

Liberty University

School of Music

**INCORPORATING AARON COPLAND'S PHILOSOPHY OF INCLUSION IN
MIDWEST RURAL BAND PROGRAMS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF ATTRACTING
AND RETAINING STUDENTS OF LOW SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS**

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

by

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July 27, 2024

Abstract

The field of music education has established the value of instrumental band music instruction as congruent with students' intellectual, kinesthetic, psychological, and academic success.

However, one should scrutinize the validity of the above data, as it addresses issues concerning access to instrumental music education that persist within underserved populations, particularly those characterized by low socioeconomic status (SES) in rural Midwest America. Researchers have synthesized very little data specifically to address the needs of Midwest rural schools and underserved student populations. This qualitative study explores the effects of applying Aaron Copland's philosophy of inclusion, specifically regarding students of low SES, in addressing equity in rural Midwest schools where the free and reduced lunch percentage is above 45%.

Aaron Copland is arguably one of the first and only composers to reach both cultivated and vernacular audiences with equal depth and quality. This study employs archival research in a qualitative method that focuses on identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns and themes within a dataset to elucidate tangible recommendations for addressing augmentation in enrollment, retention, and increased proficiency in the performance of underserved rural Midwest band programs. The findings reveal that using vernacular music and financially accessible instruments, such as plastic ones, potentially increases student interest and engagement, while performances for vernacular, underserved audiences likely enhance student commitment to their music education and improve their performance proficiency.

Keywords: Low-Socioeconomic Status, Cultivated-Vernacular, Rural Midwest Band Programs, Self-Imposed Simplified Style.

Dedication/Acknowledgments

I express my sincere gratitude to every student with whom I have had the privilege of embarking on the journey of music education. Additionally, I express sincere appreciation to Dr. Hanna Byrd, the esteemed faculty and staff of the Liberty University Department of Music, and Dr. Jessica Frerich, my dedicated Reader. Additionally, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to my esteemed colleagues, whose unwavering support, receptivity to innovative ideas, and boundless inspiration have greatly enriched my academic pursuits. My profound gratitude also extends to my courageous wife, Dr. Alicia Althaus Reif, whose steadfast support and numerous sacrifices have been instrumental in fostering this endeavor, and my three children, Elise, Noelle, and Sean. Finally, I offer my utmost gratitude to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for His dauntless Grace, unwavering strength, and abundant blessings throughout this journey.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Background

When selecting a starting point in history to examine trends in music education, most scholars would start with Classical Antiquity.¹ In ancient Greece, music had two purposes: it facilitated assimilation and allowed the exercise of autonomy in the expression of free will. "In this context, free-born boys of ancient Greece were expected to learn sports and music with a focus on fostering patriotism and obedience."² The discourses surrounding music, similar to other transcendent disciplines, frequently revolved around the dichotomy of individual versus collective philosophical recompenses. In this period, people did not view music as self-expression. Instead, they enjoyed it as a form of storytelling, a way to pass on approved traditions and learn the "right" history.³ Socrates imparted autonomy and self-expression lessons to adolescent males, ultimately facing martyrdom. As aforementioned, the Greeks understood that music had power.

Brief History of Music Education Benefits

Now, considering the 21st-century landscape through advances in neurological, psychological, and technological research, the benefits of music education have entered a new era of revelation. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machines have enabled researchers to watch the human brain while playing a musical instrument. A leading figure in neuroscience, Dr. Nina Kraus exhibits compelling evidence for the cognitive benefits of musical exercise,

¹ Michael L. Mark, *Music Education: Source Readings from Ancient Greece to Today*, ed. Michael L. Mark (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 1-3.

² Harold F. Abeles and Lori A. Custodero, eds., *Critical Issues in Music Education: Contemporary Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2022), 43.

³ Ibid.

supporting the argument for making band more inclusive.⁴ For example, Dr. Kraus's study used "electroencephalography (EEG) to compare brain activity in non-musicians versus musicians" in loud atmospheres with the notion of evaluating speech recognition.⁵ Given the intricate cognitive processes involved in learning and performing music, including auditory perception, motor coordination, and pattern recognition, it is reasonable to expect that consistent engagement with music education would lead to enhancements in cognitive development.

Furthermore, neurological research has demonstrated the brain's neuroplasticity, indicating that the structured learning environment provided by music education can stimulate cerebral growth and connectivity, thereby fostering cognitive improvements over time. Musicians' brains "revealed superior auditory processing, healthier neural connections, and quicker auditory discernment when compared to non-musician brains."⁶ Moreover, the research illuminated the ability to process information more efficiently. Musicologists, music educators, music advocates, and music scholars have presented enumerable benefits to beginning the study of musical instruments in primary school and continuing through secondary school band. Additionally, participating in band from primary school through high school has associated individuals with continued academic success, financial stability, holistic, healthy living, and even healthy relationships.⁷ The research appears straightforward; however, this document challenges its validity and efficacy, emphasizing the importance of further research and discussion on the

⁴ NAMM Foundation and Grunwald Associates LLC, *Striking a Chord: The Public's Hopes and Beliefs for K-12 Music Education in the United States*: 2015.

⁵ Nina Kraus and Travis White-Schwoch, "Musicians' Brains Show Striking Benefits," *American Scientist* 108 (July-August 2020): 214.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Carolyn Phillips, "Twelve Benefits of Music Education," courtesy of the Former Executive Director of the Norwalk Youth Symphony, CT, <http://www.childrensmusicworkshop.com/advocacy/12benefits.html>.

issue. It argues that instrumental band education in rural, Midwest America does not represent a valid sample of the general population, particularly students of low socioeconomic status (SES) Midwest Bands.

Low SES Midwest Bands

This document posits that band participation from the beginning of primary school through high school correlates with continued academic success, financial stability, holistic healthy living, and healthy relationships.⁸ Despite the apparent clarity of the existing research, a closer examination reveals the need to challenge its validity and efficacy, given that instrumental band education in America must be representative of the general population. The research may appear clear; however, this study challenges the validity and efficacy of the discussed research because instrumental band education in America needs to represent a valid sample of the general population.⁹ When scrutinizing equity and inclusion within underserved rural band programs, the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) posits a multitude of thematic elements coming to the fore.¹⁰ Central to these elements are the lack of access to reliable instruments, the inability to identify with the band director, and a lack of autonomy regarding choosing a band instrument, curriculum, inclusion in programming, performance opportunities, and audiences.¹¹

⁸ Phillips, "Twelve Benefits of Music Education," <http://www.childrensmusicworkshop.com/advocacy/12benefits.html>.

⁹ K. Elpus and C. Abrill, "High School Music Ensembles Students in the United States: A Demographic Profile," *Journal of Research and Music Education* 59, no. 2 (2011): 128-145, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23019481>.

¹⁰ "A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher." A publication of the National Association for Music Education. 1806 Robert Fulton Drive, Reston, VA 20191. <https://nafme.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/NAF072-MusicInitiative-8.pdf>, 17-22.

¹¹ J. S. Prendergast, "Music Education and Educators in Missouri, Iowa, and Illinois," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 69, no. 2 (2021): 228, doi:10.1177/0022429420961501.

This study seeks to address these deficiencies by espousing Copland constructs of vernacular inclusion regarding literature, instruments and performance.

Elpus and Abrill's seminal study in 2011, titled "High School Music Ensembles Students in the United States: A Demographic Profile," provides significant insights into the inclusivity of high school music programs. Through a comprehensive examination of nationwide data, the research uncovers pronounced demographic disparities within participation rates, revealing notable underrepresentation among rural individuals from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.¹² Further, schools in lower SES communities often have fewer resources to support students. These resources include physical resources like instruments, music, classroom facilities, technology, and human resources such as music teachers and support personnel who teach courses or provide specialized instruction. The distribution of human resources needs to be more equitable. Studies supporting the theme of inequitable distribution of resources reported that lower-income schools had significantly fewer music course offerings and were less likely to offer music than their higher-income counterparts.¹³ Furthermore, the decision to enroll in band programs during primary or middle school presents a multifaceted dilemma, particularly for students facing financial instability and insecurity. In environments marked by non-academic challenges such as emotional, relational, financial, and logistical obstacles, joining a band ensemble may become daunting, if not insurmountable. Economic constraints further compound the issue in rural Midwest schools, as participation costs serve as deterrents for students,

¹² Elpus and Abrill, "High School Music Ensembles Students in the United States: A Demographic Profile," 128-145.

¹³ T. Beveridge, "Does Music Education Have a Poverty Problem?" *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 40, no. 2 (2022): 10–18, <https://doi.org/10.1177/87551233211036069>.

particularly those hailing from communities characterized by high poverty rates and limited access to transportation, exacerbating disparities in access to music education opportunities.¹⁴

In low-income school districts, students face heightened challenges such as elevated divorce rates and limited access to dependable transportation, factors that diminish the likelihood of enrolling in and sustaining participation in band programs.¹⁵ Additionally, these students contend with a persistent state of physiological stress, exacerbated by the transient nature of teaching staff in economically disadvantaged areas, where teacher turnover rates are disproportionately high, often resulting in migration to more affluent and homogeneous educational settings.¹⁶ Furthermore, schools with lower minority populations or fewer economically disadvantaged students tend to possess superior facilities, instructional resources, parental involvement, and access to external funding compared to schools with higher proportions of minority or disadvantaged students. These results align with previous national studies on arts education and participation in the United States conducted over a decade ago, reaffirming the persistence of disparities in educational resources and opportunities across demographic lines.¹⁷

The National Arts Education Status Report Summary, titled "It's a Matter of Equity in Education," reveals that a significant number of students in U.S. public schools, totaling

¹⁴ V. C. Bates, "Social Class and School Music," *Music Educators Journal* 98, no. 4 (2012): 33–37, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432112442944>.

¹⁵ Don Stinson, *High Needs, Monumental Successes: Teaching Music to Low-Income and Underserved Students* (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc., 2001), 45.

¹⁶ J. Hilton and M. McCleary, "Preconceived Notions about Poverty Held by Perseverance Pre-Service Teachers," *Journal of Teacher Education and Educators* 8, no. 2 (2019): 95–114, <http://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/jtee/issue/48420/566078>.

¹⁷ A. F. Poor, "Middle School Music Education: An Observation Study of 30 Middle School Music Programs, 1997-1998," *Dissertation Abstracts International* 60, no. 6 (1999): 95.

3,609,698, approximately 8 percent, lack access to music education.¹⁸ Moreover, the report highlights that while 92% of students have access to music education, an inequitable distribution persists, particularly evident in public schools located in very rural communities and those with the highest proportions of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals.¹⁹ In Midwest America, the disparity between the haves and have-nots increases substantially. Research reveals a concerning lack of access to music education among students in 17 states, with over 1,472,000 students across 5,189 public schools deprived of music instruction.²⁰ Notably, these students are predominantly found in schools characterized by specific attributes, including a high proportion of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals, situated in very rural communities.²¹ The states encompassed in this analysis, namely Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin, underscore the urgency of addressing disparities in quality instrumental music education access to ensure equitable opportunities for all students, regardless of their SES or geographical location. Moreover, these findings align with broader national patterns, albeit with pronounced disparities, as evidenced by the significant wealth discrepancies over the past three decades.²²

The Influence of Aaron Copland

Instrumental band education in the United States encompasses the works of renowned composers such as Sousa, Hindemith, and Copland. Aaron Copland emerges as a seminal figure

¹⁸ R. B. Morrison, P. McCormick, J. L. Shepherd, and P. Cirillo, *National Arts Education Status Report 2019* (Arts Education Data Project, Quadrant Research, State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education, 2022).

¹⁹ Morrison, et al, *National Arts Education Status Report, 2022*.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² American Psychological Association, *Presidential Task Force on Preventing Discrimination and Promoting Diversity*, (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2012), <http://www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/promoting-diversity.aspx>.

in music history's chronicles, distinguished by his unique capacity to resonate profoundly with refined musical connoisseurs and the broader populace. Corresponding with prevailing trends characteristic of early 20th-century American composers, Copland initially embarked upon his artistic journey by immersing himself in studying European compositional paradigms.²³ This paper scrutinizes the multifaceted dimensions surrounding Copland's stylistic metamorphosis, probing into the nuanced interplay of factors that precipitated this pivotal juncture in his artistic trajectory. Of particular interest are the underlying motivations that propelled Copland to recalibrate his compositional philosophy, which had profound ramifications for American music. Noteworthy is Copland's deliberate choice of rural Minnesota, emblematic of the nation's heartland, or Midwest, as the vessel wherein this creative conundrum found resolution, underscoring the dialectical tension between urban cosmopolitanism and rustic, underprivileged Americana that permeated his works.

Copland's introspective contemplation during a midlife juncture, pondering the audience for his music and the eligibility of vernacular themes and instruments, encapsulates a perennial struggle that persists within the corridors of academic discourse. Furthermore, he recognized the profound advantages afforded by participation in band activities from primary through secondary schooling. Moreover, if instrumental band education aims to include all students, he posited that high school band programs should mirror the demographic composition of the broader populace.²⁴

At twenty-one, Copland seized an opportunity to attend the Summer School of Music for American Students at Fontainebleau in Paris, where he studied under Nadia Boulanger, a

²³ Mary H. DuPree, "The Failure of American Music: The Critical View from the 1920s," *The Journal of Musicology* 2, no. 3 (Summer 1983): 305, accessed January 30, 2024,

²⁴ "A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher." NAFME, 17.

renowned composition teacher of the early 20th century. Boulanger's belief in the potential of American music resonated deeply with Copland and she facilitated his introduction to Koussevitzky, conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.²⁵ This connection led to a close friendship and professional collaboration, highlighted by Koussevitzky commissioning and performing several of Copland's works, including the influential Third Symphony, 1936, a work championed as the embodiment of vernacular quotation which they collaborated on extensively.²⁶

Statement of the Problem

Despite the extensive body of research regarding the advantages of instrumental band programs, there remains a need to scrutinize the efficacy and validity of such research, particularly regarding its applicability to underserved, low-SES students within high school bands. More data is needed to address both the demographic of low SES in rural populations in Midwest America and strategies to attract, retain, and achieve excellence therein. Scholarly literature has yet to explore the influence of Copland-vernacular philosophies on the accessibility, retention, and enhancement of proficiency and excellence in performance within rural Midwest band programs, specifically concerning students from low SES backgrounds. The potential impact of this research on the instrumental music education community, policymakers, and stakeholders is significant, making it a compelling area for further exploration.

²⁵ Aaron Copland, *Aaron Copland: A Reader-Selected Writings 1923-1972*, ed. Richard Kostelantetz (New York: Routledge, 2004), 348.

²⁶ Elizabeth Crist, "Aaron Copland's Third Symphony; From Sketch to Score," *The Journal of Musicology* 18, no. 3 (Summer 2001): 389, accessed July 26, 2007, <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=02779269%28200122%2918%3A3%3C377%3AACTSF%3E2.0.CO%3B2-U>.

The philosophy of a cultivated versus vernacular approach to music curriculum is as old as the field of music itself.²⁷ However, strategies and research involving vernacular-inclusive approaches to music, instruments, and the performance audience have yet to occur. Aaron Copland was the first American composer to engage both the cultivated and vernacular audience, creating a bridge with his *Self-Imposed Simplified Style* of composition, programmatic geography, and focusing on who the concert audience is.²⁸ The body of research in instrumental music education has not examined the implementation of Copland's philosophy of inclusion through vernacular approaches regarding access, retention, and substantial improvement in performance excellence. Access, retention, and measurable development through Copland vernacular inclusion philosophy leads to methodology, research aim, and rationale.

Statement of the Purpose

This study will seek to understand the influence of Copland's philosophy of vernacular inclusion on low SES, rural Midwest band programs. Empirical evidence reveals a correlation wherein students' progression through grades within middle and high school band programs coincides with a decline among underserved students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.²⁹ This study aims to address possible strategies, outcomes, and discoveries of employing the vernacular strategy of Copland's philosophy of inclusion to recruit, retain, and elevate the performance of all band students in rural Midwest schools. This study investigates the connections between Aaron Copland's incorporation of vernacular music, the diversity of musical

²⁷ Mark, *A Concise History of American Music Education*, 1-3.

²⁸ Berger, "Aspects of Aaron Copland's Music," 2-5.

²⁹ Kari Elpus and Carlos R. Abril, "Who enrolls in high school music? A national profile of U.S. students, 2009–2013," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 67, no. 3 (2019): 323–338, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429419862837>.

instruments utilized, and the engagement of underserved audiences to enhance enrollment and retention in rural Midwest band programs.

Significance of the Study

The field of music education recognizes the manifold benefits of learning a musical instrument, spanning intellectual, sociological, and psychological domains.³⁰ Despite this recognition, a comprehensive philosophy of music education, grounded in universally acknowledged principles and designed to inclusively serve all students, particularly those traditionally underserved, remains notably absent. This study underscores the need for a results-oriented approach that prioritizes holistic development and equitable access to music education by espousing Copland's vernacular inclusion philosophies. By addressing this deficiency, music educators can better navigate the complexities of diverse student needs and foster an environment conducive to every learner's holistic growth and well-being.

This thesis seeks to utilize a philosophical framework to address the problem regarding the juxtaposition of incredible nascent empirical findings regarding the benefits of music education³¹ with the fact that the students involved in musical ensembles are not a valid representative sample of the human population.³² Further, researchers rarely address the sample of participants. At the same time, brain research reveals the power of music as an aesthetic

³⁰ Daniel J. Levitin, "Neural Correlates of Musical Behaviors: A Brief Overview," *Music Therapy Perspectives* 31, no. 1 (2013): 15-24, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/neural-correlates-musical-behaviors-brief/docview/1497044704/se-2>.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

³² Abeles and Custodero, eds., *Critical Issues in Music Education: Contemporary Theory and Practice*, 23-40.

entity.³³ Additionally, sociological research illuminates countless benefits of instrumental music education beyond higher standardized test scores, minimal incidence of lifetime substance misuse, and higher earning potential.³⁴ However, empirical research also irradiates the correlation between retention in instrumental ensembles and the decline in students of low socioeconomic status and other underserved demographical categories. Additionally, research on the correlations between the physiological, sociological, and psychological benefits of music education becomes problematic when it focuses on students who are higher on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs compared to their peers who are not involved in instrumental band music education.³⁵

Exploring the labyrinth of philosophical inquiry requires extending beyond the confines of academia. This exploration confronts fundamental questions of human existence and collective prosperity. Music education illuminates the transformative power of harmonious collaboration, as it brings together a symphony of voices in pursuit of knowledge, empathy, and shared humanity.³⁶ Thus, this thesis seeks to explicate the formulation of such a philosophy, that embraces inclusivity, equity, and the transformative potential of music education for all students.

³³ Kraus and White-Schwoch, "Musicians' Brains Show Striking Benefits," 209-214.

³⁴ Phillips, "Twelve Benefits of Music Education," <http://www.childrensmusicworkshop.com/advocacy/12benefits.html>.

³⁵ Bates, "Critical Social Class Theory for Music Education," 37.

³⁶ Maureen E. Ryan, "Listening Deeply to and Engaging Multiple Perspectives," in *Contemplative Approaches to Sustainability in Higher Education*, ed. by Oren Ergas (Routledge, 2016), 99.

Research Question and Sub Questions

Research Question 1:

What is the impact of Aaron Copland's philosophy of inclusion on low SES Midwest band students?

Research Question 2:

How might the philosophy of *Self-Imposed Simplified Style* music increase music appreciation in low SES Midwest band programs?

Core Concepts

In the complex educational landscape of the 21st century, questions surrounding access to music education, the purpose of performance, and the intended audience have evolved into significant sociological and anthropological inquiries. This study delves into a philosophical debate termed the 'cultivated and vernacular' approach, particularly examining instrumental music education within band ensembles in educational settings. To understand the intricacies of this investigation, one must establish situational, historical, and institutional contexts. This includes examining contemporary trends in 21st-century America, historical developments in Western musical formation, rural Midwest American band programs, and Aaron Copland's philosophy of inclusion. Copland's role as an advocate for engaging both cultivated and vernacular populations in music underscores the importance of this discourse. Moreover, the study seeks to contextualize the accessibility, retention, and excellence in instrumental band music education within Copland's inclusive framework, focusing on the correlation between musical education and ethical principles. The research aims to assess the effectiveness of band programs in serving socioeconomically disadvantaged and marginalized populations, specifically

focusing on rural Midwestern American schools through various employments of Copland philosophical frameworks of inclusion.

According to Morrison, "a disproportionate number of students without access to music and arts education are concentrated in public schools in major urban or very rural communities; in public schools that have the highest percentage of students eligible for free/reduced-price meals."³⁷ Aaron Copland became the first American to successfully grapple with the question of who instrumental music is through the invention and employment of a new style of music that cultivated the facilitation of convergence in diverse communities.

Aaron Copland's groundbreaking music, centered on individuals deemed 'vernacular' by society, including the 'common man' and various cultural frontiers, resonated with a broader audience than any composer before him. This study investigates how Copland's transformative summer in financially precarious rural Minnesota in 1934 catalyzed the development of his renowned "self-imposed simplified style" of composition.³⁸ Additionally, it explores the application of Copland's inclusive philosophies in instrumental band music education, aiming to enhance interest, access, retention, and excellence, particularly among students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, through qualitative inquiry, Copland's artistic evolution in Minnesota reflects a significant ideological shift towards societal unity and awareness of the common man's struggles amid industrialization, marking a salient contribution to the cultural landscape.³⁹

³⁷ Morrison et al, *National Arts Education Status Report 2019*.

³⁸ Howard Pollack, *Aaron Copland; The Life and Work of an Uncommon Man*, (New York: Henry Holt, 1999), 277.

³⁹ Fredrick Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1981), 39-44.

Music education to raise the status of citizens is a familiar practice. Swiss educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi believed music education could "raise one's station in life" regarding poor Swiss peasants.⁴⁰ Analogous to 21st-century educational settings, Pestalozzi frequently found himself in precarious situations of threatening disposition. This was predominantly due to his conviction of who music education was for the vernacular population. For years, people have considered Pestalozzi's work with refugee children in Stans a classic representation of how an educational community can provide kids with "opportunities to experience and discuss moral values, highlighting the very nature and current importance of his general views on moral education."⁴¹

Like Pestalozzi, contemporary band directors in the 21st century must actively identify and engage with underserved, low-SES student populations. For the sake of consideration, even if America unified under the premise that instrumental band education is for all students and that students should be able to choose their instrument, increasing access, retention, excellence, and who the performance is for in the band would still need to be addressed. Band instruments are expensive. Band music fails to resonate with underserved populations.⁴² The band's performance, specifically who a concert is for, needs to be examined through the lens of underserved students. Performances must satisfy underserved students' motivation while also addressing the needs of both the ensemble and the curriculum.

⁴⁰ Mark, *A Concise History of American Music Education*. 31.

⁴¹ Heafford, *Pestalozzi: His Thought and its Relevance Today*, 42.

⁴² Prudence L. Carter, "'Black' Cultural Capital, Status Positioning, and Schooling Conflicts for Low-Income African American Youth," *Social Problems* 50, no. 1 (2003): 136-155.

Superlative learning occurs when students are intrinsically motivated when *they want* to do 'it.'⁴³ A 'Copland philosophical bridge' to connect the cultivated and the vernacular in instrumental band music education may provide the solution to connect motivation and learning in rural Midwest band programs. While historians often focus on the period in which Copland attained success, only some musicologists have concentrated on the location and the context of interactions with a specific rural area, with the low SES of the artist's revelation. Copland was the first notable composer to embrace a philosophy of 'Music for All.'

Definition of Terms

Low-Socioeconomic Status (SES): Low SES refers to a measure of an individual's or a group's social and economic standing within a society, typically characterized by limited access to healthcare, educational opportunities, and financial resources. People with low SES often face social exclusion, economic hardship, and reduced occasions for upward mobility.⁴⁴

Cultivated versus Vernacular: Cultivated-Vernacular refers to the dichotomy in music education between formal, traditional instruction (cultivated) and informal, community-based learning (vernacular). Cultivated music education typically involves structured lessons, formal training, and observance of Western classical music traditions, while vernacular music education often involves learning through participation in community ensembles, informal instruction, and engagement with popular, cultural, or folk music styles.⁴⁵

⁴³ Thomas W. Malone, "Toward a Theory of Intrinsically Motivating Instruction," *Cognitive Science* 5, no. 4 (1981): 69.

⁴⁴ Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne, and Greg J. Duncan, "The Effects of Poverty on Children," *The Future of Children* 7, no. 2 (1997): 55-71.

⁴⁵ Randall Everett Allsup, "Cultivated and Vernacular Musical Knowledge in Music Education," *Music Education Research* 10, no. 4 (2008): 493-505, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613800802490177>.

Rural-Midwest Band Programs: The term "Rural-Midwest" refers to geographic regions in the central part of the United States categorized by smaller towns or communities, agricultural landscapes, and low population density. In the context of instrumental music education of underserved students, it denotes explicitly areas within the Midwest region that lack access to facilities, infrastructure, opportunities, and resources, specifically regarding instrumental, band, and music education.⁴⁶

Self-Imposed Simplified Style: Copland's Self-Imposed Simplified Style refers to a significant shift in Aaron Copland's compositional approach, marked by a deliberate move away from Western European serialism and towards a more accessible and distinctly American musical idiom. During the 1930s and 1940s, this style emerged, characterized by harmonic simplicity, folk-like elements, and clear melodies. Copland often drew inspiration from cowboy songs and American folk tunes. Copland aimed to create music that resonated with a broader audience while maintaining artistic authenticity.⁴⁷

Research Plan

This study utilized a qualitative research methodology known as Archival Research to investigate the employment of Copland vernacular philosophy through a sociological construct to investigate its theoretical framework and effects on rural Midwest band students and programs. Archival research in a qualitative method focuses on identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns

⁴⁶ Patricia Shehan Campbell, "Rural School Music Education: A Commentary on the State of the Art," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 55, no. 1 (2007): 6-20, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002242940705500101>.

⁴⁷ Andrew Granade, "Aaron Copland's 'Self-Imposed Simplified Style': The Americanism of American Music," *American Music* 30, no. 1 (2012): 60-92, <https://doi.org/10.5406/americanmusic.30.1.0060>.

and themes within a dataset.⁴⁸ Archival research design involves analyzing and interpreting qualitative data derived from primary sources found in archives. These sources, such as documents, letters, photographs, and other artifacts, are often rich in descriptive detail and context, making them conducive to qualitative analysis. The richness and authenticity of these data sources contribute to the depth of the research and its potential to uncover historical, social, or cultural phenomena.

The research aimed to meticulously elucidate data from instructional methods deemed vernacular inclusion, vernacular instrumentals used, and concerts performed for populations characterized as non-traditional and underserved. Further, the research thoroughly examined data from books, scholarly journals, magazines, periodicals, newspaper articles, websites, blogs, concert programs, and social media platforms for the aforementioned properties and themes. Overall, archival research design offers a valuable methodological approach for uncovering historical, social, or cultural phenomena, providing rich and nuanced perspectives that contribute to advancing knowledge in various academic fields.

Summary

This thesis chapter investigates the complex landscape of music education, focusing on the persistent challenges of access and equity encountered by underserved populations and deficient SES students in rural Midwest America. Inclusive practices must address disparities in access, highlighting the necessity for recognizing the myriad benefits of instrumental band music education across intellectual, kinesthetic, psychological, and academic realms. The chapter outlines the study's methodology, which employs qualitative, archival research to examine the

⁴⁸ John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 6th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2023), 196.

application of Aaron Copland's philosophy of inclusion in addressing equity issues within rural Midwest schools with high proportions of students eligible for free and reduced lunch programs. Copland's role as a transformative figure bridging cultivated and vernacular audiences is explored, mainly through his development of a "Self-Imposed Simplified Style" and its potential implications for fostering increased participation, retention, and performance proficiency among underserved students. The chapter integrates insights from neuroscience and cognitive psychology to advocate for the importance of inclusive music education, contextualizing it within the historical evolution of music education from its ancient Greek origins to its contemporary challenges and opportunities. Ultimately, through a multidisciplinary approach encompassing historical, philosophical, artistic, and scientific perspectives, the chapter aims to understand the complexities inherent in music education and offers valuable insights into strategies for promoting inclusivity and equity within rural Midwest band programs.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter undertakes a comprehensive literature review to provide context and validation for the study's focus. The investigation of Aaron Copland's Self-Imposed Simplified Style development elucidates connections between creativity, historical context, and inclusion within vernacular curricula, instrument accessibility, and performance settings. Further, this chapter examines the philosophical underpinnings of vernacular music, musical instruments, and engagement with underserved audiences. Moreover, it focuses on their potential efficacy in addressing challenges related to participation, retention, and proficiency among socioeconomically disadvantaged rural Midwest students in band programs. The review adopts a meticulous three-pronged approach, analyzing student-centered music education philosophies in Western history, Copland's experiences shaping his philosophy of inclusion, and educational trends affecting inclusive band education practices. A comprehensive literature search, prioritizing peer-reviewed journal articles and books, was conducted to gather insights. The examination further investigates the alignment of prominent figures in music education with Copland's philosophy.

The chapter further explores the benefits of integrating Copland's vernacular music philosophy to enhance enrollment and retention in primary and middle school band programs, particularly in diverse socioeconomic environments. It also discusses considerations regarding vernacular instruments in band education and pedagogical strategies for incorporating Copland's philosophy into culturally diverse secondary school band programs. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of the literature review.

A Snapshot of Music History as Baseline for Study

Examining the last 30 years of instrumental band education in the rural Midwest illuminates systemic discrimination.¹ Many band programs through the mid-1990s only allowed students to begin on one of three instruments: flute, clarinet, and cornet. Students who initially had to purchase one of three specified instruments without a choice were subsequently instructed after a year of study to buy a different instrument.² This reassignment by band directors aimed to meet the ensemble's needs for saxophones, trombones, or percussion from the original three instruments.³ In the first decade of the 21st century, school administrators instructed their music faculty to allow only approximately 30% of the student population to begin band in primary school because they believed that band was only for students already succeeding in math, English, science, and social studies.⁴ Further, it was customary for administrators to terminate band students' enrollment should they fall behind in any of the aforementioned 'core classes.'⁵ Therefore, all American educational institutions do not embrace the philosophy that band is for every student as an emerging viewpoint.

This reality continues despite emerging research that illuminates instrumental music education benefitting students struggling in all subjects, who, after experiencing a six-month instrumental keyboard music curriculum, outperform students in other subjects who were once

¹ J. S. Prendergast, "Music Education and Educators in Missouri, Iowa, and Illinois," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 69, no. 2 (2021): 228, doi:10.1177/0022429420961501.

² Ibid.

³ Christine N. Lovell, *Beginning Band: First Steps Instructing Students With Wind Instruments.* (2022).

⁴ George David Miller, "Peace, Value, and Wisdom: The Educational Philosophy of Daisaku Ikeda," in *Peace, Value, and Wisdom*, ed. George David Miller, Value Inquiry Book Series, vol. 122, *Daisaku Ikeda Studies*, vol. 122 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 123–125, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004496071_035.

⁵ Daniel J. Albert, "Strategies for the Recruitment and Retention of Band Students in Low Socioeconomic School Districts," *Contributions to Music Education* 33, no. 2 (2006): 53-72, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24127208>.

leading the class scholastically.⁶ Therefore, the evidence supporting the positive effects of instrumental music education on cognitive development is compelling and substantiates the claim made: instrumental music education benefits underperforming students.⁷ The challenge of underrepresentation among underserved students, particularly those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, within rural Midwestern band programs underscores the complexity of finding practical solutions. Underrepresentation increases in complexity with the need for a successful pedagogical framework tailored to address it. As a result, a noticeable rise in initial enrollment in primary school band programs sustained through secondary education remains elusive. Furthermore, the educational system still needs to achieve increased student engagement and proficiency in instrumental music education and individual and ensemble performance.

Student First Music Education Philosophy

Throughout its earliest colonial origins to contemporary public school systems, America has exhibited oscillation regarding the inquiry into the eligibility criteria for music education. Consider the juxtaposition of colonial singing schools and school segregation in Southern America. As early as 1674 in the slavery-consumed southern colony of North Carolina, white music directors established African American singing schools.⁸ In 1854, the reverend Hanks conducted a singing school for ‘Blacks’ in Wilmington, NC, where Black Americans, who graduated from singing schools, were ‘allowed’ to join a church with a mixed congregation.⁹ One

⁶ G. Schlaug et al., "Classroom Keyboard Instruction Improves Kindergarten Children's Spatial-Temporal Performance: A Field Experiment," *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (2005): 215-228.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 228.

⁸ G. Schlaug et al., "Classroom Keyboard Instruction Improves Kindergarten Children's Spatial-Temporal Performance: A Field Experiment," 25.

⁹ Michael L. Mark, *A Concise History of American Music Education* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2008), 26.

hundred years later, schools in the same geography were segregated, and instrumental music education was not accessible for black Americans.¹⁰ Once more, America grappled with the acceptance of music education as a vehicle for fostering the development of all individuals.

American Instrumental Music Philosophy

As instrumental musical ensembles formed in America, performances followed, giving rise to competitions and festivals. During the late 19th century, school administrators in New England undertook the question of the composition of a concert audience and even the purpose of a performance.¹¹ Administrators questioned whether music was for entertainment or an educational experience.¹² The questions of who should be able to study music, what the purpose of performance is, and who the audience should be became sociological and anthropological subjects of research that continue to build in complexity today. Furthermore, the research illuminated the ability to process information with more efficiency. Musicologists, music educators, music advocates, and music scholars have presented enumerable benefits to beginning the study of musical instruments in primary school and continuing through secondary school band.¹³

Pestalozzian Educational Philosophy

The first Pestalozzian Philosophy of Education, which emphasizes Experiential Learning, has significantly influenced modern educational practices. Pestalozzi espoused the holistic belief

¹⁰ Timothy J. Groulx, "Influences of Segregation and Integration on the Bands at Historically Black High Schools in Duval County, Florida," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 40, no. 1 (2018): 60.

¹¹ Mark, *A Concise History of American Music Education*, 62.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Prendergast, "Music Education and Educators in Missouri, Iowa, and Illinois," 228

that education should be based on a child's natural development.¹⁴ He emphasized the importance of learning through sensory experiences and integrating intellectual and moral education. Pestalozzian philosophy, which has evolved conceptually over the last two centuries, is now recognized as holistic, and the second concept is learning by doing. Pestalozzi advocated for 'learning by doing.' He believed students should engage in hands-on, practical activities that connect theoretical knowledge with real-life experiences. This holistic approach influenced modern concepts of Experiential Learning, where the process is more important than the outcome. Praxial music education philosophy stems from Pestalozzi's 'Learning by Doing' approach. The concert would not be the measurement but, rather, each rehearsal. Moreover, every moment of instruction would hold more weight and value.

Pestalozzi also espoused a praxial philosophical framework. "Pestalozzi believed that children learn best through their senses and using objects rather than words or lectures."¹⁵ He was concerned "with the whole person" and specifically in three areas: the heart, the tactile, and the cognitive.¹⁶ Pestalozzi's approach was holistic and focused on the development of the whole child—cognitive, emotional, and moral aspects. He believed education should nurture a child's character, not just academic knowledge. "The love and care that Pestalozzi gave to his students not only fostered a sense of well-being for them as individuals but allowed them to work and support each other, developing a sense of mutuality when working together that was psychologically different from many other school practices at the time."¹⁷

¹⁴ R. Gravil, "'Knowledge not Purchased with the Loss of Power': Wordsworth, Pestalozzi and the 'Spots of Time'," *European Romantic Review* 8, no. 3 (1997): 231-261, doi:10.1080/10509585.1997.12029228.

¹⁵ Harold F. Abeles and Lori A. Custodero, eds., *Critical Issues in Music Education: Contemporary Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2022), 222.

¹⁶ Ibid.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, Pestalozzi shaped the philosophical educational landscape in Western education. Freidrich Froebel, a student of Pestalozzi, was credited for the creation of the kindergarten, which first appeared in Germany, then in America, parochially, in Wisconsin in 1856, in Boston in 1860, and Saint Louis as part of the public school system in 1873.¹⁸ Most notably, Froebel believed that the teacher received "knowledge from the child, and so the teacher's role was to devise ways to help the child voluntarily engage in meaningful activity"¹⁹ Froebel continued the controversial philosophy of Pestalozzi by seeking to realize the dignity and individuality of the student, the intrinsic miracle from the Creator.

Modern Philosophy of Music Education

In the context of music education, vernacular music refers to the repertoire, traditions, and practices that are rooted in the everyday cultural experiences and expressions of a particular community or social group.²⁰ It encompasses a wide range of musical styles and genres that are passed down orally or through informal transmission methods, often reflecting the cultural, social, and historical contexts of the community from which they originate. Vernacular music can include folk songs, traditional music, popular music, and other forms that arise organically within a community, often outside of formal institutional settings.²¹ In music education, the study and incorporation of vernacular music serves, to acknowledge and celebrate the diverse

¹⁷ Grivil, "'Knowledge not Purchased with the Loss of Power': Wordsworth, Pestalozzi and the 'Spots of Time'", 260.

¹⁸ Michael L. Mark, *A Concise History of American Music Education*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2008), 73.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Emily M. Mercado, "Popular, informal, and vernacular music classrooms: A review of the literature," *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 37, no. 2 (2019): 30-37.

²¹ Ibid., 35.

musical heritage of students, fostering cultural understanding, identity, and appreciation. In the context of American music education history, formalized, institutionalized musical traditions typically involve standardized notation, formal training, and adherence to established compositional and performance practices.²² Cultivated music often includes classical music genres such as orchestral music, opera, chamber music, and art music composed by trained composers within academic or professional settings. It is typically associated with Eurocentric musical traditions and reflects the values, aesthetics, and conventions of Western art music.²³

American Music Educational Constructs

In the early formation of America, a division emerged regarding perspectives on cultivated versus vernacular culture and debates over prioritizing individual interests versus communal welfare. Within this context, society frequently perceived music as a domain reserved for the elite. One of the most significant examples of prioritizing education over performance among school administrators transpired in America during the late 19th century. “By the 1880s school administrators had become concerned that music was more of an entertainment than an educational experience.”²⁴ It is fascinating to consider that school administrators were grappling with the purpose of music education through the philosophic framework of proficient concerts versus music education, defined as proficiency in music reading, sight singing, and theory. The administrative philosophy predominant in the late 19th century was Pestalozzian. In the 21st century, there appears to have shifted towards a narrower emphasis on visible assessments, notably showcased through events termed 'concerts' and posted on social media. There is a

²² Linda C. Ferguson, "Music in the Academy: Process, Product, and the Cultivation of Humanity," in *Exploring, Experiencing, and Envisioning Integration in US Arts Education* (2018): 175-190.

²³ *Ibid.*, 179.

²⁴ Mark, *A Concise History of American Music Education*, 62.

perceived need to reconsider the educational philosophy advocated by 19th-century school administrators, akin to that of Pestalozzi. Future research could explore the compatibility between these approaches rather than viewing them as mutually exclusive.

Late 20th and early 21st Century American Education Philosophy

During the past two decades, particularly, the disjunction between aesthetic and artistic justifications for music study and the interests of educational policymakers and the public intensified by increasing economic difficulties in American school systems and growing cutbacks of music personnel and programs. Politicians and the public alike were preoccupied with short-term financial gains rather than aesthetic, process-oriented, and ‘long-game’ approaches and concerns with how to balance their budgets in an increasingly perilous economic and social environment.²⁵ Education leaders in America seem to have little use for subjects that were not immediately and compellingly defensible on utilitarian grounds.²⁶ Among the first musicians to disappear from the public schools were the local music supervisors, whose job it had been, historically, to justify music in the public schools, and who were, perhaps, in the best position to offer compelling arguments to policymakers and the public.²⁷ Later, state music and arts supervisors and consultants began to disappear, leaving some music teachers in local school districts in disarray, without a unified vision, mission, and curriculum.²⁸ This underscores the imperative for educational leaders and

²⁵ Heidi Westerlund, “Reconsidering Aesthetic Experience in Praxial Music Education,” *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 11, no. 1 (2003): 45–62, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40327197>, 49.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Westerlund, “Reconsidering Aesthetic Experience in Praxial Music Education,” 50.

policymakers to reassess their priorities and recognize the intrinsic value of music and arts education beyond short-term utilitarian concerns.

The Intersection of Psychology and Music Education

Abraham Maslow is a pivotal figure in modern education due to his groundbreaking contributions to understanding human motivation and psychological needs. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, proposed in his seminal work "A Theory of Human Motivation" (1943), posits that individuals have a hierarchical structure of needs, ranging from basic physiological needs to higher-order needs such as self-actualization.²⁹ This theory has profoundly influenced educational psychology and pedagogy by emphasizing the importance of addressing students' diverse needs in the learning process. Maslow's legacy in education encompasses psychology, anthropology, sociology, and countless other fields, as well as his theory of a *hierarchy of human needs*. Maslow claims that basic physiological needs at the bottom of his hierarchy must be met for students to learn while placing self-actualization at the top as the desire to fulfill one's full potential.³⁰ Maslow's philosophy requires individuals to fulfill lower-level needs through various forms of motivation before attaining abilities to address higher ones. The relevance of this source is the connection to students at all levels. Before joining the band, students must comprehend the satisfaction of their lower-level needs, such as food, safety, and shelter.

According to Maslow, belonging and self-esteem are crucial for student engagement, a chief component in retention.³¹ Students can only perform with their most remarkable capacity for artistry and proficiency with self-actualization. The challenge is to, as a society, create a

²⁹ H. Abraham Maslow, *Theory of Human Motivation* (www.bnpublishing.com, 2020).

³⁰ A. H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review* 50, no. 4 (1943): 370-396, <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346>.

³¹ Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," 370-396.

system of inclusion that elevates all students to self-actualization through education.

Accomplishing this formidable and worthy challenge would make band truly for every student.

Maslow theorized that humans can only learn if their basic needs, such as food, shelter, and safety, are met. The impact of instrumental band music education on the wellness and relief of at-risk students in 'fight or flight' status is a topic of significant interest and inquiry. Instrumental band music education provides wellness and relief for at-risk students in 'fight or flight' status.³²

Band programs can provide the aforementioned needs for students due to their standard design. Band students engage in extensive rehearsal, one-on-one, small and large group contact with the director before, during, after school, and even on weekends.

Music educator, philosopher, and scholar Bennett Reimer espouses the aesthetic manifold of holistic empowerment provided by music education. Reimer contends that music education can serve as a powerful instrument for cultural and social empowerment, providing students with a sense of connection, identity, and self-worth within the fusion of their heritage.³³ In his article, *General Music for the Black Ghetto Child*, Reimer drew upon his own experiences as a music educator in a predominantly African American school to articulate the inimitable opportunities or lack thereof, and challenges faced by African American students and advises practical strategies for integrating African American culture and music into the general music classroom and curriculum. Strategies include integrating African American music genres like gospel, blues, jazz, and spirituals into music classrooms. Furthermore, he highlights the importance of

³² Dorita S. Berger, "Pilot study investigating the efficacy of tempo-specific rhythm interventions in music-based treatment addressing hyper-arousal, anxiety, system pacing, and redirection of fight-or-flight fear behaviors in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)," *Journal of Biomusical Engineering* 2 (2012).

³³ Bennett Reimer, "General Music for the Black Ghetto Child," *Music Educators Journal* 56, no. 5 (May 1970).

incorporating African American history and culture into music instruction.³⁴ This philosophy was a shift for Reimer, who once stated: "For general music education, the attributes of excellent schooling translate into, first, materials of excellent musical and pedagogical quality that bring children into contact with the best music of common Western heritage of their own social group, of the many groups in America."³⁵ In the 21st century, music educators are expected to adapt to their students' diverse needs, mirroring Reimer's transformative approach in 1970.

Renowned music educator and scholar David Elliott addresses the 'State of Music Education in the United States by correlating current music education trends with the love of money.³⁶ Instead of music lifting the masses, it instead lowers and degrades because the outcome is to make the "almighty dollar."³⁷ While Elliot does not specifically associate direct trends in music education in the United States with a capitalistic economy, overtones of the first book of Timothy chapter six verse ten resound stating, "[that the] love of money being the root of all evil (New International Version)." Elliott continues with a powerful statement claiming that "parents today are more concerned with the financial and academic success of their children than their children's happiness."³⁸ Moreover, Elliott argues that, due to the United States obsession with capitalism, focus on the arts as an entity rather than a gift that needs to be further researched, developed, and integrated as part of society has led to a further reversion as an art form specifically when compared to Ireland or Nordic countries.

³⁴ ArtistsHouseMusic. "David Elliott On The State of Music Education in the United States." YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhZxfKOJSzE&t=1s>.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

According to Elliott, the United States supported orchestras, composers, and further musical development, including musical ambassadors like Aaron Copland. Moreover, Elliott exclaims that being creative as a mathematician in grade ten is hard. However, one can be creative as a musician as early as grade five.³⁹ One could even argue earlier than five, as Elliott eloquently stated.⁴⁰ At the same time, music is a universal language; it is also nonverbal with regards to instrumental music.⁴¹ Furthermore, according to Elliott, the fetus he has observed personally reacts to measurable proof of being able to hear music as an adult in the universe as early as four months.⁴² Elliott's critique highlights the detrimental impact of prioritizing financial gain over the intrinsic value of music, drawing parallels to the cautionary biblical admonition against the love of money. He argues that this emphasis on material success undermines individuals' holistic well-being and artistic development, perpetuating a regression in the appreciation and support of music within American society compared to other regions.

Howard Gardner, renowned for his theory of multiple intelligences, offers a transformative lens within music education, advocating for a diversified approach to understanding students' cognitive capacities. Through Gardner's framework, educators discern the multifaceted nature of musical intelligence, acknowledging varied modes of musical expression and comprehension among learners. His contributions deepen pedagogical practices, fostering an inclusive environment that celebrates diverse musical abilities and nurtures holistic development in students.⁴³ According to Gardner, musical intelligence is the first to develop,

³⁹ ArtistsHouseMusic. "David Elliott On The State of Music Education in the United States."

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ H. Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (Basic Books, 1983).

perhaps most notably in the instrument-playing domain.⁴⁴ Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, particularly its application within music education, underscores the importance of recognizing and accommodating diverse cognitive capacities among students.

Copland

Aaron Copland was born in Brooklyn, New York, on November 14th, 1900. Copland's parents were Jewish immigrants from Lithuania, Russia. His heritage as a Jewish-Russian immigrant would begin a lifelong 'Russian philosophy' concern for the common man as an American ideology.⁴⁵ Copland's social conscience began to develop when he traveled to France to train in composition. His musical formation in the French style at Fontainebleau only fueled his desire to create American music.⁴⁶ Copland's teacher and mentor, Nadia Boulanger, encouraged him to form his own style instead of following the Germans.⁴⁷ This recommendation serves as the precursor that would catalyze the development of a philosophical framework aimed at cultivating a style of music that is both innovative and revolutionary, particularly in its emphasis on inclusivity through the incorporation of vernacular musical expressions to unite diverse social strata.

Upon returning from France in 1932, Copland accepted an invitation to visit Chavez in Mexico and observe both the Orquesta Sinfonica de Mexico and the Mexican culture.⁴⁸ Copland found Chavez's approach to conducting and composing intriguing, specifically Chavez's *Los*

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Aaron Copland, *What to Listen for in Music* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1939), 27-49.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Aaron Copland, "Composer from Brooklyn," *Magazine of Art*, 1939, 158-159.

⁴⁸ Aaron Copland, "Letter to Carlos Chavez," 1937, <http://memory.loc.gov/music/copland/corr/corr0222/0001v.jpg>.

Cuatio Soles (1924) and *Caballos de Vapor* (1926-1932).⁴⁹ The profound impact of Chavez's seminal work captivated Copland due to its foundation in indigenous musical traditions. Furthermore, Chavez's fusion of folk music and contemporary modernist techniques inspired Copland in his compositional endeavors.⁵⁰ Copland described Chavez's style as one that "exemplifies the complete overthrow of 19th-century Germanic ideals which tyrannized music for more than a hundred years...the first signs of a new world and its own new music."⁵¹ The reckless passion with which the *orquesta* also performed deeply moved Copland.

Copland's immersion in the musical culture of Mexico catalyzed his artistic development, culminating in a transformative period during his 'retreat of self-rediscovery' in Minnesota. This pivotal juncture propelled Aaron Copland to prominence as one of the foremost composers in American musical history. In 1932, the artistic struggle immediately confronted Copland. During the period of an economic depression, the flow of commissions for composers dwindled significantly. Moreover, as millions of Americans stood in bread lines, the search for outrageously avant-garde noises seemed frivolous, elitist, and self-indulgent.⁵² By 1932, the most visible avant-gardes, Henry Cowell, George Antheil, and Leo Ornstein, had fallen from fame in the 1920s to a distant memory. By the mid-1930s, all three turned to a more conventional, even indifferent style; in fact, many composers who had heavily invested in ultra-modernism gave up composing altogether.⁵³ Copland's immersion in Mexican musical culture

⁴⁹ Aaron Copland, *The New Music 1900-1960* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1968).

⁵⁰ Crist, *Music For The Common Man: Aaron Copland During The Depression And War*, 46.

⁵¹ Copland and Perlis, *Copland 1900-1942*, 102.

⁵² http://musicmavericks.publicradio.org/features/essay_gann03.html.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

spurred his artistic growth, leading to a transformative phase during his retreat in Minnesota, ultimately establishing him as a prominent figure in American music. However, in 1932, Copland faced immediate artistic challenges amid economic depression, as avant-garde trends declined and composers shifted towards conventional styles.

In response to this challenging circumstance, Copland embarked on a journey of renewal, pursuing further education and expanding his professional network to establish himself as a prominent American composer. He studied at the Eastman School of Music from 1933 to 1934, seeking to refine his skills and immerse himself in the vibrant milieu of musical innovation. Copland was truly living “hand to mouth,” this time from his family who sent him five dollars a week.⁵⁴ Copland lamented over his situation, despairing, “The day of the ‘pathfinder’ and ‘experimenter’ is over, we are in a period of ‘cashing in’ on their discoveries.”⁵⁵ From despair, Copland would struggle with anger toward cultivated society and elitist ideologies that viewed music as exclusively for the highbrow. “We [composers] should no longer be confined to the sphere of special society but should interest the general public.”⁵⁶ In response to adversity, Copland undertook a journey of self-renewal, pursuing further education and networking to establish himself as a prominent American composer, advocating for broader public engagement with music.

Copland and Vernacular Philosophy

In Copland's repertoire, he addressed societal segments often labeled 'vernacular,' such as *The Common Man*, *Mexico*, *Cuba*, and the American frontier, appealing to diverse audiences.

⁵⁴ The Library of Congress, “Aaron Copland Timeline, 1900-1990,” <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/copland/actime.html>.

⁵⁵ Aaron Copland, “The Composer in America 1923-33,” *Modern Music* no. 2 (1933): 91.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

His music successfully reached more classes of people than any composer before him.⁵⁷ In seeking to rekindle his concentration and interior tranquility, Copland transitioned from New York to Minnesota during the summer of 1934, coinciding with a period marked by contemplations on social-political unrest in America. His contemplations regarding political matters coincided with a period spent in Minnesota during the summer of 1934.⁵⁸ Copland and his good friend Victor Kraft stayed on Lake Bemidji at his cousin's cabin. The world was seemingly about to fall apart in the summer of 1934. During that time, Hitler was elected Führer,⁵⁹ the Dust Bowl occurred, and violent strikes occurred in Minneapolis and San Francisco.⁶⁰ Copland's exploration of vernacular themes influenced his compositional style and commitment to inclusivity.

Copland and Rural Midwest America

Enthralled by the unique political landscape of Minnesota, Copland exhibited a profound fascination with the Communist Farmer-Labor Party.⁶¹ Minnesota's Farmer-Labor Party, uniting rural farmers and urban laborers, was a left-wing organization in line with the proletarian perspective, but not communist itself, however, Copland was never an official member of the Communist Party. Copland eventually gave a stump speech for S. K. Davis, Minnesota's

⁵⁷ Annegret Fauser, "Aaron Copland, Nadia Boulanger, and the Making of an 'American' Composer," *The Musical Quarterly* 89, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 524–554, <https://doi.org/10.1093/musqtl/gdm005>, 532.

⁵⁸ Fauser, "Aaron Copland, Nadia Boulanger, and the Making of an 'American' Composer," 532.

⁵⁹ Bemidji Daily Pioneer, "Austria Fears More Trouble in Civil War," Bemidji, MN, Thursday Evening, July 26, 1934.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁶¹ Bemidji Daily Pioneer, "Communists to Face Military Court Trial; Soldiers March Into Court and Take Charge of Two Men Held in Minneapolis Strike," Bemidji, MN, Thursday Evening, May 24, 1934.

communist gubernatorial candidate.^{62, 63} After the speech Copland, ignited with excitement, expressed a profound transformation after experiencing a sense of belonging and camaraderie in rural Minnesota. Minnesota provided the experience and environment for Copland's manifestation of his new musical philosophy.

The Minnesota events reminded Copland of his Mexico experience, motivating him to work on a recreation of the music that bridged the cultivated and vernacular peoples in Mexico. Ironically, Copland composed his first self-imposed simplified piece of music, *El Salon Mexico*, in Minnesota.⁶⁴ Copland worked tirelessly on it in Bemidji, Minnesota, with the final orchestrations completed two years later. "Copland admired the contradictory identity of the communist farmers in Minnesota, who managed to be like everyone else and simultaneously distinct individuals."⁶⁵ Significantly, when Copland traveled to Minnesota in 1934, he leaned toward many Soviet ideologies.⁶⁶ That summer, the Soviet Communist government banned the use of traditional culture folklore in all art forms, deeming it "insufficiently revolutionary in form and content." Copland immediately distanced himself from the 'Red Movement' as it related to Russia and finished his first self-imposed simplified style of composition, *El Salon*

⁶² Pollack, *Aaron Copland; The Life and Work of an Uncommon Man*, 277.

⁶³ Ibid., Note: In a letter from Harold Clurman to Copland, Clurman jeers him on stating: "Some People go east to the U.S.S.R. to become 'radicalized' but you went west to the U.S.A."

⁶⁴ Copland, *What to Listen for in Music*, 19.

⁶⁵ Pollack, 246.

Note: The landscape and rural area became equal parts of his experience. Most of the literature on the subject, including Copland's own biography, states the reason for the new style to be a longing to disconnect with the Germanic high-brow tradition and reconnect with the average American.

⁶⁶ Bemidji Daily Pioneer, "Martial Law is Declared in Minneapolis," Bemidji, MN, Thursday Evening, July 26, 1934.

Mexico.⁶⁷ Notably, it was amidst his time in Bemidji, Minnesota, that Copland undertook the composition of his inaugural self-imposed simplified piece, *El Salon Mexico*, a project that spanned two years and culminated in orchestrations reflective of his exploration of Mexican folk songs recovered from literature.

El Salon Mexico comprises authentic Mexican folk songs meticulously gathered by Copland from literary sources, utilizing quotation as the primary compositional construct. Copland utilized the following four vernacular songs *La Jesusita*, a love song associated with supporters of the Mexican Revolution, *El Mosco* is presented expressively with unsettled rhythms, *El Palo Verde* alternates between the meters of 6/8 and 3/4 to imitate the Mexican ‘son’ and *El Mosquito* is a lush, romantic setting with pulsating two and three rhythms in the viola accompaniment.⁶⁸ In what becomes an American tradition, previous material returns in a stunning *tutti* finish.⁶⁹ In his biography, Copland reflects on *El Salon*, stating: “I began (as I often did) by collecting musical themes or tunes out of which a composition might eventually emerge. I wanted to heighten without falsifying the natural simplicity of Mexican tunes.”⁷⁰ *El Salon Mexico* focused less on formal logic and more on metaphorical effect. *El Salon Mexico* is a landmark with its brash *tutti sforzandos*, mode changes without transition, drunken harmonies, and showy cadenzas.

Quotation of vernacular music was familiar to Copland, who often quotes his melodies from previous works in his former and future works and style periods incorporating the familiar

⁶⁷ Copland and Perlis, *Copland 1900-1942*, 249.

⁶⁸ Crist, 56.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 58-59.

⁷⁰ Copland and Perlis, *Copland 1900-1942*, 245.

or folk tunes.⁷¹ Copland also completed *Statements for Orchestra* in Minnesota. While *Statements* was indeed avant-garde, it contained *The Sidewalks of New York* (commonly used in carousel melodies) in the movement *Jingo*.⁷² The bigger picture of what happened in Minnesota was described by researcher Fredric Jameson as “aesthetic ideology,” meaning a listener’s ‘political unconscious’ as a means to influence society.⁷³ Copland decided that his contribution to lessening the disparity between the “haves” and “have-nots” is to compose music that will reach across the divides of cultivated and vernacular audiences unification and awareness of the common man’s struggle as a result of the rise of industrialization.

Copland ‘Walking the Talk’

Upon returning to New York after his life-changing experience in Minnesota, Copland’s interest in social welfare led him to The Henry Street Settlement Music School in Manhattan.⁷⁴ In due course, Copland’s pursuits in Manhattan led to his engagement with the Tanglewood Music Symposium, marking the inception of his commitment to embodying principles of accessibility and populism in his compositions, thereby exemplifying a tangible manifestation of his dedication to the common person. Copland’s nascent philosophical construct catalyzed accessible compositions accessible music for school-age children who, like Copland, were mainly Jewish immigrants from Russia.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Lerner, Neil. “Copland’s Music of Wide Open Spaces: Surveying the Pastoral Trope in Hollywood.” *Lerner Musical Quarterly* 85 (2001): 417-515.

⁷² Crist, 29.

⁷³ Fredrick Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1981), 39-44.

⁷⁴ Bemidji Daily Pioneer, “Ultimatum Issued by Chief of Minneapolis Police Today,” Bemidji, MN, Thursday Evening, May 24, 1934.

⁷⁵ Crist, Crist coins the phrase ‘Gebraucht Music with a purpose,’ 73.

By the mid-1940s, Copland had achieved seminal musical success with his new *Simplified Style*; he furthered his social-political endeavors through organized conferences, societies, and state department assignments. Copland's friend Sergy Koussevitsky, conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, was Chairman of the American-Soviet Music Society. Copland was concerned because the Soviet Union had been reluctant to send artists to this country who would be in danger of being treated like undercover spies.⁷⁶ As the Cold War ramped up in the late 1940s, Copland became more socially involved and composed less. Copland delivered a speech at the World Peace Conference held in New York in the spring of 1949, stating:

The Governor of NY states that this Conference and all its panels are mere fronts for the spreading of Communist Propaganda. I came here this morning because I am convinced that the present policies of our government, if relentlessly pursued, will lead us inevitably into a third world war. I came here this morning because I wish to protest an attitude that has turned the very word Peace into a dirty word.⁷⁷

While Copland never accepted a permanent university teaching position, his view regarding university composers in residence changed during the 1950s. Copland acknowledges that universities are transforming from a "conservative historical preservation society to one of experimentation and cutting-edge stylistic development."⁷⁸

Low SES and Bands

Parents' socioeconomic status (SES) plays a pivotal role in shaping children's musical exposure and participation within the household. Research indicates a correlation between parental occupation, attitude toward instrumental music participation, and a child's engagement

⁷⁶ Crist, 130.

⁷⁷ Copland, *Aaron Copland: A Reader-Selected Writings 1923-1972*, ed. Richard Kostelantetz, 128.

⁷⁸ Copland, 137.

in instrumental music programs. The correlations suggest a potential influence, whether conscious or unconscious, exerted by parents on their child's decision to pursue instrumental music education.⁷⁹ However, challenges persist in understanding retention and progression within music education, reflecting broader issues within the field. Despite efforts to track retention and progression, schools, teachers, and music leaders often need more explicit guidelines and effective assessment strategies.⁸⁰ Socioeconomic disparities exacerbate ambiguity surrounding assessment practices in music education, as teachers may unintentionally employ a uniform approach that fails to accommodate the diverse needs of low-income students, thereby impeding their progress.⁸¹ Furthermore, socioeconomic factors contribute to disparities in access to music education, as evidenced by the stark contrast in instrument learning rates between different regions. Students of low SES represent a smaller percentage of high school band populations when compared to their demographic and society even though students of low SES are impacted more by instrumental band education.⁸² Brain research in recent years elucidates the dichotomy of positive holistic correlations and the lack of access for underserved students. Music-making registers in both hemispheres, unlike language, which is localized in the left hemisphere.⁸³

⁷⁹ Daniel J. Albert, "Socioeconomic Status and Instrumental Music: What Does the Research Say about the Relationship and Its Implications?," *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 25, no. 1 (2006): 39-45.

⁸⁰ J. Hilton and M. McCleary, "Preconceived Notions about Poverty Held by Perseverance Pre-Service Teachers," *Journal of Teacher Education and Educators* 8, no. 2 (2019): 95–114, <http://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/jtee/issue/48420/566078>.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Amy M. Deisler, "A Comparison of Common Characteristics of Successful High School Band Programs in Low Socioeconomic Schools and High Socioeconomic Schools" (Ph.D. diss., The Florida State University, 2011), 12.

⁸³ R. Turner and A. Ioannides, "Brain, Music and Musicality: Interfaces from Neuroimaging," in S. Malloch and C. Trevarthen (eds.), *Communicative Musicality* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 147-181.

In England, for instance, only 10% of Year 7 pupils were reported as learning an instrument in 2012, reflecting unequal opportunities for musical engagement across socioeconomic lines.⁸⁴ While the six states: Alabama, Alaska, Georgia, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and South Dakota in America that do not require arts education in elementary school are representative of vast geographic diversity, they all have a significantly higher rural, financially insecure population when compared to states that do require arts education.⁸⁵

Economic downturns intensify these disparities, with education funding cuts during the 2008 recession disproportionately impacting music education programs. Despite a slow recovery, many states in the U.S. continue to allocate less funding per pupil for education than they did before the recession, limiting resources for music education initiatives.⁸⁶ Addressing these challenges, specifically in rural areas, requires a concerted effort to dismantle socioeconomic barriers within music education. Initiatives such as the School Proms, which promote inclusion and celebrate diverse musical expressions, serve as models for fostering equitable access to music education.⁸⁷ By recognizing and valuing the musical contributions of all students, regardless of socioeconomic background, education systems can work towards abolishing hierarchical structures and ensuring that every child has the opportunity to engage with and excel in music.

⁸⁴ "Key Issues and Challenges - Paul Hamlyn Foundation," phf.org.uk, <https://www.phf.org.uk>.

⁸⁵ "Arts Education Policies, by State, 2018," *National Center for Educational Statistics*, accessed December 19, 2019, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/statereform/tab2_18.asp.

⁸⁶ https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d18/tables/dt18_236.65.asp?current=yes.

⁸⁷ Paul Hamlyn Foundation, "Review of Music in Schools by Katherine Zeserson with Professor Graham Welch, Sarah Burn, Dr. Jo Saunders and Dr. Evangelos Himonides 2014 Inspiring Music for All: Next Steps in Innovation, Improvement and Integration."

Incongruity between Verbal Rhetoric and Substantive Action Education

The history of recommendations in music education over the past century reveals a pattern of unfulfilled promises regarding equity and inclusion in instrumental music programs. Despite numerous publications advocating for broader access and participation, concrete initiatives with adequate funding to achieve these goals still need to be developed. Even recent initiatives, like "A Look Ahead: Music Education from 2020 to 2050," reiterate the need for universal access, carefully designed standards, and increased student engagement, echoing sentiments expressed as far back as the mid-20th century.⁸⁸ Winslow's observations from 1949 lament the attrition of qualified music educators and emphasize the importance of retaining talent and promoting continuity in educational programs.⁸⁹ The challenges highlighted in his time remain relevant today, as evidenced by ongoing teacher mobility and recruitment issues. Similarly, recommendations from the Music Educators National Conference in 1972 called for a more comprehensive study of musical materials representing diverse societies, advocating for a curriculum tailored to the needs of individual preservice teachers.⁹⁰ Building on this, Ritschel, in 1985, advocated for the inclusion of vernacular music, including jazz, alongside traditional Western art music, recognizing the importance of connecting diverse musical traditions in educational settings.⁹¹ Moreover, the Houseswright Symposium in 2020 perpetuated the

⁸⁸ Paul R. Lehman, "A Look Ahead: Music Education from 2020 to 2050," *Contributions to Music Education* 45 (2020): 67-80.

⁸⁹ R. W. Winslow, "Recruiting music teachers is the job of all," *Music Educators Journal* 36, no. 2 (1949): 13-45, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3387488>.

⁹⁰ "A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher." A publication of the National Association for Music Education. 1806 Robert Fulton Drive, Reston, VA 20191. <https://nafme.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/NAF072-MusicInitiative-8.pdf>, 16-22.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

dissemination of these edicts.⁹² Further, “they saw the need for widening the pipeline to the profession by expanding the definition of the music educator to be more inclusive and insisted that music educators were responsible for identifying prospective music teachers of all backgrounds and providing fertile, welcoming environments in which these new teachers could grow.”⁹³ Additionally, to address the persistent challenges identified in historical recommendations, a reform plan must be devised to actualize the long-standing aspirations for equity and inclusion in instrumental music programs.

Despite decades of advocacy for reform and inclusivity, instrumental music education programs have not yet made significant strides toward achieving these objectives.⁹⁴ Looking to the future, policymakers, educators, and stakeholders must prioritize the implementation of targeted initiatives supported by adequate resources to ensure that every student has equitable access to quality music education, regardless of socioeconomic background or cultural heritage. Only through concerted efforts to address systemic barriers and promote inclusivity can we hope to realize the vision of a truly accessible and enriching music education for all students.

This study's focal point pertains to examining student motivation derived from personalized learning integrated with vernacular inclusion, as evidenced by the practices advocated by Aaron Copland. Bruner, a renowned authority in the field of education, articulates this concept, emphasizing that the contemporary approach to music education entails incorporating music drawn from students' lived experiences to establish meaningful connections within the classroom context.⁹⁵ Looking forward, it is an incontrovertible fact that policymakers,

⁹² Madsen, ed., *Vision 2020: The Housewright Symposium on the future of music education*, 8.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ "A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher," 23.

⁹⁵ Jerome S. Bruner, *The Process of Education* (Oxford University Press, 1960). 165.

educators, and stakeholders must prioritize targeted interventions, supported by adequate resources, to guarantee equitable access to high-quality music education for all students, regardless of their socioeconomic status or cultural heritage. This assertion is based on empirical evidence demonstrating the correlation between access to quality music education and enhanced cognitive development, academic achievement, and social-emotional well-being among students.⁹⁶ Moreover, numerous studies have underscored the importance of inclusive music education practices in fostering a sense of belonging, cultural appreciation, and diversity within educational settings.

Existing research illuminates systemic barriers such as unequal access to music instruction, limited funding for music programs, and disparities in curriculum offerings disproportionately impact students from underserved communities.⁹⁷ These inequities perpetuate existing social divides and hinder opportunities for musical expression and personal growth among marginalized student populations. Thus, there is an urgent need for collaborative efforts among policymakers, educators, and community stakeholders to address these structural impediments and promote inclusivity within music education.

Fostering inclusivity in music education entails adopting a multifaceted approach encompassing curriculum development, teacher training, resource allocation, and community engagement initiatives. Research has shown that inclusive music education programs, characterized by culturally relevant pedagogy, diversified repertoire selection, and differentiated instructional strategies, have a positive impact on student engagement, motivation, and learning

⁹⁶ Ibid., 167.

⁹⁷ "A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher," NAfME, 17.

outcomes.⁹⁸ Furthermore, fostering partnerships with local arts organizations, cultural institutions, and community leaders can broaden access to musical resources and facilitate meaningful collaborations that enrich the educational experiences of students.

In conclusion, the imperative for achieving equitable and enriching music education is firmly grounded in empirical evidence and educational research. By dismantling systemic barriers and embracing inclusive practices, stakeholders can work towards realizing the vision of a music education system that fosters creativity, cultural appreciation, and personal fulfillment for all students.

A possible framework to resolve the lack of progress over the past near-century may comprise a Christian worldview synthesized with the categorization of historical views of music education, which teeter on the purpose of assimilation and control versus free will for the sake of setting one free, analogous to the spiritual life.⁹⁹ Unfortunately, music education in America, when prefaced with free will, has led to exclusion with specific regard to instrumental music education. The promising philosophies designed by the Yale Seminar 1963, the Tanglewood Symposium 1967, the Comprehensive Musicianship Symposium at Northwestern University 1968, the Juilliard Repertoire Project 1964 through 1970, and the Manhattan Music Curriculum Project 1966 through 1970 emphasized creativity identity and diversity on behalf of practitioners.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, music education is for everyone.¹⁰¹ However, while there are several pragmatic resolutions of truth to afford schools to have vital music education programs, higher

⁹⁸ Wayne D. Bowman and Ana Lucía. Frega, *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy in Music Education* (Oxford ; Oxford University Press, 2012), 231.

⁹⁹ Harold F. Abeles and Lori A. Custodero, *Critical Issues in Music Education*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022) 43-44.

¹⁰⁰ Abeles and Custodero, *Critical Issues in Music Education*, 51.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

test scores, lowest lifetime abuse of drugs and alcohol, more robust employment, and higher graduation rates, etc. these are a means to an end.¹⁰² Further, discourse regarding the spiritual vitality associated with aesthetic and paraxial approaches to music and music education is, at the least, deemed superfluous and perceived as lacking significance within prevailing assessments or precluded due to espousing religious oppression.

A Biblical Worldview of Music Education

Music shared in education is a part of the light of salvation in Matthew chapter 5 (New International Version). Rather than the discourse of the implementation of music education enacting debate elucidating further division, a theoretical framework of inclusive and vernacular philosophy combining both aesthetic and paraxial tenets that came to full fruition in the late 20th century, attributed to Reimer and Elliot, should be employed.¹⁰³ Music alone is a powerful gift that brings people closer to each other and their Creator. Therefore, Music Education can be a form of evangelization, a vocation God calls people to for the Great Commission.

Hypothetically, if Christ were to assume the role of a music educator, especially in instrumental instruction, his actions would reflect the parable of the lost sheep, directing attention toward marginalized and underserved students. (Matthew 18:12, NIV). The Christian band director's vocation entails prioritizing individuals lacking financial stability, familial support, and basic sustenance rather than focusing solely on those already demonstrating proficiency or enjoying advantageous circumstances. The analogy highlights a pedagogical

¹⁰² John Teehan, "James Gouinlock (Ed.), 'The Moral Writings of John Dewey,'" *Metaphilosophy* 26, no. 4 (1995): 225.

¹⁰³ Estelle R. Jorgensen, "Justifying Music Instruction in American Public Schools: An Historical Perspective," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 120 (1994): 17–31, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40318631>, 18.

approach committed to equity and inclusivity, directing efforts towards uplifting the disadvantaged and ensuring access to musical education for all, regardless of socioeconomic barriers or preexisting achievement levels. If Christ were a music educator, specifically in the field of instrumental band. He would leave the 99 students already succeeding behind and seek out the underserved students, specifically those who do not have financial, family, and food security. Moreover, fulfilling the duties of band director is not a “hired-hand” job but a vocation analogous to a shepherd whose “sheep know His voice” (John 10: 4-5;14, NIV). Music is for everyone; unfortunately, instrumental music has not been afforded as such to people of low status in every arena with specific regard to wealth and power.

A 'Cultivated and Vernacular' Artist's Perspective

The dark history, or 'black-eye,' has created a climate in which it is impossible to provide empirical data regarding whether an aesthetic or paraxial approach is superior in philosophy. Once music education, specifically instrumental music education, is inclusive for everyone, a more apparent philosophy will emerge. Roger H. Brown quantified this with resplendent aplomb, “In a nation consumed with standardized tests, sports, and music kept students in schools...if a student in a struggling intercity school does well on a standardized test they are plucked out of the system and are fine. What about the students who do not do well on standardized tests?”¹⁰⁴ Further, Eurocentric and American jazz artist Wynton Marsalis colligates this phenomenon stating, “It is fascinating to contemplate how John Coltrane received such a music education in the Jim Crow South from a skilled music educator juxtaposed against wealthy American cities

¹⁰⁴ Roger H. Brown, "The Value of Music Education in Our Schools," video, "Why Music Education Belongs in Public Schools: MUSC801: Historical Developments Influencing Music Education (D01)," Liberty University, Accessed November 2023, Watch: Why Music Education Belongs in Public Schools: MUSC801: Historical Developments Influencing Music Education (D01) (liberty.edu).

like Los Angeles and Boston, which cannot provide schools with credentialed, qualified, and skilled music educators-is criminal.¹⁰⁵

[America] must try to figure out why we have to ask ourselves how in the world did Louis Armstrong get a better music education and an underfunded segregated jail for juvenile delinquents 100 years ago then you can get in most places today and the instruments will provided free of charge a study of Armstrong's education leads me to suggest that we reverse the foundational principles of how we approach our young people's education place functionality before virtuosity.¹⁰⁶

While acknowledging the numerous lamentable aspects within America's history of music education, one must recognize the past as a catalyst for the pursuit of tangible curricula that advocate for the inclusion of all individuals in future endeavors.

Espousing educational philosophies without corresponding implementation and tangible outcomes is a longstanding challenge in music education. A comprehensive approach is required to address the inclusion gap in band music education. It starts with preparing teachers to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to implement inclusive music curricula effectively. Moreover, curriculum development should prioritize the integration of vernacular music traditions on par with Western classical Eurocentrism, fostering a more equitable and culturally responsive education.

Summary

Research consistently demonstrates that students exhibit a profound affinity for music, whether it involves singing, listening, playing instruments, or engaging with music in any other form.¹⁰⁷ Instrumental music education has the power to elevate a person's status, in addition to

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Jazz at Lincoln Center's JAZZ ACADEMY, "An Interview with Wynton Marsalis, Part 3: Wynton Marsalis' 'Teaching Music in the 21st Century,'" Accessed November 14, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yNq7RPTSFkI&t=2s>.

¹⁰⁷ "A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher," NAFME, 17.

the neurological, social, psychological, and intellectual benefits aforementioned.¹⁰⁸ While explicitly targeting rural Midwest students, these themes are helpful for band directors in most settings, as the philosophical underpinnings and examined methods and strategies may be practical to apply in most band settings. 93% of band directors of rural Midwest school districts identify as white, and almost two-thirds identify as female, creating a problem with identification with underserved students.¹⁰⁹ An examination of the national percentage of students in band reveals that less than seven percent of the aforementioned underserved students are active participants.¹¹⁰ The disparity of inclusion calls into question the efficacy of research regarding the scholastic achievements of students in band. In conclusion, the chapter comprehensively examines the challenges and opportunities in music education, drawing on historical, philosophical, artistic, and scientific perspectives. By synthesizing theoretical frameworks, narratives, and research findings, the chapter offers a gap in the literature regarding the process and tangible results and insights into fostering inclusivity and equity in music education for underserved populations of rural Midwest band programs.

¹⁰⁸ Maura Sellars and David Imig, "Pestalozzi and Pedagogies of Love: Pathways to Educational Reform," *Early Child Development and Care* 191, no. 7-8 (January 2021): <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2020.1845667>. 1162.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ K. Elpus and C. Abrill, "High School Music Ensembles Students in the United States: A Demographic Profile," 128-145.

Chapter Three: Methods

Introduction

The chapter introduces the nature of the study, qualitative, archival research that has the potential to significantly impact the application of Aaron Copland's philosophy of inclusion in addressing equity issues in rural Midwest schools with high percentages of students eligible for free and reduced lunch programs. The chapter contextualizes the discussion within the historical evolution of music education and delineates the theoretical framework underpinning the investigation, highlighting the urgency and relevance of the research.

The purpose of this archival research study was to identify tangible pedagogical strategies of Copland's philosophy of vernacular inclusion to augment primary enrollment, retention, and increased proficiency of low SES students in rural Midwest band programs that have not yet been pervasively understood, employed, or agreed as valid by scholars, directors, administrators, and music education stakeholders. The research examined three instances of inclusivity within particular domains.

1. Increasing student interest and autonomy in their music education through using vernacular music.
2. To successfully increase the accessibility of instrumental band music education, band programs used vernacular and modern band instruments.
3. Student proficiency and autonomy regarding literature preparation increased when bands performed for vernacular, underserved audiences.

Archival research gathered empirical evidence regarding the experiences and perceptions of students, directors, and band programs espousing the tenets of Copland vernacular inclusion. The research examined social media entries, magazine and newspaper articles, websites, books,

and scholarly journals to explore two band programs as examples of Copland's vernacular inclusion.

Additionally, this chapter expounds upon the study's setting, the criteria for participant focus and examination, the instrumentation employed, and the procedural framework guiding the study. Additional instruments were also employed to assist in organizing, coding, and analyzing the data. Moreover, historical methods, including contextual and thematic analysis, were utilized to situate the archival data within its historical and cultural context and construct meaningful narratives from the findings. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the study's data analysis plan and procedures that the researcher followed. Chapter Four will present the study's results.

Design

For this study, we used a qualitative research design in the archival research process. According to Creswell and Creswell, qualitative methodology entails an approach aimed at delving into and comprehending the significance individuals or groups attribute to a social or human phenomenon.¹¹¹ The process of conducting research involves the emergence of questions and methodologies, with data typically gathered within the participant's environment from sources publicly obtained, such as articles from journals, magazines, newspapers, social media, concert materials. The researcher conducted data analysis inductively, progressing from specific instances to identifying general themes, and then interpreted the significance of the data. This study postulates the influence of vernacular music in Midwest schools, as observed through archival materials from districts characterized by low socioeconomic status (SES). The aim is to understand better the effects of Copland's inclusive, vernacular philosophy.

¹¹¹ John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 6th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2023), 5.

Setting

In rural Midwest American schools, educators commonly measure diversity in socioeconomic status. Furthermore, the involvement of students of low socioeconomic status in high school band programs decreases as grade levels increase.¹¹² Moreover, rural Midwest band directors find it challenging to obtain and retain students of low socioeconomic status. There is a fundamental disconnect between students of low socioeconomic status and band directors in rural Midwest school districts.¹¹³ This qualitative, archival research study addresses students of low SES students in rural Midwest schools by examining the fostering of a vernacular approach to instruments, music, and audience and its connection to enrollment, retention, and performance proficiency.

Data Collection Method

This study followed a qualitative research design by focusing on the experiences of students, directors, and stakeholders in band programs employing what would be characterized by this study as Copeland vernacular inclusion. The qualitative research method was archival and involved exploring and understanding phenomena through non-numerical data, such as texts, images, documents, and other archival materials. Qualitative methods in archival research can analyze historical documents, records, letters, newspapers, photographs, and other artifacts to

¹¹² A. F. Poor, "Middle School Music Education: An Observation Study of 30 Middle School Music Programs, 1997-1998," *Dissertation Abstracts International* 60, no. 6 (1999): 95.

¹¹³ "A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher." A publication of the National Association for Music Education. 1806 Robert Fulton Drive, Reston, VA 20191. <https://nafme.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/NAF072-MusicInitiative-8.pdf>, 5-7.

gain insights into past events, cultures, and societies.¹¹⁴ This study utilized thematic analysis to analyze data from the programs mentioned above and archival resources.

For this study, archival research included, but was not limited to, journals, books, magazines, videos, concert programs, emails, diaries, letters, newspaper articles, and social media. A universal scale is not typically used for qualitative, archival research data; however, the following tenets will be employed: credibility, transferability/generalizability, dependability/reliability, confirmability, and saturation.¹¹⁵ Further, thematic analysis was the theoretical framework utilized to establish applicable context. Moreover, the research examined ethical issues and took steps to ensure the results' efficacy, credibility, and accuracy. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used to analyze, identify, and interpret patterns or themes within qualitative data.¹¹⁶ It systematically organizes and categorizes data based on concepts that emerge from the dataset, topics, or recurring patterns. The thematic analysis allows researchers to reconnoiter intricate phenomena, uncover fundamental meanings, and gain deeper insights into participants' perspectives.¹¹⁷ In the context of instrumental music education for underserved students of low SES, "minority-majority" refers to a demographic scenario where minority groups collectively constitute the majority of the population within a

¹¹⁴ Eileen Fischer and Marie-Agnès Parmentier, "Doing Qualitative Research with Archival Data: Making Secondary Data a Primary Resource," *Advances in Consumer Research* 37, no. 798-799 (2010): 3.

¹¹⁵ Ho L. Delve and A. Limpaecher, "What is Narrative Analysis? Essential Guide to Coding Qualitative Data," *Delve Tool*, September 15, 2020, <https://delvetool.com/blog/narrativeanalysis>.

¹¹⁶ V. Braun and V. Clarke, "Using thematic analysis in psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 77-101, <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

particular context, such as a school or community. For example, 51% of the school district's population comprises students eligible for free and reduced lunch.¹¹⁸

Researcher Positionality

In doctoral research, the researcher's position significantly influences the inquiry and interpretation of findings. This study examines the researcher's experiential background and professional engagements relevant to the investigation. With twenty years of educational experience, the researcher has long been interested in the potential benefits of such programs, especially for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Serving as a college band director overseeing nearly forty high school bands across Minnesota underscores the need to investigate the underrepresentation of underserved students in advanced band levels, prompting reflection on their equitable access to music education and broader societal implications.

The researcher's positionality is deeply rooted in practical experience within instrumental music education, particularly in band programs. With a history of successful program augmentation and enhanced student participation and proficiency, the researcher possesses a profound understanding of music education's practical complexities. Moreover, direct involvement in rural Midwest high schools provides intimate familiarity with the dynamics of rural educational environments, where socioeconomic factors intersect with pedagogical practices. Noteworthy is the researcher's involvement in designing and implementing a cost-effective music degree program at a rural Community College, a clear demonstration of the researcher's commitment to inclusive pedagogy. This commitment addresses systemic barriers to participation and proficiency, encouraging optimism for a more equitable future. Overall, the

¹¹⁸ M. R. Hawkins, "Minorities in Music Education: Providing Access to Quality Music Education for Underserved Students," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 19, no. 1 (2010): 88-99, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083709345706>.

researcher's positionality, shaped by practical engagement and a commitment to inclusive pedagogy, enriches the study's contextual understanding, informing the research process and contributing to a nuanced comprehension of the investigated phenomena.

Theoretical Framework

Causality and Relational Measurement Theory offer a robust theoretical framework for analyzing qualitative archival research by enabling a structured approach to understanding the relationships and causal mechanisms within historical data. In this research plan, Causality Theory facilitated the identification of causal links between historical events, decisions, and outcomes, providing a nuanced understanding of how specific actions or conditions led to particular results.¹¹⁹ This approach allowed for mapping cause-and-effect relationships within the archival data, thus revealing underlying patterns and influences that may not have been immediately apparent. Relational Measurement Theory complements this by focusing on quantifying and comparing relational data, allowing for measuring the strength and nature of relationships between different entities or events within the archives.¹²⁰ By employing these theories, the research systematically analyzed historical records to uncover meaningful connections and causal pathways, thereby offering more profound insights into the studied phenomena of employing Copland's philosophy of inclusion to increase enrollment, retention, and proficiency in rural Midwest, low SES band programs. Furthermore, this theoretical framework ensured a rigorous and comprehensive analysis, bridging qualitative insights with quantitative rigor to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings.

¹¹⁹ Judea Pearl, *Causality: Models, Reasoning, and Inference* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 25.

¹²⁰ Kenneth A. Bollen, *Structural Equations with Latent Variables* (New York: Wiley, 1989), 32.

Summary

The notion of fidelity and authenticity in music education concerning bands warrants scrutiny. Rooted in a European tradition of aesthetic value, the concept of fidelity risks constraining music within the confines of literal signification, thereby diluting its essence as a juxtaposition between primeval and transcendent experience. Moreover, Bowman and Fraga's critique of exclusion through a lack of student-centered vernacular pedagogical methodologies prompts further investigation into the Eurocentric biases inherent within prevailing conceptions of musical authenticity, advocating for a more inclusive and expansive understanding of musical expression.¹²¹ Exploration of the labyrinth of philosophical, pedagogical, and curricular inquiry must extend beyond the confines of academia. Through the prism of archival research into results-based Copland vernacular inclusion music education practices, the transformative power of harmonious collaboration—a symphony of voices converging in pursuit of knowledge, empathy, and shared humanity was illuminated.¹²²

¹²¹ Bowman and Fraga, *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy in Music Education*, 224.

¹²² Maureen E. Ryan, "Listening Deeply to and Engaging Multiple Perspectives," in *Contemplative Approaches to Sustainability in Higher Education*, ed. by Oren Ergas (Routledge, 2016), 99.

Chapter Four: Results

Introduction

This Chapter explores the impact of Copland's rural Minnesota retreat on his compositional style and philosophy of inclusivity, with implications for instrumental band music education, particularly for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Pursuing equity in education remains a formidable challenge, particularly in regions marked by low socioeconomic status (SES) such as rural Midwest America. Reflexive investigations have elucidated a connection between student interest, intrinsic motivation, retention, and academic achievement.¹ This connection underscores the importance of engaging students with music that resonates with their interests, thereby fostering a pathway toward higher rigor and levels of musical complexity. Against this backdrop, this doctoral thesis investigated the utilization of Copland's philosophy of inclusion through vernacular instruments, music, and performance strategies as potential solutions to address the pervasive issue of inequity among underserved low SES students in rural Midwest America. This research employed a methodological framework that integrates Causality and Relational Measurement Theory to conduct a systematic archival analysis of the Copland Philosophy program's effectiveness within rural Midwest band programs. This framework evaluates explicitly how this innovative approach influences inclusivity, student engagement among low SES students, retention, accessibility, and the use of vernacular music and instruments, discovering multifaceted effects of culturally relevant instrumental music education.

¹ Geoffrey Lowe, "Class music learning activities: Do students find them important, interesting and useful?," *Research Studies in Music Education* 33, no. 2 (2011): 143-159.

Inclusion

The Vernacular Music initiative at Texas Technical University offers a promising case study in applying thematic and historiographic analysis within music education. This research aims to systematically assess how this innovative program influences student enrollment, retention, and proficiency outcomes. By illuminating effective strategies through this analytical framework, the study provides valuable insights on mitigating challenges related to student engagement and educational achievement in band programs, particularly in rural Midwest American settings.

Texas Tech

The Vernacular Music Center (VMC) at Texas Tech University offers a rich tapestry of musical exploration through its diverse ensembles, each engaging with distinct musical traditions. Analyzing the themes present in the descriptions of the Balkan, Celtic, and Collegium Musicum ensembles reveals a consistent emphasis on inclusivity, educational depth, and community engagement.² These themes illustrate how the VMC not only enriches students' musical experiences but also fosters a broad understanding of music as a global cultural phenomenon.

Musical Participation

One of the most striking themes across the VMC ensembles is inclusivity. Each group welcomes participants from varied musical backgrounds and skill levels. For instance, the Balkan Ensemble is open to players of any instrument, including singers and dancers,

² "Texas Tech 'techannounce'," *TechAnnounce*, accessed April 22, 2024, <https://techannounce.ttu.edu/Client/ViewMessage.aspx?MsgId=274450>.

underscoring its commitment to a communal, inclusive musical environment.³ This approach democratizes music-making, allowing students from the orchestral, band, and choir worlds to immerse themselves in less familiar, dance-oriented Balkan music. Similarly, the Celtic Ensemble has adapted its repertoire and orchestration to accommodate a more comprehensive array of instrumentalists, including those typically involved in winds or brass, who may need to gain a background in traditional Celtic instruments.

Inclusivity extends beyond musical roles to embrace a broad array of cultural traditions. The Collegium Musicum offers hands-on experience with historical period instruments, catering to a diverse student body interested in early-modern music. This inclusivity is pivotal in creating an educational environment where students can explore their musical interests in depth, irrespective of their central or primary area of study. Espousing inclusive vernacular philosophies has exponentially increased enrollment in virtually all university ensembles, traditional and non-traditional.⁴ Furthermore, ensembles from the VMC have been featured on social media and boast of a PBS Special.⁵ The recognition and accolades enjoyed by Texas Tech VMC affirm the influence of espousing a vernacular on inclusion and excellence within the comprehensive music collegiate division.

Musical Experiences

The VMC structures each ensemble for music performance and engages deeply with their respective musical traditions. A principal tenet at the VMC is a historical and cultural

³ "Collegium Musicum," Texas Tech University School of Music, accessed April 23, 2024, <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/music/programs/ensembles/vernacular-music/collegium-musicum.php>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ "Texas Tech Public Media," YouTube video, 4:44, posted by Texas Tech University, October 28, 2019, <https://youtu.be/sHIe7EoKi8M?si=qbNB6eK4z5nO0xen>.

scholarship achieved through a pedagogical approach that integrates performance with educational depth. For example, the Balkan Ensemble focuses on the non-Western Makam modes, offering students practical experience in systems of music that differ markedly from the Western tradition.⁶ This direct engagement with complex rhythmic structures and improvisation challenges students to expand their musical understanding and skills in a supportive, educational setting.

The Celtic Ensemble encourages skills such as playing by ear and from memory, adapting to "head" arrangements, and mastering authentic dance music rhythms. These skills are vital for professional musicians but are also transferable to broader life and career contexts, illustrating the practical value of engaging with vernacular music traditions. Music education that embraces an aural approach more closely aligns with vernacular musical traditions.

Student Engagement

The VMC ensembles do not exist in a vacuum; they actively engage with the broader community through performances and collaborations. The Balkan and Celtic Ensembles perform in a variety of settings, from on-campus recitals to community events, thus serving as ambassadors of their respective musical cultures.⁷ This engagement extends to collaborations with theater productions and other university departments, enriching the cultural life of the university and the wider community. Furthermore, these performances often serve educational and cultural missions, such as the Collegium Musicum's staging of Hildegard von Bingen's "Ordo Virtutum," which provides historical context and enriches the audience's understanding of

⁶ "Collegium Musicum," Texas Tech University School of Music.

⁷ "Texas Tech University Celtic Ensemble," Facebook, accessed April 25, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/TTUCelticEnsemble/>.

medieval music and drama.⁸ These initiatives highlight the role of university music programs in fostering cultural appreciation and understanding through active community engagement.

The thematic analysis of the VMC's ensemble descriptions at Texas Tech University reveals a dynamic interplay of inclusivity, educational depth, and community engagement. These themes are not isolated but interact to create a rich educational tapestry that benefits students and the broader community. The VMC trains skilled musicians through its diverse ensembles and nurtures informed citizens who appreciate the complex interconnections between music and cultural identity. This approach exemplifies the potential of university music programs to contribute to cultural education and appreciation in a globally connected world. Moreover, the success observed at Texas Tech concerning vernacular music refutes the notion that embracing musical philosophies beyond traditional Western canon literature and ensembles will detrimentally affect enrollment, retention, and proficiency.

Community Engagement

The band directors in a rural Minnesota high school have endeavored a vernacular music concert eliciting an augmented audience for the past 45 years. The inception of the Indoor Marching Band Concert (IMC) marked a pivotal shift from traditional classical/symphonic concert formats to a more inclusive and engaging event that appealed to a broader audience. The initial success of the concert, necessitating additional performances and live streams due to high demand, underscores a theme of broadened community engagement.⁹ This expansion is not merely about numbers but reflects a deeper connection with the community, drawing in diverse

⁸ "Collegium Musicum," Angela Mariani, accessed April, 23, 2024. <https://angelamariani.com/performance/>.

⁹ Ibid.

groups beyond students' immediate families. The choice of vernacular music, covering artists from Elvis to Lady Gaga to Green Day, played a crucial role in attracting a wider demographic, resonating with a broader cultural spectrum, and integrating contemporary musical tastes into the school's band performances.¹⁰

Another significant theme is the educational outcomes of integrating vernacular music into the band curriculum. Both band directors, Nelson and Peterson, advocated for the role of vernacular music in enhancing students' musical education, noting an increase in band enrollment in primary schools and retention in middle school as students aspire to participate in the IMC.¹¹ Peterson spoke about the lack of Covid-19 reduction in band enrollment and posited that IMC played a principal role in maintaining the number of students in the overall program, exemplifying a strategic approach to music education that recognizes vernacular music as a robust medium for teaching complex musical concepts, including articulation, balance, timbre, and dynamics, rather than perceiving it as a lower form of art.¹² The directors' strategy highlights the adaptability of vernacular music to achieve educational outcomes traditionally reserved for classical symphonic music.

The sustained success and popularity of the IMC over four decades underscore its lasting impact on students' musical proficiency and the overall school culture. The variety of music explored through the annual concerts improves students' musical skills and cultivates a dynamic and inclusive school environment. The program's ability to adapt to changing musical trends and student interests has kept it relevant and effective as an educational tool. Moreover, the tradition

¹⁰ Little Falls Community Schools TV, Facebook page, accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/LFCStv>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

of achieving the status of superior pep band at state tournaments established a norm of expectation for Little Falls, MN.¹³

Furthermore, the Indoor Marching Band Concert, pioneered by Dwight Nelson and continued by Todd Peterson, demonstrates a successful model of music education that leverages vernacular music to enhance educational outcomes, student engagement, community involvement, preparation, practice, and proficiency. The themes identified through thematic analysis of the archival sources—community engagement, educational enhancement, student motivation, self-actualization, and sustained impact—illustrate the transformative power of integrating culturally relevant music into school programs. This approach enriches students' musical experiences and fosters an inclusive and dynamic educational environment.

In rural Wisconsin, Director of Bands Jacob Karkula employs an analogous vernacular concert endeavor with a notable purpose—increasing student engagement through performing for an underserved, indigenous population. Thematic analysis of Jacob Karkula's archival media statements reveals a multidimensional approach to music education that prioritizes inclusivity, professional growth, global awareness, and the correlation between preparation, practice, and proficiency. His strategies demonstrate a profound comprehension of the challenges and opportunities in music education, particularly in their ability to bridge cultural divides and enhance community engagement. These themes not only illuminate Karkula's contributions to the field but also offer valuable insights into the potential for music education to impact broader social and cultural objectives. Moreover, the intersection of vernacular music with an

¹³ Little Falls Community Schools, "2024-03-11 Little Falls Community Schools Massed Band Concert," YouTube video, 1:21:15, (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SEut5n2cPw>).

underserved audience catalyzed an epoch of maximum learning, effort, and proficiency in music education.

Student Led Sectionals and Features

The thematic analysis also reveals that the IMC significantly boosts student motivation and ownership over their musical learning. The archival sources highlight the correlation between student investment, considerable time practicing independently, and organizing sectionals outside of school hours.¹⁴ This increase in voluntary student involvement indicates the high engagement and personal commitment that the IMC fosters among participants. By allowing students considerable autonomy in selecting and arranging music and skits, the program empowers them, enhancing their confidence and willingness to take responsibility for their performances.

A more resounding educational theme emerges in the form of self-actualization through artistic expression. Directors Peterson and Nelson note that students experience self-actualization as they engage with music that resonates with their cultural and musical preferences. This engagement is about performing well and expressing oneself through a universally understood language of music. The directors' observations suggest that students who perform music that aligns with their identity and interests are more likely to develop a profound connection to their artistic and educational journeys.¹⁵

¹⁴ Little Falls Community Schools, "2024-03-11 Little Falls Community Schools Massed Band Concert," YouTube video, 1:21:15, (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SEut5n2cPw>).

¹⁵ Little Falls Community Schools, Facebook page, accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/LittleFalls482>.

Motivation

Thematic and historiographic analysis enriches the investigation into motivation and the correlations between preservice and in-service music education under 21st-century initiatives. Utilizing Causality and Relational Measurement Theory, this study aims to evaluate how these innovative approaches affect student enrollment, retention, and proficiency within band music education. This analysis clarifies the need for programmatic formation and highlights new strategies to enhance participation and educational outcomes in band programs across rural Midwest American schools.

Another significant aspect of Witter's impact is his professional recognition. His invitation to speak at the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) convention as well as co-lead a conference on inclusive instrumental music education practices with financially assessable plastic instruments is a strong endorsement of his innovative practices. Further, the band's invitation to perform at the Michigan State Capitol collates to the program's success.¹⁶ These accolades helped elevate the profile of the Hillman band, showcasing the potential of rural music programs to achieve excellence. Furthermore, such public performances have showcased the students' talents and highlighted the efficacy of using plastic instruments in school bands. Moreover, Witter's initiative has enhanced community engagement. He has fostered a stronger connection between the school and the broader Hillman community by revitalizing the band program and integrating it with community events and functions,

Another significant aspect of Witter's impact is the professional recognition he has garnered. His invitation to speak at the National Association for Music Education (NAfME)

¹⁶ "Rep. Cavitt Welcomes Hillman Band to State Capitol Building," RELEASE, October 5, 2023, Michigan House Republicans, accessed May 3, 2024, <https://gophouse.org/posts/rep-cavitt-welcomes-hillman-band-to-state-capitol-building>.

convention as well as co-lead a conference on inclusive instrumental music education practices with financially assessable plastic instruments is a strong endorsement of his innovative practices.¹⁷ This platform provided him an opportunity to share his insights and successes with a wider audience of music educators, potentially influencing broader adoption of similar practices in other rural and resource-limited settings.

Motivation and Proficiency

Research indicates that students demonstrate heightened levels of intrinsic motivation when they perceive ownership over the music they engage with, which positively impacts retention rates and recruitment efforts.¹⁸ Alexander Lamont, David Hargreaves, Nigel Marshall, and Mark Tarrant's study underscores the significance of students' influence on musical repertoire, suggesting that fostering a sense of agency in music selection contributes to a positive attitude towards music-making.¹⁹ Annu Tuovila's research in Finnish music schools further supports these findings, corroborating the notion that empowering students to shape their musical experiences enhances engagement and enjoyment.²⁰ Moreover, recent empirical studies emphasize the holistic perspective in evaluating educational experiences, suggesting that individuals place significant value on opportunities for autonomy and self-expression in their learning journey, particularly in the later stages of life.²¹ Todd Murphy's dissertation

¹⁷ Ben Witter, "Ben Witter - Elementary Music Educator," Music Education Summit.

¹⁸ Alexander Lamont, David J. Hargreaves, Nigel A. Marshall, and Mark Tarrant, "Young People's Music in and out of School," *British Journal of Music Education* 20, no. 3 (2003), 238.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 241.

²⁰ Lamont et al., "Young People's Music in and out of School," 239.

²¹ Todd Waldon Murphy, "Using Popular Music to Engage the Multiculturally Diverse Secondary School Band," Doctoral dissertation, Liberty University, 2022.

investigating the connection between vernacular popular music found “[that] It adds to the retention rate and growth *recruiting*. If the kids are interested in what they're playing, they'll mention it to their friends and push their friends to *come to band the following year*.”²² Thus, cultivating a sense of ownership and agency in music education enhances intrinsic motivation, student engagement, and promotes lifelong appreciation and participation in musical activities.

Educational Correlation with Student Success

The educational influence of plastic transitional instruments is profound. They facilitate early music education and enhance student engagement and retention in music programs. The case of Ananda, a young musician who won international accolades using the NUVO jFlute, exemplifies the potential of these instruments to support high-level musical achievement.²³

Ananda was the first person to win a prestigious music contest, performing on a plastic instrument and a transitional one.²⁴ Her success story is not just about personal triumph but also highlights the effectiveness of these instruments in real-world settings. Ananda's journey began with the NUVO Toot and later continued with the jFlute, showcasing how early exposure to suitably designed instruments can lead to rapid and sustained musical development.²⁵ Within a remarkably short period, Ananda mastered complex pieces and transitioned smoothly to more advanced instruments, illustrating the seamless progression that these instruments facilitate.

²² Murphy, "Using Popular Music to Engage the Multiculturally Diverse Secondary School Band," 92.

²³ Brittany Bauman, "Young Flute Player Wins International Recognition with a Plastic Flute," sponsored by KHS America, published May 20, 2021, National Association for Music Education (NAfME), accessed May 21, 2024, <https://nafme.org/blog/young-flute-player-wins-international-recognition-with-a-plastic-flute/>.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

Underserved Audiences

Defining an underserved audience involves identifying groups that might typically lack exposure to high school band performances showcasing refined musical proficiency. Such audiences could include immigrant communities, residents of nursing homes, occupants of homeless shelters, and members of Native American reservations.²⁶ These groups often remain underrepresented at traditional music venues. They may benefit significantly from targeted musical outreach. Expanding the scope of musical engagement can start with simple initiatives, such as adapting vernacular music for events widely attended by diverse audiences, such as professional sporting events. For example, arranging a band performance at a major league baseball game can attract attendees who might not typically engage with wind symphony concerts. Similarly, incorporating popular or 'pep' music into concerts can broaden appeal, drawing in audiences unfamiliar with or uninterested in traditional concert band settings.

This strategy extends the reach of music education into diverse community segments and enhances support from a broader base of community stakeholders. Educational institutions can foster greater community engagement by adapting performances to suit varied audience preferences and contexts. Each performance, whether at a sports event or a traditional concert hall, becomes a valuable opportunity to refine students' skills and promote music education. Moreover, such diverse and inclusive programming creates an atmosphere that increases student engagement and enthusiasm. Students are likely to feel more invested when they see the tangible impact of their performances on a variety of audiences, thereby enhancing their educational experience. This inclusive approach educates students musically and culturally as they learn to appreciate and perform for diverse groups within their community. This strategy, therefore, not

²⁶ Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. "Incarcerated People and Homelessness." The Homeless Hub. <https://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/incarcerated-people-and-homelessness>.

only cultivates musical skills but also fosters a broader cultural appreciation and community spirit, enriching each student's educational journey. Examining schools and music educators who utilize vernacular music for enrollment growth, retention, and increased proficiency may provide a philosophical framework for instrumental music educators pervasively in the rural Midwest.

Performing for Underserved Indigenous Peoples

The themes of preparation, practice, proficiency, cultural awareness, and a global perspective emerged from various archival sources under the auspices of vernacular music in rural Wisconsin. The primary data sources for this section of the study included news articles from the Menomonie High School News, social media reactions, and a detailed YouTube ‘vlog’ synthesizing the 2023 band tour to Honduras with Director of Bands Jacob Karkula.²⁷ These sources provided rich, contextual insights into the motivations, processes, and outcomes of the band’s international performance. Further, the thematic elements present in the statements of Jacob Karkula, the Director of Bands at Menomonie High School, as he discusses his professional background, educational philosophy, and his views on the role of music education seek to elucidate the underlying themes regarding music education's potential impact on students and community, drawing on Karkula's experiences and reflections in archival sources.²⁸

Rural Wisconsin

Rural Wisconsin band director Jacob Karkula’s approach to music education is deeply rooted in the principle of inclusivity. He posits the challenges faced in a community that initially

²⁷ Menomonie High School Band, *2023 Band Trip Highlights*, directed by Jacob Karkula, YouTube video, 3:45, posted September 18, 2023, 1.

²⁸ Menomonie High School Band, Facebook, accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/MenomonieHSBand>.

prioritized athletic programs over the arts, particularly marching band, due to both financial implications and scheduling conflicts. His strategic response — reallocating the school's focus from a competitive marching band to a more inclusive band program — highlights a theme of adaptive education strategies aimed at increasing participation across diverse student groups.²⁹ This adaptation not only addressed financial barriers but also cultural and extracurricular barriers to participation in band music. The comments by parents and community members, posted on social media regarding the quality of Latin pep band music reveal Karkula's commitment to musical integrity regardless of genre.

The most profound insights from Karkula relate to his experiences with international travel and its influence on his teaching philosophy. He describes how exposure to different cultural and economic contexts, primarily through his trips to Latin America, has enriched his family's life and broadened their perspectives on global issues.³⁰ This exposure has been integrated into his music education program, fostering a global-local integration where students not only learn about music but also its role in different cultural contexts. This theme is crucial as it emphasizes the importance of preparing students to be globally competent citizens.

In a news interview published on Facebook, Jacob Karkula's statements begin with an outline of his educational background, which includes a bachelor's degree in music education from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and a master's degree focused on professional development, music education, and conducting. His comprehensive training is complemented by workshops and direct mentorship under renowned figures in music education, like Dr. Mark

²⁹ Menomonie High School Band, *2023 Band Trip Highlights*, directed by Jacob Karkula, YouTube video, 3:45, posted September 18, 2023, 1.

³⁰ "Menomonie Band's Cultural Performance," *The Menomonie Minute*, March 21, 2022, <https://www.menomonieminute.com/post/mhs-band-fundraiser>.

Heidel from the University of Iowa. This foundation underscores a theme of rigorous professional development and a commitment to continuous learning, which are critical in shaping his educational strategies and teaching ethos.³¹

The Menomonie High School Band's performance in Honduras was not merely a musical event but a profound cultural exchange. The band chose vernacular music resonating with the local community, facilitating a deeper connection between the performers and the audience. This choice of music not only entertained but also served as a bridge between diverse cultures, fostering mutual respect and understanding. The engagement in this project significantly influenced the students' perspectives and appreciation for global diversity. Performing in an economically challenged setting allowed the students to witness firsthand the unifying power of music across socioeconomic divides.³² Several entries described returning students' dispositions as having a broadened worldview, more profound respect for cultural differences, and a heightened sense of social responsibility.

Organizing a concert abroad required meticulous planning, from selecting culturally appropriate music to navigating logistical challenges. The director's previous experiences and the cooperative efforts of local communities were crucial in overcoming these challenges. The process was a learning experience for all involved, highlighting the importance of adaptability and preparation in international music education ventures.

A historiographic analysis elucidates the evolution of music education philosophy. The initiative reflects a significant shift in the philosophy of music education at Menomonie High

³¹ Menomonie Band Boosters, "Menomonie Band Tour," accessed May 21, 2024, <http://www.menomoniebandboosters.com/photo-album/>.

³² Jacob Karkula, "Menomonie High School Band Performance in Honduras," Twitter, April 22, 2018, <https://x.com/MenomonieHSBand/status/988094905833676800>.

School from a primarily performance-oriented approach to one that incorporates music's social and cultural implications. This shift aligns with broader educational trends emphasizing experiential learning and global citizenship—furthermore, the integration of local and global musical elements. The selection of music played a critical role in the concert's success. The program entertained and educated by integrating local (Honduran) and global (vernacular) musical elements, serving as a conduit for intercultural dialogue and understanding.

The positive feedback and transformative experiences associated with the concert uphold the sustainability and future implications of such endeavors, suggesting that this type of international engagement could be sustainable and increasingly integrated into the school's curriculum. This model promotes musical proficiency, global awareness, and empathy among students. The experiences and narratives gathered through this project have reshaped the understanding of the potential of music education to act as a powerful tool for social change and community engagement. Additionally, evidence exists that the focus shifted from self towards global engagement and cultural sensitivity enriched the students' educational experience.

A significant portion of the narrative in 'Menomonie Minute' elucidates Karkula's focus on a transformative experience where his students performed in Honduras.³³ This event was not just a performance but a cultural exchange that allowed students to engage with peers from significantly different socio-economic backgrounds. The theme of music as a tool for cultural engagement and social empathy emerges strongly here. Karkula notes this experience's profound impact on his students' perspectives of their own lives and their attitudes toward global communities. Furthermore, Karkula reflects on the changes within his band program following the international experience. He observes increased student engagement and a heightened interest

³³ "Menomonie Band's Cultural Performance," The Menomonie Minute, March 21, 2022, <https://www.menomonieminute.com/post/mhs-band-fundraiser>.

in participating in similar activities, indicating a theme of enhanced educational outcomes through experiential learning. His efforts to maintain and expand upon these experiences by planning further trips underscore a commitment to using music education as a platform for comprehensive educational development, including emotional and social growth.

The Menomonie High School Band's project in Honduras exemplifies the potential of music education to transcend traditional boundaries and foster global citizenship. This case study highlights the essential role of cultural sensitivity, adaptability, and community engagement in music education. As we progress, it becomes imperative to continue exploring these themes, ensuring that music education remains a dynamic and transformative force in the students' lives worldwide.

Global Perspective

The WindStars program, in particular, has been successfully implemented across various cultural and regional contexts, demonstrating pre-band education's universal appeal and adaptability. The program adjusts to local educational needs from North America to Europe and Asia, while maintaining its core objectives.³⁴ This global penetration underscores the scalability of pre-band programs and their potential to serve as a standard precursor to formal music education worldwide. The success of these programs in diverse educational settings also highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity and adaptability in curriculum design. Instruments and curricula that are culturally resonant and flexible enough to accommodate local music education norms are more likely to be effective and well-received.

³⁴ Nuvo Windstars, "Current Programs," accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.nuvo-windstars.com/current-programs?name=&country=All&state=&city=&level=All&page=1>.

Pre-band programs like WindStars represent a transformative development of music education. By providing young students with an accessible, enjoyable, and educationally sound introduction to music, these programs lay the groundwork for lifelong engagement with musical learning. The success of these programs across diverse regions and cultures further attests to their efficacy and adaptability, marking them as a valuable component of modern music education strategies. The global success of pre-band programs emphasizes the need for ongoing research and development in this area to continue enhancing the accessibility and effectiveness of music education for young learners specifically, in the rural Midwest.

Motivation, SES, and Innovative Performance

One of the cultural underpinnings regarding measuring the sociological status of a society or subset within, hence the ‘rural Midwest,’ would be to examine financial investments. Music education does not exist in a vacuum; rather, it is deeply embedded within broader social, cultural, and economic contexts. Morganstern's critique of public funding for classical music illuminates the socio-economic disparities inherent in music education, where taxpayer subsidies for military bands contrast with limited support for arts education in schools.³⁵ Further, Bowman and Fraga's exploration of music as a commodity, “\$5000 for Bowl ticket versus a \$15 seat at the Metropolitan Opera in New York,” underscores the tension between cultural value and market forces in shaping music education policies and practices.³⁶ Furthermore, additional empirical investigations have elucidated that students participating in musical performance ensembles demonstrate decreased achievement after the introduction of extrinsic rewards, such as trophies,

³⁵ Sheldon Morganstern, *No Vivaldi in the Garage: A Requiem for Classical Music in North America* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2001), 161.

³⁶ Wayne D. Bowman and Ana Lucía. Fraga, *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy in Music Education* (Oxford ; Oxford University Press, 2012), 257.

particularly in circumstances where their primary motivation for performance was intrinsic satisfaction prior.³⁷ Moreover, students simply learn more when they are intrinsically motivated. Performing to elevate the emotional status of the audience member serves as a potential catalyst for exponential growth in intrinsic motivation.

Nestled within rural Minnesota, Central Lakes College (CLC) is a distinctive bastion of music education, emblematic of innovative pedagogical approaches within the Midwest. As part of the Minnesota State College system, CLC offers a unique music education program characterized by its comprehensive curriculum, open-sourced materials, and financially accessible tenets, including two music degree programs complemented by three certificates in music studies. Notably diverse in composition, CLC's performance ensembles encompass a heterogeneous cohort comprising high school students, post-secondary learners, traditional and non-traditional music majors and non-majors, and engaged members from the local music community, including music educators and various industry professionals with collegiate music backgrounds.³⁸

Despite initial setbacks posed by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, a pioneering initiative emerged within CLC's music program during the academic year of 2023-2024. This initiative sought to extend the reach of musical engagement beyond traditional settings by facilitating performances for incarcerated individuals.³⁹ While the pandemic initially hindered the execution of this endeavor, it ultimately came to fruition, marking a significant milestone in

³⁷ Harold F. Abeles and Lori A. Custodero, eds., *Critical Issues in Music Education: Contemporary Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2022), 80.

³⁸ "Music Performance," Central Lakes College, accessed May 22, 2024, <https://www.clcmn.edu/music-performance/>.

³⁹ Theresa Brouke, "CLC Musicians Play Concert in Crow Wing County Jail," *Brainerd Dispatch*, April 23, 2024, <https://www.brainerddispatch.com/news/local/clc-musicians-play-concert-in-crow-wing-county-jail>.

the program's evolution. Accounts of these performances are disseminated through various channels, including social media platforms, local newspapers, and online college media outlets, effectively reaching diverse audiences and increasing public engagement. These narratives, though unattributed, illuminated the program's commitment to community engagement and its proactive response to the challenges posed by external circumstances.

The culmination of the initiative to perform for underserved audiences, particularly within carceral settings, yielded profound insights into the intersection of musical engagement and intrinsic motivation among participating musicians. The performances orchestrated by the Central Lakes College (CLC) brass choir for three distinct populations of inmates at the Crow Wing County Jail provided a rich tapestry of experiences and reflections from the ensemble members.⁴⁰ Through testimonials offered by Cameron Gliottone, Preston Weber, Jonah Olson, and Levi Trygstad conveyed on social media, themes of unique experiences, intense focus, community enrichment, and shared passion for music emerged, illuminating the transformative potential of musical outreach efforts in fostering intrinsic motivation among both performers and audiences.⁴¹

Cameron Gliottone conveyed a sense of awe and gratitude towards the singular experience of performing for incarcerated individuals. Emphasizing the distinctiveness of the audience and the environment, Gliottone underscored the importance of channeling utmost concentration and dedication during the performance. This sentiment reflects a heightened sense of engagement and commitment, suggesting that the novelty and significance of the setting

⁴⁰ Preston Weber, "CLC Bands Perform Three Concerts for the Incarcerated," Facebook post, April 21, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61551973472124>.

⁴¹ Brouke, "CLC Musicians Play Concert in Crow Wing County Jail," <https://www.brainerddispatch.com/news/local/clc-musicians-play-concert-in-crow-wing-county-jail>.

catalyzed a deeper level of investment in the musical endeavor. Gliottone's assertion that the experience was "worth going through again" speaks to the intrinsic value derived from engaging with underserved audiences, wherein sharing music transcends conventional performance paradigms to become a meaningful and rewarding endeavor.⁴²

CLC Music Director Preston Weber's reflection provided additional insights into the dynamic interplay between performers and audience members within the carceral context. Notwithstanding the logistical challenges posed by the unique performance space, Weber noted the ensemble's unwavering focus and cohesion, resulting in heightened musical performance.⁴³ The reciprocal exchange between musicians and inmates, characterized by mutual appreciation and engagement, exemplifies the transformative potential of musical outreach initiatives in fostering community connections and promoting positive change. Weber's emphasis on the mission of music education as a catalyst for enrichment and empowerment underscores the intrinsic value of music as a tool for social impact and collective upliftment.

Jonah Olson's testimony echoed sentiments of empathy, altruism, and inclusivity, emphasizing the universal accessibility and significance of live music experiences. In highlighting the importance of democratizing access to cultural amenities, Olson underscored the role of music in fostering connection and bridging societal divides. Bringing a live concert to individuals confined within carceral settings not only serves as a testament to the transformative power of music but also embodies principles of equity, compassion, and social responsibility. Olson's assertion that "our passions should be shared" encapsulates a broader ethos of communal

⁴² Weber, "CLC Bands Perform Three Concerts for the Incarcerated," <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61551973472124>.

⁴³ Ibid.

solidarity and cultural enrichment, wherein music is a unifying force transcending barriers of confinement and marginalization.⁴⁴

Levi Trygstad's reflection provided poignant insights into the transformative impact of musical outreach endeavors on both performers and audience members. Describing the experience as "eye-opening," Trygstad underscored the profound shift in perspective engendered by engaging with underserved communities. Sharing music with individuals who may not otherwise have access to live performances speaks to the democratizing potential of musical outreach initiatives in fostering cultural inclusion and promoting human dignity. Trygstad's gratitude for the opportunity to enrich the lives of others through music reflects a broader ethos of service, empathy, and social engagement, wherein giving becomes inherently intertwined with creating and sharing music.

The testimonials provided by ensemble members following their performance for incarcerated individuals underscored the transformative potential of musical outreach initiatives in fostering the following themes: intrinsic motivation, community enrichment, and social impact. Through their reflections, Gliottone, Weber, Olson, and Trygstad illuminated the multifaceted dimensions of the carceral performance experience, highlighting themes of uniqueness, focus, empathy, and empowerment. These insights offer valuable contributions to the scholarly discourse surrounding the role of music in promoting equity, inclusion, and human flourishing within diverse communities.

⁴⁴ Weber, "CLC Bands Perform Three Concerts for the Incarcerated," <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61551973472124>.

Vernacular Pre-Service Music Education

Cultivating musical proficiency is at the core of preservice music education programs. Through rigorous coursework, ensemble participation, and applied music lessons, aspiring music educators deepen their understanding and mastery of music theory, history, performance, music education pedagogy, applied instruments, the audience experience, and composition. Their musical expertise forms the foundation upon which they construct all other facets of their teaching practice, enabling them to effectively convey musical concepts and inspire their students through their passion and proficiency.

In addition to musical excellence, undergraduate programs foster pedagogical competence among future music educators. The fulcrum for success, both initially and beyond the first five years, consists of pedagogy and college/university music fundamentals. This foundational stage often determines success or failure in the profession.⁴⁵ Furthermore, most music education formation programs narrowly focus on the Western classical tradition, a division of music that grows exponentially as a dichotomy to the music of communities in which students will eventually teach.⁴⁶ Moreover, entrance into the aforementioned institutions usually depends on how well a music student performs in Western classical music tradition.⁴⁷ “Additionally, specific pieces or études on one instrument that are included in audition guidelines can pose a challenge to some who might otherwise excel in a music education program. In fact, the strength of a music educator might lie in their ability to play a wide variety

⁴⁵ G. V. Barnes, "Teaching music: The first year," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 185 (2010): 63–76, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41110366>.

⁴⁶ "A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher," A publication of the National Association for Music Education, 1806 Robert Fulton Drive, Reston, VA 20191 – www.nafme.org, <https://nafme.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/NAF072-MusicInitiative-8.pdf>, 15

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

of instruments or sing in multiple styles, rather than only specializing in one.”⁴⁸ The philosophy is that through coursework in music education methodology, instructional design, and classroom management, pre-service teachers learn to translate their musical expertise into effective teaching practice. The problem is that underserved students do not represent the population in secondary ensembles from which to elucidate auditions.⁴⁹

Undergraduate programs in music education should be instrumental in cultivating cultural competence and diversity awareness. This emphasis tends to confine music education within the confines of Western classical traditions and performance practices, thereby constraining its scope and breadth.⁵⁰ In an increasingly diverse and globalized society, music educators must possess the knowledge and skills to honor and celebrate their student’s diverse musical traditions and cultural backgrounds. Through exposure to various musical perspectives, cultures, and styles, aspiring music educators learn to create inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments that foster a sense of belonging and appreciation for all students. The pinnacle learning goals and objectives for undergraduate programs in the career development of music education teachers aim to provide aspiring educators with the comprehensive knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to excel in the multifaceted role of music teaching. These goals encompass various domains, including musical proficiency, pedagogical expertise, cultural competence, and professional ethics.

⁴⁸ P. Payne and J. Ward, "Admission and assessment of music degree candidates," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 29, no. 2 (2020): 10–21, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083719878388>.

⁴⁹ K. Elpus and C. R. Abril, "Who enrolls in high school music? A national profile of U.S. students, 2009–2013," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 67, no. 3 (2019): 323–338, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429419862837>.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

The traditional notion of a music director, embodying the role of a 'Sage on the Podium,' towards whom students gravitate, requires reevaluation if the Vision 2020 initiative of 'Music for All' is to be fully embraced.⁵¹ Additionally, music educators must actively seek out students, particularly those from underserved populations, and extend invitations to participate in an inclusive and welcoming environment reflective of the student body's diversity. Furthermore, the rich history of band culture in America, characterized by a diverse repertoire and potpourri concert format, offers a promising framework for curricular reform to foster collaborative musical experiences accessible to all. "New and innovative offerings for students looking for options beyond Band, Orchestra, Choir, and Jazz continue to be broadly viewed as "other," "extra," "unique," or "unusual."⁵² The singularity generates a disconnect between the curricula of music teacher educators and the responsibilities imposed on PK–12 music educators to implement in their communities."⁵³

According to the Housewright Symposium on the Future of Music Education, "Eurocentrism is viewed by the respondents as the narrow prism for the curriculum offered in degree preparation outlined by the colleges/universities and modeled by PK–12 communities that frame their course offerings by the collegiate benchmarks."⁵⁴ Numerous institutions of higher learning maintain a predominant emphasis on Western European historical narratives, literary works, theoretical frameworks, and performance traditions. Traditional large ensembles within secondary education settings prominently reflect this pedagogical orientation, serving as primary

⁵¹ *Vision 2020: The Housewright Symposium on the Future of Music Education*, ed. Clifford Madsen (Location: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers / National Association for Music Education (NAfME), 2020).

⁵² "A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher," NAfME, 21.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

conduits for preparing students for collegiate studies. Consequently, this conventional approach produces curricular frameworks characterized by limited diversity and resistance to substantive change.

Retention

In the fiscal landscape of education and corrections within the United States during 2015, a notable disparity emerged in the allocation of financial resources, revealing a stark contrast in expenditure between K-12 education and the correctional system. Specifically, the nation directed a considerable sum of \$12,330 per pupil towards K-12 education, a cornerstone of societal investment in human capital and prospects.⁵⁵ Concurrently, an allocation of \$33,274 per convict was earmarked for the maintenance of the correctional apparatus, thereby signifying a financial commitment that surpassed that directed toward educational endeavors. This financial contrast elucidates a noteworthy observation: the nation expended approximately 2.7 times more resources on each incarcerated individual than on each student within the educational system, thereby underscoring broader societal priorities and resource allocation strategies.⁵⁶

Band concerts embody a potential platform to reach out to underserved communities, including those attending the Special Olympics, indigenous or immigrant populations, and the incarcerated, to investigate potential correlations with enhanced enrollment, retention, and proficiency among Midwest band students. Furthermore, acknowledging music as an innate human phenomenon, it is understood that the human brain exhibits a predisposition towards

⁵⁵ "A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher," NAFME, 21.

⁵⁶ "News Briefs," *Music Educators Journal* 71 (September, 1984): 12.

music, as evidenced by the activation of sensory and motor cortices during music listening.⁵⁷

Minority parents demonstrate a solid commitment to music education, with African-American and Hispanic parents exhibiting higher enrollment rates in school music classes compared to Caucasian parents.⁵⁸

However, the notion of competition within music education is contentious, with some scholars highlighting its potential to foster individual growth. In contrast, others caution against its adverse effects on camaraderie and intrinsic motivation. Research indicates that intrinsic motivation, stemming from an inherent enjoyment of the activity, is paramount in sustaining interest and engagement in musical pursuits.⁵⁹ Moreover, studies suggest that the introduction of tangible rewards for activities initially driven by intrinsic motivation may diminish individuals' subsequent interest and spontaneous engagement with those activities.⁶⁰ These insights underscore the multifaceted nature of motivation and the importance of fostering intrinsic motivation as a catalyst for sustained engagement and growth in music education.

Plastic Instruments in rural Midwest America

Student attrition in school band programs is a complex issue influenced by various factors, ranging from the condition of the instruments to the type of music students are required to play. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach that encompasses proper instrument maintenance and ensures a musically engaging and relevant curriculum—

⁵⁷ Daniel J. Levitin, "Neural Correlates of Musical Behaviors a Brief Overview." *Music Therapy Perspectives* 31, no. 1 (2013): 16.

⁵⁸ NAMM Foundation and Grunwald Associates LLC. "Striking a Chord: The Public's Hopes and Beliefs for K–12 Music Education in the United States: 2015."

⁵⁹ Don Stinson, *High Needs, Monumental Successes: Teaching Music to Low-Income and Underserved Students* (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc., 2001), 246.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 247.

investigating strategies to mitigate the primary reasons why students discontinue their band activities and offer strategies to enhance retention and engagement.

Significant changes have marked the transformation of music education within economically constrained environments, mainly through the use of financially accessible instruments. Rural Minnesota band director Robert Freelove's innovative introduction of a pre-band course at Pillager High School, which incorporates plastic instruments designed for fifth graders, exemplifies this paradigm shift. This initiative, analyzed through thematic and historiographic lenses and evaluated using Causality and Relational Measurement Theory, offers insights into how such educational innovations can enhance student enrollment, retention, and proficiency, addressing longstanding challenges in rural Midwest American band programs. Freelove's program did more than provide instruments; it fostered a community spirit and enhanced the cultural fabric of the school. The inclusivity of the program brought together students from diverse backgrounds, promoting social cohesion and collective learning. The success of this initiative also garnered positive attention from the broader community, enhancing the school's reputation and music education program. Moreover, more students from low SES families were staying in band.⁶¹

Transitional and Viable

The advent of plastic transitional instruments marks a transformative era in music education, addressing physical and financial barriers that young learners and families often face. Exploring the integration of such instruments in educational settings and examining their design and benefits illuminates the possibility of instructing bands to underserved, nascent

⁶¹ Rob Freelove, "3rd Annual Paul Bunyan Band Festival," Facebook, April 19, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/profile/100063528055895/search/?q=paul%20bunyan%20band%20festival>.

to band, populations. Furthermore, the remarkable achievements of students like Ananda, who have excelled internationally using modern, plastic instruments, are essential in addressing the access gap to bands in rural Midwest America.

Design and Accessibility

The meticulous design of plastic transitional instruments such as the NUVO Clarinéo, jSax, and jHorn cater to young children's ergonomic and learning needs.⁶² These instruments are significantly lighter and smaller than their traditional counterparts. They feature shorter finger stretches and smaller tone holes, which alleviate the physical strain typically associated with starting a wind instrument. Such design considerations ensure that children as young as four can begin their musical training without the hindrances of heavy instruments. Moreover, tuned in keys like C and B \flat , NUVO horns simplify the learning process and allow for seamless integration into various educational music programs.⁶³ The ability of these instruments to play full chromatic scales and maintain traditional fingering patterns ensures that students can transition to standard instruments with ease and confidence.

Educational Strategies and Pedagogical Innovation

Pre-band programs endeavor to bridge transitions into formal music education by introducing young students to wind instruments that are less complex and physically demanding than traditional band instruments. Crafted to accommodate the physical limitations of younger students, instruments like the NUVO Dood, Toot, jSax, and Clarinéo maintain authentic musical

⁶² Nuvo Instrumental, "jHorn," accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.nuvoinstrumental.com/products/jhorn/>.

⁶³ Nuvo Instrumental, "jSax," accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.nuvoinstrumental.com/products/jsax/>.

quality.⁶⁴ These instruments are key in C, simplifying the learning process and enabling integration with other classroom instruments, thus promoting inclusivity and accessibility.

The design and implementation of these instruments are rooted in a pedagogical approach that values step-by-step learning. This method allows students to build confidence and proficiency gradually, enhancing their ability to tackle more complex instruments and musical concepts in future educational settings. This strategic approach addresses common challenges in music education, such as the physical difficulty of handling traditional instruments and the technical barriers to early music literacy.

Instrument Maintenance and Student Frustration

One of the primary reasons students quit band is related to the physical state of their instruments.⁶⁵ Instruments in poor condition, such as those with worn corks, ineffective reeds, or even minor dents, can significantly impair a student's ability to produce a good sound. Deferred maintenance leads to profound frustration, particularly when students need more experience identifying the technical malfunctions causing their difficulties. Lack of experience often leads to a misplaced belief that the fault lies with their musical abilities rather than a fixable mechanical issue.

The subtle nature of these malfunctions can make them particularly insidious, as they may not be immediately apparent to instructors or parents, who could otherwise intervene. Music educators should institute regular check-ups and maintenance workshops, ensuring that students and parents understand the basics of instrument care. Proactive maintenance not only preserves

⁶⁴ Music Constructed, "Pre-Band," accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.musicconstructed.com/tool/pre-band/>.

⁶⁵ Mazzocchi, "Why Students Really Quit Their Musical Instrument (and How Parents Can Prevent It)," <https://www.musicparentsguide.com/2015/02/17/students-really-quit-musical-instrument-parents-can-prevent/>.

the functionality and longevity of the instruments but also helps sustain student interest and self-confidence. Maintenance mitigation becomes problematic in low SES populations. Many of the plastic beginning band instruments currently available utilize synthetic mitigation interventions, eliminating the need for maintenance and frequent replacement of reeds, corks, pads, and more.⁶⁶

Accessibility

Aaron Copland wrote his music about people whom society considered 'vernacular,' including *The Common Man*, *Mexico*, *Cuba*, and frontiers in Western America. His music successfully reached more classes of people than any composer before him.⁶⁷ Copland struggled to resolve the disparities among classes through composition in rural Minnesota during social upheaval. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the divide between rich and poor and the rural and urban Midwest. The following archival sources provide data connecting how a summer stay in rural, financially insecure Minnesota enabled Copland to develop his famous "self-imposed simplified style" of composition and how employing Copland's philosophies of inclusion in instrumental band music education may increase interest, access, retention, and excellence with specific regard to students classified as having low SES in the current rural Midwest.

⁶⁶ "Making the jump from recorder to pre-band instruments," Facebook Events, accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/events/4586320051472918/?ref=newsfeed>.

⁶⁷ Lowe, "Class music learning activities: Do students find them important, interesting and useful?", 48-50.

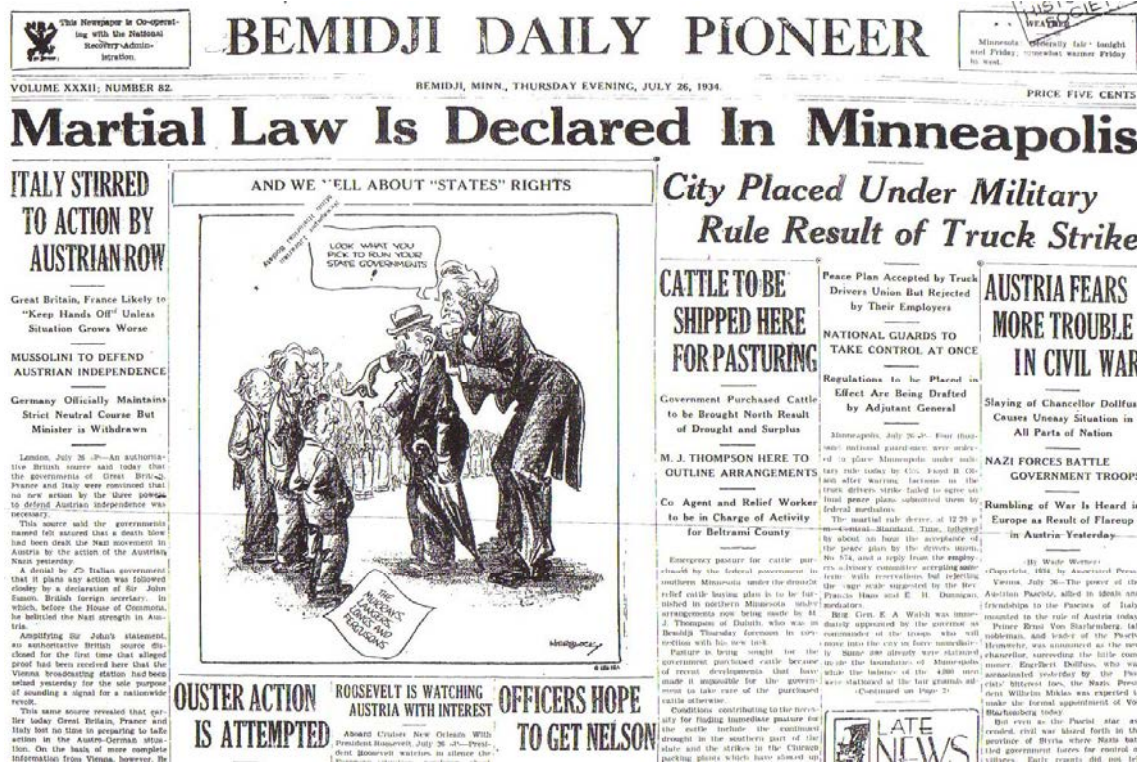
Figure 1. Local Newspaper Reporting Worker Conflicts During Copland's Stay in Minnesota.



This scene juxtaposes Copland's experience with rural, common people of the Midwest (Minnesota).

68 Figure 1. "Bemidji National Guardsmen in Minneapolis Strike Duty," Bemidji Daily Pioneer, August 2nd, 1934.

Figure 2. Local Newspaper Reporting Escalation in Worker Conflicts During Copland's Stay in Minnesota.



This article premiered in the local newspaper, where Copland realized his *Self-Imposed Simplified Style*. It depicts the growing disparity of wealth and status in the rural Midwest.

69 Figure 2: "Martial Law is Declared in Minneapolis," Bemidji Daily Pioneer, July 26, 1934.

American musicologists credit Aaron Copland as a chief contributor to the development of a unique and authentic American Style of music, referring to Copland as “more successful, perhaps, than any other American composer grasping the precise and essential curve of the colloquial patterns of folk and popular [vernacular] music, either with the aid of direct quotation of traditional tunes or by creating original ones along traditional lines.”⁷⁰ Copland established that identity with his simplified, accessible style.⁷¹ By adopting a culturally responsive approach to instrumental instruction, embracing inclusive programming techniques, diversifying musical repertoire selection, and accommodating non-traditional and vernacular instruments and performance practices, this study endeavors to cater to the needs of underserved communities, including the incarcerated, immigrants, indigenous groups, and individuals experiencing poverty.

Bowman and Fraga (2012) highlight the inherent limitations of traditional ensembles in catering to the diverse musical needs of students, stating, “while duty ethics focuses on duties consequentialism focus on for example quote given the typically small percentage of a student population who joined ensembles, the musical needs of the greatest number of students simply cannot be addressed by ensembles.”⁷² The issue of equity and inclusion concerning students of low socioeconomic status and rural Midwest band programs is both a developing trend and an enigma.

⁷⁰ Arthur Berger, "Aspects of Aaron Copland's Music," *Tempo* 10 (March 1945): 2, <http://jstor.org/stable/944307>.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 305.

⁷² Wayne D. Bowman and Ana Lucía. Fraga, *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy in Music Education* (Oxford ; Oxford University Press, 2012), 224.

Financially Accessible Instruments

One of the primary themes identified is the enhanced accessibility of music education using plastic instruments. Plastic instruments are significantly more affordable than traditional band instruments, enabling a broader demographic of students to participate in music education. The dual goals of cost-effectiveness and physical suitability for younger students drove Freelove's strategic decision to introduce instruments such as plastic trumpets, trombones, flutes, and clarinets.⁷³

Robert Freelove is responsible for the instrumental music education of students in grades 5-12 in a rural Midwest American school. Analogous to many rural districts, funding for music education is a pervasive problem that needs more predictability. In response to budget cuts that led to the elimination of the fifth-grade band program, Freelove introduced a revolutionary pre-band course that incorporated plastic instruments for all fifth graders in the district.⁷⁴ This initiative not only addressed the immediate challenge of providing a music education pathway for all students but also aligned with broader educational objectives of inclusivity and accessibility. Pre-band instruments are not a new philosophical construct. For example, as shown in Figure 3, they were first introduced as a bridge instrument from the recorder to wind instruments in 1967.⁷⁵


⁷³ Rob Freelove, "PreBand and Plastic Band Instruments," Facebook, accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/profile/100063528055895/search/?q=band>.

⁷⁴ "Music, Art, PE," Pillager High School, accessed May 21, 2024, <https://phs.isd116.org/departments/music-art-pe>.


⁷⁵ Frederick Earle, *Music Time for Flutophone & Other Pre Band Inst.* (1967), eBay listing.

Figure 3. Flutophone

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1967 *Reprinted in 2022 available on Amazon, original available on eBay⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Figure 3: Frederick Earle, *Music Time for Flutophone & Other Pre Band Inst.* (1967), eBay listing.

The introduction of plastic instruments catalyzed a profound influence on the trajectory of the music education program experienced in the band at Pillager High School. The accessibility of these instruments led to increased enrollment, as more students could afford to participate. Moreover, the ease of playing these instruments, designed to be lighter and more manageable for younger students, helped improve retention rates.⁷⁷ Students were more likely to continue in the program due to reduced physical challenges and the immediate gratification of being able to produce music. The energy and engagement levels increased, leading Frelove to seek additional performance opportunities like musicals and an annual band festival.⁷⁸

Student Participation

One of the primary themes emerging from rural Michigan band director Ben Witter's work is the critical role of instrument accessibility in enhancing student participation. Plastic instruments, significantly less expensive than their traditional counterparts, addressed the economic barriers many families in Hillman faced. By securing funding and donations, Witter ensured that every student wishing to participate in the band could do so, thereby democratizing access to music education.⁷⁹ Plastic instruments, such as the jHorn, jSax, and Clarinéo, have not only made music education more accessible due to their affordability and durability but have also significantly reduced the physical challenges students face, such as handling the weight and complexity of traditional instruments.⁸⁰ The thank you video for supporting an inclusive,

⁷⁷ Pillager Public School, Facebook, accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/PillagerPublicSchool>.

⁷⁸ "Pillager High School Hosts Paul Bunyan Band Festival," KAXE, April 18, 2023, <https://www.kaxe.org/local-news/2023-04-18/pillager-high-school-hosts-paul-bunyan-band-festival>.

⁷⁹ Hillman Broadcasting, "Thank You," YouTube video, February 20, 2019, accessed May 3, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyAc1vpmnaw>.

⁸⁰ Nuvo Instrumental, "jSax," accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.nuvoinstrumental.com/products/jsax/>.

completely financially accessible, polymer instrument outfitted band posted on social media demonstrates the ease of storage of such instruments illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Flutes and Clarinets Completely Composed of Synthetic Polymers from Hillman, Michigan displayed during a ‘Thank You’ Social Media Posting.



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Providing each student with a uniform Nuvo Plastic Instrument mitigates the competition over who possesses the best or most expensive instrument. This adaptation has been crucial in a rural setting like Hillman, where resources can be sparse and retention in music programs traditionally low.

⁸¹ Hillman Broadcasting, "Thank You," YouTube video, February 20, 2019, accessed May 4, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyAc1vpmnaw>.

Under Witter's leadership in rural Michigan, the band program significantly increased student enrollment and retention.⁸² The plastic instruments proved an effective learning tool, helping students overcome the physical and technical challenges associated with heavier, more complex metal instruments. This accessibility enabled students to focus more on musicality and less on the logistics of handling the instrument, thereby enhancing the educational experience and fostering a more inclusive learning environment. Another significant theme is the sustainability of using plastic instruments, which are cost-effective, durable, and easy to maintain. This aspect of Witter's program offers a replicable model for other schools with limited financial resources. The durability of plastic ensures long-term usability, reducing the need for frequent replacements and repairs and thus enabling ongoing program sustainability.

Ben Witter's work in Hillman, Michigan, is a compelling case study of how innovative thinking and community-oriented strategies can rejuvenate music education in rural areas. His use of plastic instruments has not only made music education more accessible but has also enhanced student engagement, community involvement, and professional recognition. This case strongly supports the notion that with creativity and dedication, educators can overcome traditional challenges in music education, paving the way for successful and sustainable programs that enrich students' lives and bolster community pride.

Durability, Maintenance, and Cost-Effectiveness

One of the most significant advantages of plastic instruments is their durability and ease of maintenance. Plastic instruments provide significant advantages due to their durability and ease of maintenance. Furthermore, straightforward methods, such as washing plastic instruments

⁸² Kiyrax Davis, "Performance At Detroit Red Wings Game," *WBKB 11*, March 7, 2024, accessed May 4, 2024, <https://www.wbkb11.com/hillmans-high-school-band-prepares-for-upcoming-performance-at-detroit-red-wings-game>

in warm, soapy water, make them particularly suitable for school settings where instruments are frequently shared among students. The robust construction prevents damage from drops and mishandling, thereby reducing repair costs and downtime in music education programs.⁸³

The affordability of these instruments also makes them accessible to a broader demographic. Schools and parents can invest in these instruments without the financial burden associated with traditional metal and woodwind instruments, thus democratizing access to music education, and ensuring more children have the opportunity to learn music. 21st-century plastic instruments, in general, are approximately less than one-tenth of the cost of their brass, wood and composite counterparts.⁸⁴ The sustainability of using plastic instruments is another critical theme. These instruments require less maintenance and are more durable, reducing long-term costs and ensuring the program's continuity. The replicability of this model to increase enrollment in band through financially and physically assessable instruments is significant for other schools facing similar financial constraints of traditional expensive and unreliable instruments, providing a blueprint for how music education can be made more accessible and inclusive.⁸⁵

Vernacular Music

Incorporating vernacular music into rural band programs has demonstrated significant educational outcomes, as evidenced by the experiences of three rural Midwest band directors,

⁸³ Nuvo Instrumental, "Clarineo," accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.nuvoinstrumental.com/products/clarineo/>.

⁸⁴ Anthony Mazzocchi, "Why Students Really Quit Their Musical Instrument (and How Parents Can Prevent It)," *The Music Parent's Guide*, February 17, 2015, <https://www.musicparentsguide.com/2015/02/17/students-really-quit-musical-instrument-parents-can-prevent/>.

⁸⁵ "Pillager High School Hosts Paul Bunyan Band Festival," KAXE.

Joel Poland, Ben Witter, and John Crust, practicing in Minnesota, Michigan, and North Dakota. Delving into thematic elements derived from their approaches, illuminating the integration of diverse musical genres, the emphasis on jazz and indigenous music, and the resultant enhancements in student musical proficiency and engagement reveals a non-traditional potential roadmap for success in rural Midwest band programs with low SES students. The discussion further examines how these themes contribute to broader educational benefits, including increased participation and recognition in music education.

Joel Poland, a rural Minnesota band director, adopts a philosophy that prioritizes jazz education over traditional concert band curricula.⁸⁶ This approach not only diversifies the musical exposure of students but also enhances their proficiency across various music genres. Poland's initiative to include instruments like the acoustic bass guitar in concert band curriculum and performances, coupled with his efforts to facilitate students' participation in prestigious ensembles, exemplifies a successful augmentation of the traditional band program. One notable achievement under Poland's direction is a student's selection to a state concert honor band. This accolade underscores the effectiveness of integrating non-traditional instruments and genres into the band setting.⁸⁷

Furthermore, Poland's strategy to expand the jazz program through active participation in festivals and securing grants for master classes with renowned artists enriches the learning environment. These opportunities provide students with direct exposure to professional musicianship, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of jazz music. By securing

⁸⁶ Pierz Public Schools, "Pierz Music Department Newsletter," accessed May 21, 2024, [PDF file], <https://www.pierzschools.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=979&dataid=2594&FileName=Pierz%20Music%20Department%20Newsletter.pdf>.

⁸⁷ Pierz Bands, Facebook page, accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/pierzbands>.

college credit for co-curricular ensembles, Poland also ensures that students' musical endeavors are recognized academically, enhancing the value of their participation in the band program.⁸⁸ The accolades, in the form of high ratings and medaling at contests, affirm Poland's assertion that engagement with vernacular music leads to superior performances across multiple genres.⁸⁹ Versatility and adaptability are traits realized by students, affirmed by accolades, and exposed to a pedagogical philosophy employing a broad spectrum of musical styles.

Vernacular Instruments

John Crust, directing bands in rural North Dakota on a Native American reservation, focuses on integrating indigenous Native American music into the band curriculum.⁹⁰ This initiative not only preserves and promotes indigenous culture but also engages students in unique ways. Crust's innovative approach includes teaching students to construct traditional indigenous drums, an activity that combines practical skills with cultural education. By applying the principal tenets of superior performance typically reserved for Western Eurocentric music to vernacular indigenous music, Crust successfully increases student participation and retention.

The inclusion of indigenous music has led to notable successes, such as the selection of two Newtown students to perform in a multi-state honor band endeavored in Seattle, Washington, one of the most significant honor bands in the country, 'The Western International Band Clinic.'⁹¹ This recognition is a testament to students' high proficiency level when engaged

⁸⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/pierzbands>.

⁸⁹ Pierz Public Schools, "Pierz Music Department Newsletter."

⁹⁰ New Town Public School District #1, Facebook, accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057288286132>.

⁹¹ John Crust, "New Town Students to Perform at Western International Band Clinic," Facebook, accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=821323819787220&set=a.536444804941791>.

with culturally relevant and historically significant music. Crust's program enhances musical skills and instills a sense of pride and ownership over one's cultural heritage.

Analyzing and synthesizing the pioneering contributions of Ben Witter in the field of music education, particularly his significant achievements in implementing a band program with exclusively plastic instruments in rural Michigan, provides a theoretical framework for success in rural, low SES, Midwest America. Further, Ben Witter's remarkable journey in music education within rural Michigan offers a compelling case study of innovation and determination. His successful implementation of a band program exclusively utilizing financially accessible plastic instruments underscores significant themes in the discourse on music education reform: accessibility, inclusion, and sustainability. This exploration examines the thematic elements of innovation in music education, community engagement, and recognition within the professional sphere.

Historically, rural music programs across the United States have faced numerous challenges, including limited funding, resource constraints, and declining student interest.⁹² Witter's approach undertook these challenges head-on by introducing plastic instruments, a choice driven by both necessity and a strategic vision for inclusivity and engagement. This initiative not only revitalized the Hillman music program but also provided a scalable model for other districts facing similar constraints.⁹³ Ben Witter, a music educator for over 15 years, has had a transformative influence on the Hillman community in Michigan which had been

⁹² Jean Anyon, "Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work," *Journal of Education* 162, no. 1 (1980): 67-92, accessed February 29, 2024, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42742034>, 70.

⁹³ "The Alpena News, 'Hillman schools band director 'impressed with students'" May 09, 2024, *Today's Paper*, accessed May 2, 2024, <https://www.thealpenanews.com/news/local-news/2018/06/hillman-schools-band-director-impressed-with-students/>.

discontinued for several years by the former school administration.⁹⁴ Witter's arrival marked a resurgence of interest and participation in music among students across all school levels.⁹⁵ His strategic introduction of lightweight, durable plastic instruments has addressed several barriers typically associated with traditional metal instruments, particularly for younger students.

Robert Frelove's innovative approach to music education at Pillager High School illuminates the transformative potential of integrating affordable plastic instruments into band programs. This initiative has not only enhanced the accessibility and inclusivity of music education but also demonstrated significant positive impacts on student engagement and learning outcomes. Frelove's work is a model for other educators looking to overcome financial and resource barriers in music education, advocating for a more equitable and inclusive approach to teaching music in schools. Moreover, Frelove's response to budget cuts, which eliminates an entire grade of band, contributes to the broader discourse on music education reform, emphasizing the role of innovative, cost-effective solutions in overcoming the challenges faced by educational institutions in economically disadvantaged areas. Frelove's pioneering work underscores the importance of adaptability, creativity, and commitment to inclusivity in pursuit of educational excellence and equity.

All four band directors illustrate that focusing on vernacular instruments utilized in vernacular music genres—ranging from Latin and gospel to hip-hop and swing—motivates students to achieve musical excellence. This motivation is evident in students' enthusiasm for participating in solo and ensemble contests and large group contests and festivals. Engaging with

⁹⁴ Ben Witter, "Ben Witter - Elementary Music Educator," Music Education Summit, accessed May 2, 2024, <https://musiceducationsummit.org/2021-elementary-presenters-1/ben-witter-88enb#:~:text=Ben%20Witter%20%2D%20Elementary%20Music%20Educator,been%20cut%20for%20many%20y> ears

⁹⁵ Ibid.

music that resonates with their personal experiences and cultural backgrounds makes students more inclined to invest time and effort in their musical development.

The integration of vernacular music into rural band programs, as demonstrated by directors Poland, Witter, Frelove, and Crust offers significant educational benefits. This thematic analysis reveals that such integration enhances student engagement, increases musical proficiency, and promotes cultural education. The success of their programs provides a compelling argument for the broader adoption of vernacular music in music education. By embracing diverse musical genres, rural band programs can foster an educational environment that is inclusive, engaging, and conducive to high levels of student achievement in music. This approach not only prepares students for musical excellence but also enriches their cultural understanding and appreciation, ultimately contributing to a more holistic educational experience.

Addressing the Research Questions

The following research data and results reflect the viability of the endeavored Copland inclusion philosophical framework. Research Question One delves into the influence of Aaron Copland's philosophy of inclusion on low SES Midwest band students. The reflexive themes from this study indicate that leveraging 21st-century financially accessible plastic instruments and performing for underserved audiences increased student enrollment, retention, and motivation in rural Midwest band programs.

Research Question Two centers on the philosophy of Self-Imposed Simplified Style music and its potential to enhance music appreciation within low SES Midwest band programs. The reflexive themes from this study indicate that integrating vernacular music and instruments

into the curriculum bolsters students' intrinsic motivation, thereby fostering increased retention and excellence in performance.

Summary

Chapter Four critically analyzes the profound impact of Aaron Copland's Minnesota retreat on his musical style and pedagogical philosophy, particularly within the context of instrumental band music education for low socioeconomic communities in the rural Midwest. It explores how Copland's use of vernacular elements and simplified musical styles revitalized his compositional approach and set a practical framework for enhancing student engagement, retention, and academic achievement in band programs. The chapter highlights how Copland's emphasis on everyday American themes and folk elements, which resonate with students' cultural backgrounds, promotes inclusivity and broadens access to music education through affordable plastic instruments and folk music. Furthermore, it discusses the broader implications of Copland's educational strategies, which challenge the limitations of traditional band settings and advocate for a more inclusive and effective music education paradigm. Ultimately, the chapter posits that adopting Copland's philosophy could significantly transform music education, fostering skill development and a deeper, enduring connection to music for students from underserved, low SES backgrounds, thereby advocating for a paradigm shift towards more equitable and culturally responsive educational practices.

Chapter Five: Conclusion/Discussion

Introduction

This doctoral thesis explored the integration of Aaron Copland's philosophy of vernacular inclusion within rural Midwest band programs, particularly those populated by students of low socioeconomic status (SES). The study employed a qualitative, archival research design to examine the influence of vernacular music, instruments, and audiences on student enrollment, retention, and performance proficiency in band programs. Furthermore, the study utilized thematic analysis to understand better the association between using accessible instruments, vernacular music, and underserved performance audiences and outcomes in music education, mainly focusing on enrollment, retention, and proficiency.

Summary of Findings

Few musicologists have concentrated on the location of Aaron Copland's artistic revelation, despite extensive focus on the period of his success. This project investigated how a summer stay in rural Minnesota enabled Copland to develop his famous "self-imposed simplified style" of composition. There is considerable debate among Copland scholars regarding the classification and number of his stylistic periods. Secondary literature often recognizes four style periods: an early jazz period, a severe abstract period, a populist or 'Americana' period, and a late 12-tone period beginning with the Piano Quartet in 1950.¹ Richard Crawford, however, categorizes Copland's style periods differently, identifying them as formative (1920-25), jazz-derived works (1924-1929), abstract period (1930-34), and simplified-Americana (from 1935

¹ Howard Pollack, "Aaron Copland," *Grove Music Online*, s.v. "Aaron Copland," by L. Macy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), www.grovemusic.com.

onwards).² This study focuses less on the number of stylistic periods and more on the formation of Copland's 'Self Imposed Simplified Style' period and its implications.

The 1920s saw the advent of radio revolutionizing how the vernacular populace consumed musical concerts, paralleling the rise of social media in the 21st century. Aaron Copland's incorporation of vernacular melodies, such as folk songs, and compositional techniques evoking familiar sounds, like the opening of "Hoe-Down" from "Rodeo" mimicking an orchestra tuning, serves as a model for contemporary instrumental music educators.³ Band music educators should embrace creativity in programming and audience engagement, integrating vernacular music and instruments, and utilizing financially accessible instruments of the 21st century. This approach aims to democratize instrumental music education, ensuring its accessibility and relevance to a broader spectrum of society.

The findings elucidate that rural Midwest band directors face significant challenges in attracting and retaining low SES students. Vernacular music and financially accessible instruments, such as plastic ones, potentially increased student interest and engagement. Furthermore, performances for vernacular, underserved audiences enhance student commitment to their music education and improve their performance proficiency.

Implications

The research underscores the potential of Copland's inclusive philosophy to address equity issues in music education. By focusing on music that resonates with the student's cultural and economic backgrounds, band programs can become more accessible and appealing to a

² Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 586.

³ Howard Pollack, *Aaron Copland; The Life and Work of an Uncommon Man*, (New York: Henry Holt, 1999), 277.

broader demographic. This approach supports increased participation and retention rates and promotes a deeper connection between students and their musical studies.

Embracing vernacular music and instruments represents a departure from traditional music education practices that often prioritize Western classical music paradigms. This shift challenges existing curricular frameworks and suggests a broader, more inclusive definition of what constitutes educational music. The findings are consistent with the experiences of band directors Witter, Pohland, Peterson, Crust, Karkula, and Frelove, who have seen higher levels of student engagement, enrollment, retention, and performance proficiency. Their success stories serve as beacons of hope, inspiring other band directors to consider this paradigm shift at a substantial national level, moving away from a standard of literature and instrumentation contained on a state list.⁴

The current paradigm shift from standardized exams to student-centered assessments intersects significantly with music education. The comprehensive and inclusive educational approaches advocated in the late 20th and early 21st centuries did not receive unanimous acceptance among music education scholars. However, the experience of the Vernacular Music Center at Texas Tech University, and rural Midwest band programs in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan demonstrates that expanding ensemble repertoire increases participation across all ensemble forms, supporting the findings of this doctoral thesis..⁵ This evidence suggests that inclusivity in musical offerings enhances overall engagement rather than diminishing it. Further quantitative empirical research into vernacular music applications holds the promise of

⁴ S. Budiansky and T. W. Foley, "The Quality of Repertoire and School Music Programs: Literature Review, Analysis, and Discussion," *Journal of the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles* 12 (2005): 18.

⁵ "Texas Tech 'techannounce'," *TechAnnounce*, accessed April 22, 2024, <https://techannounce.ttu.edu/Client/ViewMessage.aspx?MsgId=274450>.

explicating additional strategies for enhancing student motivation, retention, and performance, offering a bright future for music education.

Applying the curriculum of Copland vernacular philosophy, as opposed to G. F. Will's extreme praxial philosophy which emphasizes rigorous pedagogy in teacher-centered classrooms and dismisses child-centered approaches as lacking rigor, reveals the benefits of diversifying ensemble offerings to include modern bands, vernacular instruments, and music.⁶ Insights from various music educators and professional artists globally, who have successfully integrated NUVO plastic instruments into their teaching practices, underscore the practical benefits of these instruments. Educators like Valentina Noris and Weronika Balewski highlight the practical benefits of NUVO instruments, including their light weight, ease of handling, and adaptability for young learners, even children as young as three.⁷ This reassures the audience about the effectiveness of these instruments in fostering music education. Further, the durability of these instruments in various climates, as demonstrated by educators Matteo La Spada in Italy and Chad Guess in the United States, supports their adaptability.⁸ However, band directors often prioritize equipping elite ensembles with professional instruments, limiting access for all students. This approach hinders the broader educational benefits of instrumental band music education.⁹ Future research should explore the impact of integrating affordable and durable instruments, like NUVO, on student engagement and the democratization of music education.

⁶ G. F. Will, "Education schools vs. education," *Newsweek*, January 16, 2006, 98.

⁷ Nuvo Instrumental, "Ambassadors," accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.nuvoinstrumental.com/ambassadors/>.

⁸ "A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher," A publication of the National Association for Music Education, 1806 Robert Fulton Drive, Reston, VA 20191 – www.nafme.org, <https://nafme.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/NAF072-MusicInitiative-8.pdf>, 15.

⁹ Mazzocchi, "Why Students Really Quit Their Musical Instrument (and How Parents Can Prevent It)," <https://www.musicparentsguide.com/2015/02/17/students-really-quit-musical-instrument-parents-can-prevent/>.

Theoretical

The ethos of educating the whole person through music integrates broader educational objectives, such as developing social, emotional, and cognitive skills alongside musical abilities. This approach recognizes the transformative power of music education in fostering personal growth and life skills that transcend the music classroom. Educators like Justin Tse, Hong Kong, and Sarah Todd, United Kingdom, have pointed out the educational advantages of these instruments. They provide a hands-on, immediate entry point to music learning, essential in developing early musical skills and knowledge.¹⁰ The ability to join more advanced ensembles at a young age, as seen in the experiences shared by Valentina Noris, Italy, showcases the instruments' role in enhancing musical proficiency and social integration within musical settings. Further, the use of NUVO instruments allows for a broader pedagogical approach. Teachers like Kirsty Duffy, Scotland, use these instruments to introduce woodwind instruments to younger children, making complex instruments more approachable and less intimidating.¹¹ This flexibility is crucial for educators aiming to diversify their teaching methods and cater to varied learning needs and styles. These constructs fail to align with the band tradition and practice in America over the past century.¹² Moreover, if instrumental music education is indeed for everyone, drastic changes need to be made to reach underserved students.

Some music philosophers espouse a construct where participation in a band teaches teamwork, discipline, and resilience. These lessons are as valuable as the musical skills

¹⁰ Nuvo Instrumental, "Ambassadors," accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.nuvoinstrumental.com/ambassadors/>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Paul R. Lehman, "A Look Ahead: Music Education from 2020 to 2050," *Contributions to Music Education* 45 (2020): 67-80.

themselves.¹³ Aesthetic philosophers endorse a philosophical framework of holistic education, which prominently displays part of the pre-band instrument curriculum.¹⁴ The findings in this research illuminate that addressing the latter also accomplishes the former notwithstanding. Furthermore, the colorful and fun design of the instruments, as reported by multiple educators, including Marjolein Desmet, Belgium, and Kevin Collins, United States, significantly boosts student interest and engagement.¹⁵ This aspect is crucial in maintaining sustained interest among young learners. The instruments' affordability and durability remove barriers to entry-level band instrumentalists, making music education more inclusive, as evidenced by the experiences of professionals like Victor Hugo Guzman, where economic barriers often restrict access to traditional instruments. Consequently, these ideals fail to align with the majority of directors who desire consistent materials and conventional colors of instruments, resulting in a continuation of exclusivity and elitism within the context of band education.¹⁶

Practical

This research advocates for reevaluating pedagogical strategies for music educators, especially those in rural areas with high percentages of low SES students. It emphasizes the importance of incorporating Copland's philosophy into band programs, which involves embracing culturally relevant music and affordable instruments. This approach not only

¹³ Bennett Reimer, "Roots of Inequity and Injustice: The Challenges for Music Education," *Music Education Research* 9, no. 2 (2007): 191-204, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613800701384052>, 191, 202.

¹⁴ Music Constructed, "Brittany Bauman," last modified 2024, <https://www.musicconstructed.com/people/brittany-bauman/>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Budiansky and Foley, "The Quality of Repertoire and School Music Programs: Literature Review, Analysis, and Discussion," 17-24.

enhances student accessibility and engagement but also empowers educators to be more effective in their teaching.

Band music educators can impart essential practical elements of music education—such as balance, form, analysis, dynamics, tempo, and timbre—effectively within the context of vernacular marching band music, as they would in traditional classical symphonic band settings. This practical application broadens the students' musical experience and enhances their appreciation and understanding of music as a dynamic art form. For instance, dynamics and tempo are crucial in expressing emotion and narrative in music, which is as accurate in the pulsating rhythms of jazz and pep-sports bands as analogously to structured movements of a symphony. Furthermore, teaching music analysis and form through various genres allows students to appreciate their structural similarities and differences, fostering a deeper understanding and a more well-rounded musical education. This approach efficiently engages students whose musical interests lean more toward contemporary or culturally resonant forms of music.

Broader Implications for Music Education

The ability to teach these fundamental musical concepts across different genres also has broader implications for developing music education as a discipline. It suggests that music education can be a more inclusive field, one that embraces a variety of musical expressions and traditions, which enriches both the teaching environment and the learning experience. It challenges the traditional boundaries of music education and opens up new possibilities for curricular development that is more reflective of the modern, multicultural world. Further, integrating music education, specifically band participation, into the curriculum for all students is rooted in a wealth of research highlighting the multifaceted benefits of musical training. Studies

consistently show that engagement in music education enhances cognitive functions, improves academic performance, fosters social skills, and cultivates emotional resilience.¹⁷ By mandating band participation, educational policymakers aim to extend these benefits universally, promoting equity in educational opportunities and outcomes.

Potential Benefits

Universal band participation could democratize access to music education, ensuring that all students, regardless of socioeconomic background, can learn music. Further, increased access to band could help bridge the gap often observed between students who can afford private lessons and those who cannot. Additionally, using these instruments supports an educational framework that does not merely seek to produce musicians but aims to cultivate well-rounded individuals.

A holistic philosophy champions the idea that the value of music education lies not only in the artistic output but also in the process of artistic creation and the development of the creator. In this context, the type of instrument becomes less important than the educational and developmental opportunities it provides. This approach can potentially transform the demographic makeup of those participating in band programs. Furthermore, group musical activities such as band can enhance teamwork, discipline, and patience.

These skills are transferable across various aspects of life, including academic and social settings. Moreover, exposure to band and music from an early age can lead to improved auditory skills, enhanced language abilities, and a greater memory capacity. The cognitive benefits are crucial during the formative years of music education and can contribute significantly to a

¹⁷ Jenefer Robinson, "This Is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession by Levitin, Daniel J.," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 66, no. 1 (2008): 91-94.

student's overall academic trajectory.¹⁸ However, implementing such a policy is challenging. Logistical issues such as funding, resource allocation, and curriculum integration pose significant hurdles. Schools may need help procuring sufficient musical instruments, hiring qualified music teachers, and integrating band practice into an already crowded academic schedule. Students' varying interest levels and musical aptitudes could complicate the delivery of uniformly effective and engaging music education. Moreover, resistance from stakeholders, including parents, students, and educators, who prefer a more traditional approach to education or believe in a more elective-based curriculum, could also impact the feasibility of this initiative.

Incorporating vernacular and contemporary musical styles into the band curriculum makes music education more inclusive and culturally relevant, acknowledging students' diverse musical backgrounds and preferences. This inclusivity fosters greater engagement and participation, democratizing music education and increasing student autonomy.¹⁹ As a result, students become active contributors and leaders within the music program, particularly in recruiting and retaining peers, directly facilitating their active engagement and essential contributions to the program's development.

Spiritual

The noble quest to use music education to uplift underserved students' status is as ancient as Jesus' *Sermon on the Mount* (Luke 6:20-21, New International Version). Learning to play a musical instrument is a lifelong skill that profoundly impacts the brain, body, and spirit of the dedicated musician.²⁰ Band directors must play a pivotal role in facilitating access, retaining

¹⁸ Robinson, "This Is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession by Levitin, Daniel J.," 91.

¹⁹ Todd Waldon Murphy, "Using Popular Music to Engage the Multiculturally Diverse Secondary School Band," Doctoral dissertation, Liberty University, 2022.

²⁰ Gerald Klickstein, *The Musician's Way: A Guide to Practice, Performance, and Wellness* (Oxford University Press, 2009): 229.

underserved students, and adopting a results-based philosophy regarding the intended participants in band, the nature of performances, and the audience for whom these performances are conducted. This approach is essential to harnessing the full benefits of instrumental music education for humanity. Furthermore, to align with Luke, 6:20-21 (NIV), it is crucial to actively engage students of low socioeconomic status in all aspects of their musical learning. When we view the composition of performance audiences through a Christian lens, our focus shifts to the marginalized, including individuals such as orphans, widows, and aliens (Deuteronomy 24:17-22, New American Standard).

Limitations

Archival research findings are often contextualized within existing scholarship and theoretical frameworks. Furthermore, researchers discuss the significance of their findings, contribute new insights to the scholarly conversation, and propose implications for theory, policy, or practice.²¹ Moreover, the study provides valuable insights; it relies heavily on archival data, which may not capture the full range of contemporary student and teacher experiences. Another limitation of this study is the subjective nature of the field of music education with specific regard to assessment. Music education inherently involves personal interpretation and artistic expression, which can vary widely among students and educators.

This subjectivity complicates the establishment of standardized assessment criteria, making it challenging to measure and compare student progress and program effectiveness consistently. For instance, affirming empirical data without a standardized instrumental band music education instrument for assessment is challenging. Further, each band program has a

²¹ Marc J. Ventresca and John W. Mohr, "Archival Research Methods," in *The Blackwell Companion to Organizations* (2017): 805-828.

variety of focal constructs, such as being a marching, jazz, or classical/symphony school with an epoch of analogous traditions.

Students' diverse backgrounds, experiences, and school settings contribute to varied responses to music education, affecting learning outcomes and engagement levels. While rigorous methodologies and comprehensive case studies are employed, the inherent subjectivity of musical assessment may influence findings, leading to differing interpretations of student success and program impact, and potentially limiting the generalizability of results. However, the future research should incorporate multiple assessment methods and perspectives to address this subjectivity and provide a holistic evaluation of music education programs. This approach balances subjective interpretations with objective measures, offering a nuanced understanding of the benefits and challenges associated with instrumental music education, thereby ensuring the validity and reliability of the research.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research in music education has the potential to bring about positive change. We can gather real-time data and responses by incorporating empirical studies involving direct interactions with students and educators, leading to more effective teaching methods. Exploring the long-term impacts of implementing Copland's philosophies in music education could reveal new strategies for student development. Additionally, a comparative analysis of different pedagogical approaches inspired by Copland's methods could provide deeper insights into their relative effectiveness and adaptability across diverse educational contexts, paving the way for more inclusive music education.

The second recommendation for further study is the traits of successful, holistic instrumental music educators. "Indeed, the majority of school band directors, when asked quote

to identify composers they themselves regarded as the most significant in the wind band repertoire, name composers of repertoire that they themselves were not performing.”²² The call for empirical investigation into the practices of in-service teachers underscores a notable deficiency in the inclusivity of curricular frameworks within music educator programs. Findings indicate that a significant proportion, approximately 63%, of K-12 educators who have undergone training, have encountered limited exposure to strategies tailored for serving students from varied socioeconomic backgrounds.²³ The theoretical framework that constitutes the formation of music educator may reveal solutions for inclusion in ensembles and a more diverse demographic of educators. Finally, the author of this study recommends conducting further research through detailed case studies to address the complexities mentioned above. These studies should involve diverse school districts to account for variations in demographic factors, resource availability, and cultural attitudes toward music education. Each case study must evaluate the educational, social, and administrative impacts of mandating band participation.

Key metrics for evaluation could include student academic performance, engagement levels in band activities, changes in social behavior, resource allocation effectiveness, and overall student and parent satisfaction. This comprehensive approach, incorporating qualitative data from interviews with students, parents, teachers, and administrators and quantitative performance data, would provide a thorough understanding of the outcomes. Furthermore, beyond logistical and immediate educational outcomes, case studies should consider long-term impacts on students' lives, including their continued engagement with music and other

²² Budiansky and Foley, "The Quality of Repertoire and School Music Programs: Literature Review, Analysis, and Discussion," 18.

²³ Taie, S., & Lewis, L., Characteristics of 2020–21 Public and Private K–12 School Teachers in the United States: Results from the National Teacher and Principal Survey First Look (NCES 2022-113) (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2022), <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2022113>.

extracurricular activities, higher education attainment, and even career paths through quantitative data. Additionally, studies could explore the psychological impacts of mandatory participation in band, such as effects on student motivation, anxiety, and self-esteem.

Summary

Instrumental music education offers extensive intellectual, sociological, psychological, and physical benefits. This study introduces practical philosophies and interventions to promote widespread student participation in band programs. Implementing Copeland's philosophy of vernacular music—emphasizing music for everyone, using vernacular instruments, music, financially accessible instruments, and performing for underserved audiences—can enhance inclusion and excellence in rural Midwest band programs. Financially accessible plastic instruments, supported by global educational and performance experiences, prove effective in modern music education. These instruments enhance accessibility and engagement and support inclusive practices and pedagogical flexibility. Positive impacts suggest that NUVO instruments significantly improve music education by making initial instruction more engaging and universally accessible.

These findings are not just informative, but they carry the potential to transform music education. They are crucial for shaping policies that foster musical skills and holistic development. Rigorous case studies enable policymakers to design inclusive educational programs. Furthermore, band educators can maintain high pedagogical standards while enhancing the relevance and appeal of music education through traditional and vernacular settings. The adoption of a philosophy focused on vernacular music and accessible instruments has the power to transform music education, ensuring inclusivity and holistic development,

especially for low SES students in rural Midwest programs. The potential for transformation should serve as a source of inspiration and motivation for all individuals.

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