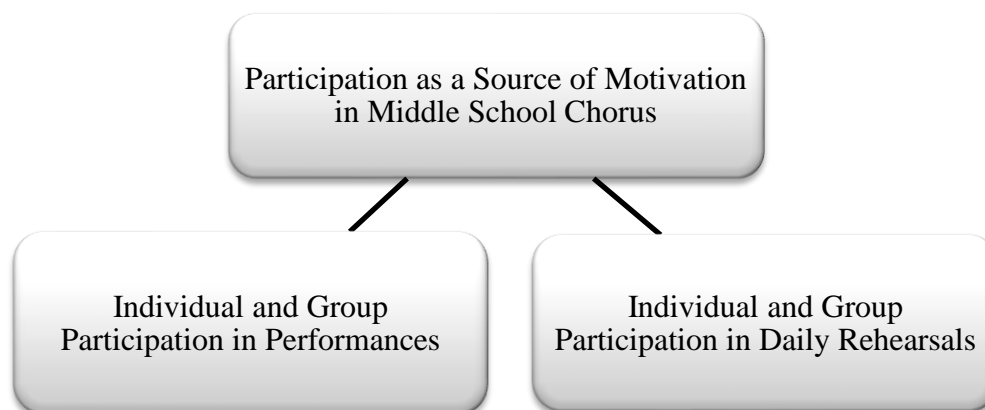
Individual and Group Participation in Performances. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the students have only had one concert during their middle school career. Participants referred to their most recent concert as an amazing achievement, both individually and as a whole group. During her interview, Chloe discussed how nervous she was prior to the concert. She mentioned that the feeling of accomplishment, however, overshadowed her nervousness by the end of the concert. She stated, "I never thought I would be singing like that on stage, but I really enjoyed it." Other students from all three discussion groups referenced how amazing they felt as they were singing on stage with the ensemble and how exhilarating it was to hear the applause for all of their hard work and effort. Charlotte, one of the eighth-grade non-auditioned chorus students, also mentioned the total group participation during concerts. During her individual interview, she stated that many of the students in her choir class did not participate fully during daily rehearsals. However, when they came to the concert, Charlotte said that the

overall motivation level was enhanced and that "we actually wanted to sing as a group." Charlotte felt that when people were in the audience supporting them and it was not just the normality of the daily classroom, they were more successful. Participants like Charlotte and Chloe felt an increased feeling of competence following their performance, which seemed to increase their level of motivation.

Some of the students, like seventh-grade honors choir students Harper and Luna, referred to previous concerts they were in at the elementary level, including competitions. One of those concerts was at a local theme park where the choir received a superior rating and outranked a middle school during the awards ceremony. Harper stated in her individual interview that "we rocked it . . . partly because of a high part I had with two other girls in the choir. So, I am proud of myself for that." Honors choirs at the elementary level were also mentioned by Veronica and Sophia as something that motivated them in chorus. Involvement in honors choirs meant being able to audition to be part of a more advanced choir at the district level with students from other schools. During her individual interview, Sophia, an eighth-grade honors chorus student, referred to this opportunity as "fun" when they were able to sing with students who shared their same passion and dedication for vocal music. Participants were unable to be part of a district honors choir in middle school due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the students in this study who were able to participate in competitions, festivals, and honors level choirs at the elementary level noted how these experiences amplified their feeling of competence in chorus.

Each of the focus groups discussed concert attendance as mandatory. Students received a grade based on their attendance but not the content of the concert. For instance, if a student attended the concert, they automatically received an A. This grade was not based on whether the rhythms and melodies within the repertoire were correct. For example, Luna stated that concert

attendance was a major portion of quarterly grades during her individual interview. Although she was not certain if the grade was based on how well the chorus performed, she did know that students received a grade for showing up. She also explained that "if you can't show up, which was apparently part of your grade, then you would have to do something else like a paper assignment."

Brandon and Charlotte, who are both in the eighth-grade non-auditioned chorus, felt that individual participation was enhanced during formal concerts. During her individual interview, Charlotte referenced the fact that she enjoyed the participation level at their previous concert because it "makes me feel like I'm not the only one. In choir class, me and a few of my friends are the only ones that ever sing." She also stated during both her individual interview and focus group discussion that each student is required to reflect on the concerts in their e-Portfolios. Brandon stated in his individual interview that the concert was much better than their normal rehearsals because everyone was participating. He described the daily activities in chorus as "rambunctious" and stated that the choral director gets frustrated with them at times. But, for him, the concert was extremely motivating. He said, "It made me feel proud that I was actually part of something like that."

Individual and Group Participation During Daily Rehearsals. Daily rehearsals in chorus at NVMS were referenced as the "best" part of the school day by many students. During his individual interview, Brandon described chorus as "different than regular school and I can't wait to do it in high school." Brandon enjoyed the camaraderie with the other male singers in his eighth-grade chorus class. He considered daily rehearsals his release from other parts of his school day. During the focus group discussions, Evan and Charlotte, who were more advanced singers in the eighth-grade non-auditioned chorus, described how they enjoyed break-out

rehearsals where only a section of the ensemble rehearses with their director at a time. They found that those small, one-on-one tutoring sessions were beneficial to the whole ensemble because they felt more accomplished or competent within their vocal section. Both students stated that this type of environment is usually absent from other classes during most of their school day where teachers focus more on whole-group instruction. During one of the seventh-grade honors choir focus group discussions, Chloe and Scarlett referred to the daily rehearsals as "fun and enjoyable and something they looked forward to outside of the rest of their school day." Chloe stated in a reflection in her e-Portfolio, "When I first started choir, I thought it might be just fun and games with a little bit of singing and dancing. But then we started class and learned songs. It was more than I thought it would be." Scarlett discussed how she had gotten much more confident in front of people by participating in chorus and that "it's really fun and the people are nice."

During her individual interview, Harper described that her perception is that participation in daily rehearsals is the basis for quarterly grades. Her seventh-grade honors choir focus group also discussed their perception of how individual participation impacts quarterly grades in choir. Harper stated that "it depends on your level of participation. That's what determines your grade. So, if you individually participate, you're gonna get good grades." Luna stated that their director "mostly gives us A's. So, it's because we don't have to do very much. We just have to sing and participate in choir." All of the participants for this research study had maintained all A's and B's for the academic year in chorus. They also participated in their respective chorus class during both observations, which corroborates why many of the participants felt their grade was based primarily on participation.

Theme 2: Differentiated Types of Assessment are Key Motivating Factors for Achievement Among Advanced Middle School Chorus Students

There are essentially two types of assessment within a chorus classroom: formative and summative. Formative assessment refers to assessment that is "for" learning, which seeks to uncover a gap between current and desired levels of understanding (Chen et al., 2017; Furby, 2013; Long, 2021; Payne et al., 2019; Sanchez et al., 2017; Wesolowski, 2015). Typically, this means that the student and teacher are monitoring growth over a period of time like a quarter, semester, or year. Formative assessment includes individual goal setting, performance assessments, and e-Portfolio assessment. The eighth-grade honors chorus e-Portfolios, collected for data analysis, included video excerpts throughout the year of students singing a segment or entire songs from either their chorus class or songs that the student chose to showcase their level of ability. Video excerpts also showcased student growth regarding sight-reading for both the eighth-grade honors and seventh-grade honors chorus. Not only did these advanced chorus students include the video as an artifact, but each excerpt also allowed the student to self-reflect on the positives of their performance as well as areas for improvement. Although the eighth-grade non-auditioned chorus did not have many video excerpts, all three chorus classes completed the assignment of "The Good, Bad, and the Ugly" in which the student had to choose one of their songs from chorus and sing a passage they felt they utilized good vocal technique and sounded "good" as well as sing a passage from the same song where they felt they needed to improve. This also required them to reflect on how they needed to improve before their upcoming spring concert.

Summative assessment is referred to as "of" learning, which is typically a written assessment that communicates the knowledge that the student has learned over a short (such as a

few days or weeks) or long (such as a quarter or semester) period of time. Advanced chorus students in this study, like seventh-grade honors choir students Scarlett, Riley, and Amelia, communicated during their individual interviews that they were quite used to summative assessments, referring to them as paper-pencil or written assessments. Google Forms, an online test generator, was also referenced as a form of summative assessment. Scarlett discussed a written assessment in which students had to identify types of music notes. She felt that her overall score communicated what she knew quite well without having to perform anything in front of the class or record herself. Riley and Amelia stated that they like both performance assessments and written assessments but preferred written assessments. Riley stated that she preferred written assessments because feedback or the score is faster than waiting for a grade on a performance assessment. Amelia referenced the fact that she gets nervous on any type of performance assessment where she has to sing in front of others or record herself. She said, "I just don't like singing on my own. If she doesn't tell us ahead of time, I get like super nervous." During the observation where students had to record themselves singing into FlipGrid, many of the participants were just like Amelia, who said that they did not want to record alone. They found confidence singing with others. Participants like Amelia preferred written assessments because the answer was either right or wrong and there was no fear of judgment.

Figure 2

Theme 2 and Its Related Sub-themes

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│   Summative     │                      │   e-Porfolio    │
│   Assessment    │                      │   Assessment    │
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            ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
            │ Differentiated Types of Assessment are Key        │
            │ Motivating Factors for Achievement Among          │
            │ Advanced Middle School Chorus Students            │
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│   Performance   │                      │   Individual    │
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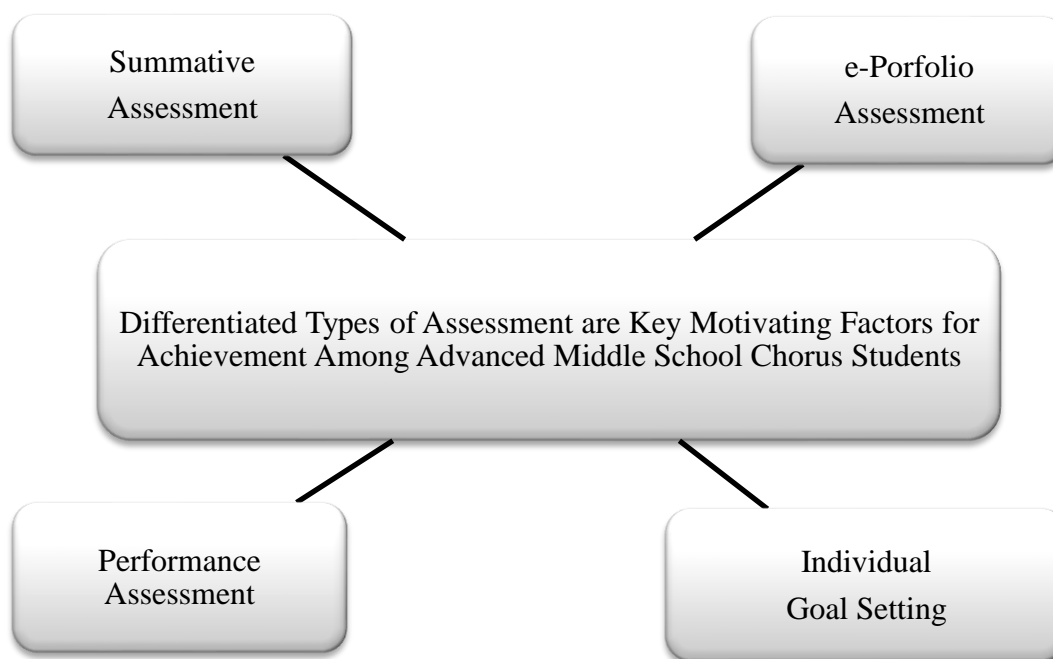
Summative Assessment for Musical Knowledge. Many of the auditioned and non-auditioned participants in this study were motivated by traditional grading and written assessments. During the eighth-grade non-auditioned chorus focus group discussion, Evan and Charlotte indicated that they liked the fact that written assessments typically take less time than performance assessments. Both students were self-proclaimed procrastinators and discussed the importance for them to complete their work during class time so that they were guaranteed to turn it in on time. Auditioned honors choir students, like Avery and Sophia, discussed the value of the traditional grading system in their individual interviews. They both referenced the fact that traditional grading motivates them because that is what they have known throughout school. Avery equated her grade with her level of competence. She stated,

I think a grade shows like what you learn. So, if, like, I got a really bad grade, that means

I wouldn't really be knowing what I'm doing. But, since I got an A in here, it really

shows that I know what I'm doing and how I learned and stuff.

Sophia referenced the fact that she had based her value on her grades during most of her school

career. Getting good grades was what drove her to complete work. Honors choir students

Madison, Scarlett, and Chloe stated in their individual interviews that they preferred written

summative assessments. Madison, an eighth-grader, said, "The answer is either right or wrong

and there is immediate feedback, especially when using Google Forms." Each of them stated that

they enjoy the instant gratification of a good grade on an assignment or assessment. Luna stated

in her individual interview that she was motivated by grades in a negative connotation as she

referred to grades as giving her "big anxiety." However, she also indicated that grades prompted

her to get work turned in or re-do assignments that she may have failed.

e-Portfolio Assessment of Musical Skills. Honors choir students Hannah and Veronica

stated in their individual interviews that they preferred e-Portfolio assessment of their musical

skills. They both indicated that they enjoyed the opportunity to independently showcase their

abilities, talents, knowledge, and reflections through a more personalized format that allowed

them to communicate with their director. Hannah, an eighth-grader, stated, "I think it's good to

keep track of how you are doing over time. Your teacher can see what you thought was

successful over the course of the year." Veronica, also an eighth-grade student, referenced the

fact that the director introduced the e-Portfolio during the COVID-19 pandemic to get chorus

students excited about written work during the pandemic and to keep them singing at home.

Once Veronica started the process, she really enjoyed it. "I like the feeling that I am writing

something between me and my director. That way, she can hear my thoughts and I can write it in

my own words. That's probably a huge benefit to her." Both of these students stated that they

enjoyed recording performance assessments without the fear of being judged live either in front

of their director or other students.

Based on the e-Portfolio physical artifacts and data, students utilized Google Slides to

complete artifacts and assignments for each of the chorus classes. Both the seventh-grade honors

chorus and eighth grade non-auditioned chorus completed a "Getting to Know You" section

where students placed their favorite musical quote, a picture of themselves, and background

information including why they joined chorus. There were also numerous artifacts where

students reviewed new material introduced in class or cumulative content for review of previous

quarters or even years. Students were also asked to independently reflect on songs they were

performing in class. These reflections included individual positive and negative perceptions

about the song as well as areas where they felt they needed to improve. The director had taught

eighth-grade students how to individually record themselves in FlipGrid this past year and how

to place the video into their e-Portfolio. Not only were these used as artifacts in the class for

sight-reading and repertoire, but they were also used as the audition for the high school

ensembles for students matriculating into that program.

On the day that I observed the eighth-grade non-auditioned chorus, students were given

an assignment called "The Good Bad and the Ugly" where they had to record themselves in

FlipGrid on a song that they were rehearsing in class. They had to record two parts of the song:

one passage where they felt very confident in their singing and another passage that they felt

uncomfortable and needed help to improve. Although many students were apprehensive

especially about the latter, they seemed to enjoy it by the end of the class. The final artifact in the

e-Portfolios that the students submitted for data collection was a letter to their younger self. The

data analysis revealed that the e-Portfolios were only graded for completion, not content. The more advanced seventh-grade and eighth-grade chorus students did not mind this as many of them saw the benefit in the e-Portfolio as a progress tracker for both the student and director. However, some non-auditioned chorus students like Evan, Charlotte, and Brandon commented during their focus group discussion that because the e-Portfolio is not graded for content they viewed the e-Portfolio assessment as busy work. Evan suggested that instead of working on the computer with e-Portfolio assessment, more time should be spent focusing on ways to improve in choir. He posed the question, "So, why use time on those when we could be focusing on us and getting everything sounding better?" Charlotte summed up those thoughts by stating that many of her fellow classmates do not do them or get graded on them, so not much value is placed on them by the students. She stated, "They take up our time. And just basically, there's no reason for them."

Individual Performance Assessments. Performance assessments in the middle school chorus classroom included individualized assignments that were in the e-Portfolio where students would include a video artifact of themselves sight-reading a small passage of music, performing an entire song learned in class, or performing a song of the student's choice. Although it was not graded on overall achievement, the director used these examples for student reflection and overall growth, mostly for students in the eighth-grade ensembles. During the eighth-grade non-auditioned focus group discussion, Zoe stated that she thoroughly enjoyed the e-Portfolio assessments because she could "make them her own." She appreciated being allowed student choice over the artifacts she chose for her director to see and was given ample time, both in class and outside of class, to get the assignments finished.

Evan stated in his individual interview that "whole-group or whole-section evaluation is not always fair when some fully participate and others do not." Many other participants discussed the possibility of a more competency-based approach to chorus assessments instead of one weighted by a traditional grading system. Sophia stated in her individual interview that a competency-based grading system would have less pressure because the bar is not to hit "the 90 out of 100 mark, it is to achieve a goal." Since participation is a behavior and should not be graded, Sophia and Zoe suggested that e-Portfolios would be of more benefit if the artifacts they chose to put in them were evaluated by a rubric. Sophia stated, "Everyone in the class is on a different level, so you need to be evaluated on what you are able to do." Zoe suggested that if the instructions were clearer about what artifacts to put in the e-Portfolio, other students may value it more when they are able to choose their "best."

Individual Short-term and Long-term Goals. Individual short-term and long-term goals were referenced by students as a way to motivate themselves within the chorus classroom. Since chorus is a participatory class, each of the participants was asked how they individually contributed to the rest of the group. Luna indicated in her individual interview that she preferred putting her goals into her e-Portfolio so that she could look back at them and remember what she did to achieve that goal. She enjoyed creating short-term and long-term goals due to her constant battle with ADHD. She referenced that writing her goals down and going back over them helped her stay more focused within the class. She explained, "When you're in a big room, it's kind of hard to work in there. You get distracted." Many other students discussed their feeling of accomplishment when they met a goal on their sight-reading, solfège, passage in a particular song, singing in front of an audience, or even being able to reach a particular note.
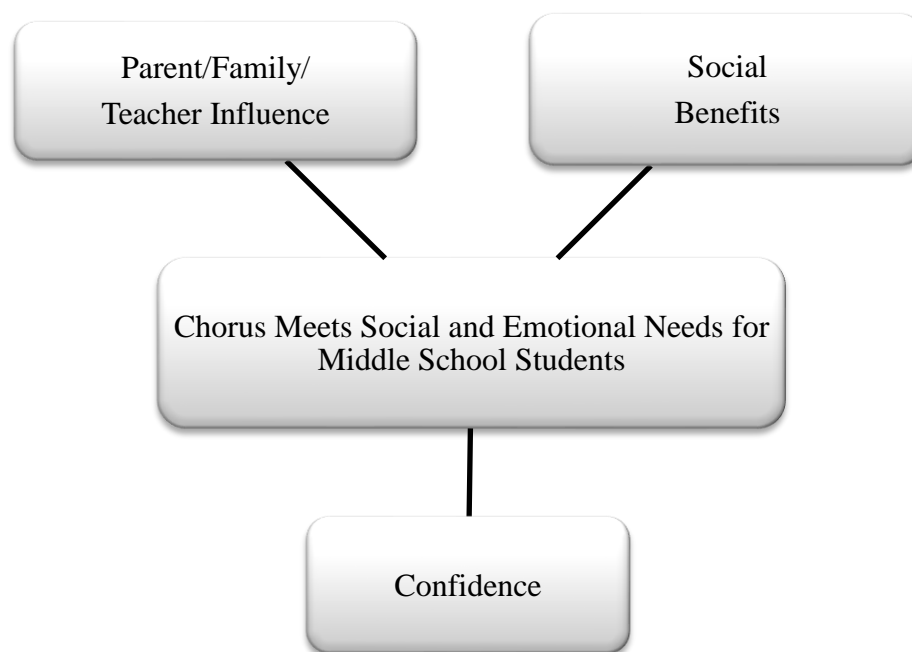
In her individual interview, Chloe referenced the director's suggestions of short-term and long-term goals for the whole ensemble. She stated, "We achieve a lot of goals together. It's like I know a lot of my friends never thought they'd be singing or go to a concert night." She said that goals were discussed together in class with their director in preparation for each concert. Students then make their own individual goals in their e-Portfolio to assist with the ensemble goals.

Theme 3: Chorus Meets Social and Emotional Needs for Middle School Students

Choir provides social and emotional learning (SEL) benefits for many of the students at NVMS. SEL is defined as the process of developing and applying knowledge, skills, and attitudes to acquire self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (Sparks, 2019). During her individual interview, Riley stated that being part of something larger than themselves provides students with a "safe zone" and a "sense of belonging." She discussed moving to the area during the COVID-19 pandemic when school was completely virtual and described how difficult it was to make friends when it reopened. Choir provided her a "safe spot" to be around other students who shared a love of music. She said, "It's like my safe spot and it's like my family now." Harper also stated that choir at NVMS was like a family that tolerated each other's intricacies for the sake of music. She said, "We might not all get along, but we all work well together." Avery, also a seventh-grade honors student, referenced during her individual interview that her choir is "like my second family right now and they're always there when I need someone or if I need someone to talk to."

In their individual interviews, Scarlett and Luna discussed that the inclusiveness of the ensemble environment in chorus gave them more confidence. Not only did they become more confident in their individual singing but more confident in general. Scarlett stated that she is

"more confident with people she does not know," which has helped her in other areas of her life.

Madison stated during her individual interview that through her involvement in chorus, she was

more open to working with a group. As a self-proclaimed introvert, she used to be very shy in

group situations. She stated that "I felt as if the world were going to end" if she could not work

on things individually. Chorus helped her become more open-minded about working in group

settings. In his letter to his younger self that Evan placed in his e-Portfolio, he said that he should

not have doubted his decision to join chorus in sixth grade due to the lifelong friendships he has

made. He wrote, "Chorus is worth the wait!" Zoe also stated in her individual interview that

choir had been a form of therapy for her. She stated that choir "helped me deal with stuff in my

life." During one observation, I noticed that Zoe did not have many friends in choir. She had

some special needs as she was on the autism spectrum and stayed to herself most of the time.

During her interview, she stated that she also had ADHD and chorus assisted with her focus. She

stated that "other students in the class and my director help me re-direct my attention to what's

going on if I miss it."

Figure 3

Theme 3 and Its Related Sub-themes

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┌──────────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────────┐
│   Parent/Family/      │        │       Social         │
│  Teacher Influence    │        │      Benefits        │
└──────────────────────┘        └──────────────────────┘

          ┌───────────────────────────────────────────┐
          │  Chorus Meets Social and Emotional Needs for │
          │          Middle School Students             │
          └───────────────────────────────────────────┘

                   ┌──────────────────────┐
                   │      Confidence      │
                   └──────────────────────┘
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Parent/Family/Teacher Influence. Family and teacher influences were mentioned by

Brandon, Veronica, and Chloe as the reason they either decided to initially join choir or

continued to re-enroll in choir throughout elementary and middle school. They stated that an

older sibling who was part of a successful high school chorus program was a major factor in the

motivation to persist in choir throughout middle school and enroll for choir next year at the high

school level. During his individual interview, Brandon stated that "it looked fun" as he made the

decision to join choir for the first time in eighth-grade after his older sister went through the

program and continued in high school. During her individual interview, Veronica also said that

"my sister made it look like so much fun." Luna, Zoe, Sophia, and Hannah all stated that the

motivation for them to join or persist in chorus was a parental figure. During her individual

interview, Zoe discussed that she had previous experience singing with her mother at an early

age and stated that music had always been a huge part of her life. She could not wait to begin

choir in elementary school, and the thought of not persisting in the program has never really

crossed her mind. Luna stated that she "wanted to follow in her mom's footsteps" since she did

choir in high school. Harper mentioned that her elementary music teacher influenced her to join

chorus. She stated in her individual interview, "She was amazing and encouraged me to join

chorus in fourth grade, but then wanted me to do chorus in middle school . . . so, I did."

Social Benefits. Many of the participants discussed some type of social benefit

surrounding their chorus class. This type of benefit was encouraged by the choral director during

both observations that I conducted as she referenced the choir as a family and encouraged them

to interact and socialize not only with her but with each other. It was a casual and inviting

atmosphere for middle school students. The choral director promoted social awareness through

e-Portfolio prompts, ensemble expectations, and whole-group discussions. Even during the

eighth-grade non-auditioned rehearsal, she tried using SEL resets such as reflection prompts in

their e-Portfolio and explaining assignments in a non-threatening manner. This was her attempt

to address the low energy towards performing that most of the students had in that class.

Honors choir students like Luna and Harper referenced socialization and friends as part

of their success in choir. Luna stated in her individual interview that she was initially hesitant

about taking chorus in sixth grade. In her letter to her younger self, she explained that she

thought she wanted to join band because it seemed less intimidating. However, for her, chorus

equated to much more fun because she gained many new friends by joining chorus. Harper stated

in her individual interview and in the focus group discussion, "Chorus is not only a social

experience for me but also provides me with an emotional outlet." She mentioned that her best

friends were in chorus and that they go "everywhere together." Other students, like Avery and

Brandon, referenced how the social benefit of chorus makes the discipline more fun than other

subjects. During her individual interview, Avery indicated that her decision to persist within the program after elementary school was because her friends were also continuing to take it and she knew they would have that class together at the middle school. Brandon discussed how the social benefits of chorus made him feel more comfortable in a new environment when he decided to join chorus for the first time in eighth grade. He stated that he likes to "hang out with them outside of choir," which makes choir even more fun.

Riley moved to NVMS during the virtual and hybrid scenario of the pandemic. She discussed in her individual interview how chorus provided her an opportunity to find others with a common interest. This allowed her an immediate place within the school to feel included. Although she stated that she would still be in choir even if she did not have any friends, she also said, "My success is being in like a choir full of all my friends." She credits the socialization in choir for helping her when she was struggling academically.

Most of the students, even the few like Chloe who stated they did not have many friends in chorus, used the same term that the choral director used: "family." Their choir family was something they enjoyed sharing with me and was one of the first reasons they gave for making the choice to join or persist within the choir discipline. Veronica and Sophia credited choir during their individual interviews for their long-lasting friendships, which to them feels like family since they have been best friends since fourth grade. Veronica stated that choir "keeps a friend group together" and was hopeful that would continue throughout high school.

Confidence. Participants discussed their discovery of or level of self-confidence within the chorus ensemble through their competence with music and singing. Students in the advanced level ensembles referenced confidence as something they gained through their involvement in chorus. Hannah discussed how shy she was in front of others prior to joining chorus. In her

individual interview, she even stated that group projects were difficult for her because she did not enjoy working with others. She stated, "I've definitely come out of my shell a lot more. I've definitely become a lot more outgoing. I'm a lot more confident since I started choir, which is a success." Some of the more musically advanced students also discussed their participation in music competitions, festivals, and honors ensembles which has boosted their perception of their individual competence within music. A few students from the honors choirs mentioned auditioning and being selected for All-District Honors Choir in elementary school. Veronica gained even more confidence in her abilities after auditioning and being selected for the American Choral Directors Association All-Virginia Honors Choir prior to the pandemic. She stated during her individual interview that she was only one of two students in her sixth-grade class to be chosen: "It was pretty awesome," she said.

Students who were newer to choir like Brandon and Chloe discussed their feeling of accomplishment and success after their first concert since the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow them to sing for almost 2 years. Most of the participants had not experienced a live middle school choral concert and referenced what an amazing feeling it was while they were singing and when the audience applauded. Each of them stated that it was an amazing feeling of success. Chloe and Brandon both mentioned in their individual interview how nervous they were prior to the concert. Chloe stated that the concert "made me really nervous before, but I really enjoyed it. That was really fun too." Brandon referenced his feelings of accomplishment after participating in the well-received concert, which boosted his confidence in his own abilities.

Theme 4: Middle School Students Need Intrinsic and Extrinsic Sources of Motivation to Participate or Complete Work

Motivation within the middle school chorus classroom did not seem to be a problem for most of the students. However, the sources of motivation were quite diverse along with the motivation to complete certain types of activities. Honors choir students like Veronica, Hannah, Riley, and Addison were motivated to participate by their intrinsic motivation to sing and make music. Other honors chorus students like Luna, Riley, and Scarlett were more motivated to participate by the social and emotional aspects that chorus provided them.

Veronica, Sophia, and Harper referenced in their individual interviews their intrinsic desire to show growth and improvement within their e-Portfolio through performance assessments and reflections. Although Riley and Sophia mentioned how they were intrinsically motivated to remain in choir, they, like Madison, discussed how traditional grading and expectations of parents were an extrinsic motivation to complete assignments in chorus. In their focus group discussion, Brandon and Evan also indicated how they were extrinsically motivated and rewarded to complete assignments by the social aspects of chorus, performance opportunities and trips, candy, and the ability to go outside after assignments were submitted.

Figure 4

Theme 4 and Its Related Sub-themes
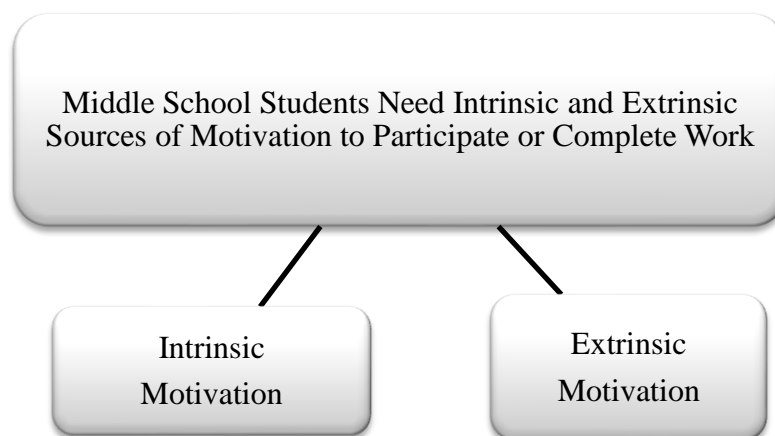
Intrinsic Motivation. Intrinsic motivation, or one's internal desire to complete an activity, was found to have different sources in this research study depending on the type of activity within the chorus classroom. The more advanced honors chorus students such as Harper, Virginia, Sophia, Rebekah, Avery, and Zoe had an inherent passion and desire to not only participate but to be involved as much as possible with everything in the classroom to improve their musicianship. This included choosing performance artifacts for their e-Portfolios so that the director had an opportunity to comment and make suggestions to them for further improvement. Harper referenced the two-way communication that the e-Portfolio provided for her director to take the time with her that did not always happen in the busyness of the school day.

Other honors chorus students like Riley, Luna, Tina, and Madison discussed their enjoyment of the class and love of singing, which was the intrinsic motivation to participate in class and concerts, but was a hindrance when it came to written work within the classroom such as e-Portfolio assessment. Madison and Riley stated in their individual interviews that they felt that they should not have to be on a computer during chorus class. Madison said, "I'm not really

liking the idea of being on a computer. I just want to go and sing." Riley also stated, "I like performing better than being on my Chromebook." Although these participants each discussed the value of the e-Portfolio to monitor growth, they did not want written work to take away from the time they wanted to devote to singing.

Extrinsic Motivation. Rewards such as candy and spending time outside after assignments were submitted was referenced by Evan and Brandon during their individual interviews and observed during the observations. Brandon explained, "If we sing well and we are cooperating with her, we have time at the end of class to like, go outside when it's really nice." Due to the apathy and lack of participation within their chorus class, the director utilized extrinsic rewards to enhance full participation not only within the rehearsal but also for individual assignments. Brandon enjoyed the extra time to play sports with his friends in choir. Charlotte and Evan also mentioned Performance Fridays during their focus group discussion, which were basically karaoke days for students if the director felt they were deserving of a reward in exchange for participation and assignment submissions. Evan stated that the choral director "used them as like, kind of a way to see how far we've come so that she knows what we can do next." He discussed how much fun they were and how the students looked forward to them so that they could perform anything they wanted to in front of the class. Since all of these students were in the eighth-grade non-auditioned chorus and in the same focus group discussion, I specifically asked them if external rewards such as candy, time outside, and Performance Fridays were used in exchange for getting their work done. Collectively, they all agreed that was the case.

Sophia, Madison, and Avery referenced during their individual interviews that traditional grades and pressure from parents were extrinsic motivation for written work and e-Portfolio

assessment in chorus. Sophia indicated that she bases her value on traditional grading. She said, "It's hard to mentally move away from that. Change is sometimes difficult for me." Avery mentioned that if she received "a really bad grade, that means I wouldn't really be knowing what I'm doing. So, I would want help on that." She went on to state that students who receive A's are knowledgeable in the class and do not really need to improve on anything. Madison, a self-proclaimed procrastinator, discussed her motivation as the pressure her parents place on her to complete assignments and get good grades. She stated that this type of motivation precedes all of her classes, not just chorus. She said, "Your parents would want you to do this right now. So, that's how I kind of do it." She also discussed how her parents use her as an example for her younger brother who struggles academically.

Outlier Data and Findings

This research study did reveal two unexpected findings that did not align with specific research questions or themes. The COVID-19 pandemic factored into the data analysis as many participants referenced starting e-Portfolio assessment during a time period where either school was not in session or when singing was not allowed due to heightened aerosol release. For many of them, they viewed e-Portfolio assessment as busy work when their passion for singing was extracted from the program. Procrastination factored into the data analysis as many participants referenced their issues with getting e-Portfolio assessments finished by a certain deadline. Many admittingly finish most of their assignments at the last minute or do not turn them in at all. Since e-Portfolio assessments are based on growth over a period of time, procrastination defeats the overall purpose as an effective type of formative assessment.

Outlier Finding #1: Virtual Learning Impacts Motivation

Virtual learning brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic impacted motivation for many students within the NVMS chorus program. Since relatedness was a form of intrinsic motivation for many of them, the virtual and hybrid school scenarios over the past 2 years seemed to stifle not only their motivation but also their work ethic. Students did not sing at all for almost 6 months, and when they were finally able to sing for smaller periods of time, they were in smaller classes or in an all-virtual environment without chorus as an elective option. Due to this type of environment, many students felt they were given lots of written or "busy" work to complete on their Chromebooks. Sophia indicated during her individual interview that she was introduced to "digital portfolios" during the pandemic when students were unable to sing together. Her choral director used it as a way to teach music online. Sophia said that "it was a slideshow that we had to put artifacts of assignments we completed, like a parody of a song or music theory." Evan explained to his younger self in his letter that he would get through the pandemic even though it would not seem like it at the time. He referred to the frustration of "having to do actual written work in chorus instead of singing for almost 2 years."

The observations of the eighth-grade non-auditioned chorus provided the most enlightenment surrounding this unexpected outlier. NVMS is a non-traditional school without bells (teachers dismiss them), block scheduling for the eighth-grade students and modified block scheduling for the seventh-grade students, and students utilize a digital portfolio for all areas of their middle school career, not just in chorus. However, on both days of my observation, the semi-structured environment also led to apathetic classroom management. These students had not had an in-person choir for the majority of middle school, so the director never got to establish a solid foundation with them in terms of classroom management or vocal technique. Many

students either did not participate or pay attention at all or at a bare minimum. Some students had their feet up on the chairs in front of them, even while others were sitting in them. There were a few students chewing gum during the rehearsal in which the director got out a piece of candy and exemplified what singing sounds and looks like while you are chewing gum. The director had more energy than the rest of the class and tried unsuccessfully to engage them. Some of the female singers were laughing and giggling at others while they were singing. This was perceived as intimidating by some of the others including Charlotte, who referenced this issue in her individual interview and focus group discussion. This class as a whole responded better to the extrinsic rewards of going outside "because it's a nice day" and grabbing a piece of candy if they projected their singing better and finished their assignments in their e-Portfolio.

The auditioned seventh-grade honors choir, however, was much different. The intrinsic value of singing was prominent in these classes from the very first moment of the observation. They wanted to sing, sight-read, and reflect in their e-Portfolios. Most students wanted to participate fully. The only issues I observed occurred when one young lady was walking around the back of the room during one rehearsal seemingly unfocused and confused. She did not really have an answer as to why she was behaving in this manner but quickly found her seat and engaged in the rehearsal. The second time I observed, two young ladies were late to class without an excuse. The director made them very aware of their tardiness, but no punitive punishment was given, which did not seem to be an issue for anyone. Extrinsic rewards were not needed for either of these classes as students engaged in the vocalises, sight-reading activities, repertoire rehearsal, and e-Portfolio assignments. Most of them finished their e-Portfolio assignments prior to the end of class.

Outlier Finding #2: Procrastination

Procrastination is a major issue for many of the participants when it comes to e-Portfolio assessment. Due to the autonomous nature and extended time given for the assignments, some of the students put it off until the last minute, which de-values the goal of the e-Portfolio, which is to monitor growth over a period of time. Sophia stated during her individual interview that she puts the e-Portfolio on the back-burner when she becomes overwhelmed by work in other classes. Sophia said, "I eventually finish it but not within the timeframe that the director probably wanted to show growth." In their focus group, Brandon, Evan, and Charlotte discussed that they did not enjoy being on their Chromebooks during choir and, therefore, did not complete the assignments like they should. Charlotte stated that there is no reason for them to have to be on technology during choir class. She said, "I would much rather come to class and be graded on participation." She was also unsure if the e-Portfolios were actually graded because many other students never submit them to the director. Some of the seventh-grade students mentioned in their focus group discussion that they procrastinate on their e-Portfolio assessments because the directions are not always clear, which confuses them. Harper mentioned that the e-Portfolio assessments are "super easy, but it's hard to insert attachments sometimes." Chloe, Luna, and Tina discussed in their seventh-grade focus group discussion that there is not always a template to follow, which confuses them when completing the assignments. Tina explained, "I sometimes have to miss class and it is frustrating when I don't understand when I return."

Research Question Responses

The collected data for this research study revealed themes that were relative to the central research question focusing on self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation using e-Portfolio

assessment within the middle school chorus classroom. The data also revealed themes relative to the three sub-questions that are based on the constructs of SDT.

Central Research Question

> *How do participants perceive, value, and experience self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation opportunities using e-Portfolio assessment practices in the middle school choral classroom?*

The participants' perspective in this research study is that while e-Portfolio assessment shows individual student growth over time for both the student and director, it can also be extremely frustrating when coupled with the intricacies of a competency-based curriculum within a traditional grading system. Chorus, especially at the middle school level, is based on the emerging abilities and talents of the individuals within the program, each of them at a different level. Many students are accustomed to the summative written assessments that have been given in the past and graded on a traditional grading system yet have difficulty grasping the value of e-Portfolio assessment that is based more on individual student competencies through performance assessment.

One of the major themes that emerged from this study was formative and summative assessment as a key factor in students' motivation toward chorus. All of the participants were familiar with summative assessments as they utilized standardized testing within their district to assess state standards of learning. Students like Chloe stated in her individual interview that she actually preferred summative assessments within choir because they were less time consuming. Chloe was a procrastinator, explaining, "I need lots of reminders to complete my work. I even set reminders on my phone." She also said that she was not a big fan of technology and would much rather be singing than completing written work in class. Other students, mostly in the advanced

choirs, valued e-Portfolio assessment as a type of formative assessment. Harper mentioned in her individual interview that she enjoyed being able to go back and look at her growth over time and how beneficial that was to her and her director. She said, "I like them [e-Portfolios]. You get to explore different ways of personalizing it and you get to choose your own artifacts to showcase." Although Evan, in the non-auditioned chorus, could place value on e-Portfolio assessment as a way to inform one's individual self-awareness within choir, he stated in his individual interview that he did not like the time that went into creating them as he felt it took away from class. He stated, "Google Forms or written assessments on paper don't take a lot of time. Outside of class you are not really going to do it if you are a procrastinator like me."

Another theme that emerged that directly relates to the central research question is the intrinsic and extrinsic sources of motivation within the middle school chorus classroom. Aside from the extrinsic motivators of candy, time outside, and fun days that some participants from the eighth-grade chorus discussed, the more advanced students were motivated by the extrinsic reward of traditional grades. Charlotte stated in her individual interview that she completed her e-Portfolio knowing that it was graded for completion and not content. She stated that the "A for effort" was worth it to her to complete it and turn it in on time. In her individual interview, Sophia mentioned that she was driven in all of her classes by traditional grading. Although she enjoyed formative types of assessments like e-Portfolios, she did not feel a sense of accomplishment with formative feedback instead of an actual grade. She said, "I have based my value on my grade and making sure they were good. My parents expect that as well." However, she also stated that the value from the feedback in her e-Portfolio and performance assessments was crucial to her intrinsic motivation to audition for honors level choirs. Harper and Veronica also referenced that they received their internal motivation from the comments from their

director on their e-Portfolio assessments. In her individual interview, Veronica stated, "I like to know what I need to improve to get better on my instrument."

Sub-Question One

What factors influence participants' perceptions of e-Portfolio assessment regarding competence in the middle school classroom?

Summative assessment, e-Portfolio assessment, performance assessment, and individual short-term and long-term goal setting that emerged as a major theme within this research study provided middle school chorus students with the SDT construct of competence. Students were accustomed to traditional grading within NVMS and, therefore, felt confident with written summative assessments, either via paper-pencil or Google Forms. Some students referenced getting quicker and more immediate feedback on this type of assessment, which provided them with a feeling of accomplishment. Sophia stated in her individual interview, "I feel I am less critical on myself when it's a right or wrong paper-pencil test. And I feel like, 'Oh, yes! I got it right!'"

E-Portfolio assessment, on the other hand, allowed students to choose artifacts that they felt were their best to showcase to their director. Some students like Harper stated during her individual interview that she enjoyed watching overall growth within the program through e-Portfolio assessment. She said, "It definitely shows like what we're taking out of it. What we are learning and how we are growing." Students referenced how showcasing this growth was beneficial to both the director and the student. Individual goal setting was also referenced as a form of competence as students indicated their feelings of accomplishment after completing them, whether it was successfully singing a short passage of a song, hitting a particular note, progressing into more difficult sight-reading, or singing for a concert.

Participants also felt competent as they participated in daily rehearsals and in occasional performances. This major theme of participation as a source of motivation in middle school chorus emerged within this research study. Evan referenced an activity in his individual interview about an assignment during a daily rehearsal where he and some friends were able to create a video about some of the content they learned in class. He stated, "I partnered up with three other people and we made a video. It was really fun and explained everything we needed to know this year." Like Evan, many other participants discussed a feeling of competence while participating in daily rehearsals. During her individual interview, Riley stated, "I just don't like math. I'm not very good at it. So, between chorus and math, I always choose chorus because I'm good at it." She stated that her feeling of competence within the chorus discipline is a motivating factor for her to participate and complete work in chorus, including the e-Portfolio. Harper stated that she felt competent after their most recent concert. During her individual interview she said, "We did this really hard song and I didn't think that I was going to be able to do it and I did." She discussed how motivating performances were for her especially when the audience was so supportive and appreciative.

Sub-Question Two

What factors influence participants' perceptions of e-Portfolio assessment regarding relatedness in the middle school classroom?

Participants perceived choir as a place to form social bonds with the people around them, whether in choir or the influences that were supportive of them joining or persisting in choir. The sub-themes of the first major theme of participation as a source of motivation in middle school chorus directly related to Sub-Question Two and the SDT construct of relatedness. Daily rehearsals and performance attendance provided students with the SDT construct of relatedness

to others as participants felt they were given a space to socialize with others who shared a common passion for music. Another theme that was commonly referenced within this research study was social and emotional learning as a source of motivation in chorus. The nurturing and inclusive type of environment of the middle school chorus classroom provided students with confidence and a feeling of accomplishment. Some students, like Riley, found their safe zone. She stated during her individual interview, "I was struggling academically in other areas and I became more successful because of being in the choir family. I made friends who are my family now."

Harper discussed how her choral director intentionally notices the social and emotional needs of her students. During her individual interview she described an occasion where she came to class crying after receiving a bad grade in the previous class. When she was asked what was wrong, Harper responded, "I really need to work on this assignment. And, she said yes, of course. And, then, I felt much better because I had everything done and I was more motivated for chorus the next day." She stated that her intrinsic motivation for chorus was subsequently enhanced after her emotional needs were met that day.

In his individual interview, Evan said that his source of motivation within choir is "definitely working with other people." He enjoyed the camaraderie of the socialization chorus provided. He described singing with the other guys in chorus. He said, "When we all join together, we sound fantastic. So, I feel like if everybody can trust everybody, we can all sing really, really well." In their focus group discussion, Evan and Brandon described sectional rehearsals within their eighth-grade chorus as a motivating factor for them. Sectionals are when students rehearse in small groups with just the choral director. It typically removes the fear of

singing in front of others and the choral director can focus on error detection. Both young men described the smaller, more intimate rehearsals as motivating for them within their ensemble.

Sub-Question Three

> *What factors influence participants' perceptions of e-Portfolio assessment regarding autonomy in the middle school classroom?*

Individual goal setting and individual performance assessments provided chorus students with the self-determination construct of autonomy. Many of the students enjoyed this structure-free and self-directed form of learning where they were given student choice over the artifacts in their e-Portfolio. Students mentioned the value of self-reflecting on their growth over time and how that is motivating to persist within the choral program as they watch and hear themselves perfect their instrument. Harper stated in her focus group discussion that e-Portfolios show what they are learning on an individual basis and allow students to choose their own artifacts to showcase their abilities. She said, "It definitely shows like what we are taking out of it; what we are learning and how we are growing." She enjoyed setting goals for herself and celebrating when they were accomplished.

Hannah mentioned in her individual interview that she suffered from test anxiety. She doubted her answers when someone else like her choral director chose questions for assessment. Hannah stated that she appreciated having the freedom to choose the artifacts that showcased her strengths and weaknesses. She said, "I am more confident than on a paper-pencil tests where I think I get the answers right and then I just doubt myself and change my answers." Veronica also enjoyed the independence of working on artifacts within her e-Portfolio at her own pace and personalizing them to fit her personality. Her e-Portfolio was creative, colorful, and was in her own student voice, even using some contemporary slang and text. Veronica stated, "That's what

I like I like about the e-Portfolios. It's like the director can hear my thoughts and I can write it out like that in my own way." Veronica referenced one of the most memorable projects she was able to work on in her e-Portfolio, which was a mask design for the choral department during COVID. She was able to research other singing masks that would be able to reduce aerosol spray and create something that her choir could potentially use in class. Veronica said, "I enjoyed making it my own and the individual feedback that she gave me."

Summary

The participants' lived experiences utilizing e-Portfolio assessment within the middle school chorus classroom presented in this chapter provide narrative and context that illuminates and supports themes related to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in chorus as well as the sources of motivation. The four themes that were revealed through data analysis included the following: (a) participation as a source of motivation in middle school chorus, (b) differentiated types of assessment are key motivating factors for achievement among advanced middle school chorus students, (c) chorus meets social and emotional needs for many middle school students, and (d) middle school chorus students need various sources of motivation to participate or complete work. Most of the students referenced some sort of SEL benefit of middle school chorus due to its inclusiveness. The contributions of everyone were referenced as cultivating the success of the entire group. Individual contributions were assessed through e-Portfolio assessment at NVMS where students choose artifacts that showcase their summative knowledge of the subject area, reflections about the class or performances, and individual performance videos. The primary goal of e-Portfolio assessment was not always valued by those students who either procrastinated with the work or viewed it as busy work. Discussion of emerging themes, implications for the field of music education, and suggestion for future research will be discussed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions and experiences of middle school students who exhibited self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation as they utilize e-Portfolio assessment in middle school chorus. The intent was to contribute new information for the middle school choral music educator regarding formative assessment, student-centered assessment, and goal-setting strategies. This study attempted to address the gap between the antiquated assessment practices used in most middle school chorus classrooms and the current literature on effective classroom assessment promoting self-efficacy and motivation. Chapter Five introduces the findings of this research study and interprets them in five discussion subsections.

Discussion

The purpose of the discussion section is to reveal the study's findings considering the developed themes. The discussion section that follows has five major subsections including: (a) Interpretation of Findings; (b) Implications for Policy or Practice; (c) Theoretical and Empirical Implications; (d) Limitations and Delimitations; and (e) Recommendations for Future Research.

Interpretation of Findings

The thematic findings within this research study suggest sources of motivation within the middle school chorus classroom. Participation, as a whole group and individual, emerged as a source of motivation within daily rehearsals and performances. Formative assessment, including performance assessment, individual goal setting, and e-Portfolio assessment, as well as summative assessment emerged as a source of motivation for some middle school chorus

students. The benefits of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) within the chorus classroom emerged as a major theme among many middle school chorus students in terms of parental, family, and/or teacher influence, confidence building, and overall social benefits. Lastly, sources of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation emerged as a theme.

This study was designed to contribute to the ongoing research on self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation within the middle school choral classroom. Based on the qualitative data that were collected and analyzed examining the perceptions and experiences of middle school choral students as they utilized e-Portfolio assessment, I was able to make five distinctive interpretations:

1. The self-determination theory (SDT) construct of relatedness overpowers other SDT constructs for middle school chorus students, promoting SEL and self-regulated learning.

2. More competence within the choral discipline increases intrinsic motivation.

3. Whole group participation often overshadows individualized contributions.

4. Students who have become passive in their learning often stifle their own self-regulated learning.

5. E-Portfolio assessment within the middle school choral classroom does not fit a traditional grading model.

Middle School Chorus Students Value Relatedness Within Their Ensemble

Rising above all the constructs of SDT within this research study, relatedness through SEL is one of the most motivating factors within the middle school choral ensemble. Referring to the chorus ensemble as a "family," most of the participants identified their choral director as intentionally promoting social constructs within her teaching and everyday interactions with students. Choir culture, student learning, and ensemble music making were promoted through

SEL teaching practices. McNickle and Morris (2022) suggested that there are five sequential

components of effective SEL teaching strategies within the classroom:

1. Self-awareness

2. Self-management

3. Social awareness

4. Relationship skills

5. Responsible decision making

However, this research study identifies these components in a slightly different order.

The first SEL component that middle school chorus students in this study identified with

is social awareness. Students recognized the value of being related to others who provide them

with resources and support from their school, community, and family. They recognized their role

within the social setting, which in this case is middle school chorus. Their "family" is of most

importance to them and one of the major reasons for participating in and choosing chorus as an

elective. Honors choir student Veronica, an eighth-grader, stated that the reason she initially

joined chorus was due to the encouragement of her mother and older sister. She said, "My mom

always talked about chorus and my sister was in chorus in high school. They talked about how

much fun it would be." However, once Veronica joined chorus, she persisted because of the

friends who shared her passion for singing. She said, "I haven't really thought about not doing it

since I started because now all of my friends are in chorus. It's just been fun."

The community that chorus students build within this type of relatedness then enhances

their relationship skills, the next SEL component middle school students identified in this study.

Many within this research study referenced identifying and resolving conflict with others as well

as maintaining healthy relationships with those in their ensemble. Harper, a student in seventh-

grade honors chorus, referenced how the atmosphere of her chorus class is just like a regular family. She stated, "We might now all get along and we don't all like each other. But we all like chorus so we all tolerate each other." She discussed how her class puts aside their differences and works together for the common good of the group. She even mentioned how her chorus class has been asked to help out other choirs if they are not as loud or not as comfortable with their songs. She smiled and said, "It's because we're tight and we're good."

The next component that many students referenced is responsible decision-making. They evaluate their relationships within this type of culture based on their benefits and consequences and take responsibility for their actions. This does not always result in a perfect scenario for them, but they are able to critically analyze problems and possible solutions. Honors choir student Riley, a seventh-grader, credits middle school chorus as her saving grace when she started to decline academically after moving to the area during the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially, she was not able to connect with many other students because schools were closed. Once they were reopened in a hybrid scenario, Riley was able to establish relationships with others, including her choral director, who made her feel accepted and included in a new school. She stated, "I think my success was being in choir full of other music students. We became a family and they supported me."

The last two SEL components students identified with result from a funnel effect. Self-awareness and self-management are typically only mentioned by higher level, advanced middle school chorus students. Self-awareness is when students can identify and understand their individual role within the ensemble. Hannah, an eighth-grade honors choir student, placed great value on her role as a leader within the chorus. Not only did she discuss how other students rely on her leadership during class but she also referenced how she has used group projects during

class to develop memorable experiences for her choir. She said, "I was able to plan things like Carols in the Courtyard where we sang different Christmas songs for the school community." She enjoyed her influential role as a leader but also understood that at times, she needed to rely on the help of others. At the beginning of this past year, she had to change voice parts, which meant she needed to learn from those around her. She stated, "If I forgot something, someone would be there to help me. They have my back, too."

Self-awareness then leads to self-management or self-regulated learning when students value setting personal goals for participation, performance, and engagement (McNickle & Morris, 2022). Honors choir student Harper, a seventh-grader, discussed how she appreciated individual goal setting and e-Portfolio assessment. She said, "It definitely shows what we're taking out of it and what we're learning and how we are growing." She also referenced how accomplished she feels when she creates a goal for herself in choir and is able to finally reach it. One of her personal goals this past year was to successfully audition for honors choir. She used the individual feedback from her performance assessments as a guide to improving her instrument. She said, "I am so proud of myself for that."

More Competence Equals Increased Intrinsic Motivation

Middle school chorus students that exhibited more competence in chorus, such as the auditioned honors choir students, displayed more intrinsic motivation toward individualized performance assessment and e-Portfolio assessment. Competence, one of the constructs of SDT, is one's perception of success and effectiveness within a discipline (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000, 2008, 2017; Vergara-Morales & Del Valle, 2021). Kingsford-Smith and Evans (2021) and Vergara-Morales and Del Valle (2021) suggested that one's motivation and overall achievement is influenced when a sense of effectiveness is realized. Students within both the eighth-grade

honors choir and seventh-grade honors choir discussed an enhanced intrinsic motivation toward e-Portfolio assessment. Because they were confident with their abilities in the class, these students approached e-Portfolio assessment and performance assessments much differently than students in the non-auditioned choirs. On the days that I observed, these students worked on their e-Portfolio assignments without extrinsic rewards such as candy or time outside. Once the director posted the assignment, students began finding areas to record their video artifacts in FlipGrid and self-reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of their performance.

Bennett et al. (2016) suggested three themes associated with e-Portfolio assessment that engage more competent chorus students as they identify their strengths and areas of improvement through self-assessment. The first theme that Bennett et al. suggested is that by utilizing the e-Portfolio as a self-portrait, students are allowed to be creative in their presentation of themselves. Honors choir students in this research study chose artifacts for their biography portions of the e-Portfolio that gave a story about who they are. They placed pictures, quotes, videos, and statements about themselves. The second theme suggested by Bennett et al. is that students construct their identity through the development of the e-Portfolio, allowing chorus students to show growth over a period of time. This research study was for one semester of instruction, which was bounded by time. However, video artifacts included entire songs, partial songs, and sight-reading where students could showcase areas of success from the previous semester or previous year and identify areas of improvement. Utilizing the e-Portfolio as a prompt to guide future goals and learning was the last theme suggested by Bennett et al. This allows the student and choral director the opportunity to engage in individualized goal setting within a group environment.

Whole Group Participation Overshadows Individualized Contributions

Creating a sense of identity within a performance ensemble is a difficult concept for middle school chorus students (Bennett et al., 2016; Silveira, 2013). Although they understand that individual participation is a requirement for overall success, self-regulating their own learning and understanding their independent value within a group environment is not quite realized at this age level. The students within this research study received an overall grade for the e-Portfolio without much formative feedback from the director. Yang et al. (2016) suggested that this assessment technique gives e-Portfolio a high-stakes summative function instead of a low-stakes formative function. The latter function is more beneficial to inform and assist a student's individualized learning process within a group environment (Yang et al., 2016). This is completely the opposite of Gardner and Dewey's purpose of education, which is for students to understand one's self within the world around them (Ivaldi, 2019; Johnson, 2019).

Chorus students are accustomed to whole group assessments that are based on participation. The entire group or entire section receives praise or suggestions based on its performance (Ivaldi, 2019; Johnson, 2019). The results from this study exemplified the same scenario. Many students stated that their grade was based on participation within the entire group or that their grade should be based solely on participation instead of any type of written work. I believe that participation is a behavior and should not be the basis for one's overall grade. The content and skill should be the basis for the overall grade. However, the middle school chorus classroom is filled with students of varying abilities and experience, so it does make individualized grading time consuming for the choral director.

Although educational reform is emphasizing a participatory and collaborative approach to the classroom, music education should be responding to the individual needs of each student and

teaching them how to self-regulate their own learning within this type of culture (McPhail &

McNeill, 2019; Sanchez et al., 2017; Sicherl Kafol et al., 2017). Tiered/group targets where

students are categorized within the ensemble are beneficial for this type of approach

(Wesolowski, 2015). Electronic portfolio assessment, when utilized as a growth tracker to

collect, track, and report individual student growth, takes the tiered targets and modifies them

into individualized plans for improvement and achievement.

Passive Students Stifle Self-regulated Learning

Today's students are conditioned to learning from a prescriptive curriculum in most

disciplines due to standardized testing. Students have learned how to play school as teachers

"teach to a test" and take the creativity of teaching and intrinsic learning out of the classroom.

Standardized testing is highly restrictive and narrow for both students and teachers within core

academic areas. Entire curriculums have been developed around the topics covered by

standardized testing. Students have also become accustomed to the design of standardized

testing, containing clear differentiations between correct and incorrect answers (Segal et al.,

2017); there is no room for interpretation or explanation of one's answers. The chorus classroom

is not immune to this phenomenon. Many students in this research study were confused by

student choice within e-Portfolio assignments and were frustrated that prescribed directions were

not given. Standardized testing has taken away the creativity and curiosity of learning for many

students. They feel that they need to only know what they will be tested on to be successful and

nothing more. Long (2021) suggested that the most effective type of assessment is utilizing

overlapping formative and summative assessments. I believe that the overall goal of any type of

assessment is to inform teaching and learning and that can only be done with formative feedback.

Students have not been taught how to participate in their own learning and, therefore, may

become passively aggressive toward many parts of their own education, including music education. The data from this study indicated that many students, especially from the non-auditioned eighth-grade chorus, did not value or appreciate the artifacts in their e-Portfolio that were able to showcase their individual skills and abilities. Some felt that it was a waste of time and that a written summative assessment would have produced the same result.

e-Portfolio Assessment Does Not Fit a Traditional Grading Model

Traditional grading emphasizes summative rather than formative assessment. Klapp (2018) suggested that summative assessments impact one's feeling of competence, which in turn impacts one's motivation for learning. Chorus does not align within a traditional or summative assessment model as students are all on different levels within one classroom. Much like a special education classroom where students have individualized educational plans, chorus classrooms need individualized goals or competencies for students. Through an e-Portfolio, students choose artifacts that showcase what they have and are currently learning as well as what they can or will achieve in the future (Silveira, 2013).

Sicherl Kafol et al. (2017) suggested that traditional, numerical grades can give students anxiety and result in a negative attitude when it comes to assessment. The reality is that when grading is used as an extrinsic motivator, it often has the opposite impact. The data from this research study indicated that many students felt the pressure to turn in the e-Portfolio without placing much value on it because it was graded for quarterly completion. This resulted in procrastination and negative feelings toward the e-Portfolio. Choral directors might consider utilizing a rubric that classifies the artifacts of the e-Portfolio into separate categories such as reflections, performance assessments, and goals. Students and directors would have the opportunity to check off the artifacts for completion but also give individualized feedback. Since

most school districts utilize traditional grading, the rubric could easily be transferred into a traditional grade. That way, students understand that the content in the e-Portfolio is of value to the director in order to inform teaching of each individual's strengths and weaknesses within the discipline.

Implications for Policy and Practice

This study provides implications for both policy and practice. What follows is a discussion of the need for school districts and administration to review requirements at the middle school level that may impact self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation. Effective policy changes at the middle school chorus level could include better implementation of SEL strategies, continuation of required fine arts credits post-elementary school, and exploration of competency-based grading within the chorus discipline. Changes within the classroom for practicing music educators might include better communication of individual self-regulation expectations that also includes individual contributions over the whole group experience.

Implications for Policy

The first implication for policy is that middle school chorus students are in desperate need of SEL strategies to meet social and emotional needs before self-regulated learning or intrinsic motivation can occur. Although many states have adopted K–12 SEL competencies, many are not equal or equitable (McNickle & Morris, 2022). McNickle and Morris (2022) suggested that lack of clarity and insufficient funding have inhibited some states and school districts from full implementation of SEL. In addition, some school districts that have school-wide SEL programs lack the ability to transfer teaching strategies to performing arts classes (McNickle & Morris, 2022). It is imperative that all teachers, including instructors in electives such as chorus, be trained on the incorporation of SEL strategies into their daily teaching. We

live in a society where children deal with a plethora of social and emotional needs (McNickle & Morris, 2022). This research study suggests that students' SEL needs must be addressed before self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation can occur within the chorus classroom. Policies need to be changed or addressed that encourage middle school choral classrooms to have an SEL focus.

Secondly, music in middle school is most often an elective where students choose or audition to be part of either chorus or band. In elementary school, however, music participation is mandatory. NVPS still had physical education and career and technology education requirements once students transitioned to middle school, but it does not require a fine arts credit. Cronenberg (2020) stated that when students obtain the ability to make decisions about their academic journey, classes that are required become more important or have greater value in a student's mind than ones that are electives. Therefore, participation becomes more of a closed system as students get older in this type of environment. Musical skills start to decline when students are no longer enrolled in chorus, which sets them up for the feeling of incompetence and failure in a class that progressively becomes more advanced (Demorest et al., 2017). The focus for school districts and administration needs to be on the declining enrollment within performing arts ensembles as the demand for more career and technology education courses continues to rise. Students are losing interest and motivation in a subject that requires commitment to refining one's own individual skills. Large groups of students begin their music journey in elementary school, but very few persist through high school.

Many school systems within Virginia have adopted a "Portrait of a Graduate" that represents the competencies needed for students to be successful in life outside the school's walls. NVPS lists communication; collaboration; learning how to learn; social and cultural

empathy; flexibility, adaptability, and resilience; creativity and innovation; and critical thinking and problem solving as key competencies for their graduates. Social and cultural empathy, creativity and innovation, collaboration, learning how to learn, and critical thinking and problem solving are competencies that are obtained at their highest level within fine arts classes. Therefore, school systems such as NVPS need to re-evaluate their overall credit requirements to include the fine arts at the secondary level instead of making it an optional elective.

The final policy implication in this research study is the need for change within the traditional grading system, especially in performing arts classes that are based more on competencies. This research study provided numerous accounts of participants referring to grades as an extrinsic reward. Bandura (1986) suggested that intrinsic motivation within an activity must come from mastery level experiences. Although mastery level experiences are often done through whole group activities, such as performances within choir, they are not effectively implemented on an individual level. Students are still relying on traditional grades as communication for their overall learning, but they are based on whole group participation and attendance. This type of extrinsic motivation undermines the inherent value of self-regulated learning within chorus. Although credits are essential for middle and high school students, school districts and administration need to investigate other possibilities to traditional grading that are based on individual competencies. This type of learning environment can be compared to the special education population where every student had an individualized educational plan. All students are special, and each of them has strengths and weaknesses. It is the choral director's responsibility to know what those are and allow them to inform their teaching. Providing continuous feedback through formative assessment on an individualized basis would influence students' self-determination, thus impacting self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation.

Investigating alternative grading systems that are competency based, especially in the performing arts, would be beneficial and motivating for many students. Currently, Virginia has Standards of Learning that serve as a guideline for middle school chorus. However, there is not a benchmark or assessment for these unless the choral director or district creates it. As school systems like NVPS evolve traditional modes of assessment into student-centered formative assessments, results can be used to inform how competency-based grading could be utilized within performing arts classes.

Implications for Practice

Current choral teaching methods focus more on whole group expectations than communicating individual expectations within the group. Choral teaching methods that foster goal setting and self-monitoring within the choral discipline need to begin at a younger age. Students need to learn how to think critically within this type of class in order to build self-awareness. Current strategies within other academic areas encourage this as the teacher becomes a facilitator within the classroom. The choral discipline needs to adjust accordingly and implement the same strategies. When students value goal setting, they acquire a greater sense of self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and persistence within the discipline (Chang et al., 2018; Panadero et al., 2017). As choral directors get to know the goals of each individual student, providing regular formative feedback, the student will begin to treat goal achievement as an intrinsic incentive. This may help individual students know and value their contribution to the whole group.

Middle school choral directors are also in need of re-evaluating the antiquated methods of valuing the whole group experience over the individual contribution. Often, the individual growth is lost in the target goals of the ensemble as the choral director prepares for concerts,

assessments, and festivals. However, it is critical to remember that individuals within a group setting still have many different learning styles, contributing to their own strengths and weaknesses. Individual assessment is a crucial component to informative teaching and learning. Choral directors have a responsibility, just like any other academic discipline, to provide a quality education to each individual student (Nolker & Sinclair, 2020). Electronic portfolio assessment allows middle school directors to monitor and track growth over a longer period of time, such as a quarter, semester, or entire year. It also allows students and chorus directors two-way communications for goal setting and reflections. It provides an inside glimpse of the perceptions of individual students within the classroom to inform future teaching methods.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

The theory used for this study was SDT, which describes the conditions necessary for one to be psychologically healthy and intrinsically motivated. Although Deci and Ryan (1985) suggested that the three constructs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy are equal, this research study suggests that relatedness needs to be met within the middle school chorus classroom before the feeling of competence within the discipline or autonomy in the classroom is reached. Participants referenced their relatedness to others including their choral director, other chorus students, as well as their families. The social network within the chorus ensemble is an emotionally supportive environment. Past research suggests that healthy and positive relationships influence motivation (Allen et al., 2018; Deci & Ryan, 2017; Kingsford-Smith & Evans, 2021; Sparks et al., 2016; Vergara-Morales & Del Valle, 2021). This study corroborates the need for relatedness, but suggests that once that construct is met, competence and autonomy will follow, thus increasing the potential for intrinsic sources of motivation. Considering this theoretical implication, SDT may not have been the best theoretical framework to use for this

study designed to investigate intrinsic motivation and self-regulated learning as choral directors and chorus classrooms are licking their wounds from the impact of COVID-19. Instead, an SEL theoretical framework may fit this research better as chorus students lost much of what is valuable to them over the past 2 years. As schools were shut down and singing was banned, chorus students lost their feelings of closeness, emotional connection, and inclusion (Blackhurst & Freeman, 2022). This research study was impacted by this phenomenon as students returned to live music instruction just a few months prior to data collection.

This research study softly aligns with the formative assessment study by Chen et al. (2017). Emphasizing three key strategies of formative assessment, Chen et al. (2017) suggested that student learning and motivation are heightened when used in the visual and performing arts. The implication of this study is that the first strategy noted in the Chen et al. study of clarifying and sharing learning goals aligned, but providing informative feedback for both the choral director and students as well as promoting students' roles as instructional resources for their peers and themselves was absent from this current study. Formative feedback was not given on an individual basis even though e-Portfolio assessment was a staple within the classroom. Participants noted that their e-Portfolios were solely graded on completion. Thus, the internalized value of self-awareness was not conceptualized and students did not perceive themselves as an instructional resource within the chorus classroom.

This study aligns with previous research that suggests that current assessment practices within music classrooms focus more on the summative group performance assessment rather than formative individual performance assessment (Russell, 2015; Wesolowski, 2015; Wesolowski et al., 2018). The focus is more on the whole group rather than individualized learners. Students see themselves as part of the whole group rather than how their specific

contribution impacts the whole group. Electronic portfolio assessment allows students and choral

directors the ability to develop self-awareness within a group setting as they reflect on the

contents of the e-Portfolio. However, without literature and research that discuss what those

contents might be, how do choral directors know how to set them up with students and what

artifacts might be the most beneficial? In my professional opinion, middle school directors need

to be teaching students how to set individualized goals within their chorus e-Portfolios. Guiding

them to listen and reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses with video artifacts and

performance assessments is the best way to accomplish this task. This sets up a dialogue between

the choral director and the student on improvements and competencies that need to be addressed.

However, middle school students must overcome their fear and apprehension of listening to and

being critical of themselves. Like any sports team, watching the video is essential to

improvement.

      Bennett et al. (2016) suggested three themes associated with effective e-Portfolio

assessment: the e-Portfolio as a self-portrait; identity construction through the development of

the e-Portfolio; and the e-Portfolio as a prompt to guide future goals and thinking. Analysis of

the participants' e-Portfolios within this research study revealed the e-Portfolio as a self-portrait,

but the other two themes were vague or missed by most of the participants in this study. Many

students were hesitant with their performance assessment artifacts, limiting self-reflection, which

would promote future goals and thinking. Lonergan et al. (2020) suggested that posting selfies on

social media has increased the development of eating disorders among women over the last few

years. I believe the same thing has happened to our teenagers as they edit most of the videos and

pictures they take in order to exude the perfect image to others. Students do not enjoy unedited

videos that may show their inadequacies. However, within the chorus discipline it is crucial for

this to occur for improvement to take place. Therefore, time needs to be spent with each individual student to showcase their abilities as well as their inadequacies so that they feel competent enough to record themselves. This only happens through a one-on-one, two-way dialogue between the choral director and the student.

Limitations and Delimitations

There were some limitations in this research that could not be controlled, potentially affecting the results of this study. The first limitation was the participant survey and consent form response rate from the participants of the study. I met with each class prior to the choral director giving the survey. Although there seemed to be quite a bit of interest in the study, very few participated in the survey the first time the choral director announced it and made the link available via Google. The choral director reminded students several times before approximately 20 students completed it. Once participants were selected, the consent forms took several more weeks to be returned. Some did not return it until the day of the first interview, so I had to schedule an additional day of interviews to allow for enough time.

The second limitation was the impact of weather and illness of the timeline for completion of data collection. Scheduled to start prior to the beginning of the semester, data collection was delayed due to inclement weather. School was closed on several scheduled interview and observation dates. Illness also played a factor as several students were absent on the first interview date, resulting in a couple of interviews that were held online due to time and availability constraints. The social dynamics between the two observations was also impacted by illness as several students in each class had been quarantined for COVID-19 on the first observation date. I also had to host the focus group discussions via Google Meet due to commitments at my own school. I had previously scheduled them to be held in person, but they

were re-scheduled so many times, it was difficult to make it work with concert and assessment season obligations for my own students.

Another limitation was the attention span of some of the participants in the individual interviews. Since chorus class was being held in the room adjacent to the interview room, some students were distracted by what was going on in the class while the interview was taking place. Noises, talking, the intercom, and singing were a source of distraction for some participants. Questions also needed to be rephrased several times for some participants as they were seeking a right or wrong answer. Hesitation was a common phenomenon as participants tried to think of a correct answer.

The last limitation was the number of schools within my surrounding area that utilize e-Portfolios for middle school chorus. NVMS adopted e-Portfolio assessment out of a need during COVID-19. I reached out to several districts within driving distance and was only able to find NVMS and one other high school that was piloting it this school year. Many of the other schools within my surrounding area continue to use whole-group assessments, individual summative assessments, or individual performance assessments without the addition of tracking individual growth. These types of assessments are used to provide quarterly or yearly grades, not to inform teaching or learning.

This study also had some delimitations, purposeful decisions made by me to limit or define the boundaries of the study. Because of my role as a full-time employee in the study district, the middle school in this study was purposefully selected so that I could easily travel to the site from my home school. The distance between the two schools was less than a 30-minute drive, allowing me to visit during planning times and half days. In addition, I was also aware that the choral director at the site had already implemented e-Portfolio assessment, which is

referenced as digital portfolios. Another delimitation was that focus group discussions had to be held virtually via Google Meet due to inclement weather and illness that caused the cancellation of many of the originally planned dates. The virtual focus groups allowed me to hold them during a convenient time for both me and the middle school director so that I could meet other commitments at my own school.

Recommendations for Future Research

Further research is needed to explore e-Portfolio assessment through the lens of self-determination theory and intrinsic motivation. Due to the difference in intrinsic motivation between the auditioned, honors level choirs and the non-auditioned choirs, further investigation needs to be done to identify and analyze possible barriers that might hinder intrinsic motivation within the middle school chorus classroom. Extrinsic motivators such as candy, time outdoors, and traditional grading seemed to be effective strategies for the director. Studies specific to intrinsic or extrinsic motivation within the middle school chorus classroom in relation to demographics and level may possibly yield useful information for secondary music teachers.

Studying an older population of students would also provide useful data for understanding the narrative surrounding high school students exhibiting self-regulated learning behaviors who use e-Portfolio assessment strategies within the chorus classroom. Students who persist within the program for multiple years seem to place more value on their overall growth and development within the program. However, reaching a broader population within various schools or school districts might be more effective and valuable using a quantitative research approach with anonymous surveys. At times, the middle school students did not understand the question regarding self-regulated learning or intrinsic motivation and had a difficult time answering the interview and focus group discuss questions.

This study also needs to be investigated post-COVID. This study was initially planned prior to the pandemic and before chorus was basically frozen for almost 2 years due to aerosol studies and the transmission rate of the virus. Chorus programs throughout the nation had to find alternate ways to deliver instruction in both virtual and hybrid scenarios. Chorus students who had an intrinsic love of music and singing were forced to use a computer for written work and/or performance assessments. Because singing was not allowed for quite a while, many chorus students began to resent the work they had been assigned, including any value that had previously been placed on portfolio or e-Portfolio assessment. Incorporating the e-Portfolio into a performance class gets students to sing and utilize e-Portfolio assessment simultaneously.

Lastly, it is suggested that further research investigate alternate grading systems to be used in choir ensembles as opposed to traditional grading. Students in this research study seemed to be confused on how they were graded or on what their grade was based. Students suggested that passing competencies, much like a video game, made much more sense to them within a performance-based class since everyone was on a different level and the talent pool was not the same. There is very little research available to chorus teachers regarding assessment and grading as most articles come from practitioner journals centered more on opinions and experiences rather than on empirical research and rich data. Thus, it is suggested that more qualitative, quantitative, and cross-case studies examine the grading practices of secondary chorus classrooms.

Conclusion

e-Portfolio assessment is a type of formative assessment that encourages self-regulated learning within the traditional choir rehearsal paradigm. This qualitative research study sought to examine the perceptions and experiences of middle school students who exhibit self-regulated

learning and intrinsic motivation as they utilize e-Portfolio assessment in chorus. Using SDT as the theoretical framework, qualitative data were collected using individual interviews and focus group discussions that concentrated on the three constructs of SDT—competence, relatedness, and autonomy—in relation to e-Portfolio assessment. Formal and informal observations as well as physical artifacts were used to triangulate the data. Analysis of the data determined four themes that aided in answering the central research question of the study of how participants perceive, value, and experience self-regulated and intrinsic motivation opportunities using e-Portfolio assessment practices in the middle school choral classroom. Themes from the data suggesting sources of motivation in chorus were as follows: (a) participation as a source of motivation in middle school chorus; (b) differentiated types of assessment are key motivating factors for achievement among advanced middle school chorus students; (c) chorus meets social and emotional needs for middle school students; and (d) middle school chorus students need various sources of motivation to participate or complete work.

In conclusion, it is essential for secondary choral music disciplines to evolve into a student-centered learning environment. Individual students need to understand their value within a group setting yet also have their individual needs met within the chorus classroom. It is the choral director's responsibility to know what those needs are, whether they are social, emotional, or academic. Once these needs are met and choral directors are informed about each student, there is potential for intrinsic motivation and self-regulated learning, but choral classrooms must continually evolve and tailor opportunities for formative assessment, such as e-Portfolio assessment.

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Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

November 16, 2021

Melissa Mauck
Gail Collins

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY21-22-260 Promoting Self-Regulated Learning and Intrinsic Motivation in the Middle School Choral Classroom Through e-Portfolio Assessment: A Qualitative Instrumental Case Study

Dear Melissa Mauck, Gail Collins:

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the following date: November 16, 2021. If you need to make changes to the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit a modification to the IRB. Modifications can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

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

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

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

Appendix B: Recruitment Letters

Parent Letter

Xx, xx, 2021

Mr. and Mrs. John Doe

Dear Parent/Guardian of Selected Participant,

I am e-mailing you to let you know that your child has been selected to participate in a research study on e-Portfolio assessment and self-regulated learning that I am conducting as part of the doctorate requirements at Liberty University. Based upon the recommendation of the NVMS choral director and the screening survey that your child took, I am interested in exploring his/her perceived individual achievement in choir and how e-Portfolio assessment plays a role in his/her achievement. In discussing your child's experiences, thoughts, and feelings, I hope to be able to better understand the role of assessment, specifically e-Portfolio assessment and how to refine and expand current strategies to better suit the needs of individual choir students. You were informed about the details of this study and already provided consent for your child's participation in this study. I am including a digital copy of the parental consent and child assent forms to this document. Later in the document, you will be asked to sign and return the parental consent form.

If you choose to allow him/her to participate, over the course of the next semester, your child will be observed engaging and participating in e-Portfolio assessment experiences in chorus class. Previous experiences with assessment in choir, e-Portfolio assessment, grading, evaluation, and past and current levels of motivation will be discussed in an individual interview as the first step in the data collection process. Larger focus group discussions that will take place at the end of the semester. I will send a reminder for each meeting. I will also be collecting, with your permission, student artifacts such as their e-Portfolio and student grades, if applicable during my research study.

To participate, please click here to sign and return the parental consent document. The consent document contains additional information about my research. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the survey. You may either e-mail the document directly to me at ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉ or print, sign, and return it to your child's chorus director.

Thank you so much for your participation.

Sincerely,

Melissa L. Mauck
Doctoral Candidate Liberty University
▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉

Student Letter

Xx, xx, 2021

John Doe

Dear Chorus Student:

As a doctoral student in the School of Education at Liberty University I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a PhD in Higher Education Administration. The purpose of my research study is to examine the perceptions and experiences of middle school students utilize e-Portfolio or digital portfolios in chorus, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be in 7th or 8th grade, 12-14 years old, enrolled in a middle school chorus ensemble, and utilize e-Portfolio assessment within that ensemble. Participants, if willing, will be asked to do the following:
1. Be observed in the chorus classroom. During the course of the semester, I plan to observe you at least two times during the 47-minute class time.
2. Participate in one-on-one interviews with the researcher. During the course of the semester, I will interview you once for approximately 15-20 minutes. The interview will take place during the 47-minute chorus class time.
3. Participate in focus group discussions with the researcher. Focus groups are comprised of 4-5 students within your chorus ensemble taking part in my research study. During the course of the semester, I will conduct one focus group discussion that will take place during the 47-minute class time.
4. I will also ask you to review a copy of the transcript of the individual interview and focus group discussion, which is a copy of the conversation that took place in a written format. This is so that you can check for accuracy and make certain I have written exactly what you meant to say. Once the transcripts are complete, I will meet with the participants from your ensemble for approximately 15 minutes to review them.
5. I will also be reviewing your e-Portfolio and requesting your chorus grades if I need them.

It should take approximately one semester to complete the procedures listed. Participation will be completely confidential, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

To be considered for participation in this study, please click here to take a screening survey. The purpose of this survey is to help me identify students with the best attributes for the study.

The parents of all students who are chosen as participants will receive an email notifying them that their child has been selected as a participant in a research study.

A parental and student consent document will be emailed to you if you meet the study criteria. 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 to your choral director prior

to the research study beginning on January 3, 2022. Please click here to review the parental consent form. Please click here to review the child assent form.

Sincerely,

Melissa L. Mauck
Doctoral Candidate Liberty University

Appendix C: Screening Survey

1. Please state your full name (first, last): _____

2. What is your gender?
    o   Male
    o   Female
    o   Prefer Not to Answer

3. What is your age?
    o   12
    o   13
    o   14
    o   15

4. What grade are you currently enrolled this year?
    o   7
    o   8

5. In which choir are you currently enrolled this year?
    o   7th Grade Chorus: I am in the beginning/intermediate 7th grade ensemble.
    o   7th Grade Honors Chorus: I am in the auditioned and advanced 7th grade ensemble.
    o   8th Grade Chorus: I am in the beginning/intermediate 8th grade ensemble with prerequisite chorus experience.
    o   8th Grade Honors Chorus: I am in the auditioned 8th grade ensemble with little to no prerequisite chorus experience.

6. Is this your first year in chorus?
    o   Yes
    o   No

7. Have you previously used e-Portfolios, also known as Digital Notebooks, in choir or another class?
    o   Yes
    o   No

8. Do you plan on taking choir in high school?
    o   Yes
    o   No

9. On average, do you typically complete all independent assignments in choir?
   - o Yes
   - o No

10. Do you typically fully engage and participate in all choir rehearsals?
    - o Yes
    - o No

11. Do you feel successful in chorus?
    - o Yes
    - o No

12. How many friends do you have in your choir class?
    - o 0-3
    - o 4-6
    - o 7-10
    - o 11+

13. Do you prefer to work on your assignments in choir independently or with a group?
    - o Independently
    - o Group
    - o Either is fine

Appendix D: Selection E-mail

Xx, xx, 2021

Mr. and Mrs. John Doe

Dear Parent/Guardian of Selected Participant,

I am e-mailing you to let you know that your child has been selected to participate in the research study on e-Portfolio assessment and self-regulated learning that I am conducting as part of the doctorate requirements at Liberty University. Based upon the recommendation by the NVMS choral director and the screening survey that your child took, I am interested in exploring their perceived individual achievement in choir and how e-Portfolio assessment plays a role in their achievement. In discussing their experiences, thoughts, and feelings I hope to be able to better understand the role of assessment, specifically e-Portfolio assessment and how to refine and expand current strategies to better suit the needs of individual choir students. You were informed about the details of this study and already provided consent for your child's participation in this study.

Over the course of the next semester, your child will be observed engaging and participating in e-Portfolio assessment experiences in chorus class. Previous experiences with assessment in choir, e-Portfolio assessment, grading, evaluation, and past and current levels of motivation will be discussed in an individual interview as the first step in the data collection process. Larger focus group discussions that will take place at the end of the semester. I will send a reminder for each meeting. The confidentiality of all participants is protected by separating signed consents from data sheets, using pseudonyms, restricting the number of people who can access data, and destroying raw data or identities after data has been entered. For the student focus group discussions, I will request for the students to keep the discussion confidential.

Your child is a volunteer. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. Volunteers may choose to terminate participation in the study at any time. There will be no effect on your child or relations with Liberty University or ▮▮▮▮. There are no risks or harm to your child in this study. You may find the discussions helpful to your child or it may make them feel good to know that their contribution allows the researcher to make meaning of our conversations in order to contribute something substantial to the music education profession. There is also no compensation for participation in this study.

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board is the committee that protects the rights of participants in research studies. The IRB may review study records periodically to be sure that participants are being treated fairly and that the study is being carried out as planned. If you have questions or concerns, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email irb@liberty.edu. The researcher conducting this study is Melissa Legge Mauck. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮. The advisor for this research study is Dr. Gail Collins, ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮.

Thank you so much for your participation.

Sincerely,

Melissa L. Mauck
Doctoral Candidate Liberty University

███████████████

Appendix E: Consent Forms

Parent Consent Form

Title of the Study: Promoting self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation in the middle school choral classroom through e-Portfolio assessment: A qualitative instrumental case study
Principal Researcher: Melissa Legge Mauck, PhD student, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

Your child is invited to participate in a research study. Participants must be enrolled in one of the represented middle school chorus ensembles, 12 to 14 years old, and in 7th or 8th grade. Your child is being asked to participate in this study as a representative of a choral classroom utilizing e-Portfolio assessment within ███████████████████████████. Along with your child, approximately 10-20 other chorus students from ██████ will participate in the study. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

What is the study about and why are we doing it?

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions and experiences of secondary students who exhibit self-regulated learning and intrinsic motivation as they utilize e-Portfolio assessment in chorus.

What will participants be asked to do in this study?

If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, I will ask them to do the following things:
1. Agree to be observed in the natural environment of the chorus classroom. During the course of the semester, I plan to observe students at least two times during the 47-minute class time.
2. Participate in one-on-one interviews with the researcher. During the course of the semester, I will conduct one 15–20-minute interview that will take place during the 47-minute class time.
3. Be willing to participate in focus group discussions with the researcher. During the semester, I will conduct one focus group discussion that will take place during the 47-minute class time that will be comprised of 4-5 participants of each ensemble.
4. Review a copy of the transcript of your individual interview and your part of the focus group discussion to check both for accuracy. Once the transcripts are complete, I will meet with your group for approximately 15 minutes to review them.
5. Allow me to collect, with your permission, student artifacts such as their e-Portfolio and student grades, if applicable during my research study.

How could participants 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 new information to the ongoing research on intrinsically motivating, student-centered assessment strategies that focus on long-term goals in the middle school classroom. This study will also significantly contribute to the gap in current literature on motivation and persistence of middle school chorus students.

What risks might participants experience from being in this study?

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

How will personal information be protected?

The records for 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 and focus group discussions 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.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.
- Since I will be collecting, with your permission, student artifacts such as their e-Portfolio and student grades, I will also store this information on a password-locked computer.

How will participants be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for being in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect their current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to allow your child to participate, they are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships. Students not taking part in this study will still complete the e-Portfolio or digital notebook as part of their chorus ensemble.

What should be done if a participant wishes to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw your child from the study or child chooses to withdraw, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw them or should your child choose to withdraw, data collected from your child, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your child's contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if your child chooses to withdraw.

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

The researcher conducting this study is Melissa Legge Mauck. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Gail Collins, at ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about 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 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

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 allow your child 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 allow my child to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record my child as part of their participation in this study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to obtain my child's grade data for chorus as well as other subject areas and to access his/her student portfolio as part of their participation in this study. In order to access this information, the researcher must have signed parental permission.

_____
Printed Child's/Student's Name

_____
Parent's Signature   Date

_____
Minor's Signature   Date

Child Assent Form

What is the name of the study and who is doing the study?
The name of the study is Promoting Self-regulated Learning and Intrinsic Motivation in the Middle School Choral Classroom through e-Portfolio Assessment. The person doing the study is Melissa Legge Mauck, a doctoral student at Liberty University.

Why is Melissa Legge Mauck doing this study?
Melissa Legge Mauck wants to examine the perceptions and experiences of middle school students as they utilize e-Portfolio assessment in chorus. I am interested in exploring your perceptions on your individual and group achievement in choir and how assessment, specifically e-Portfolio assessment, plays a role in your achievement. In discussing your experiences, thoughts, and feelings I hope to be able to better understand the role of e-Portfolio assessment. I also plan to use my research to expand on strategies that will better suit the assessment needs of individual middle school choir students.

Why am I being asked to be in this study?
You are being asked to be in this study because you are in 7th or 8th grade, 12 to 14 years old, enrolled in one of the represented middle school chorus ensembles, and utilize e-Portfolio assessment within your choir class.

If I decide to be in the study, what will happen and how long will it take?
If you decide to be in this study, you will participate in a recorded 15–20-minute one-on-one interview with me where we will discuss your experiences with motivation and assessment specifically e-Portfolio assessment in the chorus classroom. In addition, you will be observed over the course of a semester as you engage with and participate in e-Portfolio assessment experiences (at least two times during the 47-minute class time). Focus group discussions, which will happen near the end of the semester, will be held during the 47-minute class time with 4-5 other students from your class and/or program. I will send a reminder for each meeting. Lastly, with your parent's permission, I will be collecting your e-Portfolio and chorus grades, if applicable to the study.

Do I have to be in this study?
No, you do not have to be in this study. If you want to be in this study, then tell the researcher. If you don't want to, it's OK to say no. The researcher will not be angry. You can say yes now and change your mind later. It's up to you.

What if I have a question?
You can ask questions any time. You can ask now. You can ask later. You can talk to the researcher. If you do not understand something, please ask the researcher to explain it to you again.

Signing your name below means that you want to be in the study.

Signature of Child _____

Date_____

Melissa Legge Mauck

██████████████████

Dr. Gail Collins

██████████████████

Liberty University Institutional Review Board
1971 University Blvd, Green Hall 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515
irb@liberty.edu

Appendix F: Individual Interview Questions

Introduction: Welcome! Thank you for talking with me today.

I am a doctoral student at Liberty University conducting a study to explore assessment, specifically e-Portfolio assessment practices within the chorus classroom. I will be asking you some questions about your experiences with assessment in past and current choir programs. I will also be asking you some questions related to your level of motivation and self-regulated learning in choir. If you feel uncomfortable answering a question, you are welcome to pass on the question. If you need a break, please let me know. I am using an audio recorder and my laptop to record this interview. I will also use a pseudonym (or different name) in my interview transcript to protect your identity as well as your chorus teacher's identity.

Do you have any questions? If there are no questions, let's get started!

Background Questions

1. Describe your chorus background and why you joined choir or have continued with choir. CRQ

2. Describe areas of success or achievement both individually and as a group that you have experienced in choir. SQ1; SQ2

3. Describe your choir and the experiences you have had with others in your choir. SQ2

4. What else would you like to discuss about your personal and social experiences in choir that we have not already discussed? SQ2

Assessment Questions

5. Describe how your individual skills and knowledge have previously been or are currently assessed or tested in choir. CRQ; SQ3

6. How does your quarterly grade communicate your individual achievement and success in choir? SQ1; SQ3

7. What are your personal experiences with e-Portfolio assessment in choir? CRQ

8. What else would you like to discuss regarding your personal experiences with assessment in choir? CRQ; SQ1; SQ3

Self-regulated Learning Questions

9. Describe your challenges with motivation to complete individual tasks, assignments, or assessments in choir. CRQ

10. Describe strategies that may influence your motivation to complete individual tasks, assignments, or assessments in choir. CRQ

11. What else would you like to discuss regarding your individual motivation in choir? CRQ

Thank you for talking with me today. Please keep in mind that everything we discussed will remain confidential.

Appendix G: Sample of Completed Observation Template

Observations: Observations were conducted at least two different times with the researcher as an observer. The length of each class is approximately 47 minutes, so a template with time stamps was used by the researcher to take descriptive field notes as the choral director transitioned to different activities throughout the lesson. Descriptive notes provided a description of the activities within the classroom and followed the participants in each class. Reflective notes provided the researcher's reflections on the activities, process, and summary themes for later use. Observation Template:

Date: 3/15/22 Site: NVMS Ensemble: 8th Grade Chorus	

Participants: Charlotte; Zoe; Brandon Evan (absent)

Length of Observation: (90 minute block) 7:58 – 9:28 am

Time:	Descriptive Notes of Observed Activities:	Reflective Memos:
7:58 am	Students started with the digital portfolio activity on the board (refer to picture): Please do the following: it should only take 5 minutes!! 1. Open the end of year portfolio located under Classwork (unsubmit if needed, this was from LAST semester). Copy and Paste ALL slides from End of Semester portfolio into your 2nd	Director explained through the activity as part of their written grade and explained that by turning it in, that was their grade. The purpose of the assignment is to monitor their growth and self-reflection over a period of time. Most are on their Chromebooks. Director talks about personal things (parents having

	semester portfolio (you may arrange it any way you would like). 2. Open the Noteflight portfolio activity: "Noteflight Activity." Cut and paste the slide into your 2nd semester portfolio and label is "Composition 2022" 3. Clean up and organize your portfolio until we begin our morning warm-up singing. Remember this is YOUR creation. Although I am giving you a grade for this in class, I want you to consider sharing it!	babies; dog that got out of the fence; class pet)
8:06 am	Warm-ups: Physical: Stretching; clapping; and echo activity. 1, 123, 123 . . . (different styles - gave them a choice: army, barbie, British). Vocalise: Beedee (123454321); stomp/clap Tempo vocalise: chant and pitched Sirens Solfège activity: d, drd, drmrd, (etc.) Echo solfège activity per voice part Ee, eh, ah, oh (123454321, 12345321, etc.)	Limited participation; apathetic Some participating, but afraid to participate loudly. Some barely doing anything. Body posture - lazy Some not paying attention at all or participating. Divides (d, drd, drmrd) into canon. "Men against the world." Guys having trouble matching pitch; some speak-sing. Ladies have trouble with volume. Not successful. Splits them into 2 different groups in the room. Better, but men still have issues with pitch
8:18 am	Repertoire Rehearsal: "Fly Away Home": Reviews each part in unison. Standing.	Has them stand . . . but, what does posture look like? Focus: Diction. Reminds them of diction is done with the tip of the tongue and teeth.

	Reviews with accompaniment. Sitting (terrible posture). Isolates parts that need help on piano with accompaniment.	Reviews the ladies part: VERY timid and soft. Weak, lazy song. Reviews the men's part: Pitch problems. Tells them they sound "amazing, but need more breath." ?? Sings it through with them . . . loudly . . . but could she HEAR them? Focus seems to be part of the problem. Reviews vocal terminology with unison vs. divisi Compliments them on trying (even though new). Reminds them of singing out and not being afraid.
8:26 am	"Let My People Go" Starts with sopranos/altos: "You Gotta Stand for this." "Find your inner soul sister." Asks them to put music away. Shouts the lyrics and asks them to repeat. But, when they sing it, it goes back to apathetic singing. Gives them the example of a giant spider on the floor. They have to stomp it on "Moses." "I don't believe you that you want to let my people go." Asks the guys to join them . . . standing Reminds them of what "Witness" sounded like by the end, but it took work to get there. GREAT transition - "Are singers born or are they made?"	Standing posture. Apathetic/lazy singing Director has WAY more energy than the rest of them. Some of the girls laugh while others are singing. It's a little intimidating to some of the others. One young lady never did participate due to "sore throat" . . . but continued to stare and laugh at others.
8:34 am	"What do we need to do to sing our faces off at the concert?" How do we get there? What are some things we do to reinforce our best singing?	Students answer with vocal terminology. They KNOW the answer.

	"The Good Bad and the Ugly" Think of one instance where you tried to make yourself sound better. "I'm working way too hard up here" . . . what can YOU do? Goes over the FlipGrid assignment that will go in their e-Portfolio. Checks for understanding with thumbs up. Reminds them of focus - NO tik toks; surfing phone; etc. Some ask if "they can do it at home." The director explains that it needs to be done today during class since many have trouble completing digital portfolio assignments at home. Students complete the activity in FlipGrid in various practice rooms. She gives them candy when they are finished (extrinsic reward). She does not go outside with them? Gives them access to balls and such.	Reminds them of things like the ones chewing gum. Puts candy in her own mouth and shows them what it's like. Gives example of "I love gum, but in chorus . . ." Students are apprehensive about recording themselves. Some girls . . . feet on chair in front of them. Talking about other things. Behavior is an issue in this class for many. Some have issues with access into FlipGrid. ASK to join. She says some can use WeVideo if they want. Gives them a choice. Has to wait for them to request and approves them. Delays the lesson just a bit due to an unforeseen technical issue. Meets with some students individually about "how" to get started. Many do not know WHAT to feel or WHAT they are personally good at. Self-reflection is difficult for some . . . they seek the approval of others as some "don't want to do it by themselves, but want to do it in a group" . . . in front of others? Other students complete it, but want to re-record it numerous times. Gives them a choice . . . IF you finish in class today, you may go outside. Extrinsic reward. Some SAY they submitted, got candy, laughed with others to say they did not submit, and sat in the corner chatting and playing on their phones.
9:28 am	NO BELL - dismisses class NO wrap-up	NOTES: Brandon - participates; highly disruptive with how he doesn't sound good and acts as "the class clown."

		Zoe - highly participates; isolates herself on the end away from other people. Charlotte - participates, with an attitude. Seeks approval of director for her song and self-reflection.

Appendix H: Focus Group Discussion Questions

Introduction: Welcome! Thank you for talking with me today.

In this focus group, I am interested in learning/understanding your perceptions of e-Portfolio assessment practices utilized within your chorus classroom. I will ask you some questions about your experiences with e-Portfolio assessment. If you feel uncomfortable answering a question, you are welcome to pass on the question. If you need a break, please let me know. I am using an audio recorder and my laptop to record this interview. I will also use a pseudonym (or different name) in my focus group transcript to protect your identity as well as your chorus teacher's identity.

Do you have any questions? If there are no questions, let's get started!

<u>Focus Group Questions</u>

1. How do your current grades in choir reflect your individual level of achievement? CRQ; SQ2; SQ3

2. What would you like your choir director to know about you or your class that may impact your level of achievement in choir? SQ1; SQ2; SQ3

3. Describe the challenges you have had with e-Portfolio assessment in choir. CRQ; SQ1; SQ2; SQ3

4. Describe the successes you have had with e-Portfolio assessment in choir. CRQ; SQ1; SQ2; SQ3

5. What would you like your choir director to know about your experiences with e-Portfolio assessment? CRQ; SQ1; SQ2; SQ3

6. Is there anything I did not ask that you would like to share? <u>CRQ; SQ1; SQ2; SQ3</u>

Appendix I: Physical Artifacts

These documents were utilized to support and reinforce themes that emerged from interviews, observations, and focus group discussions. Detailed descriptions and the demographics of each participant as well as the choir class were analyzed from documents provided by the school and district. Student grades were also analyzed from documents provided by the school and district to give insight on participants' previous and current grades in chorus as well as other subject areas. Student artifacts collected in the e-Portfolio were also examined, which included documents as well as audiovisual materials such as videos. The e-Portfolios included a letter that each choir student wrote to themselves answering the following prompt: Based on your growth and achievement in choir as evidenced in your e-Portfolio, recruit your younger self into a middle or high school chorus program. The letter will be the final artifact placed in the e-Portfolio.

Appendix J: Researcher's Reflexive Journal

| JOURNAL ENTRY 1 August 17, 2021 | As I complete my proposal for my dissertation, I am also beginning a new school year with my own high school students. Battling motivation and persistence within my program coming off of a hybrid learning environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I find myself searching for ways to provide more autonomous and self-regulated learning opportunities for my students to keep them involved and improving within my classroom. Persistence has been an issue within middle and high school choral programs for years as students are inundated with so many choices of electives after elementary school where most are required to take music as a resource. Middle and high school choral directors battle a numbers game to complete their programs with appropriate voicings.

My firm belief is that current forms of assessment within most choral programs are not motivating for students. Traditional grading is antiquated in a performing arts classroom where achievement is based on individual levels of talent and motivation. Middle and high school choir couples talent with practice and students will only improve within this type of class if they are motivated to practice. Within my own classes, most of my advanced students naturally harbor this type of intrinsic motivation and self-regulate their own learning within those ensembles. Utilizing an e-Portfolio assessment strategy where they self-reflect on individual and group performances; place performance artifacts such as part recordings, sight-reading, and solos; and reflect on their growth has typically been motivating for these advanced students regardless of a traditional grading system. They continue to be motivated by challenging themselves to achieve higher goals within their own learning.

The true issue in my experience is motivating beginning and intermediate middle and high school students. These students typically do not persist within the program if they do not relate to others within the choir, have a freedom of autonomy within their own learning, or feel successful in their individual achievement. In past years, I have not used e-Portfolio assessment as much with these ensembles because of the size of the program. These are typically my larger ensembles which makes it much more time consuming to assess e-Portfolios with the type of formative assessment needed to make it beneficial for the student. Formative assessment should be for their own learning so that students can set goals based on their own individual competency levels within the discipline. My hope is that I can learn from this study on how to effectively manage an e-Portfolio assessment strategy within these ensembles to help grow my program with students who are motivated to persist from the beginning level to graduation. |

JOURNAL ENTRY 2 February 14, 2022	I was able to go to the middle school today and begin my individual interviews. I received so much valuable information today for my research study. It's interesting to talk to the students from all three levels as their value for the e-Portfolio is almost determined by the choir they are currently in and how much written work they had to complete in their e-Portfolio during COVID. Those are two things I did not take in consideration. The more advanced choirs seem to value performance assessments a bit more and enjoy hearing themselves sing, reaching out to their director for marked improvement. The other choirs view it as busy work and do not enjoy being on their Chromebooks when they "are on them every day in every other class." That is my fear with this research study in light of the pandemic. Students in the regular chorus relied on lots of extrinsic rewards such as going outside at the end of rehearsal or receiving candy for turning in an assignment. COVID also played a huge factor in the value that many students have for their e-Portfolio. Apparently, the director started using them during the pandemic, so many of them view it as busy work since they were unable to sing for the majority of the past 2 years. I also see this within my own choirs. The advanced level choirs seem to have more intrinsic motivation, while the non-auditioned choirs almost have to be bribed with extrinsic motivation.
JOURNAL ENTRY 3 March 15, 2022	Today was my first observation at the site with many of my participants, although there were a few that were on a field trip. So, the biggest thing that stood out to me today was the difference in intrinsic motivation and overall behavior between the auditioned and non-auditioned ensembles. The auditioned ensembles seem to be there for the sheer enjoyment of music and they work well together as an ensemble. The non-auditioned ensemble was extremely apathetic in terms of their singing and their behavior was an issue for most of the class. Again, I see this in my advanced choirs vs. my non-auditioned choirs. The director worked entirely too hard during the eighth-grade non-auditioned class. They were not responsive to her at all. I felt kind of bad for her. I also noticed what one of the girls referenced in her individual interview about others making fun of them while they are singing. There was a group of girls in the back who continually giggled while other parts were being isolated during the rehearsal. It was very intimidating for those trying their best to participate. Once she gave the e-Portfolio assignment, it was extremely chaotic. Many complained that they were apprehensive about recording themselves and some even asked if it was required to complete it. The reflection portion of the assignment was met with confusion as these students

	obviously had no idea what to feel or what they are personally competent at within this class. Self-reflection proved to be a difficult concept as these students seem to seek the approval of others. With quite a bit of push back the director finally makes a deal with them. She tells them that if they finish the assignment in class, she will give them candy and allow them to go outside. Apparently, this extrinsic award is used quite frequently because many of them took advantage of that opportunity.
	The seventh-grade auditioned ensemble was the complete opposite of the previous class, but they meet for a shorter period of time every day. They were focused and engaged during the entire time I was there. Apparently, student choice is encouraged in this class because one of the songs they are performing is "My Shot" from the musical *Hamilton*. The students were not only able to choose the song for their spring concert but they also choreographed it. They had lots of fun performing it for me. The same e-Portfolio assignment was given to this class. Although the disruption level was drastically different, many students were still quite apprehensive about recording themselves. Some asked if they could record in a group, while a few others stated they do not like to hear themselves sing. Assuring them that there is no right or wrong answer for this, the director goes over the recording directions in FlipGrid as this will be the first time the seventh graders record themselves. Although met with lots of questions in the beginning, these students quickly got to work and completed their assignments with the class time that was left.
JOURNAL ENTRY 4 April 13, 2022	I reported for my second round of observations today. All of the eighth-grade students were in attendance this time for the first observation which also meant that the dynamics were different. I also see the social dynamics of my own choirs change depending on who is in attendance. Some of the students who had been quite disruptive and apathetic in the previous observation were a bit more attentive, especially among the boys. I believe that may have been due to Evan as he seems like a leader within the group. The assignment in their e-Portfolio today happens to be my last physical artifact in their e-Portfolio, their letter to their younger self. Once again, the director made a deal with them that if they finished and submitted the artifact, they could take some of the balls in the back of her room outside. The seventh-grade ensemble was fun to watch. They are so enthusiastic about choir. It was club picture day, so some of the class was a bit chaotic due to announcements over the intercom the entire period. However, once the rehearsal began, most were quite focused and enjoyed singing through some of their upcoming concert repertoire. The director gave them the same e-Portfolio

	assignment as the eighth-grade ensemble. Some were a bit talkative in the beginning, but upon redirection from the director, they continued to work. Some completed it during class time while some others decided to finish it at home.
JOURNAL ENTRY 5 April 26, 2022	Today I finished collecting all of my data. The final e-Portfolios and student grades have been shared with me and I finished my last focus group discussion. I only had a few questions for the focus groups, in which I am hoping the data will reveal saturation at this point. My guess is that has been done. The first eighth-grade focus group discussed their negative feelings toward the e-Portfolio. Many of them just want to come to choir and sing. They do not feel as if they need to be on their Chromebook during choir class. A few of them even referenced the fact that they feel they are pointless because they are not graded for content, only completion. Obviously, they do not value the self-reflection that the e-Portfolio provides. Some of these students pointed out that in chorus you should basically get an A for effort if you participate. The next seventh-grade focus group, an academically accelerated group of young ladies, discussed the fact that they do not mind the e-Portfolio assignments. However, they did point out that sometimes the directions for the assignments are unclear which causes them to procrastinate in turning them in on time. Many of them in this group discussed the value of the e-Portfolio as it shows growth over a period of time and keeps track of how one is doing in the class. They also discussed the autonomy of the assignments. They enjoy personalizing it and having a way to communicate with their director without doing it in front of the entire class. The second seventh-grade focus group did not have the same perceptions of the e-Portfolio assignments. Many of them in this group suggested that reflecting on things in class would be better than doing it on their computer. Again, they reiterated that the directions are unclear at times, which confuses them. One of them even stated that the e-Portfolio doesn't teach anything and the reflections are pointless. This group also discussed wanting to come to chorus to participate. Therefore, they feel that grades should be based on each individual's level of participation.

Appendix K: Audit Trail

September 2, 2021:   Site permission

November 16, 2021:   IRB approval

December 17, 2021:   Recruitment visit and letters or recruitment sent home

January 3, 2022:   Screening surveys taken by potential participants

January 18, 2022:   Participant selection e-mails sent along with consent and assent forms

February 14, 2022:   Individual interviews at the site (Veronica, Sophia, Hannah, Madison)

February 16, 2022:   Individual interviews at the site (Charlotte, Luna, Avery, Zoe, Scarlett, Chloe, Harper, Brandon)

February 18, 2022:   Individual interviews via Google Meet (Riley, Amelia, Evan)

March 11, 2022:   Transcriptions from audio to text data completed for all individual interviews

March 15, 2022:   Formal observation at the site (eighth-grade chorus; seventh-grade honors chorus)

April 13, 2022:   Informal observation at the site (eighth-grade chorus; seventh-grade honors chorus)

April 22, 2022:   Focus group discussion via Google Meet with Group 1 (Evan, Charlotte, Zoe, Brandon)

April 25, 2022:   Focus group discussion via Google Meet with Group 2 (Riley, Harper, Amelia, Avery)

April 26, 2022:   Focus group discussion via Google Meet with Group 3 (Chloe, Tina, Luna)

April 26, 2022:   e-Portfolios and chorus grades submitted as physical artifacts

April 28, 2022:   Transcriptions from audio to text data completed for all focus group discussions

May 2, 2022:   Meeting at the site for member transcript checks

May 4, 2022:   1st cycle coding finished and analyzed including memoing of all collected data

May 6, 2022:   2nd cycle coding finished and analyzed including coding and pattern-matching

May 9, 2022:   Themes developed from coding and pattern-matching; completion of data analysis

May 12, 2022:   Re-analyzation of codes, pattern-matching, and themes after initial review by dissertation chair; triangulation of all data

May 26, 2022:   Conclusion and implications written

May 27, 2022:   External peer review with suggested edits